

**ASCENT TO THE
SUMMIT OF MONT
BLANC IN 1834**

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Ascent to the Summit of Mont Blanc in 1834 by Martin Barry

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MARTIN BARRY

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BLANC IN 1834**

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IN

1834.

BY

MARTIN BARRY,

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&c.

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TO
ROBERT JAMESON, F. R. SS. L. & E.,

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PRESIDENT OF THE WERNERIAN NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY,
REGIUS PROFESSOR OF NATURAL HISTORY IN THE UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH,
&c. &c.

THE FOLLOWING NARRATIVE

IS

RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED,

BY

HIS FORMER PUPIL,

THE AUTHOR.

The following narrative contains the substance of two lectures delivered in the Assembly Rooms, Edinburgh, in March 1836, for the benefit of an excellent Institution,—the ROYAL INFIRMARY of that city,—in which the author had been a pupil.

PREFACE.

A SHORT account of this ascent of Mont Blanc was published in the Edinburgh New Philosophical Journal, Vol. xviii. No. 35; beyond which,—with the interesting narrative by Auldjo already before the public,—it was not proposed to extend it. But having since been made the subject of two lectures,—in preparing which, some information was collected, likely to be found generally useful,—and as any contribution seems allowable, on the subject of a track so few have taken,—the narrative is now published in a separate form.

The following pages contain the lectures nearly as delivered; with the addition of a short account of the early attempts to reach the summit of Mont Blanc.

The observations on the effects of dimi-

nished atmospheric density on respiration and other functions, are condensed from a paper by the author, lately read before the Royal Society of Edinburgh.

The large drawing appended, will serve,—it is presumed,—as no mean substitute for the model, used at the lectures. The former was executed for me by a talented lithographer;* and the latter by a rising young sculptor, and portrait-modeller:†—both of Edinburgh.

The model has been presented to the Royal Museum of Natural History in the University of Edinburgh,—as a work of art, not undeserving of a place among the works of nature,—and as a production worthy of a Scottish artist.

It covers *forty-eight* square feet. Arthur's Seat,—near Edinburgh,—on the same scale, might be represented by—a mouse.

* Murray.

† Slater.

FIRST LECTURE.

Hot summer of 1834—Heidelberg—Fine autumn—Switzerland—Sunrise, and sunset, from the Faulhorn—Arrival at the Col de Balme—First view of Mont Blanc—Goethe's evening approach to Chamonix—Snow-cap of Mont Blanc, and Benlomoind—Mont Blanc the most considerable *mountain* known—Chamonix but little known before 1741—Captain Sherwill's sketch of "Chamouni"—Origin of the name "Chamouni"—The summit not wrapped in vapour—Guides consulted at the Priory—their objections—favourable circumstances—Departure for the mountain—Ascent—Pine-Forest—Chalet de la Para—Pierre Pointue—Pierre à l'Echelle—Highest tree—Rhododendron ferrugineum, and other alpine plants—Provisions, &c—Chamois seen—Entrance upon the ice—Iron points for shoes—Nitric acid—Bâtons—The glaciers—transverse rents—lateral debris—slips—Glaciers of Bossons and Taconnaz—Bridges of ice—Crossing the chasms—Narrow crevices concealed—Danger of setting ice in motion—The guides on the glacier—Unseen torrents—Thickness of the ice—Icy desolation of the glaciers—Fissures wi-