

Arthur Severn



Dent du Midi, from the valley of the Rhone – early morning

Reference: 10917

Dimensions:

Height: 17.40 cm / 6⁷/₈ in

Width: 25.10 cm / 9⁷/₈ in

Watercolour and bodycolour over traces of pencil on blue paper, inscribed in pencil on old mount (and partially strengthened in pencil) Dent du midi- from valley of the Rhone- early morning

17.4 x 25.1 cm

The Dent du Midi is a mountain with seven summits in the Chablais Alps in the Swiss canton of Valais, reaching a height of 3257 metres (10,686 feet). Dominating the Vald'illiez and the Rhône Valley, to the south it faces the Lac de Salanfe, an artificial reservoir. Geologically it makes up a part of the massif Haut Giffre. In this watercolour the Haut Cime, the highest summit, dominates the composition.

In 1871 Severn married Joan Agnew, a cousin of the Ruskins, who had acted as companion to John Ruskin's mother, who

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died in that year. When Ruskin then moved from Denmark Hill in South London to Brantwood in the Lake District, the Severns accompanied him and remained part of the household until his death.

In April 1872 the Severns were invited by Ruskin on a continental tour; Albert Goodwin was also one of the party. Goodwin and Severn sketched together at Mont Blanc, at Chambéry and at Geneva, from where they continued to Italy. The present drawing probably derives from this trip.

Literature: James S. Dearden, ed., *The Professor: Arthur Severn's Memoir of John Ruskin*, London: Allen & Unwin, 1967 I am grateful to Stephen Wildman and Christopher Newall for their comments on this drawing.