diately before the starting, and shortly after the return of the expedition); at the sea-level of Vera Cruz, and in the Central Meteorological Observatory of the City of Mexico, at an elevation of 7,403 feet. To the officers of the latter institution I am indebted for the privilege of making comparisons with the standard meteorical column.

The results of our measurements show a striking accord in some instances with those obtained from earlier measurements, while in other cases they exhibit marked divergence. The fact that all the summits were ascended within a period of three weeks, were measured with the same instrument, and during a period of atmospheric equability and stability which is offered to an unusual degree by a tropical dry season, renders the possibility of errors of any magnitude almost nil. At any rate, such errors as may have creeped in will probably not affect a general comparative result. The points of important difference are: (1) The highest summit of Mexico is not, as is commonly supposed, Popocatepetl, but the peak of Orizaba (Citlaltepetl, the "Star Mountain"), which rises 703 feet higher (18,200 feet); (2) Ixtaccihuatl, the familiar "White Woman" of the plain of Anahuac, is but a few hundred feet (about 550) lower than Popocatepetl.

The peak of Orizaba was ascended on the 6th and 7th of April, Popocatepetl on the 16th and 17th of the same month, the Nevado de Toluca on the 21st, and Ixtaccihuatl on the 26th and 27th.

The restoration of the peak of Orizaba to the first place among Mexican mountains, and its increased altitude, opens up the interesting question as to what constitutes the culminating point of the North American continent. The only other mountain that need be considered in this connection is St. Elias, situated approximately on the 141st meridian of west longitude, and whose summit is claimed for both the possessions of Great Britain and the United States (Alaska). The measurements of this mountain do not go so widely from one another, however, that we are not yet in a position to affirm, even within limits of a thousand feet or considerably more, how nearly it approaches in height the Mexican volcanoes. We are probably justified in dismissing without further examination the measurement made by La Pérouse in 1786, which gave for the peak less than 18,000 feet; and seemingly not much more reliable is the datum (14,970 feet) which appears in Capt. Denham's chart from 1835 to 1856, and is copied into the British Admiralty chart of 1872 (Humboldt's Cosmose, p. 419, Otte's edition; Dall, Report of the United States Coast and Geodetic Survey 1875, p. 156). This latter figure (4,593 metres) is adopted by Petermann in his general map of North America prepared for Stieler's "Handatlas" (1878-81). Malaspina in 1791 determined the height, by means of angles taken from near the position of Port Mulgrave, to be 5,541 feet, or 17,851 feet; and the equivalent of this figure has been copied into the Russian hydrographic charts (1847). Tetenoff reduces this amount by somewhat over 900 feet.

No carefully conducted measurements of the mountain appear to have been made between the date of the publication of Tetenoff's chart (1849) and 1874, when Mr. Dall, under the direction of the United States Coast Survey, surveyed a considerable portion of the Alaskan region. This investigator found four different values for the height of the mountain as measured from four points respectively 69, 127, 131, and 167 miles distant: these are 19,464, 19,590, 19,266, and 18,323 feet. Mr. Dall dismisses all of these as having little value, except the measurement of 19,464 feet, made from Port Mulgrave. It is difficult to reconcile the

---

1 From the Proceedings of the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia.