

On page 107 the translator, in citing an "error" in the account of a rappel, is himself in error. Nevertheless, it's exciting and enjoyable reading.

DAVID HARRAH

*La Meije*, by Henri Isselin. *Collection Sempervivum*. Paris and Grenoble: Arthaud, 1956. 262 pages; ill.

Henri Isselin, whose "Barre des Ecrins" was reviewed in *AJ*, 1955, has now turned his attention to the Meije. He has given us an equally complete and even more fascinating work on this great Dauphiné mountain, once known in the local dialect as "Oeille de la Meidjour"; in other words, the Meije is merely another of the many Aiguilles du Midi scattered throughout the Alps! Alone among the great Alpine peaks, the Meije remained unconquered till 1877, and was finally climbed by the young Frenchman, Boileau de Castelnau, with the Père Gaspard, pioneer guide of the valley of La Bérarde.

Books as well documented and precise as this one sometimes tend to be dry, but Isselin writes with humor and the vividness of a man who knows and loves his subject. We follow the early pioneers on the mountain, the establishment of the classic route, the many successful and unsuccessful attempts on the ridges and faces. We hear of the tragic death of the young Austrian, Emil Zsigmondy, on the south face in 1885, and of its conquest 27 years later by his compatriot, Guido Mayer, with the famous Cortina guide, Angelo Dibona. We visit the Dauphiné valleys of the Romanche and the Vén Eon, La Grave and La Bérarde, the local huts and camping sites. We meet a wonderful collection of Alpine characters, beginning with Whymper, Coolidge, and the latter's strong-minded aunt, Miss Brevoort, who arrived in La Grave in 1870 with nephew, dog, and three Swiss guides, to make the first attempt on the Meije. We see de Castelbau's return 36 years later, with his three children, to the scene of his early triumph, and his touching reunion with his old guide whom he found hale and hearty, tending sheep above his native village.

The sketches and illustrations are excellent, and should be helpful to climbers wishing to study the different routes. In short, anyone who knows French and plans to visit the Dauphiné should not miss this book.

URSULA CORNING

*Alps and Elephants*, by Gavin de Beers. London: Geoffrey Bles, 1955. 89 pages; appendices and references; map. Price 10 s 6 d.

Gavin de Beers' very readable re-examination of Hannibal's route across the Alps begins by testing the original narratives of Livy and Polybius. By a

reasonable elimination of what seemed to be unjustified and arbitrary changes introduced into their translations by modern printers, he puts Hannibal across the Rhône near Arles, and then marches him up the east bank, not to the Isère, as so many of us have been led to believe. Instead, short of the Isère he turns him eastward up the River Drome; thence over the Grimone Pass to the Durance. Then, following up that river, he routes him off to the right up the gorge of the confluent Guil instead of over the obvious open Mount Genève route. In this way de Beers is able to conform the description in the two classical accounts with what is present-day topography.

At the very head of the Guil he takes the invaders over the Col de la Traversette. That must have been an astounding feat. That pass is over 9000 feet high, rising up on the shoulder of Monte Viso. But one of the principal reasons for holding to that pass in this analysis is that it is one of the three watershed passes from which one can see the plains of Piedmont, a fact referred to by both Livy and Polybius. But Hannibal and his army must have had wonderful stamina. Consider that they roamed over Italy from coast to coast for 15 years, living off the country without reinforcements, defeating the Romans three times, first at Ticinus, then at Lake Trasimene, and finally at Cannae. Included in the publication is a list of 31 earlier authorities, with an analysis of each of their proposed routes. I commend this book particularly to those who have traveled in the Graian Alps or who have visited the sites of Hannibal's great battles.

JOEL E. FISHER

*Tents in the Clouds*, by Monica Jackson and Elizabeth Stark. London: Collins, 1956. 255 pages; 24 pages of photographs; 5 sketch maps. Price 18 s.

Mrs. Monica Jackson, Miss Betty Stark, and Dr. Evelyn Camrass accomplished something new in the way of a Himalayan expedition—one organized and carried out—and with complete competence and success,—by women alone. Although theirs was a relatively small and modest expedition, still they explored the last large unknown area of the Nepal Himalaya, the Jugal Himal (where white people had never before entered), discovered hitherto unknown passes, corrected inaccuracies of the map, and climbed a new peak of more than 22,000 feet. The surprising aspect of this expedition is the technical difficulty of the terrain—glaciers, icefalls, crevasses—that they took on. I believe rocks have long been considered appropriate for women, but complicated snow- and ice-work has usually been man's field.