



That Untravelled World: An Autobiography (Legends and Lore)

Eric Shipton

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- One of the greatest explorers of the 20th century
- Shipton's Everest explorations set the stage for its conquest by Edmund Hillary

Eric Shipton was an adventurer when adventure meant traveling to places for which no maps existed, scaling mountains whose heights were uncalculated, and encountering people whom no westerner had ever met. That Untravelled World, originally published in 1969, is his autobiography, written near the end of his career, when the passing of time had deepened his reflections on his many accomplishments and companions.

Shipton's story begins with his early childhood, his first climbs in the Alps, his decision to be a coffee farmer rather than attend university, and his early climbs in Africa. He recounts his introduction to Bill Tilman, through a letter Tilman sent asking for advice about climbing Mount Kenya. This introduction lead to one of the most famous climbing partnerships in history—as bonded in pursuit of adventure as Holmes and Moriarty were in solving crimes.

In 1951 Shipton led an expedition to explore the south side of Everest. His small party of four (plus Sherpas) explored Everest's Western Cwm to determine if the South Col could be climbed from there. In 1952, unable to get a permit to climb Everest, Shipton and his team climbed “eleven mountains between 21,000 and 23,000 feet, and a number of smaller peaks.” Shipton was expected to be named the leader of the momentous 1953 British Everest expedition but, surprisingly, John Hunt was chosen instead. Of the slight, Shipton wrote, “I had often deplored the exaggerated publicity accorded to Everest expeditions and the consequent distortion of values. Yet, when it came to the point, I was far from pleased to withdraw from this despised limelight; nor could I fool myself that it was only the manner of my rejection that I minded.”

So disappointed was Shipton in being overlooked to lead the Everest summit expedition that he left Britain for South America. He never again returned to the Himalaya yet, as this book reveals, his adventures were far from over.



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