

How Hannibal crossed the Alps

Autor(en): **J. J. S. F.**

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HOW HANNIBAL CROSSED THE ALPS.

In May 1949 there appeared in these columns a short historical sketch on Hannibal's crossing of the Alps. In that sketch it was stated that the exact locality of the crossing was not known and that it was impossible to say how near Hannibal came to the Swiss mountains. Most historians, it added, inclined to the belief that the crossing was effected through the gap of the Little St. Bernard.

Fresh light has now been thrown on the problem. Professor G. de Beer, or to give him his full title, Sir Gavin de Beer, F.R.S. has written a book entitled "ALPS AND THE ELEPHANTS" published by Geoffrey Bles, price 10/6, in which the Little St Bernard theory is exploded.

Careful research into the original text of Polybius' Histories, the main source of information on Hannibal's campaign, provides a clue that seems to have escaped the notice of previous translators of the Greek original. Polybius, it appears, mentions a river the name of which so puzzled the translators that they changed it to make it fit their own theories. Sir Gavin's thesis asserts the existence of such a river. His discovery coupled with a certain amount of circumstantial evidence leads him to the conclusion that Hannibal never penetrated as far north as the Little St. Bernard. When, after skirting the Rhone, he turned East, he followed the course of the Durance river and crossed the watershed over the Col de la Traversette, descending into the plain of the Po at Saluzzo, West of Turin.

A correct interpretation of the Greek text, according to Sir Gavin, admits of no other conclusion and makes the pieces of the jig-saw puzzle fit into their proper place.

All this, and the story of the elephants, is lucidly and convincingly set out in Sir Gavin's little book. We recommend it to those of our readers who take an intelligent interest in history and to those who have been charmed by the talented and learned author's previous publications such as "Escape to Switzerland", "Travellers in Switzerland" and others.

J.J.F.S.

NEW SAME-DAY LONDON-CAIRO AIR SERVICE.

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Connecting with the Super Swiss service leaving London at 10.30, the flight will depart from Zurich at 16.00 and arrive in Cairo at 23.50. The return flight will leave Cairo on Tuesdays at 06.30 and arrive in London via Zurich at 16.10.

The new service will be in addition to the twice-weekly flights to Cairo from Zurich and Geneva via Athens. Making the same connection from London, they leave Zurich and Geneva at 15.00 and 16.40 respectively every Wednesday and Saturday.

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