

WHO WERE THE TWO ENGLISHMEN WHO ATTEMPTED TO ASCEND MONT BLANC IN 1814?

THE Hon. Richard Boyle Bernard was at Chamonix in the summer of 1814, and after leaving that place for Martigny: 'We were amused with an account of two English gentlemen, who attempted to ascend Mont Blanc, notwithstanding the assurances they received of the impracticability of the attempt under present circumstances, as a chasm had lately been made by the thaw on one side of the mountain; but they were not to be intimidated either by the advice of the inhabitants, or by the accounts of the hardships suffered by M. de Saussure, and judging with *Hannibal*,

' Nil actum reputans si quid superesset agendum.'

' Think nothing gained while ought remains.'

They set out on this difficult enterprise, attended by eighteen guides, but were at length obliged to desist, after running many hazards, and after having expended at least £50. If they failed in accomplishing their undertaking, they had at least the satisfaction of exciting much wonder amongst the surrounding peasants, at the curiosity and rashness of the English.'

Who were they? The only suggestion which I can make regarding the identity of one of them is based on an entry in Lord Glenbervie's *Diary* for October 4, 1818, where mention is made of: 'Mr. Williams, a young English artist of great promise, who was travelling with the Mr. Douglas whom *we* in September 1814 met at the *table d'hôte* at Frankfurt. He had been to Chamonix, and had attempted to go to the top of Mont Blanc.'

It is not quite clear from this entry whether it was Mr. Williams or Mr. Douglas who had attempted to ascend Mont Blanc. The probability is, however, that the reference is to Mr. Williams in 1814, and in that case he must have been one of the two Englishmen referred to by Bernard.

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REFERENCES.

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