

DESCRIPTION  
OF  
A VIEW  
OF  
MONT BLANC,  
THE  
VALLEY OF CHAMOUNIX,  
AND THE  
SURROUNDING MOUNTAINS.  
NOW EXHIBITING  
AT  
THE PANORAMA, LEICESTER SQUARE.



PAINTED BY THE PROPRIETOR,

ROBERT BURFORD,

FROM DRAWINGS TAKEN BY HIMSELF, IN 1835.

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1837.

IN THE UPPER CIRCLE  
IS NOW OPEN,  
A SPLENDID VIEW  
OF  
THE CITY AND BAY OF DUBLIN.

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*Admittance, One Shilling.*

# MONT BLANC.

—————“ The Alps  
The palaces of nature, whose vast walls  
Have pinnacled in clouds their snowy scalps,  
And throned eternity in icy halls  
Of cold sublimity, where forms and falls  
The Avalanche. The thunderbolt of snow!  
All that expands the spirit, yet appals,  
Gather around these summits, as to show  
How Earth may pierce to Heaven, yet leave vain man below.”

THE most stupendous and magnificent portion of the vast chain of the Alps is Mont Blanc, there is, perhaps, no other known mountain that is covered to such an extent with snow, that gives birth to such wondrous plains and cataracts of ice as the glaciers, or that can be seen in so large a portion of uninterrupted outline, from a situations so immediately adjacent. On whichever side it is viewed, whether from a distance, or close, the “Giant of the old world,” with its surrounding court of minor mountains, rising in the sublime varieties of nature, strikes the mind with awe by its great height and magnitude, yet at the same time produces the most delightful sensations of pleasure, by its continually varying appearance; it rarely disappoints the most vivid anticipations, and has always been an object of intense interest to the intelligent traveller; which he views with astonishment and curiosity, dwells on with admiration, and from which he reluctantly departs; it fully justifies the most rapturous encomiums that have been at various times lavished upon it, and truly deserves the regal title given it by Lord Byron.

“ Mont Blanc the monarch of mountains,  
They crown him long ago;  
On a throne of rocks, in a robe of clouds,  
With a diadem of snow.”

To present a clear and intelligible image, of a scene so fearfully grand and imposing, by a verbal description is impossible; the most fertile imagination, aided by the pen of a Byron, or the matchless pencil of a Claude in a painting of moderate size, must alike fail to convey an adequate impression of the reality; for nature is here almost too magnificent, and the whole is on a scale of such inconceivable vastness, that it sets at defiance any attempt to depict it with ordinary means; the Panorama alone, and that to an extent considerably beyond its

usual limits, can hope to approach any thing like a fair delineation of this sublime scene, and even that, vast as it is, must fall far short of presenting it in all its glorious and ever varying beauty.

The drawings for the present Panorama were taken from the Flégère, a mountain of considerable elevation, on the northern side of the valley, which from its height and situation (being opposite Mont Blanc), commands a most comprehensive view of the mountain, with its attendant Aiguilles, Glaciers, &c., from base to summit. The time represented is evening, when the atmosphere is nearly cloudless, and the snow-clad heights shine resplendently, the lofty peaks reflecting the richest hues of the setting sun, long after the luminary which gilds them, has sunk below the mountains, and become invisible to the lower world.

The various objects that surround the spectator in this situation are of the grandest description, on all sides

—“The Alpine summits rise  
Height o'er height, stupendous hurl'd,  
Like the pillars of the skies,  
Like the ramparts of the world.”

The vastness of the scene at first oppresses and overwhelms, and the mind labours to form a definite idea of such colossal magnificence; but the voluptuous and universal tranquillity, the deep and solemn stillness which reigns, interrupted only by the fearful rush of the avalanche, the hollow whistling of the wind, or the shrill cry of the chamois or marmot, impresses the senses in a manner that obliterates the passions and follies of the world, and awakens associations and feelings altogether new, disposing the mind to feel, in its full force, the sublimity of the scene, raising the thoughts to an immaterial world, and inspiring emotions of religious awe, which the tongue cannot utter, or the pen record.

Immediately in front the mountain monarch

“High o'er the rest displays superior state  
In grand pre-eminence supremely great.”

Its majesty and magnificence, unchanged in countless ages, its vastness here perceptible, and its height strikingly apparent, its white mantled head silvered with everlasting snow, where the foot of man has scarcely ever trod, or the eagle's wing dared to soar, rising with delicate brilliancy, without spot or blemish, in a pure atmosphere, against a deep blue sky: the surrounding elegant and slender needles, and subject Alps, “sun-gilt spires, pinnacled on roofs of snow,” resembling the cupolas and minarets of some gigantic eastern temple. Directly below, forming a magnificent foreground, the Mer de Glace, and the Glaciers des Boix and des Buissons, exhibit vast seas of sparkling crystal, and immense pyramids of sea green ice, splendidly illumined, shining in dazzling pomp, and the most harmonious mixtures of light and shade, seeming the effect rather of enchantment than of reality. Then comes a region abounding in the romantic and picturesque; vast and gloomy forests of lofty pine and larch, the rich tints of the luxuriant foliage contrasting beautifully with the delicate whiteness of the snow, torrents foaming over perpendicular cliffs, picturesque cottages and chalets, clinging to the almost inaccessible rocks, mountain, plain, and precipice, in ten thousand varied forms, blended by distance, and softened by the various

tints of sunshine and shade. Lastly, at a tremendous depth, the verdant valley presents a fairy-like scene of fertility and cultivation. Nature has here bestowed her treasures with a bountiful hand, the beautiful, the terrific, fertility and barrenness, are finely contrasted; the seasons are united, and every climate brought together; the flowers of spring, the fruits of Autumn, and the ice of winter, are seen at once under the richest rays of the summer sun.

To the left of Mont Blanc stands the Aiguille Vert, a dark frowning mass (which from its nearness appears both larger and higher than the monarch itself), followed by a sublime perspective of mountains of every form and character.

“ Nature’s bulwarks built by time,  
 ’Gainst eternity to stand,  
 Mountains terribly sublime,”

intermixed with scenery of the same severe and beautiful kind, and extraordinary vastness; majestic glaciers, separated by immense forests crowned by dark and rugged rocks, steep ridges, gloomy ravines, fearful slopes, and jagged peaks of astonishing altitude, sometimes lost in the clouds, at others towering above them, a rapid succession of grand and interesting objects, terminated by the Col de Balme, and the mountains of the Valais above Martigny.

Towards the right, the same scene of magnificence is continued, Aiguille and Glacier succeed each other, with towering masses of stone hanging over, and almost enclosing the valley; other mountains stretch along towards Geneva, as far as the eye can reach, the long chain melting into a line of blue vapour, scarcely to be distinguished from the horizon.

On the opposite side of the valley, the Breven, Flégère, and the Aiguilles rouges, form a vast and imposing barrier, and complete a sublime and unique coup d’œil of Alpine scenery, the boldest of the Almighty’s creations, the wonder of each generation; a scene fit for poets and enthusiasts—to be viewed with silent admiration and unminged pleasure—once seen, never to be forgotten.

## EXPLANATION OF THE ENGRAVING.

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### 1.—*Aiguille Verte.*

In any other situation the Aiguilles or needle-like peaks, which rise from eleven to thirteen thousand feet above the sea, would be regarded with astonishment, but here, although they command attention from their beauty and singularity, the effect of their height is diminished by comparison with the superior height and magnitude of Mont Blanc. They are composed of nearly vertical beds or plates of granite, raised into this position by some violent convulsion of nature, whose epoch is lost in the night of time. The Aiguille Verte nearly rivals Mont Blanc in height, being 13,734 feet above the Mediterranean; it presents a very striking escarpment of bare rocks, of course inaccessible, but its back, being not quite so perpendicular, is generally covered with snow.

### 2.—*Aiguille du Dru.*

No pinnae of the Alps can be compared to this Aiguille for elegance of form, or length of shaft, it consequently forms one of the most striking objects in the view; it is an isolated taper spire of reddish granite, that shoots up to the height of 12,700 feet, and is apparently quite detached from the neighbouring mountains. It appears to be composed of horizontal layers of granite, of rectangular pieces, disposed with the regularity of masonry. M. De Saussure compares it to an immense artichoke; the upper part rises nearly to a point, in one solid shaft of above 4000 feet, and is said to have a polish or glaze like that sometimes seen on granite exposed to the action of the sea; it is quite inaccessible.

### 4.—*Le Chapeau.*

A fine elevation, commanding an extensive view of the Mer de Glace; part of the ascent to the summit is practicable for mules, the remainder is rugged and dangerous, winding on the brink of precipices of terrific depth. The ascent and return occupies about four hours.

### 6.—*Glacier des Bois.*

The Glaciers of Mont Blanc are larger, and penetrate farther into the valley, than those of any other part of the Alps; the most extensive, is that called des Bois—

— — — “A savage sea,  
The glassy ocean of the mountain ice.  
Its rugged breakers, which put on  
The aspect of a tumbling tempest's foam,  
Frozen in a moment, a dead whirlpool's image.”

The glacier itself is about seven miles in length, in a sloping direction, forming, from the Moraine at its base, to its summit, an uninterrupted series of ice and snow, two miles in perpendicular height, that has never been dissolved, and is calculated to be at least two hundred feet in thickness. Above what is termed the glacier, is a portion less slanting, about four leagues in length, by three quarters of a league in breadth, appropriately called the “Mer de Glace,” a strange and sublime spectacle, which cannot be better described than in the words of Coxe; “A raging sea suddenly frozen in the midst of a storm.” It is a valley filled with a solid and connected mass of ice, the surface (which from the present distant situation, and the magnitude

of the surrounding mountains, appears nearly level) riven, cleft, and split into every variety of shape, enormous masses of gigantic crystals, two or three hundred feet in height; pinnacles, pyramids, and blocks, frightful abysses, yawning gulphs, and fissures that have been plumbd to the depth of 1200 feet; in short, the eye meets with the most extraordinary combinations of ice, piled in all the extravagance of fantastic irregularity; if it were possible to suppose a mighty and impetuous torrent, suddenly consolidated, a tolerable idea might be formed of this unparalleled scene. At its upper extremity the sea of ice divides into two great branches, one towards the east, called the Glacier de Léchand, the other towards the south-west, called the Tacul, which descends directly from Mont Blanc.

The whole of this immense glacier which is supposed to extend in various directions not less than twenty leagues, is in constant motion, and continues steadily and surely, although invisibly, to advance towards the valley; during the summer, the snows from the higher peaks of the mountains, becoming partially thawed, fall in mighty avalanches, one enormous body presses on that which has preceded it, and by its own weight the solid ocean of ice is insensibly impelled onwards. From various observations the progress is stated to be about two hundred yards annually. Mr. Brockedon remarked, that a mass of granite on the surface, advanced, between 1821 and 1824, nearly a mile. The glacier, at its extremity, fairly debouches into the valley, and, during a series of cold seasons, makes a considerable advance, overturning trees, and prostrating vast blocks of granite into the cultivated ground; on the other hand, during warm summers and mild winters, it diminishes, leaving vast heaps of rocks and stones, the debris of the mountains, brought down by the ice, called the moraine, very interesting to geologists, and said to contain many particles of fine gold.

#### 10 & 12.—*Les Jorasses.*

A semicircle of rocks or Aiguilles, which with the Aiguilles de Léchand closes the glacier de Léchand.

#### 11.—*Glacier de Léchand.*

One of the branches of the Mer de Glace, which terminates in a complete wall of granite with very elevated points; near the Jorasses it joins the glacier of Talèfre, a precipitous, majestic, and terrible torrent of ice surmounted by the Aiguille de Talèfre. In this situation is a flat space, surrounded by high rocks, which is covered in August with a fine verdure, and a great variety of Alpine plants and flowers. In the patois of the village it is called "la courtil," or the garden, and is the highest verdant spot in Europe, being 9000 feet above the sea, and about sixteen miles from Chamounix.

#### 13.—*Les Periwades.*

The mountain which separates the Mer de Glace into two branches.

#### 14.—*Le Tacul.*

From the grand plateau, the new route, to avoid the dangers of 1820, winds round the Tacul; it was taken by Messrs. Hawes and Fellows, and followed by Mr. Auldjo.

#### 16.—*Montanvert.*

This beautiful and verdant mountain, which is 6240 feet in height, may be considered a portion of the base of Mont Blanc; it rises abruptly from the valley, and is finely wooded to its summit, from which circumstance it derives its name; the various paths deeply indented on its sides, bear testimony to the curiosity of travellers, who ascend it to enjoy the extensive view it commands of the Mer de Glace, and the snowy mountains which surround it. The road from the village is steep and difficult,

through immense forests of larch and fir; when ascended on foot, about three hours and a half are required, but by mules about half that time is sufficient. On that part overlooking the Mer de Glace, is a pretty pavilion, erected some years back by order of M. Desportes, the French resident at Geneva; the building is stone, of an octagon form; four of the sides contain presses for beds, to accommodate those who pass the night there; two contain windows, one a fire-place, and the eighth a door, opposite which a fine cascade falls from the Aiguille du Dru; the whole was repaired and re-furnished a short time back, at the expense of a M. de Pontecoulant. The foundation for an inn on rather a large scale for such a situation, has recently been laid. A small square building of rough stones without mortar, erected before the pavilion, called the Château de Blair, now serves as a shelter to the cows that are brought here for pasturage, and to supply visitors with milk; persons who made any stay on the mountain previously to the erection of these buildings, took refuge in what M. de Sanssure calls the "Château," in which he, M. Pictet, and M. Trembley, passed a night; it is a large block of granite, one end of which being considerably elevated, leaves an open space beneath, sufficient to shelter several persons.

### 18.—*Source de l'Arveiron.*

The Arveiron is a small but rapid river, formed by the melted ice, from the Glacier des Bois, its source at this spot is in summer one of the most interesting features of this wonderful scene; it emerges from the foot of the glacier in a majestic torrent from a stupendous arch of ice, the size of which, depending on the warmth of the weather, is, in August, usually about one hundred feet in height, and of corresponding breadth, from which the ice hangs in the form of the most elegant drapery, in festoons of transparent beauty; in winter the river ceases to flow, the arch closes, and all is bound in adamantine chains of ice; many persons led by curiosity have the temerity to enter this cavern, which is attended with much danger, the masses of ice above being so delicately suspended, that the slightest vibration brings them down; a M. Maritz, of Geneva, accompanied by his son and nephew, were foolish enough, a short time back, to explode a hand grenade under the arch, the result was they were immediately buried in the ice, M. Maritz had his leg broken, and his nephew was killed. The river joins the Arve at a short distance.

### 19.—*Hamlet des Bois.*

This Hamlet, which is about three quarters of a league from the Priory, is worthy of notice from being the residence of the Albinos, who excited so much interest in London a few years back; they are now very aged, their constitutions feeble, and their sight so weak that they can scarcely bear the light of the sun; they labour for their subsistence, and are assisted by the occasional gifts of travellers; through the village lies the road to Martigny, nine leagues distant.

### 24.—*L'Arve.*

A rapid river which rises near the village of Tour; at Argentière it receives the waters of the Buism, which pours over a tremendous precipice; it traverses the whole length of the valley in a serpentine direction, and falls into the Rhone near Geneva; its waters are of a soapy colour, and abound in front of a fine flavour.

### 25.—*Village of Chamounix.*

This retired and beautiful spot is generally called "La Prieuré," from a convent of Benedictines founded about the year 1099, by a Count of Geneva having formerly existed there. It stands on the borders of the Arve, on a slight elevation formed by the debris of the Breven; the church is an ancient but handsome edifice, with a tall spire of bright tin; the interior has fine marble pillars, and much ornamental work on the altars; it was formerly attached to the priory, and by a date on the portal appears to have been rebuilt in 1640, it is the ecclesiastical mother of all the valey, and has spiritual jurisdiction over the other churches. The houses are neat and clean, and for the accommodation of visitors, who are numerous in summer, there are four good inns, and a fifth building, the charges in which, considering the distance that most articles of consumption have to be brought, are reasonable. There is also



a good museum of natural history belonging to J. M. Carrière, the minerals in which are said to have been arranged by M. de Saussure, and M. Pictet. The inhabitants number about 1500, and are, in common with the other natives of the valley, a quiet, moral, poor, and honest people, who have made considerable advances in civilization, the long winter producing much friendly intercourse, and kind feeling.

### 27.—*Valley of Chamounix.*

The valley is situated in the province of Faussigny, and is the longest and most interesting of those of Savoy; it is about fifteen miles in length from N.E. to S.W., and generally about one mile in breadth, but the great height of the mountains on both sides, make it appear much narrower; it is about 3433 feet above the Mediterranean; it is supposed that the whole was once a vast lake, there being no apparent original outlet at either end; but the river having worked itself a passage through a bed of soft slate, a deep chasm has been formed, extending more than four miles, by which the Arve now passes the ridge that separates Chamounix from the valley of Servoz; Mont Blanc occupies about eight miles of the southern side of the valley, and the Breven and Aiguilles rouges, somewhat more of the opposite; the Col de Balme closes it at one end, and the mountains of Lacha and Vaudagne at the other. It contains three parishes, Ouches, Argentière, and the Priory; those parts spared by the encroachments of the glaciers are rich and well cultivated, the butter and cheese are good, and the honey particularly fine; these, with a few cattle, form the only commerce of the Canton. From November to May the most intense frost binds all nature in inactivity; so soon as the snow melts, the grain is sown, and the rays of the summer sun being concentrated in this small spot, the reflected heat is so great, that an abundant harvest is reaped in August.

It is a singular but well attested fact, that a century back, this valley was as little known excepting to its own mountaineers, and a few inhabitants of Geneva, as the interior of Africa, being far distant from all high roads, and isolated, as it were, from the rest of the world; although a few villagers came occasionally to market, yet the Genevese sought no intercourse with them, believing that the eternal snows of Mont Blanc were the effects of a malediction brought on them by reason of their crimes. In 1741 the valley was first explored by Messrs. Pöcock and Wyndham, English travellers, who when they entered this wild and unpromising region, pitched their tents, lighted fires, and prepared to act on the defensive, against a people whom they conceived were as wild and savage as their country, nor were they satisfied of their safety, until the curé came to invite them to the village. Carriages cannot enter the valley, they are therefore generally left at St. Martin or Sallenche, and the last stage, of six or seven hours, performed on mules, or in a char-a-banc, a Swiss cabriolet, well adapted to the roads; the distance from Geneva is seventeen and a half Swiss leagues.

### 28.—*Hameau des Pèlerins.*

The highest Hamlet on the side of the mountain.

### 33.—*Le Géant.*

At the foot of this mountain M. de Saussure, with his son, servant, and four guides, spent seventeen days and nights, making those experiments which have immortalized his name; his cabin still remains. On the opposite side of the mountain is the village of Conrmayer, celebrated for its mineral springs. Ladies frequently ascend the Geant to the cabin, which is 11,500 feet, the Aiguille 14,217 feet in height.

### 34.—*Aiguille de Charmoz.*

9882 feet in height.

36.—*Aiguille de la Blaitière.*

Formed of granite, similar to most of the others, in layers from North-east to South-east, 8710 feet in height.

37.—*Aiguille du Plan.*

Similar in formation to the others, 8606 feet in height; at the foot of the Aiguille, near the Glacier de Nantillon, is a small deep lake, called "Lac du plan de l'Aiguille," whose waters are perfectly pure and limpid, and of an emerald colour.

38.—*Glacier de Blaitière.*

A Glacier composed of snow and ice of peculiar hardness; at its commencement is a small verdant space, enclosed by a vast accumulation of debris from the mountains.

40.—*Chalets des Blaitières.*

Scientific persons who visit the Aiguilles to examine them carefully, generally remain two or three days at either the upper or lower of these Chalets; the lower is situated on a fine verdant pasturage, practicable all the way for mules; both command fine and extensive views.

41.—*Glacier des Pèlerins.*

Situated at the foot of Aiguille du Midi, on the eastern side of the Glacier des Buissons, by which visitors ascend to it, and by coasting round the bases of the other Aiguilles, attain Montanvert, and descend by the Glacier des Bois. The Glacier des Pèlerins is small, and scarcely worthy notice, after its splendid neighbours.

42.—*Aiguille du Midi.*

The nearest Aiguille to Mont Blanc, and one of the highest of these elevated points, the summit being 13,038 feet above the Mediterranean. It is composed of granite mixed with hornblende; at its base, M. de Saussure made some of his most interesting experiments; the ascent to it is difficult and dangerous, being exposed to the continual fall of avalanches. There are considerable veins of lead and copper in its vicinity, but they are not worked.

43.—*Mont Maudit.*

The eastern shoulder of Mont Blanc. In ascending this precipitous mount, Dr. Hamel's party were overwhelmed by a slipping of the snow in August 1820, when three guides, Pierre Carrière, Pierre Balmat, and Auguste Tairray, perished; the mass of snow put in motion was estimated to be two hundred feet in height, one hundred and fifty in breadth, and one in thickness.

44.—*Rochers Rouges.*

A cluster of small pinnacles of green and red granite, lying in great disorder from the effects of lightning, continually striking them; they are the highest uncovered rocks; here Dr. Clarke deposited a bottle containing some writings, which, although "hermetically sealed down by an icy plug, and covered with a winter's snow," was, when found two years after by Mr. Auldjo, full of water, and its contents entirely destroyed.

On the western side of the rocks, detached from it by a crevasse, is a small area, on which, in a cavity, a few feet from the verge of the precipice, Mr. Clissold passed the night, during his ascent in 1821. Near this spot, Dr. Clarke's party saw two birds of a black colour, with yellow beaks, called by the guides "Cornelles," resembling a variety of the Cornish Chough.

#### 45.—*Mont Blanc.*

"Monarch of the scene, mightiest where all are mighty."

This, the highest mountain in Europe, or indeed in the ancient world, is, according to M. de Saussure's calculation, 15,670 feet in height; M. de Lue makes it 15,303, and Mr. Rogers, an engineer in the Swiss service, who has recently measured it, 15,775 feet above the Mediterranean, or nearly three miles in perpendicular height. This vast height is only apparent from an elevation, as at present; from the valley it is not so evident, mountain scenery having at all times a most deceptive appearance, from the vastness of the objects, and the pure atmosphere through which they are seen; it even has a more colossal appearance, seen from a distance of twenty or thirty miles, where, by a singular optical allusion, it seems almost over head; even from the present situation, its height and magnitude can only be judged of relatively, the enormous scale of the surrounding objects being so far beyond what the eye is accustomed to measure, that a fair estimate cannot be formed, and it is only on approaching close that the deception ceases, unless some well known object comes fortuitously in the way to lend assistance by comparison.

The mountain, it will be seen, presents three distinct zones or regions, each offering magnificent and diversified scenes; the lowest is all fertility and cultivation, fields, orchards, and gardens, in the greatest prodigality of luxuriance, singularly contrasting with the glaciers, that make their way into the very midst of them; the middle region is that of wood, rock, and glacier, the base being less precipitous and formed of calcareous strata, turned up against the granitic mass, affords footing for large trees, forests of larch and pine consequently rear their dark heads to the height of six or seven thousand feet above the valley; the rocks then become more abrupt with vast clefts, chasms, and indentations, the more favourable spots where they can find the least hole for their roots, covered with the rhododendron ferrugineum, the gentian, and numerous Alpine plants of great variety and beauty; even on the highest peaks, nature still struggles to maintain an appearance of gaiety; the hardest and bleakest rocks presenting a species of artificial verdure, with many tinted lichens, the remotest link in the chain of vegetation. Lastly, comes the region sacred to the deities of frost and silence; nature here lies in a trance, her features fixed and unchangeable, the accumulated ice of ages soaring to its native sky, calm and mighty in its loveliness.

The various changes produced by the clouds on these stupendous masses, are striking and beautiful, at times it is only by their motion that their fleecy whiteness can be distinguished from the snowy summits; when they ride at a lower altitudes broken into fragments, thick and tempest-clothed, they at times reveal certain portions, suspended as it were between heaven and earth, on which the sun shines most resplendently; sometimes they appear like blue curling smoke, casting the most fanciful shadows on the ice, and at others they are so black and dense, as to blot out the scene altogether. These continual alterations, with the variety of the roseate tints produced by the rising and setting of the sun on a surface so vast, presents a scene of extraordinary beauty.

The summit of the mountain—

"Snow piled on snow, the mass appears  
The gathered winter of a thousand years—"

is often compared to a dromedary's back; but consisting as it does entirely of snow calculated to be at least five hundred feet in thickness, it is subject to increase or diminution, by change of season or by drifting with the wind; it consequently does not always present the same appearance, nor is it always of the same height. The plane of the summit is nearly triangular, the base or highest part, about fifty feet

in width, being towards the spectator, from whence to the opposite angle M. Auldjo found to be 180 feet; Mr. Clissold from five to six hundred; Captain Sherwell 200 paces; but at the time M. de Saussure ascended, there was no plane whatever. The view from this spot, when the weather is clear, being in some directions uninterrupted to a distance of 150 miles, is inexpressibly magnificent and beautiful; but the cold is so intense, and the air in such a state of rarefaction, that few of those who have attained this fearful height, have been able to remain long to enjoy it. Buonaparte caused a column of wood to be erected on the extreme point, but it disappeared in a few days.

The ascent is tedious, fatiguing, and dangerous; but if the snows are not traversed until some days after their fall, and the directions of the guides (hardy careful men, and practised mountaineers, under the surveillance of the government) are implicitly followed, but few accidents are likely to occur; the fall of an avalanche is most to be dreaded, for the large masses of frozen snow are balanced with such fearful nicety, that the footstep, or even the voice of the traveller, or the leap of a chamois, will break the charm, and bring them rushing down with a noise like thunder, overwhelming every thing in their path. Mr. Auldjo calculates that without accidents to retard, the summit may be reached in seventeen hours, estimating the distance at eighteen leagues, or fifty-four miles from the Priory; the descent, by sliding down the inclined planes of snow, &c., may be accomplished in about nine more; the route usually taken is to the east of the Glacier des Buissons, round the base of the Aiguille du Midi, by the grand Mulet, the Plateaux, Tacul, and the Rochers rouges.

The number of persons who have accomplished the perilous and repeatedly attempted ascent, is not large; it was first undertaken by Pierre Simon, of Chamonnix, in 1762, in consequence of a considerable reward offered by M. de Saussure. He tried it on both sides, but failed.

In 1775, four villagers of Chamonnix ascended by the Glacier des Buissons and La Côte, but returned unsuccessful after much suffering.

In 1783, three guides, or chamois hunters, tried the same route, passing the night at La Côte. By one of them M. de Saussure was told if he attempted the ascent, not to take any provisions with him, but only a parasol and a bottle of scent. M. Bourrit, with the same guides, tried both this and the following year, and attained a much greater height than had before been reached.

The first grand expedition was undertaken in 1785, by M. de Saussure, M. Bourrit, and his son, and fifteen guides; ascending by the usual route, they remained the first night at the foot of the Aiguille de Gonté, in a hut erected by the guides the preceding day, the following morning they attained the height of 11,422 feet, when the soft state of the snow compelled them to return, after passing another night in the previous quarters.

In 1786, the attempt was made by six guides, at the expense of M. de Saussure; they ascended by two different routes, but returned unsuccessful. Balmat, one of the number, having strayed from his companions, missed their track, and was compelled to remain on the mountain all night: on his return to the valley, being seized with a severe illness, he received great kindness and attention from Dr. Paccard, a physician, to whom, on his recovery, he revealed that he had discovered a route which he thought led to the summit, and proposed that they should together make a trial; this they did on the 7th of August, and having passed the night at La Côte, on the following morning at half-past six, were the first to tread the maiden snow of this inhospitable region, where they remained about half-an-hour, and after passing a second night at La Côte, regained the village, much exhausted from fatigue and exposure to the cold. M. de Saussure immediately made another attempt, but was again baffled.

In August 1787, M. de Saussure, his servant, Balmat, and seventeen other guides, after passing a night at La Côte and one on the Plateau, gained the summit, where they remained four hours and a half, and returned without accident to the Priory on the fourth day. Shortly after, in the same month, Col. Beanfoy, with ten guides, was also successful, returning to Chamonnix in three days. Mr. Bourrit commenced the ascent, but was compelled by a storm to return.

The following year M. Bourrit, his son, Mr. Woodley, and Mr. Camper, made the attempt, but a storm having divided the party, Mr. Woodley and one guide alone attained the summit. M. Bourrit, having been thus five times defeated, gave up the task.

An unsuccessful essay was made in 1791 by four Englishmen, which was attended

by a most disastrous issue; a false step having displaced a stone near La Côte, one of the guides had his leg broke, and another his scull fractured.

M. Forneret of Lausanne, and Baron Doorthasen, a German, in 1802; M. Rodatz, of Hamburgh, in 1812; Count Meteyeski, a Russian, in 1818; Dr. Renseyler and Mr. Howard, Americans, and Capt. Ündrell, R.N., in 1819, severally attained the summit.

In 1820, Dr. Hamel, a Russian (who had made an unsuccessful attempt ten days previous, and reached the dome de Gônté), accompanied by Mr. Dornford and Mr. Henderson, of Oriel and Brazenose Colleges, and a M. Selligne, an optician of Geneva (who returned the second morning), with twelve guides, attained the grand plateau in safety, but in climbing from thence a slip of snow overwhelmed the party, by which three of the guides were driven into a crevasse, where they perished.

Mr. Clissold, in 1822, gained the summit in twenty-two hours, and, after remaining three, descended in eleven more; and in 1823, Mr. H. H. Jackson completed this arduous undertaking in thirty-six hours and a half.

In 1825, Dr. E. Clarke and Capt. M. Sherwell, with seven guides, accomplished the ascent.

In July 1827, Mr. C. Fellowes and Mr. C. Hawes ascended by a new and less dangerous route than that usually taken, and in August, Mr. J. Auldjo, following the same direction, accomplished the task in thirty-seven hours.

In 1834, Dr. M. Barry, and in 1835, M. de Tilley, made successful ascents; and in 1836, Mr. Alfred Waddington, with six guides, three volunteers, and five assistants, made the ascent in two days.

In addition to these, parties of guides, for experience or pleasure, have also attained the summit, but only one female, Maria Paradis, called from the circumstance Maria de Mont Blanc, has ever been known to succeed, few indeed even to attempt the task.

#### 46.—*Le Grand Plateau.*

Between the rochers rouges and the dome de Goute, are three level spaces or plains of ice, which succeed each other after as many steep slopes; on the second, at an elevation of 1455 toises above the valley, M. de Saussure passed the second night of his ascent. The route, previous to 1821, was across these plateaux; it now winds to the left of them. The highest or grand plateaux is a league across.

#### 47.—*Les Mulets.*

Two small conical isolated rocks; the grand Mulet rises almost perpendicularly towards Chamonnix, from the Glacier des Buissons, to the height of three hundred feet; at about three-fourths of this height Mr. Auldjo passed the night, on a small platform; here also, Dr. Paccard lost his hat in ascending. The Mulets consist of large vertical patches of granite, quartz, hornblende, and talc, with some brown coloured mica.

#### 48.—*Glacier des Buissons.*

One of the finest objects to which the attention of travellers is directed, its ice being purer and less sullied by earth and stones, than any other glacier; it presents the appearance of the ruins of a vast city, with towers, pyramids, and obelisks, some the colour of pure alabaster, others a fine azure, each day assuming new forms, as they are thawed by the sun, and successively frozen at night; it is about half a mile broad; the summit of Mont Blanc, which appears directly at its head, is, at a distance, horizontally of more than a league and a half, but the glacier doubtlessly descends directly from it across the plateaux. It does not encroach on the valley, being thawed in proportion to its advance.

#### 50.—*Glacier de Tacconay.*

A small and beautiful glacier, which does not descend so far as the valley. This glacier, with another called La Gria, forms a bright and singular arch, the dark rock, furrowed by perpendicular ravines which divides them, exhibiting the appearance of an open cavern.

54.—*Dome de Gouté*.

A portion of the summit to which it is joined by a narrow ridge of rock, a part of which being too precipitous to allow the snow to lodge, exhibits the appearance of a species of sienite. The dome evidently derives its name from its form. It is 13,930 feet in height.

59.—*Le Bonhomme*.

A mountain pass on the road to Aosta; two high pinnacles of rock resembling square towers, bear the names of "Le Bonhomme," and "La femme de Bonhomme." The pass is said to have acquired its name from some humane individual having established a place of refuge on it for travellers compelled to traverse the mountains.

60.—*Mont Lacha*.

This high mountain, which is composed of calcareous stone and slate, terminates the valley towards the south west. The road to St. Gervais and Sallenche lies by the Col de la Forclaz on this mountain.

61.—*Le Breven*.

This chain, one of the most interesting in all respects to the geologist and naturalist, is composed of Gneiss, lying in beds, and mica slate, containing quartz and felspar, slightly tinged by iron. It rises abruptly from the valley, being at its base united to the Aiguilles rouges; the highest peak, or Mont Breven, rises to the height of 8540 feet, naked and isolated, forming a terrific precipice immediately over the village. The Chalet of Pliampra is situated about two-thirds of the height, in a small wood over the Priory; the ascent thus far, although steep and difficult, may be performed on mules; here persons who mean to attain the summit, generally pass the night; the remainder of the way is more dangerous, being partly through a kind of open chimney, two feet wide, thirty feet of which must be ascended in the manner that sweeps climb chimneys; the whole ascent occupies about five hours. In the crevices of the Breven is found a considerable quantity of red snow, similar to that seen by Capt. Ross in the northern regions, which has so much puzzled naturalists; it is generally supposed to be coloured by a fine vegetable powder. Behind the high summit is a lake, that receives the melted snow from several rocks, without having any apparent outlet for its waters; but a fine stream which issues from the base of the mountains near the bridge of Perolata, is supposed to be derived from this source.

65.—*La Flégère*.

An elevated peak forming part of the chain on the northern side of the valley, 7029 feet in height; about half-way up is the Chalet and pasturage, called the "Praz de Viola," and a little higher the cabin and Cross of La Flégère, the ascent to which is accomplished on mules; several of these fine animals, which are of great size and beauty, are represented in its vicinity. This spot is generally visited by travellers, on account of the extensive view it commands of all the objects of interest in connection with Mont Blanc, and from thence the present Panorama was taken. The rapid and continual changes in the atmosphere, and the density of the vapours that occasionally rise from the valley, rendering the scene so distinctly different, seen under the various circumstances of sunshine or partial obscurity, that Mr. Burford and Mr. Selous (by whom he was assisted in taking the view), in order to avail themselves of the most brilliant periods, found it absolutely necessary to remain on the mountain, to be able to depict it accurately, and free from the mists which sometimes obscure the whole, for days together; they therefore caused mattresses and other necessaries to be brought from the village, and wholly resided in this little better than shed, during the progress of the drawings.

66.—*Aiguilles Rouges*.

A series of elevated peaks, rising from the chain on the northern side of the valley; they are composed of veined granite, mixed with quartz, felspar, mica, and a considerable quantity of iron; the oxidation of which causes the red appearance to which they owe their name.

69.—*Rochers de Croux de Fer.*

A mountain named "Le haut de Veron," but more generally called the Iron Cross, from a large cross of that metal on its summit, erected in pursuance of some religious vow: this elevated summit is very interesting to the geologist, from the circumstance of fossil oyster shells being found on it, which rarely occurs at so great an elevation as 7620 feet.

70.—*Le Col de Balme.*

The Mountains forming the Col de Balme, are the North-eastern barrier to the valley, they are composed of sand stone, primitive lime stone, and clay slate, on a granite base: most of the pedestrian visitors to Chamounix, come or return by this pass, it being the direct route to the Valais; it is also frequently ascended by those who do not go farther, to enjoy the fine view it commands. The pass, where the Hospice is situated, is about 3000 feet above the valley; a stone adjacent, with the arms of the Duchy, and the date 1778 engraven on it, marks the boundary between Savoy and the Valais. The ascent is very tedious, and the descent on the opposite side to Martigny, extremely steep. The highest part of the mountain is 7676 feet above the Mediterranean; that portion above Tour is celebrated for its fine herbage, and the vast number of Alpine plants of great beauty that flourish on it.

72.—*Tour.*

A village at a considerable elevation, about two miles above the village of Argentière, it is nearly enclosed by high rocks, the bases of which are covered with fine pasturage, but are too much exposed to the fury of the winds to allow the smallest tree to grow. The houses are low, and are built close to each other; during the winter they are nearly buried in snow, which lies for weeks together from twelve to fifteen feet in depth; when the villagers are obliged to excavate passages through it, to hold communication with each other; the forlorn and desolate condition of the inhabitants of these aerial villages, during this long and dreary period, can scarcely be conceived; cut off for months from any intercourse with the valley below, no sound gladdens the ear, no variety of colour relieves the eye, nature, in her wildest form, is clad in one universal hoary mantle; the only change from this awful calm, is when the storm sweeps furiously along, or the dread avalanche carries on its work of devastation. On the first approach of spring, the villagers assemble and strew black earth on the snow, which, being thus "terrasser," melts three weeks earlier than it otherwise would.

73.—*Glacier du Tour.*

A small but interesting glacier, which descends like a frozen torrent down a precipitous valley; its icy billows being less pointed, or broken, than any of the others, have a beauty peculiarly their own. This glacier may be considered the principal source of the Arve, which before it receives the water that flows from it, is but a small and insignificant rivulet, scarcely sufficient to turn a mill.

74.—*Aiguille du Tour.*

The highest pinnacle of the ridge, the path passes round the base of the Aiguille.

75.—*Glacier d'Argentière.*

Perhaps the most elegant and beautiful of the glaciers of Mont Blanc; it is of considerable size, and descends in a zigzag direction; it derives its name from the sparkling appearance and silvery whiteness of its ice, which is seldom sullied by earth or stones.





A Description of A VIEW of MONT BLANC, now exhibiting at the PANORAMA, LEICESTER SQUARE.



1. Aiguille Verte.
2. Aiguille du Dru.
3. Glacier du Nant Blanc.
4. Le Chapeau.
5. Mer de Glace.
6. Glacier des Bois.
7. Aiguille de Bochard.
8. Rochers des Mottets.
9. Aiguille du Moine.
10. Petite Jorasse.
11. Glacier de Léchard.
12. Grand Jorasse.

13. Les Periaes.
14. Le Tacul.
15. Le Jardin.
16. Montanvert.
17. Sentier de la Filia.
18. Source de L'Arveiron.
19. Hameau des Bois.
20. Sentier du Montanvert.
21. Hameau des Mouilles.
22. Route de Martigny.
23. Hameau des Prés.
24. L'Arve.

25. La Prieuré de Chamounix.
26. Chalets sur le Rocher.
27. Valley of Chamounix.
28. Hameau des Pèlerins.
29. Cascade des Pèlerins.
30. Pont Piralotta.
31. Hameau des Buissons.
32. Mont Mallet.
33. Le Géant.
34. Aiguille des Charmoz.
35. Glacier de Crepon.
36. Aiguille de la Blaitière.

37. Aiguille du Plan.
38. Glacier de la Blaitière.
39. Glacier du Plan.
40. Chalets des Blaitières.
41. Glacier des Pèlerins.
42. Aiguille du Midi.
43. Mont Maudit.
44. Les grands Rochers Rouges.
45. Sommet du Mont Blanc.
46. Le grand Plateau.
47. Rochers des grands Mulets.
48. Glacier des Buissons.

49. Montagne de la Côté.
50. Glacier de Tacconay.
51. Montagne de Tacconay.
52. Glacier de Gria.
53. Montagne de Gria.
54. Dome de Goûte.
55. Aiguille de Goûte.
56. Aiguille du Bionnassay.
57. Aiguille du Miage.
58. Pierre Ronde.
59. Le Bonhomme.
60. Mont Lacha.



61. Le Breven.
62. Passage de la Cheminée.
63. Chalets de Plampra.
64. Sentier de la Croix de Flégère.

65. Cabane de la Croix de Flégère.
66. Aiguilles Rouges.
67. Chaîne Septentrionale du Valais.
68. La Genousi.

69. Rochers de Croix de Fer.
70. L'Hospice du Col de Balme.
71. Chalets de Charamillan.

72. Hameau du Tour.
73. Glacier du Tour.
74. Aiguille du Tour.

75. Glacier d'Argentière.
76. Aiguille du Chardonnet.
77. Aiguille d'Argentière.

