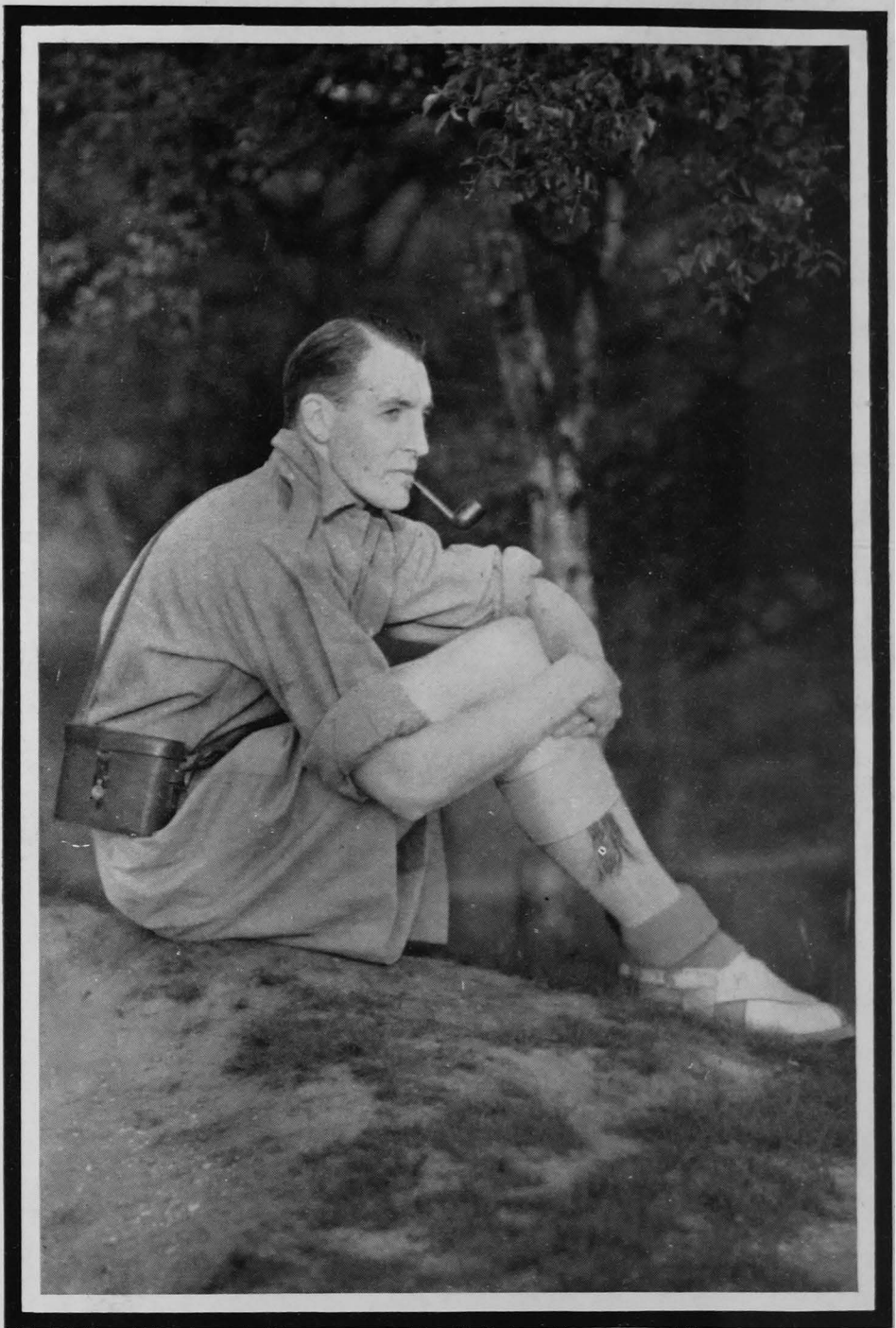


# TIBETAN TREK



RONALD  
KAULBACK

# TIBETAN TREK



THE AUTHOR.

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BY

RONALD KAULBACK

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TO  
MY MOTHER

## INTRODUCTION

ANYONE who takes upon himself to introduce an author to the public must of necessity write a eulogy, more or less; otherwise he may receive a writ for libel! I have endeavoured to meet this obvious suggestion of bias by writing nothing except what I had already said and written about Ronald Kaulback, privately, before he ever decided to write a book at all; but I do not repudiate the suggestion of bias. Many accusations have been brought against the "modern young man." His defence is often unanswerable—an alibi. "At the material time I was in the stratosphere (or Tibet, or Matto Grosso)." Our modern young men are much too busy inventing, creating and discovering to have time to answer these charges; so it seems rather unfair to bring them. Probably there are exceptions; there is always froth on the surface.

Ronald Kaulback came down from Cambridge having skilfully avoided reading too many books, or attending too many lectures. He had no very clear idea of what he wanted to do in life, but he *did* know that he could make a name for himself. Fate took him to the Royal Geographical Society, where he decided to equip himself with the bed-rock knowledge required of an explorer—a knowledge of surveying. It was there that I first met him. From that moment his mind was made up; he would become an

explorer. I was looking for someone to accompany me to Tibet, preferably a surveyor. Here was the very man, of that I had no doubt.

As soon as we had come to an understanding, Ronald Kaulback threw himself whole-heartedly into the work of preparation. I was impressed by his sound common sense and his anxiety to take work off my shoulders. Nor did he shirk responsibility. For the first few days after we left civilisation, I was worried about him. Had I made a mistake? But I need not have alarmed myself. From Rima onwards, when he had work of his own to do, he began to shape into the real thing. His work was astonishingly accurate and neat. Above all he was thorough. He took an interest in everything, and was an excellent companion. I never wish a better.

Then came the unlucky news that, for political reasons, Kaulback would not be permitted by the authorities to accompany me all the way. However much this upset my plans, and disappointed me personally, it was naturally a far more bitter disappointment to Kaulback himself. He took the blow quietly, like a man, neither complaining nor upbraiding me. My respect for him increased. Finally, the question arose, how was he to get back? To return through the Mishmi Hills during the rainy season was probably impossible; there remained only the long and difficult route via Fort Hertz and Burma. Could Kaulback do it? I believed he could, although the crossing of the Diphuk La had only twice previously been performed by white men, on both occasions by experienced travellers. Eventually Ronald Kaulback, on this his first journey—he was



barely twenty-four—with his older companion, Brooks Carrington, who was liable to break down, led the party back over those inhospitable mountains at the worst season of the year. Not without considerable difficulty they reached Fort Hertz and safety. My confidence in his powers was justified; it was a remarkable feat, and proved him a born explorer. On his return to England, Ronald Kaulback reaped his reward; he was asked to lecture to the Royal Geographical Society.

I doubt, however, whether his friends will see him for long. He has won his spurs as a serious explorer at an early age, and has at least a quarter of a century of exploration in front of him. We shall hear of him again. The day is not far distant when I shall be saying to my cronies, with pardonable pride: “You, know, Ronald Kaulback made his first big journey with *me*”!

F. KINGDON WARD.

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