

**MOUNTAIN AND  
MOOR; NATURAL  
HISTORY RAMBLES**

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Mountain and Moor; Natural History Rambles by John E. Taylor

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**JOHN E. TAYLOR**

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NATURAL HISTORY RAMBLES.

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MOUNTAIN AND MOOR.

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# MOUNTAIN AND MOOR.

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## CHAPTER I.

### OUR BRITISH MOUNTAINS—THEIR GEOLOGICAL ANTIQUITY.

The High Mountain Ranges of the World—The Andes, Himalayas, Alps, &c.—Our British Mountains much older Geologically—Mountains and Literature—Comparison of the Ages of Sutherland Mountains and Himalayas—Evidences of Metamorphism, &c., in Strata of our Mountains—Evidences of Denudation from British Mountains—Skiddaw, and the Western Highlands—Sulven—Mountains of North Wales—Fentland Hills, the Grampians, Mendips, Quantock Hills, &c.—Silurian Hills and Mountains—Carboniferous Hills—Peak of Derbyshire, Ingleborough Fell—Millstone Grit Hills—Penyghent, Kinder Scout—The Pennine Chain—Hills of New Red Sandstone—Beeston Hill—Cotteswold and Cleveland Hills—Chalk Wolds and Downs—Age of the Wrekin—Ancient Volcanoes of Great Britain—The Isle of Mull—Rev. J. Clifton-Ward on Ancient Cumberland Volcanoes, and Denudation of Lake District.

THERE are other mountains and hills in the world than those occurring in Great Britain. Some of them stand base to base, and extend over many degrees of latitude or longitude, and we term them "mountain-chains." Their highest peaks penetrate far into the clouds, and it may be that the snow-line enshrouds

nearly half their heights, as it does the Himalayas. Human beings could hardly bear the decreased atmospheric pressure which is characteristic of Mount Everest, the highest point of the Himalayan mountains, five and a half miles above the sea-level. No wonder that the loftily-elevated masses of the earth's rocky crust forming the Himalayas should be snow-clad, and so have originated the native name, which signifies the "Abode of Snow."

Our British mountains are not marked by the presence of active volcanoes, like those which crown the peaks of the Andes, and which have built the latter up still higher by the heaps of rubbish and lava they have accumulated around their craters. They are not mountains which tremble and groan, like Sinai of old, beneath the pressure of volcanic forces; or whose flanks are ascended with suspicion of a possible overwhelming beneath clouds of hot ashes, as with Vesuvius and Etna. They are neither affected by fire nor ice. No volcanic flames light up their summits, no glaciers now glide down their rugged sides. The numerous ice-rivers which give to the Swiss Alps half their natural charms are only represented on the loftiest and coldest of our British mountains, such as Ben Nevis, even in its darkest and most protected fissures, by the snow-wreath which has lingered since last winter!

And yet our British mountains have a history transcending in geological and general interest those of any other part of the globe, no matter how the latter overtower them in loftiness or in the importance of *their prevailing physical phenomena*. Many of them

have been the sport alternately, and almost pendulum-like, of the volcano and the glacier. They have been crushed under continental ice, like the unknown and as yet unseen mountains of Greenland; whilst some of the most notable of them owe the very existence of the masses which remain after millions of years' wear-and-tear, to the materials ejected from ancient volcanoes on or near their present sites! Such hills and mountains are the Wrekin, Mount Sorrel, Snowdon, and many of the Cumberland and Scotch mountains.

No other mountains in the world, except the hills of Greece, have such rich historical and poetical associations as those of our own country. Most mountain regions have sheltered the defenders of human freedom in all ages from the overwhelming arm of the oppressor; and British hilly fortresses have sometimes served in as good stead as similar mountain homes to other lovers of freedom! The hills and mountain slopes, where one seems to breathe faster and freer, and to be more removed from the artificial restraints of society, have consoled many a fugitive from despotic oppression, and have been the home of brave lovers of liberty, long after the plains have yielded to the yoke of the tyrant. The literature of almost every mountain country in the world is a patriotic literature. Liberty always found her choicest home in the mountains—long even before the time when David fled from the wrath of Saul. Our own English mountains fortunately have had little opportunity thus to influence our history. But those of Ireland, Wales, and of the Scottish High-