

Despite of the non-success of the gallant mountaineers, a naturalist, to whom we owe some excellent descriptions of the Alps, Pierre Bourrit, canon of Cologne Cathedral, resolved on attempting the same route before the end of the season. He slept for the night on the top of the Montagne de la Côte; but at the moment he entered upon the Glacier des Bossons, a sudden tempest arose and compelled him to retrace his steps.

Bourrit, however, was not a man to give up so quickly a cherished design. Recognizing the proved impossibility of attaining the goal by that route, he set to work gathering information from all parties in the Chamounix valley, and discovered that, on the side of the Glacier de Bionnassay, three chamois hunters had arrived, by keeping along the ridge of rocks, at such an elevation that they had almost gained the summit of Mont Blanc.

In possession of this intelligence, Bourrit hastened to the village of La Grue, inhabited by these hunters, and engaged them to accompany him in an ascent by the same route.

With the three hunters he set out that very evening. On the morrow, at day-break, they had reached the base of the rock scaled by the hunters in pursuit of the chamois, and which opened up a road to Mont Blanc. But the morning was very cold, and Bourrit, whom the night-march had overwhelmed with fatigue, had not strength to follow his guides. One of them remained with him; the two others mounted to the summit of the rocks, and penetrated far into the everlasting snows. They boasted that they had thus arrived very near Mont Blanc.

This attempt rendered probable a complete success. Bourrit therefore prepared to renew the enterprise, and De Saussure undertook to join him. Unhappily, the summer of 1785 was cold and rainy; and it was not until the month of September they had any opportunity of realizing their project.

Horace de Saussure and Bourrit, the latter accompanied by his son, had agreed to meet, on the 12th of September, at the village of Bionnassay, which lies about four leagues from Chamounix. Bourrit conceived the felicitous notion of sending forward three Chamounix peasants to construct, in a rocky recess, at the foot of the Aiguille du Goûter, a kind of hut or cabin of dry stones, which might serve as a sleeping-place and for shelter in case of a storm. The first day's journey, therefore, was limited to reaching the height where this hut was situated.

On the 12th of September 1785, at eight o'clock in the morning, Bourrit and De Saussure, accompanied by five mountaineers loaded with provisions, furs and coverings, philosophical instruments, straw, and fuel, began their march to the conquest of Mont Blanc.

They followed at first a gentle slope skirting a ravine whose bed is washed by a torrent issuing from the Glacier de Bionnassay. A swift ascent conducted them next to the foot of this glacier. They followed it for some time, and then diverged to the north-east, by a rather difficult ascent. This ascent brought them to a place named the Round Stone (*Pierre-Ronde*), which is situated 4750 feet above Chamounix. Here had been constructed the cabin intended for their accommodation. They reached it at half-past one o'clock, P.M.