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## A CONTRIBUTION TO BRITISH OROGRAPHY.

IT is rather a curious thing that so few of us know much about the British hills in general. We all know parts, but very few take that geographical interest in the whole. The chief difficulty lies in the method of classifying the hills. Height is the generally accepted method, and though it conveys some idea, it is eminently unsatisfactory. There are no means of classifying hills by their shape or mass, and such classifications are intensely complicated by the different views and surroundings. Therefore, in order to give a brief survey of the mountains of the British Isles, other than geological, one is compelled to fall back upon the method of heights. Of the four components of our islands, Scotland is easily the most mountainous. Naturally, the first purely British Mountaineering Club arose there in 1890, when the beginning may be dated from the first number of their journal. A great enthusiast, both for geography and mountains, Mr. Munro, compiled lists of the Scottish mountains, which was published in their journal. The figures in this paper were a surprise to almost everybody. No one had any idea of the mountainous conditions of the country. The figures are now a little in need of revision in places, but will remain the standard for many years. It was found that there were 285 distinct and separate mountains in Scotland over 3000 feet. To this figure may be added 254 "tops," *i.e.*, summits, which are not sufficiently separated from a massif to be called mountains. The total is 539. The figures given above are Mr. Munro's, except for a slight alteration. On looking into the orology of the other countries, it was found that there were seven mountains in Wales over 3000 feet, six in Ireland and four in

England, making a total of 302 mountains over 3000 feet in the British Isles, of which Scotland contains all but 17. The highest mountain in the British Isles is Ben Nevis, 4407 feet, and whoever has climbed through its cliffs on a fine day will decide that it is a worthy monarch of the British Hills. Next to Ben Nevis comes Ben Muich Dhui, 4296 feet, *i.e.* 111 feet lower. Besides these two there are six others over 4000 feet high, in all eight. These may be enumerated as follows:—

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|--|-----------|------------|
| 1. Ben Nevis (the hill of the clear cold spring)               | . . . . . | 4407 feet. |
| 2. Ben Muich Dhui (the hill of the black sow)                  | . . . . . | 4296 "     |
| 3. Braeriach (the speckled or hoary hill)                      | . . . . . | 4248 "     |
| 4. Cairntoul (the northern cairn)                              | . . . . . | 4241 "     |
| 5. Sgor an Lochan Uaine (the peak of the little<br>green loch) | . . . . . | 4095 "     |
| 6. Cairngorm (the blue cairn)                                  | . . . . . | 4084 "     |
| 7. Aonach Beag (the small lump)                                | . . . . . | 4060 "     |
| 8. Carn Mor Dearg (the great red cairn)                        | . . . . . | 4012 "     |

A goodly list, which may be done in two long days, but will most probably represent four. Ben Nevis and the two last are situated together near Fort-William, and the other five are close to each other between Aviemore and Braemar. It will be noticed that Ben Attow is not included in the above list. It is popularly credited to rise 4000 feet, but scientifically it has been found only to exceed 3300 feet by a little.

The highest hill out of Scotland is Snowdon, 3565 feet, which takes the 56th place on the list of the hills of the British Isles. Carnedd Llewellyn, 3484 feet, comes next, and is 72nd, the third highest being Carnedd Dafydd, 3426 feet, and 90th. Ireland's highest hill comes next, Cairntoul in Killarney, 3414 feet high, and which takes the 94th place. The highest mountain of the English division is Scawfell Pike, 3210 feet, and which humbly takes the 174th place amongst our British 3000 footers. When the corresponding positions of the lowest 3000 footers in our islands are taken, the above is completely reversed. Thus Scotland possesses three mountains 3000 feet high; Ireland one; Wales comes next with Tryfan,

3010, 289th; Ireland with Lugraquilla in Wicklow, 3039, 268th; England with Skiddaw, 3058 feet, and 255th.

To Mr. Munro's list of the Scottish hills I append those of Wales, Ireland and England—

WALES.	IRELAND.	ENGLAND.
Snowdon, 3565 feet.	Cairntoul, 3414 feet.	Scawfell Pike, 3210 feet.
Carnedd Llewelyn, 3484 feet.	Brenkeragh, 3314 feet.	Scawfell, 3161 feet.
Carnedd Dafydd, 3426 feet.	Brandon, 3127 feet.	Helvellyn, 3118 feet.
Glyder Fawr, 3279 feet.	Cumloughra, 3100 feet.	Skiddaw, 3058 feet.
Glyder Fach, 3262 feet.	Lugraquilla, 3039 feet.	
Y Garn, 3104 feet.	Caher, 3000 feet.	
Tryfan, 3010 feet.		

A factor which is intimately bound up with the height of the British hills is the depth of the snow, and how long it lies. The Observatory on Ben Nevis supplies us with figures on this point, just as it gives us hot coffee after a long cold climb. Taking the returns for the years 1883-1895, inclusive, the summit bore snow from November to the end of May, and generally through part of June. On two occasions did snow remain towards the end of July, and on four occasions did it begin in October. Thus, on the average, the summit will be clear of snow during July, August and September. On the average the snow was at its greatest depth during April, the end of March and the beginning of May, when the average depth was 78·4 inches. The maximum depth was 142 inches in 1884, and the minimum 57 inches in 1888. Ben Nevis presents quite an Alpine appearance for about eight months in the year, whilst snow will be found in the gullies all the year round. Excellent winter climbing can be obtained throughout the greater part of the year, and is at its best during the month of April.