

# A JOURNEY THROUGH THE OBERLAND AND TO CHAMONIX IN 1787.

*The Manuscript Journal of Mrs. Mark Beaufoy.*

TRANSCRIBED AND EDITED BY J. MONROE THORINGTON.

[A FEW words of explanation are necessary in connexion with the manuscript journal of Margaret Beaufoy (1768–1800), transcribed in the following pages, which has recently come into my possession.

It was originally intended to consist of two parts: a first, descriptive of a journey in the Oberland, and a second, dealing with Chamonix, later in the same summer, 1787. Only the first part was completed in detail, the sole entry relative to Chamonix being the important paragraph concerned with Colonel Beaufoy's ascent of Mont Blanc. In binding the manuscript, the page on which this paragraph was written has been transposed to the beginning, in order to make it more prominent. In chronological sequence it follows the Oberland narrative.

It is not generally known that the Beaufoyes travelled in the Oberland, and the journal is one of the first, written in the English language, to describe the valleys of Grindelwald and Lauterbrunnen. It is amongst the earliest British documents to give a description of the glaciers of that region.

The few data concerning the first British ascent of Mont Blanc form an interesting addition to the bibliography of that mountain, and supplement the contemporary accounts of that ascent.

Mrs. Beaufoy<sup>1</sup> who, at that time, according to Bourrit, was but nineteen years of age, has entered a careful account of expenses, covering the entire journey, and, prepared against emergencies, includes unique recipes for a worm medicine and a preventive of gout. There is also a short table of posting distances and times between Calais and Lyons.

In the back of the bound manuscript there are ten pages, covered over with mathematical calculations, written in pencil, parts of which have become very indistinct. They are in Mrs. Beaufoy's hand, and represent results of barometric readings made in the valley of Grindelwald by Colonel Beaufoy

<sup>1</sup> *Etat civil de Neuchâtel.*

Le 27me may [1785], Mr. Dardel a batisé Henritte-Philippine, née le 11me avril, fille de Mr. Marc Beaufoy, feu Mr. Marc Beaufoy, de Londres, et de Mme. Marguerite Beaufoy. Parrain, Mr. Henry Beaufoy, frère du père, membre du parlement, représenté par Mr. Bosset, conseiller d'Etat; marraines, Mme. Beaufoy, grand mère maternelle de l'enfant, et Mme. Phillipine Régine Bosset, née Sandoz, qui s'est présentée seule.

(Extrait du registre des baptêmes de Neuchâtel, vol. 1767-1812, p. 175.)

Le 5me juin [1786], Mr. Dardel a batisé Henri-Benjamin-Hanbury, né le 23me avril, fils de Mr. Marc Beaufois, fils de feu Mr. Marc Beaufois, de Londres, et de Mme. sa femme Marguerite Beaufois. Parrains: Mr. Jean Beaufois, frère du père, et Mr. Benjamin Beaufois, père de la mère, représentés l'un et l'autre par Mr. Samuel de Meuron, conseiller d'Etat de cette souveraineté; marraine, Mme. Elisabeth Beaufois, belle sœur du père de l'enfant, représentée par Mme. de Meuron née Blaquières, femme du représentant des parrains.

(Extrait du registre des baptêmes de Neuchâtel, vol. 1767-1812, p. 196.)

One gathers from the two certificates that the Beaufoys must have been quite well off and that they were well received by the aristocracy of Neuchâtel, which was then an independent principality with the King of Prussia as Sovereign Prince. Otherwise Samuel de Meuron, the Councillor of State, and his wife, and M. Bosset, also Councillor of State, would not have appeared as witnesses representing the two families. For two such dignitaries to appear in person with their wives at the baptism of the children of a young English couple was quite an honour in those days.

as she mentions in her narrative. It is evident, therefore, that the Colonel entrusted to his wife the working out of his observations, a fact confirmed by Bourrit (in his letter to Miss Craven), who informs us that Mrs. Beaufoy calculated the results obtained by her husband on the summit of Mont Blanc. The end result of each set of figures (the Oberland measurements) is, in almost every instance labelled, once or twice (the Wengern Alp measurements) in another hand, presumably Colonel Beaufoy's, his wife not having accompanied him at the time.

I have summarised the final figures, not with any thought that they may be now of value, but because they are among the earliest known scientific measurements of the Oberland glaciers.

The quaint spelling in the manuscript has been retained. The general absence of punctuation, paragraphing, and capital letters at the beginning of sentences has been remedied in a few instances.

The 'Dictionary of National Biography' (edited by Leslie Stephen) states that Beaufoy's military title dates from January 20, 1797, when he became Colonel of the Tower Hamlets Militia. He, therefore, did not hold this rank at the time of his ascent of Mont Blanc. The biographer tells nothing about Mrs. Beaufoy, save that the sudden death of this talented lady, in 1800, held up a number of the Colonel's astronomical results for which she had been making the calculations. This is further confirmation of Bourrit's statement that she was the mathematician of the family. Beaufoy's tribute to the memory of his wife is found in his 'Nautical and Hydraulic Experiments' (London: Private Press of Henry Beaufoy, South Lambeth, Surrey, 1834), vol. I, p. xxviii :

'For some years the calculations were made at Colonel Beaufoy's residence at Hackney Wick, by himself, assisted by his wife, who contributed no inconsiderable share to the progress and success of the Experiments: for favoured alike in person and mind, being a woman of considerable talent and scientific attainments, beside the usual female accomplishments in which she excelled, she was a good mathematician and practical astronomer, familiar with all the details of the observatory, the calculation of eclipses, etc.; and by method and strict economy of time, while the domestic arrangements proceeded with perfect regularity, she was never at loss for leisure

She died in the year 1800 at an early age, after a few hours' illness ; an irreparable loss to her husband. He survived her twenty-seven years and proved the sincerity of his attachment to her memory by not marrying again. A few hours before he died, he spoke of her with emotion, which showed that time had not caused the smallest diminution in his affection for this estimable woman.'

Mr. Henry F. Montagnier has very kindly placed additional data at my disposal :—

Colonel Beaufoy, born a Quaker, married his cousin in *Church* on August 12, 1784, and was read out of the community.

Leaving London, December 21 of the same year, they travelled slowly *via* Dover, Calais, Lille, Besançon and Pontarlier to Neuchâtel, arriving in January, 1785. Their son, Henry Benjamin Hanbury Beaufoy, was born April 23, 1786, in a country house in Chaumont.

In July, 1787, they visited Grindelwald. Beaufoy ascended to the Wengern Alp and passed the night in a hut, the altitude, according to his calculations, being 5767 feet above sea-level.

Beaufoy was born March 17, 1764. The family arms are painted on a window of Harrow School. An inscription in the tablet room of Stanmore Church, Herts, reads as follows :—

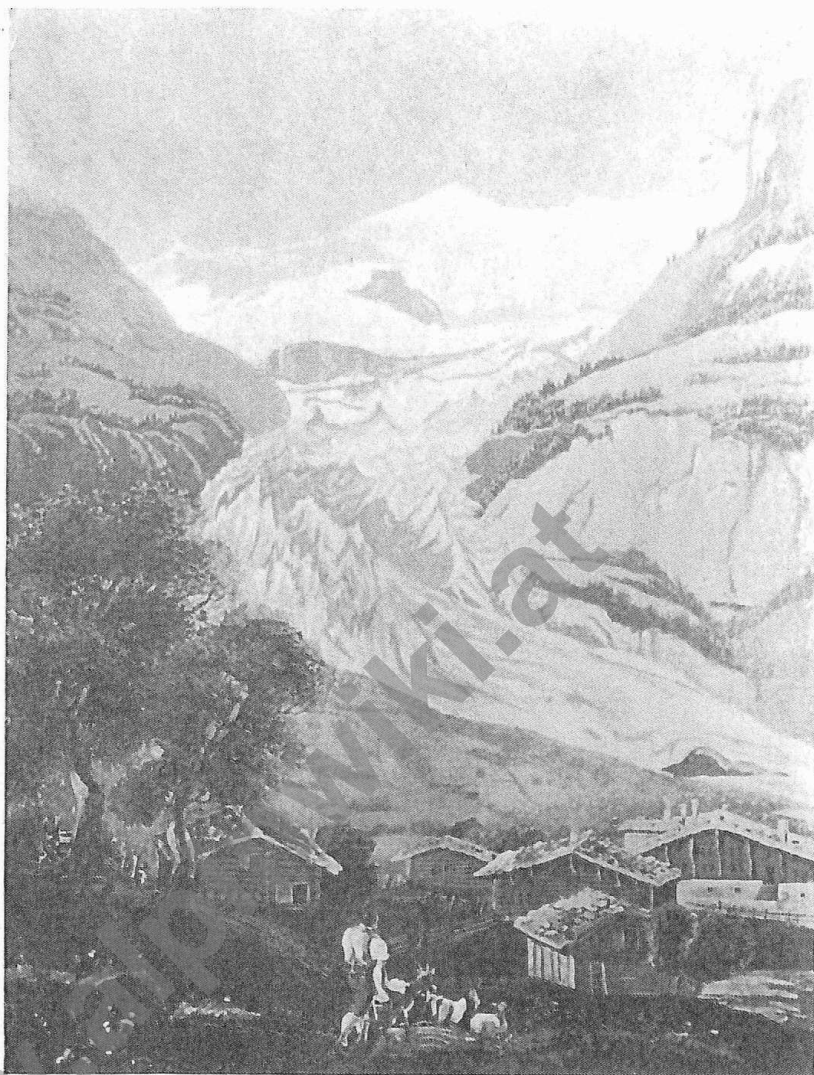
To the Memory of Mark Beaufoy, Esqr., F.R.S.

Blest with talents as rare as they were useful ;  
The unwearied attention with which for many years  
He pursued his observations in astronomy,  
And the variations of the magnetic needle ;  
And the zeal and perseverance with which he conducted  
A series of experiments for the improvement of navigation ;  
Have enrolled his name on the records of science.

To his family and friends, the excellence of his private  
Character, and the kindness of his disposition,  
Have rendered his death an irreparable loss.  
By his wife Margaret, he left three sons, Henry, Mark, and George,  
And four daughters, Harriet, Margaret, Julia, and Laura.

Obiit 4th May 1827, aged 63 years.

J. MONROE THORINGTON.]



The Lower Grindelwald Glacier, showing the ice cave.  
(From an unsigned print published by BLEULER.)



started on his ascent of Mont Blanc. . . . My Father being the first Englishman who ever made the ascent of the Mountain, an account of which was published (privately printed) some years ago in a little volume of letters.<sup>2</sup> This Manuscript I am desirous of preserving as an Affectionate Memento and Family relic.

G.[ERTRUDE] BEAUFOY.  
26 February 1858.

Feeble must every attempt of mine be to discribe the various beauties which adorn Switzerland, nevertheless the desire I have that you my dear father should accompany me in idea through the tour I am about to take, and knowing likewise that your partiality in my favor will supply every defect of elegance or even in-accuracy, I shall with pleasure devote a few minutes every evening tho after a fatiguing day in order to discribe to you its occurrences.

We left Neuchatel on Wednesday morning about 6 and at 12 arrived at Anet a small town belonging to the Canton of Bern which has nothing remarkable in it, nor would have merited mention but for a very good dinner we made there. After reposing the horses about 3 hours (being 18 miles on our route) we again set out from Anet which is the place of residence of the Balliage. After a most charming ride of about 12 miles we came suddenly in sight of Berne, the place of our destenation—the approaches to it are the most delightful imaginable thro long Allies of Lime trees, which from being in flower perfumed the air.

Berne is a fortified town and I dont doubt sufficiently strong to

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<sup>2</sup> This privately printed volume is not mentioned in the bibliographies on Mont Blanc by C. E. Mathews, H. Ferrand, or H. F. Montagnier. It is not included in Martin's 'Bibliography of Privately Printed Books,' or the catalogue of the Library of Congress.

Beaufoy read a paper before the Royal Society (reprinted by Mr. Freshfield in *A.J.* 29, 323) which was printed in the *Annals of Philosophy* (vol. IX, Feb. 1817) and reprinted in part in *Blackwood's Magazine* (vol. I, Apl. 1817) and the *Annual Register* (vol. LIX, 1817).

Beaufoy (1764–1827) was at this time twenty-three years old. About 1796 he became well known for his experiments on the resistance of bodies moved through fluid, and during the period 1817–20 was engaged in work on magnetic declination at Bushey, Herts, precisely at the time when the needle, which had been continuously moving to the west since the earliest observations, began to retrace its course.

Beaufoy was also interested in Arctic exploration. See *The Possibility of Approaching the North Pole Ascertained by the*

resist the only attacks they have to fear, insurrections of the peasants, but from Mortars, Cannon &c I should fear they would make but a poor defence, being entirely surrounded by hills which command the town. Berne I before said is fortified and has a constant gaurd of 100 Men—300 peasants from the environs are chosen. Each serves every 3 day only, for which he is paid 11 brutz. and 2 lb of Bread a day—so that this alternate change makes a regular gaurd of 100 men, and being all farmers in the neighbourhood they have the two intervening days to follow thier occupations.

Having given our names we proceeded to our Inn. I must own the regularity of the streets was far from answering the expectations I had formed. I had heard Berne too highly extoled to be *more* than satisfied with it—besides the bad politic of our Coachman led us up all the bye streets he could find, which considerably added to the little effect the Town's first appearance made on me. Except a stroll along the town after tea I may say we saw nothing the first day, but in revenge the following one was devoted to continual movement in visiting those places worth our attention.

After Breakfast we sallied forth and the Hospital for the reception of the poor first attracted our notice. It is a vast and airy Building square in which by the foundation are received 50 Bourgois of Berne, 25 men & women, accept in cases of inability to provide for themselves (as folly, Madness &c.), the person so received must have attained a certain age. They are I think as well lodged as possible. We went in to two large rooms containing each 9 beds, all of them headed with dark blue stuff curtains and hangings, with printed red and white counterpanes. Each person (sleeping also separately) has a small wardrobe and one chair and from the cleanliness reigning throughout, the very floors might have been eat off. They have soup for Breakfast, soup Boullie and garden stuff for dinner—soup likewise for supper, with half a bottle of wine at each meal. This is allowed by the establishment. Likewise a number of poor Bourgois are received for the trifling sum of £11 a year, who besides having every necessary supplied them, with a convenient and comfortable Chamber, are exempted from eating at the common table (each eating in his own room) and having also meat twice a day.

All poor strangers likewise passing through the town may claim a meal and 6 brutz [*Batz*, i.e. a small Swiss coin worth  $\frac{1}{10}$  of a franc], or arriving at night they have a supper (soup with a  $\frac{1}{2}$  Bottle of wine) have a good lodging, and a breakfast before thier departure in the morning—or being sick they may remain there untill cured. This as you see is not properly an hospital for the sick but for the poor and strangers; but there is also one, equally superb (if I may use the term) for the sick. Having visited every



nature in writing to an englishman. It will suffice to say the regularity and order which reigned throughout the whole department would not have disgraced England itself.

The Arsenal is small containing arms only for 30,000 Men. There is also a considerable number of field peices and they continue augmenting them, the foundry being now open. Even a stranger sees with interest arms, armour &c. of the army of Charles the Bold, Duke of Burgunday who was defeated several times by the Swiss whom he attacked without provocation. His two principal Battels were fought at Morat and Grandson, March 3 1476; at the latter having beseiged a Castle bravely defended by Swiss only. They afterwards suffered the greatest hardships, capitulated on the most honorable terms, when no sooner was the door thrown open to the Victor than He, forgetting every law of honor and humanity—some he tied in sacks and threw in the lake—ignominiously hanged them every one. I leave you to judge of the horror this action gave thier country men. Inspired with the double sentiment of liberty and revenge they, at the Battle of Morat in 1476, entirely routed the army of Charles. With the Cry of revenge and Grandson, they animated each other to the most heroic acts, and made a general slaughter. Those who escaped the sword were drowned in the lake, and Charles saved himself with the greatest difficulty by swimming with his horse across it (3 miles). The diamond which he wore in his hat to distinguish himself was found in a field by a peasant who sold it says the old story for a bottle of wine. It is now in the possession of . . .<sup>3</sup> He was afterwards killed near Nancy.

Here too they show the cords taken at the same time with which Charles *meant* to have Hanged all the Swiss. Upon my word I have given you a long article on war, an art few women have distinguished themselves in; therefore permit me now to leave the Arsenal and if I have not been sufficiently minute you must attribute it to the little interest of my sex in Guns, Cannon, Bombs &c.

On our way to the Cathedral we looked in upon the Bears, 4 of which are kept in the cages round the town in honor of the Arms of the Republic (a Bear). Several tales are told as to the origin of these Armes, but that which has gained the most credit is the following: Berchtold, 5 duke of Zaringen, in 1191, who built the town, had a Castel situated in the middle of a wood in the identical spot where the town now stands. He having determined to found a City said that it should be called after the name of the first beast killed in the day's chace. This happened to be a Bear—*Bere* also



know how little these old histories are to be depended on. However you may place that faith in it you please.

I wish it was possible to make you partaker with me of the extream pleasure the view from a public walk called the platform gave me—the most richly cultivated Hills, enlivened by large and comodious Houses built in the situations the most desirable, numerous herds of Cattle grazing along the sloping sides, interspersed with small Woods of Oaks and Pines, whilst the Aar (which nearly surrounds the Town) formes at the Bottom, from being dam'd up, a Cascade of 200 Yards in breadth, and tho the desent is not very considerable, it is sufficiently so to form one of the most beautiful scenes I ever beheld. This platform is elevated nearly. . . .<sup>4</sup> Above the lower part of the town at its East and west extremities are two most beautiful Octagan buildings commanding the views just mentioned. A Gothic Cathedral formes also one of its sides, whilst the other two are open to the back View of the town.

I must not forget to mention an inscription on the middle stone of the side overlooking the precipice, indicating that a young man, a minister, was carried by his Horse over the wall which is breast high, and that the highth is as I above noted, and they likewise fell together on a pavement. The Horse only was killed on the spot, whilst the rider escaped unhurt. As for the Cathedral we saw nothing worthy the trouble we took in mounting to its summet, except a most amazing Bell . . .<sup>4</sup> in circumference.

The Library next claimed our attention. It is but small, containing but 20,000 volumes. Its principal riches are in manuscripts, for which I believe it is famed. It consists of two long rooms really elegant. The 1st is ornamented with portraits of all the Avoyers (who are the chief Majestrates of the Town) who have ever reigned; and those of the two in office (it being a place for life) are always placed on each side of the door of entry. The other room contains the principal number of books and is also ornamented with portraits of distinguished characters: Our William 3, George 1st, Louis 14, King of Prussia, Euler, Haller, &c. The librarian,<sup>5</sup> a very intelligent polite man, answered our several questions with the greatest good humour. Mr. B. invited him to sup with us, and I'm sure we cannot sufficiently praise the attention he had, to explain to us those steps to be persued to make our intended journey to the Glaciers as agreeable and comfortable as possible.

The Town of Berne is supposed to contain 14,000 inhabitants,

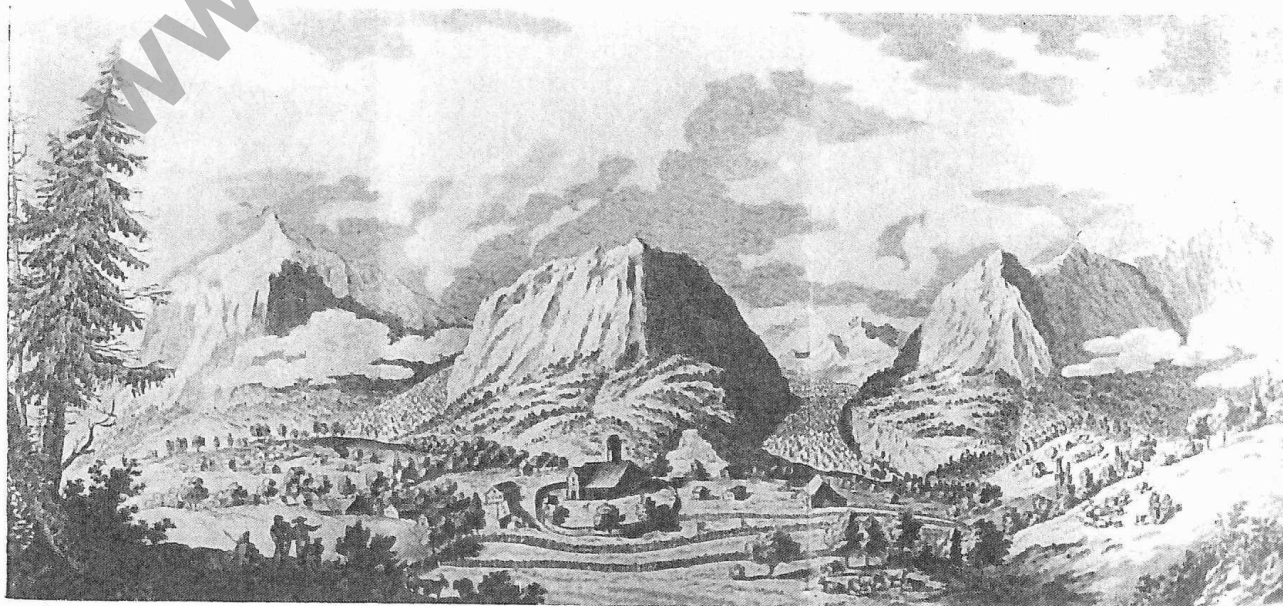
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<sup>4</sup> A space is left in the manuscript.

<sup>5</sup> Dr. H. Dübi writes to me that the librarian of the public library in Berne who received Beaufoy and his wife so courteously



The Valley of LAUTERBRUNNEN.  
(From an old lithograph.)



GRINDELWALD.  
(Drawn by F. MEYER for GRUNER'S book, 1760.)

a considerable number for a town neither rich (as to the generallity) nor commercial. It is built entirely of a greyish white stone. The great street is certainly a most noble one. A small stream of water runs entirely thro it, which does not a little to contribute to the cleanliness which distinguishes it. The houses are nearly the same, and from the alcades which run on each side of the street a stranger has some difficulty in recollecting the houses; at regular distances in the middle of the street are fountains, which from thier being adorned with figures in white and gold, are not barely useful but highly ornamental. In short Berne from its constitution, order, cleanliness (for in the most rainy weather you may walk from one end of it to the other without even dirtying your shoes) cannot fail of interesting every stranger.

As for the Public Buildings and Charities, they reminded me of the so many noble and well conducted ones, my own country produces, and in so saying, I assure you I mean to pay a compliment to both. As for any information on the State &c. I refer you to Cox: who has given a general outline of that Republic in fewer words than I possibly can. But I must at the time remark that I cannot help having the heighest idea of thier order and regularity, from remarking that even the most minute things are attended to—for example—thier roads in general are superbe, and at every entry into the Town it is thro a Beautiful avenu of Lime trees. And from the declivity, as the Town as I before said is surrounded on every side by hills, a railing for General safty is put. Not a post or rail is wanting in the whole extent. This you may observe in every thing, and what not a little contributes to the perfection of each department is the choice of an inspector, whose only necessary recommendation is a turn for the employ he solicits. What more can I possibly say of Berne, except that in my life I never saw a place the *tout ensemble* of which so highly delighted me.

I forgot to mention a noble Charity lately established for orphans. I believe it is 25 Boys & as many Girls who are received, educated, settled in life, &c. The boys are already received, but the House designed for habitation of the Girls is not yet entirely finished. The rest of the day we have employed in walking about the Town, and I only wait to bid you good night in order to prepare myself by a refreshing sleep for the Journey we propose making tomorrow.

We left Berne about 6 o'Clock on Friday morning and after a ride of 12 miles arrived at Thun, the seat of a Balliage in the Canton of Berne. I cannot possibly discribe to you the constant succession of beautiful scenes which presented themselves to our view during our route from Berne. Everywhere we saw the most abundant nature, and the richness of the prospect was considerably augmented

and opulence and really supports them at the expence of the Bourgois, who in fact are the people oppressed under this government.

Thun, where we left our carriage and horses, is rather a large town situated on the Aar : which runs out of the lake of Thun about  $\frac{1}{4}$  mile above the Town. We saw nothing remarkable in it, and having dined whilst the boat was preparing, at 2 o'Clock we embarked, in order to pass the lake in all its length, about 16 miles. The first half is a continuance of the gay and animated scenes before mentioned, but afterwards the Rocks coming almost perpendicular down to the lake render landing impossible. Luckily tempests are very rare here, the hights of the surrounding Mountains serving as a shelter. We had made nearly half way when a heavy rain, which we hoped would past over the mountains, surprised us. It was attended with but little wind, however our boatmen wished to be ashore as they feared thier boat was too small to resist a more violent one. Accordingly in a  $\frac{1}{4}$  of an hour we landed safely at a cavern hollow'd out in the Rocks (by the order of thier Excellences of Berne) for the purpose of serving as an assistance those unfortunate people whom a storm might here surprise, another instance of thier universal attention, because without this cave a landing would be impossible, as the Rocks as I before observed are perpendicular from the waters edge. The rain abating after about  $\frac{3}{4}$  of an hour we again trusted ourselves in our little boat, which brought us very safely, tho with a considerable wind, to the place from whence I now address you.

It is at the extremity of the lake, a lone House called Maison-neuve.<sup>6</sup> You may judge with what joy we found ourselves in a really good room, with a good fire, and having passed all our dangers, with the addition of having heard the thunder re-echoed from all the surrounding Alps, without having risked our lives for the pleasure.

The weather prevented our visiting the Grot of St. Beat by the side of the lake, but we shall see it, probably in returning, when I will mention it to you. Mr. B. sounded the lake, and found 1816 feet ; the rain &c. prevented a repetition of the experiment. Therefore it is improbable that at the first cast he found the most

<sup>6</sup> The Pastor Wyttenbach mentions this in his *Instruction pour les Voyageurs qui vont voir les Glaciers et les Alpes du Canton de Berne*, Berne 1787, p. 13 :

'Ce trajet étant fait, [Thun to the end of the lake] on arrive au haut du lac, & l'on met pied à terre près du *Neuhaus*, mot qui signifie Maison neuve, où il y a un dépôt pour les marchandises. Un chemin, qui traverse des plaines agréables & et la plûpart fertiles, long de trois quart-d'heures, conduit delà à *Ountersée* où l'on fait porter

profound place. We slept at Maison-neuve last night and we are still detained here by a violent and incessant rain ; for our carriage which we have sent for from the next town, being a cart, we are exposed a little to the seasons you'll allow. However, we hope to reach Lutterburn tonight as it appears clearing a little.

We are here surrounded by high Mountains whos summits are unattainable and down the sides of which the unmelted snow yet remains. But I must bid you adieu—the steam from the soup now on the table reminds me of the appetite which I had entirely forgot in the pleasing reflection that I was writing to you, my dearest father and mother. Farewell, then, to Lutterburn.

Appearances for once were not deceitful, therefore after dinner we set out in our elegant equipage for Lauterbronnen. Our road for some little time was tolerably good ; we past several small Villages not worthy of note and after crossing the Aar 3 times, we began to be pritty sensible of our carriage not being hung upon springs.

We at length enterd the Valley of Lauterbronnen, or Claire fountain, our road lying by the side of the united rivers of the Black and White Lutchine, who rush with a dreadful roaring down the Vale. I cannot discribe to you the beauty and horror of the scene. Huge rocks here and there stopt the rivers impetuous course—then with a noise like thunder, scorning all bounds, it burst over them. In short, stuned by the roaring of its fall, and knowing that one false step of the horses might expose me to all the fury of its waves, I beheld these savage beauties in trembling. On each side we were surrounded by stupendous Mountains down the which poud innumerable cascades, but untill our coming within sight of the Staubbakh we had observed none render'd remarkable by fame. We were near 5 hours before we arrived at Lauterbronnen, situated in the narrow Valley of that name and enclosed on every side by Rocky Mountains.

We went to the Curates, who in general lodges strangers.<sup>7</sup> Thier, in the midst of an almost desart we found a most excellent House, good chear, &c. besides the advantage of the 3 most celebrated Cascades of this Valley before our Windows. The Staubbakh or river of dust takes its rise from the fountains of the pasturage of Muren, desends that mountain across a wood of pines untill the rock of Pletsch. There it devides itself into two streams, but falling again, peirces across the Rock, comes out as from a Pipe, and spreads itself in the air like a fine small rain.

The quantity of water being considerable it has a most beautiful appearance, falling from a highth of 1000 feet. We went to take

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<sup>7</sup> See *Sketch of a Tour through Swisserland*, by T[homas] M[artyn] London, 1787, p. 67 :

‘There being no inn at Lauterbronnen, the Minster was chosen

a nearer view this morning, and from the reflection of the beams of the Sun on this mist, one of the most beautiful rainbows was formed at the bottom of the fall, imaginable. We went near enough to be entirely encircled by it, tho at the expence of a compleat wetting.

The second is the Pisbakh, which falls in an undeviated stream from a rock still higher than that just mentioned. And the 3d the Buckenboekli, which is a considerable body of water falling 1200 feet from a perpendicular Rock. The number of houses built on the lower declivities of these Mountains render them really extremely interesting, and the lively green and oderiferous herbs which serve as pasturage for thier Cattle, is a striking contrast with the snowy Alps and inaccessible Glaciers which top them.

Mr. B. went this morning to measure with his Barometer the height of the Staubakh.<sup>8</sup> Judge of my agitation in seeing him perched, in appearance, on the very brink of the declivity, and in hearing the good lady minester declare she never yet saw any body in the same place. However, he has assured me that his situation was far from a dangerous one, and seeing him now safe before me I readily give him credit for having been the first Englishman in the same situation.

After dinner we separated, Mr. Beaufoy going to Climb the Wagnor alp,<sup>9</sup> which is an assent of 8 hours and very difficult, whilst I attended the Curate and his Wife, set out to see the lead & silver mines which lie at the Southern Extremity of this Valley.<sup>10</sup> We proceeded about 6 miles in our Cart when we were obliged to quit it, the road growing so exceedingly narrow and steep it was impossible to go on. I perceived the waggoner saddle his horse and began to imagine that myself was designed to figure on one of them. My maid mounted first, and from the highth of her horse, the breadth of his Back &c. together with her dress, I thought she never would have accomplished it. However, after about 5 minutes in the most risible postures imaginable, I saw her safely seated close to his tail. It required another 5 to lug her on the saddle, and to be sure a curious figure she cut. I had lost my strength in laughing at her. However the fear of becoming likewise an object of ridicule to a number of women who surrounded us, made me doubly exert myself, and I assure you at the first essay I was fairly seated.

Lead by the waggoner I abandoned myself almost without fear in roads made certainly to inspire it. The path which was merely

<sup>8</sup> The measurements are summarised at the end of the manuscript.

<sup>9</sup> According to Coolidge (*Swiss Travel and Swiss Guide Books*, p. 27) the pass over the Wengern Alp was first crossed in 1771, by Wytttenbach and Von Bonstetten.

<sup>10</sup> These mines were exploited according to Ebel III p. 331 in the



a foot one lay chiefly along the edge of a precipice on the one side, whilst the impending Rocks on the other hung in many places over our heads. The River of the White Lutchine roars along the Bottom; it takes its source from the . . . not far from this spot, and from the violence of its fall, and the amazing declivity of its Bed, it is really one continued Cascade.

I beleive we went nearly 3 miles and I am sure we mounted by steps (a kind of Staircase) the heighth of St. Pauls--tho I cannot praise the easy jog of my poor Beast, yet I can render with truth justice to his surefootedness, for not once did he give me an alarm either by a false step or trip. The Director of the Mines received us with the greatest civility and lead us thro the various Buildings. It being Sunday, the works stood still, but he ordered each in his department to give us a speciment of thier employ. They show'd us pieces taken from two different veins, one much richer than the other, and inform'd me that from the finer sort they in general got 70 ounces of Silver to 100 of lead. The works are emense. As for the method of seperating the Metal from the Stone, I presume you are perfectly well acquainted with it, and indeed it is as simple as one can well conceive. The Stone is broke even to dust by a Mechine consisting of several large Stampers, and being so reduced passes by a current of water into a trough where the water passing off leaves the pounded mixture of Silver, lead and Stone; the next process is to seperate the Stone from the other two, for which purpose the whole is put into a trough which declines gently, the Stone being the lighter remains whilst the weight of the other two forces them off. They remain untill quite dry and are afterwards smelted both together, and by a second operation seperated.

Being as I before said accompanied by the worthy Curate and his Wife, who appeared to be intimate in this family--there was no honor they did not show us, and to finish with they gave us the Mineurs Dance. To tell you it amused me would be ridiculous, but I was content with thier efforts to please and did not fail, you may be sure, to show the highest satisfaction. As for our Hosts of Lauterbrunnen, I believe they thought it a spectacle worthy, and were very much surprised at my impatience to set out on my return, as they assured me over and over gain that I might stay a *whole hour* longer and still be at home by day light. I very much regretted my ignorance of the language of this country (a very bad German) throughout our tour. It has deprived me of a great deal of information and pleasure.

I did not venture to mount again my Rosinante for the desent, which is nearly perpendicular the whole way, but trudged with great credit to myself along the brinks of precipices, down the sides of rocks &c., untill we came to that spot where we had left our Cart, in which being again seated we trotted merrily home. And in speight of the great haste I had made I assure you we found it



is very soon hid behind thier summits, and the air which passes on either side over a frozen reigon comes impregnated with cold.

The literal translation of the word *Lauterbrunnen* is 'abounding with Fountains,' and surely never was a place more aptly named. During our course along the Valley to these Mines, we counted no less than 33 Cascades, and the greater part considerable ones. The absence of Mr. B. ennuiz me; therefore to amuse every unpleasant sensation I have employed the interval of our arrival and retirement in recounting to you the history of the day. I must however by sleep prepare myself for the fatigues of tomorrow. So good night. Sunday. Scarcely had we left our Beds, before we were agreeably surprised by the arrival of Mr. Beaufoy.

After taking the necessary precaution of a good Breakfast, we took leave of our Complasant Hosts, in making them a handsome present, which is the custom as they make no charge. We continued on the road by which we came, untill the bridge of the two Lutchines (being the place where the black & white rivers of that name join). Then turning to the right we soon entered the Valley of Grindenwalt, taking its name from the two Glaciers so called, situated at the upper end of the Valley.

We beheld with astonishment the amazing fertility and populousness of this place. The length of it appeard nearly 12 miles and it really is one continued Villiage. Stupendous rocks whos impending summets threaten each moment to overwhelm the passenger necessarily strick one with horror; nor is that dread entirely to be overcome whilst one sees the whole plain strewd with large peices of Rock thus detached. The road is remarkably good, borderd on each side by Orchards and the honest civility of its inhabitants fills one with the most favorable opinion of them. This Valley produces Barley, rye, hay & hemp. Above 5,000 head of Cattle are here fed. After a ride of about 4 miles we desended from our carriage in order to take on foot the road of the lower Glaciers, at which we arrived after a most troublesome walk, partly over the bed of the river and sometimes in it.

Even at a distance of about 5 minutes walk from them, I found the Glaciers did not at all fulfill the idea I had formed of them. They appeard like a parcel of dirty Snow heaped together, but on a nearer view I must own there was nothing wanting to complete the horrid beauty of the Scene. A Glacier is always situated betwixt two mountains and is formed of the unmelted snow of Ages, for from the heighth of the Rocks on each side the Sun rests too short a time upon them to make any considerable thaw. These rise to a considerable height most rapidly, the surface of the ice forming pyrimaids of different heights; on the lower part of the Glacier the dirt is so mixt into the ice as to give it a most disagreeable appearance, but the superior parts are free from this inconvenience and give a dark sky blue shade.

underneath it, forming a most picturesque scene. Mr. Beaufoy would not suffer me to mount upon them, as large peices of ice frequently detach themselves, and it would be impossible to shelter ones self from the impeteosity of thier fall. During the time he was examining them more closely I was occupied in gathering strawberries of which there was plenty, even within 5 yards of the foot of the Glacier. After about an hour we left these wonderous works of nature and time, and directed our steps towards the House at which we were to dine.

The road appear'd to me very, very long. Besides the fatigue, natural attendant on a walk perhaps of 6 miles, in the very heat of the day, and in a road almost inaccessible, I had the misfortune to step on a loose stone, which not only threw me at my whole length on the ground, but also strained my ancle.

However, at length we arrived at 5 o'Clock, and sat down in less than 5 minutes to a most excellent dinner which our guide whom we had sent on before had order'd to be prepared for us. Elated by the Majestic Views which surrounded us, and considerably refresh'd by good chear &c., I was soon ready to accompany Mr. B. in a walk which show'd the whole and various beauties of the Valley to the greatest advantage.

On our right arose the inaccessible mountain of the Jungfrau-horn, whose lofty top was then coverd by the clouds, but soon chased by the wind, we held its steep and snowy sides reflecting by the beames of the setting sun, a thousand different coulours.

On our left we saw the Wetterhorn, whilst the Schreckhorn Grosshorn and Eiger formed a demi circle,<sup>11</sup> at the bottom of which, we saw the cattle grazing besides the peaceful habitations of thier owners, whos huts were shelterd from the distrustive Avelanches by forrests of Pines & Beach trees, which occupying the middle region of these Alps show to greater advantage the dazling whiteness of thier Summets.

We were surprised by the sound of thunder, but our guide derecting our Eyes towards the lower Glacier, we saw a large peice of Ice which being detached by the heat of the Sun, came rolling down with a horrid noise. Our landlord of Grindelwald is now nearly recoverd from an accident occasioned by one of these peices of falling Ice, called Avelanches.<sup>12</sup> He was on the Upper Glacier,

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<sup>11</sup> Before 1850 there was considerable uncertainty regarding the nomenclature of the Oberland peaks. Consult Coolidge (*Swiss Travel and Swiss Guide Books*), p. 183 ff.

<sup>12</sup> The Inn at Grindelwald, in 1790, was kept by Christian Bohren, the hero of this much-quoted adventure.

This passage fixes the date of Bohren's adventure. Ebel says it occurred in 1790, but as Bohren was recovering when the Beaufoys arrived, it must have taken place in 1787. See *Manuel du Voyageur*

and as I understood, conducting his cattle to an abundant pasturage which lies on the other side of them, when he was knocked down by the impetuous shower (as it is almost immediately reduced in to a dust of frozen Snow), and from the hard and slipping surface of the Ice he could not recover himself, but slid into an emense hole about the middle of the Glacier, at the bottom of which flowed the river of melted snow water which escapes by an arch its Torrent has worn. On his hands and knees he followed the course of this water. As you may conceive in some degree his sensations whilst thus buried alive under a depth of Ice and snow impossible to penetrate, you may also form some idea of his joy on again beholding the face of day by an overture he was so near attaining. In short the poor fellow escaped the treble danger of being crushed by the Avelanche, of dashing his brains out in a fall of 60 feet, and 3d of being drowned, with the trifling remembrance (in comparison) of a broken arm.

Mr. B. got up at 4 in the morning in order to visit the upper Glaciers, which are much superior to the lower ones in every respect. In the first place they are free from that incrustation of dirt, and the pyrimades which rise from the bed of Ice are from 40 to 60 feet high. They shorten as you assend untill they terminate in a broad surface, broken into deep and large Clefs. It is said that this Glacier joins to a very extensive Valley of Ice 36 miles long, which is situated betwixt two elevated chains of Alps. But as neither I, nor any of our party penetrated so far, I cannot attest it.

At 11 o'Clock we left Grindelwald and returned by the road we came, to the head of the Lac de Thun, where having dined we embarked a second time on its waves. The weather being fine we determined on visiting the Cave of St. Beat, of which I before spoke, for which purpose we landed at about a mile up the lac. We assended by a most difficult and fatiguing path scoped in the side of the rock and in  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a hour arrived at the summit of the path, where a large Body of water which passes thro this cave, deviding itself into seven different branches, formes as very pritty Cascade. The Caverne is situated at the top of this Cascade and the access extreamly difficult, as one is obliged to scramble up the Rocks rugged side, with no other assistance than the brush-wood which covers it, which certainly prevents one falling down a 100 or two of feet into the lake.

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Grindelwald, eut le malheur de se jeter dans une fente du glacier, en le traversant avec un troupeau de moutons qu'il ramenait des pâturages de *Bäniseck*. Heureusement qu'il tomba dans le voisinage du grand torrent qui coule dans l'intérieur, il en suivit le lit par-dessous les rochers de glace, et arriva au pied du glacier avec un bras

As for the Caverne, it perhaps once more particularly merited the pains it costs to arrive at it. Now it has no singular beauty to recommend it, the entrance even being over the mid-leg in water. This last circumstance prevented (with not having candles) Mr. B's advancing far into it, therefore I cannot boast of having seen those crystallizations &c. for which I believe it is famed. Neither is it improbable that they are effaced and destroy'd as most visitors would naturally provide themselves with a sample of these curiosities.

This walk hinder'd us  $1\frac{1}{2}$  [hours] without recompensing us by its beauty for the violent Rain, hail, thunder and lightening we were caught in. Never in my life did I see anything which made a more awful impression on my mind than the force of the hail. We luckily landed before the greatest violence of the Storm, and our Servant brought us several hail stones of very great size, one of which I measured the circumference of and found it the length of my middle finger. Not anything can be more terrible than these hail storms, as where ever the stone touches all is lost.

After some time we continued our voyage, and with very indifferent weather arrived at 11 o'Clock at Thun. We enjoyed our elegant Apartment (for the Beds were white striped muslin drawn Back and edged with pale blue ribbons, with white calico window Curtains, and the room was ornamented with several good Engravings & prints) and having done justice to an indifferent supper I, with real satisfaction at being once more on my return towards my poor little Children, composed myself to sleep.

It was nearly 10 before we were off in the morning. At this place we left our Guide, quite an original character, who had been servant to some English Gentleman, and it was his knowledge of the German and English tongues which made Mr. B. prefer him. Peter Cocher <sup>13</sup> is near 64, a stout hale looking man who drinks his bottle and half at each meal, and perhaps for these last 40 years has never gone sober to bed. However he is I believe a very honest fellow, and we had every reason to be contented with him as he served us faithfully and was a never failing source of entertainment from his oddities &c.

It was too late to think of persueing our journey towards Neuchatel, therefore we remained at Berne untill Thursday morning, when we set out for Neuchatel, at which place we arrived without any accident at 7 o'Clock, without any alloy to my pleasure as I found my dear Children in perfect health. Here we mean to stay a week, and then begin a 2d course, an account of which I shall not fail to transmit to you—till then Adieu.

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<sup>13</sup> Kutscher (2) in German (1) in English. I think the first is the correct name.

## [Mrs. Beaufoy's Expense Account.]

July 11 – 1787 Wednesday.

We set out from Neuchatel.

Paid Emden Board	84	Brought over	2770.2
Dinner & waiter at Anet	47	Paid Francis Board	189
A Hat at Berne	52.2	Emden do	21
Hospital and Arsenal	42		
Church 15.3 Foundry 5.1	21		2980.2
Bill at Berne	340.2	11..20..Expences without	
Waiter	42	Coach hire	
On the road to Thun.			
Wine &c.	10.2	July 28th set out for Geneva &c.	
Gave Peter & Boatmen	31.2	—Aug. 16	
Bill at Thun	101.2	Paid for 4 views of Chamouni	336
Boat to Newhouse	84	A Hat for Mr. B.	84
Bill at Newhouse	105.0	Crockery	100
Give Mineurs	42		
Guide for going to Stau-			520
bach &c.	68.1	living – board – Mont Blanc	
at the Curates	336	&c. from July 30 to August 16	
Shoes to climb in	21		7998
Gave for various things	42		
Bill at Grinderwalt	136		8518
Waggon and horses	294	Expences without the Horses	
Hire of Parasoliels	10.2	£50.14s.	
Guide of Lauterbrunnen			
to G.	63		
Dinner at Newhouse	42		
Gave the Gide	5.1		
Boat expences	92.2		
Paid Peter	220.2		
Bill at Thun	102.0		
a Milk pail	21		
2d Bill at Berne with			
waiter	199.2		
oranges 12 dinner at			
Alberg 47	59.0		
Gave [?]	52.2		
	2765.1		
Gave Girl	5.1		
	2770.2		

[The following paragraph is written on a page by itself, on the reverse of the sheet bearing the Account of Expenses.  
J. M. T.]



View of MONT BLANC and its glaciers from the COL de BALME.  
(From a print by LAMY.)

Mr. Beaufoy arrived at Chamouni on the 6<sup>th</sup> August  
and on the 8<sup>th</sup> set out with his servant to go  
to attain the summit of Mount Blanc - he  
quitted Chamouni at 7<sup>3/4</sup> and on the 9<sup>th</sup> reached  
the summit at 10 o'clock took 3 or 4 minutes  
at 12.10 he was then again recommenced their  
march.

Facsimile of a paragraph in Mrs. Beaufoy's Journal, mentioning the ascent  
of Mont Blanc by her husband.



Mr. Beaufoy arrived at Chamouni on the 6th August and on the 8th set out with his servant & 10 Guides to attain the summit of Mount Blanc—he quitted Chamouni at 7H $\frac{3}{4}$  and on the 9th reached the summit at 10 o’Clock less 3 or 4 minutes—at 12H10 we saw them again recommence thier march.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Dr. Paccard, in his journal, relates : ‘ Il est arrivé à 10 heures du matin au sommet. Il est resté 2 heures et  $\frac{1}{2}$ .’ (Dübi : *Paccard wieder Balmat*, p. 269.) Beaufoy, before the Royal Society, stated that he arrived on the summit half an hour after ten, and left a half an hour after twelve.

Bourrit (Lettre à Miss Craven, p. 5), on August 13, 1787, wrote : ‘ . . . il [Beaufoy] partit le mercredi 8 du courant avec dix guides & son domestique : je le vis atteindre le sommet le jeudi, & vendredi il fut de retour le matin. . . . Son épouse, qui n’a que 19 ans, a joui du succès de son époux. Sensible, très-instruite, *c’est elle qui a tiré les résultats des opérations* [the italics are mine—J. M. T.] faites au sommet [Beaufoy calculated the Latitude of the mountain], avec une facilité dont j’ai été surpris, & qui prouve avec quel soin l’éducation des Anglaises est soignée.’

Bourrit gives further details in his *Itinéraire de Genève, de Chamouni, du Valais et du Canton de Vaud* (Genève, 1808 ; p. 190) : ‘ Une course si prompte me donnoit des craintes sur sa santé ; son épouse avoit les plus grandes inquiétudes, et elles n’étoient que trop fondées, car nous le vîmes revenir dans l’état le plus déplorable, son visage entièrement pelé et ses yeux comme fondus. Nous le crûmes aveuglé ; cependant il fut pansé avec de la graisse de marmotte, et nous eûmes l’inexprimable plaisir de le voir guéri dans peu de jours. Ce fut pendant sa maladie que son épouse, qui n’avoit que 19 ans, tira les résultats des opérations faites au sommet, avec une facilité qui me donna une haute idée de l’éducation Anglaise.’ [J.M.T.]

Letter from Pierre Balmat to H. B. de Saussure.

Ce 10 août 1787.

MONSIEUR,—Le jour que vous partîtes de Sallanche pour Genève le 8 août l’anglois [Beaufoy], qui s’étoit proposé de faire faire une tente, est parti de Chamounix à 7 heures du matin, est allé coucher à votre seconde cabane que vous fîtes bâtir l’année dernière, et Monsieur Bourrit a dit les avoir vus à 5 heures du matin près de l’endroit où nous avons couché la dernière nuit, et moi je les ai vus arriver sur le Gros Rocher où nous sommes arrêtés avant prendre la dernière montée pour arriver au sommet à 9 heures. Et à 10 heures et quart ils sont arrivés tous en haut et à midi et demi ils ont com-



## [Mrs. Beaufoy's Pharmacopeia.]

About five o'Clock in the Afternoon give the Child a Clyster made of new Milk blood warm and made very sweet with treacle. Put nothing else in to bring it away as the longer it remains in the body the more effecacious it will prove. When the Child goes to bed give him four grains of Calomel worked up in a peice of sweet meat & in the morning 15 Grains of Tollop to purge it off & take great care the child drinks nothing cold, nor takes cold.

A great many children have been cured of these Worm fevers when life has been dispaired of by taking this medicine. It is most effecacious when taken at the full of the moon and may safely be repeated once a month till the Child be well.

## To prevent the Gout.

Take of the Inner bark of Elm & Juniper Berrys  $\frac{1}{2}$  lb of each, boil them in 5 pints of water till it is reduced to half that quantity. Strain it off and boil the liquor with 1 oz of nitre. Drink about a 3d of a pint every night for a month, spring & fall, which will keep off the attack. If at any time you feel flying pains about you, one preparation will in general remove them.

## [Table of Distances.]

	Post	or	Miles	H.
Paris to Calais by Amiens	33 $\frac{1}{2}$		176 $\frac{3}{4}$	31.32
Lyons to Paris	61 $\frac{1}{2}$		297	48.05
Lyons to Paris by Burgundy	60 $\frac{1}{4}$		98 $\frac{1}{2}$	21.35
	<hr/> 113		<hr/> 595	<hr/> 103.43

[Summary of Colonel Beaufoy's Measurements.]<sup>15</sup>

Height of Lac of Thun above the Chamber we slept in at	
Berne	97.731
Curates at Lauterbrounen above Thun	799.982
Lower Stabbach	1138.375

ils sont arrivés à Chamonix à 11 heures du matin et il a eu les yeux beaucoup brulés par le soleil dont il est moitié aveuglé.

Je suis de tout mon cœur avec tout le respect possible,

Monsieur,

Votre très humble et très obéissant serviteur,

Pierre Balmat

Guide à Chamonix.

From the papers of H. B. de Saussure in the possession of his descendants in Geneva. [H. F. M.]



Photo. T. G. Longstaff.

TRISUL above the head of the gorge of the NANDAKGINI.

Upper Stabbach	1499.010
Difference of two falls of Staubbach	360.5928
Height of the Gate	2075.639
Height of the Trough	630.760
The house above the trough	394.377
The Wagner Alp	3107.776
The height of the house I slept in	3068.226
Wagner Alps Steiner's house	39.
The height of the Cavern	984.448
Height of the Caverne	4000.804
Wagnor house by 2d Cal	3023.131
Height of gate by 2d Cal	2008.877
Height of lower glacier above Curates House	572.512
Height of the Cabaret at Grindenwald above lower Glacier	199.897
Upper Glacier above Cabaret	662.699
Height of the Cabaret above Lac de Thun	824.909
Grindenwald	1645.47
Hill at Zainesborough higher than Berne	384.432
Inn at Alberg	336.007