Mary Somerville Encyclopedia Article

Mary Somerville

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Contents

Mary Somerville Encyclopedia Article.....1

Contents.....2

Mary Somerville.....3

Mary Somerville

1780-1872

Scottish mathematician and scientific writer who published papers in physics and became well known for her 1831 translation of Pierre Laplace's *Mécanique Céleste.* One of the few female mathematicians of her era, Somerville became interested in mathematics while studying Euclid with the help of her younger brother's tutor. A strong advocate of women's education, she published her own treatise *Finite Differences* and several other books on popular science. Oxford honored her by naming one of its colleges after her.