

THE  
**Oriental Sporting Magazine.**

VOL. VIII.]

JUNE 15, 1875.

[No. 90.

**MY BHUTAN JOURNAL OF TIGER-SHOOTING, &c.,  
IN THE WESTERN DOOARS OF BHUTAN.**

By T. A. D.

*(Continued from page 18 of the Magazine for  
January 1875.)*

**CHAPTER XVIII.**

PROCEEDED again to the scene of yesterday's exploits—put up the fourth tiger (a tigress)—wonderful tenacity of life—bagged after a good fight. Way back to camp three rhinos bagged—one big with young. *Khubbur* of a tiger in the Cooch Behar territory, a few miles from camp. The Cooch Beharites, a general description of them. Hunt after the tiger—the “Despoiler spoilt.” Large wild boar—a brace of wild ducks and a hog-deer bagged. “True believer!”

*March 7th, 1865.*—I ordered the elephants and went back to the jungle where I had left the wounded tigress. I found her as lively as ever in the grass on the high bank near the tree; and strange to say I found a man there, or rather several men, cutting the grass! The tigress was, if anything, more vicious to-day than she was yesterday, she fought madly, desperately, and then after receiving several fresh wounds she took refuge in the grass just on the very edge of the high perpendicular bank overhanging the river on the west side. I could not see her and dared not take elephants up too close for fear of the bank giving way. I then got a long bamboo and made one of the *mahouts* on a beater elephant get as close as possible and bang at the grass to drive the tigress out, but she seized the bamboo with her teeth and fairly wrested it out of the *mahout's* hands. I never saw such a devil as she was! At last some of the villagers, who had been cutting the grass, saw the tigress from the other bank, and they told me she was visible. So I got down a sloping part of the bank and going into the bed of the river I went on till I got opposite to the spot,

and then I, too, saw her, and fired a couple of shots into her, and she put up her back and grinned and spat at me like a pussy cat. She then tried to drop down the bank, and as she hung over the precipice I fired a last shot into her, and she dropped into the river dead.

There were no less than seventeen shot holes through her, and how she could have lived through it all so long astonished me not a little. It was certainly an extraordinary instance of tenacity of life. After bagging her I immediately set out on my return to camp, and the following adventure turned up on my way back.

On our way back to camp I made the beaters pass through all the most likely looking jungles in the valley of the Mujnai without turning anything up till I got to within about two miles of Fálákátah, and then in a very large *bund* of the river overgrown with thick tarah jungle, a female rhinoceros was turned up. I was not yet quite sick of shooting rhinos, so I fired several bullets into her, and chased her into another jungle which joined on to the one I had turned her out of first. I again turned her up, and after blazing at her for some time, and wasting a lot of ammunition, she dropped, and then it was discovered that she was big with young. She dropped just at the entrance into some heavier jungle which I then beat through, and put up several more rhinos; one was a big beast with a tolerably large horn who made a desperate charge at me. I fired two shots into him at close quarters and turned him, and as he was galloping away diagonally across me, I fired two more barrels into his huge carcase and down he went after turning round and round two or three times. When he fell, I, to finish him, gave him another shot, which, however, so stirred up his vitals that he got up again, and entered some jungle close by where I lost him altogether. But in looking for him I put up another not quite so large, and he, too, charged me furiously, and as he was just within eight yards of my elephant's trunk, I fired a shot straight into his forehead and he dropped dead.

I again went in search of the big brute, but could not find him. I put up several others, and fired at them all, more or less, wasting a lot of ammunition, for they all escaped except one, and as he was in a fighting mood, and I had got him up into a corner, I knocked him over at last. After this I put out one more thundering big brute which looked quite as large as a middling sized elephant;

but I had not an opportunity of firing a single shot at him, and he galloped away across the *maidán* (plain), and I could not catch him up. I returned to camp late in the evening, and made up my mind not to hunt any more rhinos unless a very fair chance offered of bagging a brute with a good horn. I had secured the hides entire of all the rhinos I had shot, and on the big female I shot to-day being cut open, a young one of the proper size was found in her quite perfect; she would have calved either on that day or on the next. The young un was perfectly formed in all its natural ugliness. I cannot possibly fancy anything more ugly. It was brought to me entire, and after admiring its wonderful ugliness, and hearing my *sarrishtadar*, who was a Mahomedan, exclaim on seeing it, *subhán Allah!* (praise be to Allah!) it is indeed, *ajáeb úl gharáeb!!* (a wonder of wonders) I had it skinned entire and carefully kept the hide as a curiosity.

I thought after this that I should have a few days quiet, but they say there is no peace for the wicked! I had got into a splendid shooting country where game abounded, and this was the proper season, hardly a day was to pass over without my receiving complaints of the depredations committed by tigers. They infested the country in almost every direction, and the people having now got confidence in me they never hesitated a moment. The instant it became known that a tiger had killed a cow or bullock, the owner would hasten to me and eagerly point out to me where the brute had hidden himself, and so a villager came to me on the morning of the 8th March 1865, to tell me that a tiger had killed a milch cow of his as she was grazing tethered in the open plain within a few yards of his door! His village was about three miles from my camp, to the south-east thereof, and in the Cooch Behar territory.

I ordered the elephants, and as soon as they were ready I started, and in a quarter of a mile from my camp I crossed the boundary separating Cooch Behar from the Bhutan Dooars. The difference between the aspect of the country on the one side and that on the other was most striking. The change was so sudden that you could not help remarking it; over there in Bhutan the land is all laying waste, except that in the immediate vicinity of the scattered hamlets to be met with few and far between you see just two or three acres of land under cultivation. But look here in Cooch Behar, there is hardly an inch of ground that is

not cultivated and fully under the dominion of man. The country here, too, is thickly populated ; and look at the dense topes of bamboos overtopped by the pretty heads of thousands of *bestul*-nut trees. Plantains, mangoes, jack, and other fruit trees, too, are numerous, every collection of huts is surrounded by them, especially by plantains, and I see that the tobacco here also is of splendid growth. All this should betoken prosperity ; and yet I cannot help observing an incongruity between these outward tokens of prosperity, and the actually squalid appearance of the peasantry and the miserable hovels they have to shelter themselves in. Are they, too, ground down by oppression ? I fear that it is so, and that the system of rack-renting prevails ; it always does where there are rapacious middle men and *jotedars* or farmers. I observe, too, that the people all seem to be somewhere about the lowest type of humanity. Their physical conformation bears very little resemblance to the human form divine. They are mostly a diminutive race with heads disproportionately large, no forehead to speak of, and what little there is of forehead is narrow and retreating. Small expressionless eyes, New Zealand noses, bad mouths filled with bad ugly teeth, high cheek bones, hollow cheeks, arms without muscles, flat chests, and weak legs with hollow thighs and no calves.

On arriving at the *khubberiah's* village he guided me at once to his hovel, and showed me the place where the cow had been tethered about twenty-five paces from his door ; but seventy or eighty yards to the south there was some low ground with long grass in it. The cow had been dragged into that grass. I next proceeded to the low ground and had it carefully beaten through, but found nothing in it, except the head and some of the larger ribs of the cow. The tiger must have been very hungry, or perhaps there had been two tigers. There was not one now, however.

I next bade the beater *mahouts* separate and look for the foot-prints, and I also desired the villagers, of whom a crowd had assembled, to hunt about for the foot-prints. I could see no jungle anywhere close by, but the villagers told me that there was a continuation of the low ground away to the west about half a mile, where there was some thick heavy grass jungle. I and a few of the beater *mahouts* went a short distance to the west hunting for the foot-prints, and soon came on numerous, but they were all old, some going and some coming. We went a little further, and then I

saw a fresh foot-print coming eastwards. I followed this closely, and discovered more; but they were of one tiger which had *come from* the west, and had gone east into the low ground where the cow had been eaten. I could find no fresh foot-prints going west, so that the tiger we were in search of *came* from the west, but did not return there. While we were still hunting about there, I heard a shout from the east. I turned in the *howdah* and asked what was the matter, and I saw one of the beater elephants coming towards me at a quick pace, and the *mahout*, on seeing me looking in his direction, beckoned to me to approach, and on my doing so he bawled out: "The tiger has gone east! we have found his fresh foot-prints!"

I hastened away to the east, and soon got on the brute's tracks. I kept on these closely for a little more than a quarter of a mile up to a river; and I then found that the tiger had crossed over to the east side: he must have swum across. We, too, all got across, and I again found the foot-prints on the other side where there was a bed of sand. I saw the tiger had rolled himself in the sand, and then gone a little way to the north; but he had then changed his mind and turned and walked leisurely away to the south for about fifty or sixty yards. He then ascended a high bank, and there for a time I lost his foot-prints. Searching for them on a-head (in the direction in which he seemed to have gone), I suddenly again came on them; they tended towards some low ground in which there was a strip of tarah jungle, of which, though it was high, there was not much.

"The tiger is in there," I said to my *mahout*, pointing to the tarah, "and I do not expect we shall have much trouble with him, as there is no more jungle anywhere visible near. I shall take up my position *here* on this high ground (at the west end of the jungle), and you tell the beaters to go round by this side to the extreme east end, and bid them beat up to the west towards me."

I gave these brief instructions to Tookrah (my *mahout*), and he communicated them in a low tone to the beater *mahouts* who went round to the extreme east end. My position was a fine commanding one; it was about eight or ten feet above the level of the low ground containing the tarah jungle, and I could see well across it in any direction, except the north which was behind me, and where there was a village close up along side of my position (I was on the

north side of the jungle). To the south it was all open, sloping gradually *upwards* for about two hundred yards, and then there were a few stunted ber bushes growing in the open. To the east there was not a bush that the tiger could escape to, and to the west there was just a continuation of the low ground which ran into the river flowing past the place about one hundred and fifty yards distant.

It was an awfully jolly bit of jungle without the slightest difficulty about it. The beaters entered the east end, and came beating up steadily till they arrived near the west end, where the elephant, "Hussan Piari," trumpeted, and some of the other elephants showed signs of uneasiness. From this I made perfectly sure now that I should presently see the tiger; again the same elephant trumpeted and made a little rush forward, and then, with a sort of suppressed growl, as if he did not like that sort of thing at all, and that he might as well go elsewhere if he was to be disturbed in that way, out bounded a very fine tiger with the evident intention of going across the river again. But to somewhat alter an old saying, "the tiger proposes, but in this instance the man disposes"! As soon as he showed himself I gave him a shot that angered while it astonished him. He did not know where the shot had come from, and he roared loudly as he rushed back into the jungle. There he encountered those big brutes, the beater elephants and the shouting *mahouts*, and although one or two of the elephants got frightened and bolted, the others stood fast, and the *mahouts* yelled in such a way that the tiger evidently did not know what to make of it, and rushed out of the jungle again. As soon as he re-appeared, I gave him another shot which made him roar louder than before; and thinking he had had enough of it he turned to his left and fairly ran away! He went as fast as a race horse towards the ber bushes over there to the south. As he went I sent a couple of leaden messengers after him desiring him to stop. They both overtook him, but he would not heed them till he got in amongst the ber bushes. I then descended the bank into the hollow and followed him up the opposite slope, sending the beaters round by the river side to take care that he did not cross the stream further down (the river ran north to south). The beater elephants got round all right, and then I pushed on towards the ber bushes, and suddenly saw the tiger in amongst them looking at me. I let fly a shot at him and down he came a gallant charge,

roaring and lashing his sides with his tail as he came along, his skin gleaming like gold in the sunshine. I allowed him to come up to within fifteen yards of me and fired and he rolled over; but before I could pick up another gun, he was off again, making for his old place in the tarah jungle. I fired two more shots at him as he went, both of which hit him for he acknowledged them with angry roars, without, however, stopping I followed him back and called to the beaters to come up sharp.

They did not lose a moment, and as soon as they came I told them to again beat up the tarah from east to west, while I stood just outside of it at the west end in the low ground. The tiger charged the beaters in the tarah, but they stood fast and the *mahouts* yelled at him, and then he bounded out at the west end and came at me, and then he got a shot that broke his foreleg, and he was fain to hop back again into the tarah on three legs roaring loudly. As he was disappearing into it, I gave him another shot that increased his row, but he was now near his end and could not hold out much longer. Poor brute! he was awfully punished for having killed that cow this morning. It was a regular case of the despoiler spoilt, every shot I had fired had hit him, and he now lay growling amongst some creepers. I re-loaded my guns and approached the spot where he lay, but as I could not see him, to polish him off with a last shot I ordered one of the beater *mahouts* to go up on the bank where there was a clump of tall bamboos just opposite to the spot where the tiger lay concealed, and I desired him (the *mahout*) to make his elephant break down one of the bamboos so as to make its top-most branches press down on the spot where the tiger lay hidden by the creepers. The bamboo was just long enough to reach the creepers, and when it came crashing and cracking down as the elephant pressed it with his foot just above the root, the tiger moved, and in moving he exposed himself or rather a part of his body. I could not make out what part of his body it was, but I fired a last shot into that part and it sufficed to kill the tiger.

He measured 9 feet 3 inches, and was a very handsome beast. He had been very noisy and his roars were heard a mile off, and hundreds of the Cooch Behar peasantry were attracted to the spot. They assisted joyfully to hoist him on to the pad of one of the beater elephants; and as we turned to leave the place, I rewarded the *khubberiah*, and

he then made bold to say that there was a large boar in some bushes close by that part of the river where the tiger had crossed over to the side where I had just shot him. The place where he crossed was, in fact, a ghaut or ferry, and as the bushes where the boar was were just close beside a much frequented pathway, and the boar had been there for a long time, and had twice or thrice mischievously wounded some way-farers, I was entreated to go and *máro* (kill) him. My guns were nearly all loaded, so I went to the place, and after beating the bushes for a few minutes, I saw the boar. He was a very large brute, and had a pair of very formidable tusks, but I soon "did" for him, and his carcass was at once taken possession of by the villagers, who were of the Cooch tribe and who eat swine's flesh eagerly.

On my way back to camp I shot a brace of fine large gray ducks; and not far from the little swamp where I bagged them a hog-deer was disturbed as we were moving through the grass, and as he went rushing through with his head low down right across me, I bowled him over with a bullet in the neck, much to the delight of the *mahouts* to whom I presented him. They, of course, cut his throat, notwithstanding that he was killed by the shot in the neck. But as I said before, the consciences of Mahomedans, are always elastic, and they will pass the knife across the throat of a dead animal if there is only a little warmth in the body, and while they are doing so they will repeat the formula, *Bismillah! Allah ho, Akbar?* (In the name of Allah! Allah is great!) just that they may safely, as far as old Mahomed's precepts are concerned, feast on the flesh; sublime! isn't it? But you say their religion makes hypocrites of them all. Well, it does in a sort of a way, nevertheless there are many good fellows amongst Mahomedans, who would all be much *better* fellows, were it not for their religion. I have invariably found that those amongst them who are not, literally speaking, "true believers," are the best of the lot, though they do not profess any other religion.

I returned to camp before the evening had set in, and as it happened to be market day at *Fálákátáh*, crowds of the market people come to the camp to see the dead tiger.

(To be continued.)