

## Chapter 18

Almost as soon as he was back in England after his first Tibetan journey, Ronald began making plans for another. This time his main objective was to be the source of the Salween, one of the great rivers of Asia, which must lie somewhere to the north of Lhasa. He left England on February 27th, 1935, and, with N.J.F. Hanbury-Tracy and three Sherpa servants, went into Tibet through Upper Burma, by the same route he had used on his way back in 1933. At that time there was not a single wheeled vehicle in the whole of Tibet -- not even a wheelbarrow -- and not a road wider than a few feet, except in Lhasa itself, where there were some carts, a few bicycles and one Ford car, which had been carried in pieces over the Himalayas from India, for the use of the Dalai Lama. So, travelling either on pony or on foot, with the baggage mainly mule- or yak-borne, they followed a winding course northwards, reaching the Salween for the first time on October 31st, 1935, a few miles after they had crossed the old Silk Road, from Lhasa to Peking. They followed the river upstream, and, by the beginning of January, 1936, were within about a month's journey of the source, or even less, when they were prevented from moving further towards their goal by order of the Tibetan Government. Finally they turned back towards India, by another route, and reached Assam in December of 1936. By the time Ronald reached England he had been away twenty-three months, of which nineteen had been spent in Tibet; and the party had covered between two and three thousand miles of hitherto unexplored country.

During this expedition it was not only the physical dangers which occupied my mind, for I could not help being deeply apprehensive when I heard, privately, that Ronald and John Hanbury-Tracy were likely to get into serious trouble for having entered Tibet without waiting for