

one to two hundred feet. Its walls are usually nearly vertical and in places exceed 150 feet in height. In low water, the navigation of the Cañon is reported to be easy, but in seasons of flood the swollen stream is partly dammed back, and its effort to force a way through the narrow channel is attended with the production of such whirlpools and billows that its passage with large boats is exceedingly difficult and with small boats is impossible. The Omenica was still high when we reached the Cañon, and after an examination it was decided to make a portage. A trail was cut along the north bank, and the portage was made in less than a day. The ridge through which the Omenica cuts at the Cañon increases rapidly in height to the north, and develops into a mountain range the peaks of which exceed 5000 feet in height. Southward the ridge soon dies away.

Omenica
above the
Black Cañon.

Above the Black Cañon the valley is closed in for a mile or more by steep cliffs of sandstones, clays and conglomerates between which the stream rushes with torrential speed. Further up the stream bends to the north-west and follows parallel to the direction of the mountain ranges of the district, the rocky walls disappear, and the river, freed from confinement, enlarges to twice its former width. Above the bend the river follows a wide valley between the mountains as far the mouth of Tehutetzeca, a distance of ten miles. The Omenica in this reach is wide and swift; no rapids were met with, but short and strong "riffles," exceedingly difficult to ascend, occur every few hundred yards. A notable feature of the river here is the great drift-piles of logs which have been heaped up by the rapid current at all the bends, and on the heads of the numerous gravel-bars and islands around which the stream divides. The Tehutetzeca, a rapid stream about 150 feet wide, comes in from the north-west down the same valley occupied by the Omenica above the Cañon. It has not yet been explored.

Rapid char-
acter of
Omenica.

Above the mouth of the Tehutetzeca the Omenica leaves the longitudinal valley followed below, and bends to the west. The declivity and current increase, and for some miles the river is simply a wild torrent plunging in a succession of rapids from bar to bar. The ascent of this portion of the river proved a matter of no ordinary difficulty. The trucking-line could not be used owing to the beaches being covered by high water, and the strength of the current rendered poling in many places equally impracticable. At the worst places wading in the ice cold water and pulling the canoes up foot by foot against the foaming stream, at the risk of stumbling on hidden and slippery boulders paving the channel, proved the only practicable means of ascent. Our progress here was very slow, and for some days