

cornice of snow proved unscalable. They estimated this cornice, which covers the crest of the mountain, at less than one hundred feet in thickness. Readings of the aneroid barometer and of the boiling point thermometer show the height at which they stopped to be 8,950 feet, giving about 9,050 feet as the full height of the mountain, which rises only 3,340 feet above the pass.

There can be no mistake as to the mountain, for no higher point rises beyond it west or northwest of the Athabasca pass, so far as could be seen from the summit. Mount Brown must descend, therefore, from its undeserved reputation as the highest mountain between Mexico and Alaska. There are hundreds of peaks higher than it towards the east and south, though probably none reaching within 2,000 feet of its reputed height. If Mount St. Elias proves to be within Canadian territory, instead of being the corner stone of Alaska, as claimed by Americans, its altitude of nearly 18,000 feet puts it far in advance of any other Canadian peak, and it has no rival in North America, except Orizaba in Mexico, which, according to some accounts, is a few feet higher.

During our return journey we asked ourselves again and again how the height of Mount Brown could have been so enormously overestimated as 6,000 or 7,000 feet, and we have found no answer to the question. Scores, if not hundreds, of men, many of them well-trained engineers, have made the pass a thoroughfare on the business of the Hudson Bay Company, or of the railway surveys. How did they fail to slice off some of the undeserved thousands of feet?

I should mention here that Dr. George Dawson, in a private letter on the subject, expressed the opinion that Mount Brown would turn out to be not more than 12,000 feet high when climbed.

The case of Mount Hooker we found less easy to settle. Johnson makes it lower than Mount Brown, Reclus higher.* The point nearest in position to that on the map is only about 8,000 feet high, as determined by Mr. Stewart and my brother, but a handsome, glacier-covered mountain, just east of the Punch Bowl, probably reaches 11,000 feet, and there are summits a few miles southeast that perhaps surpass 12,000 feet. Unfortunately, lack of time prevented our climbers from ascending any of them.

The Punch Bowl suggested no ideas of conviviality when we visited it last summer, for we had not even a flask of brandy with which to celebrate the end of our journey. The little meadow of matted sedge, surrounded by stunted spruces on three sides, and by the limpid pond on the

* *Loc. cit.*, Johnson says 15,700; Reclus, 16,979 (5,180 metres).