

lotteries also—"first past the post." This arrangement finds much favour with those who only wish to back their opinion as to the respective merits of the horses before them.

We think that the arguments in favour of the rule are fairly met by the remedies we have suggested, and that at all events the disadvantages attending the rule preponderate over its advantages, such as they are. We hope that Stewards of race meetings will take the same view of the question as ourselves, and that owners of race-horses may not be deprived of the privilege enjoyed in other lands of a reference to a body of gentlemen whose special business it is to study the laws and practice of the Turf.

JOURNAL OF A TIGER-SHOOTING EXPEDITION IN OUDE IN 18—.

By M. D.

(Continued from page 16.)

THE weather still keeps delightfully cool, and when there is a breeze one can remain all day in the sun without the slightest inconvenience.

Our camp is near one of the cattle-grazing enclosures called a gourie, so common in this part of the country, and in a tope of trees, about eight miles to the north-west of Sonapatta and on the same side of the Mohaan. The road for the hackeries, camels, and camp baggage they tell me has been better than usual to-day at some of the halts. They complain dreadfully, especially where any rivers have to be crossed: it is no joke getting a large camp over a stream with few boats and stupid people. The camels, too, always give a deal of trouble, as they don't like the water in the least.

28th March.—We made a long and unsuccessful series of beats over what a few years ago was the best find in Oude for tigers, but we neither saw nor got anything. One large swamp, "Rungnawass," to the south of the Hilewna, and in one of the numerous breaks in the forest, which here consists almost entirely of saul trees—the largest we have yet seen, being at least a mile and a half long and perhaps half that breadth—offers cover for any quantity of tigers, buffaloes, elephants and rhinoceros; we beat it out as thoroughly as we could but saw absolutely nothing. Here elephants were formerly caught in numbers, and at certain seasons of the year they still come, for we saw comparatively recent traces of them. The rhinoceros has been also seen here but more rarely. We tried

several other beats in the neighbourhood, but without the least success : all this country used to be full of burrah singahs (large deer), but we have not seen one. They say that the Bungarrahs, and the encroachments of cultivation and population have frightened them all away. In passing through the forest we saw a few spotted deer, but they were very wild and could not be approached on the elephants : we had neither time nor inclination to get down and stalk them as we were still intent on tigers. In crossing the grassy plain we took an occasional shot at a hogdeer, and D. shot a couple of black partridges. We returned to our camp after dark, having had a long, tiring, and unsuccessful day's work.

We move our camp to-morrow.

29th March.—We have been travelling nearly due north to-day for about 14 miles through dense belts of saul forest, and again across plains covered with long grass which in many places has been set fire to and burnt. In these plains one finds cattle-feeding villages and enclosures with a few huts for the wretched creatures who herd their miserable half-starved looking cattle there. Several times to-day we have seen the tracks of wild elephants, but very little game of any description ; after all, in the heart of the forest one never does see anything, except an occasional herd of spotted deer and a few forest birds or monkeys. The predominant feature of the forest is its extreme stillness, life seems to be altogether absent.

In crossing one of the plains to-day D. shot two floricans which he took the trouble to get off his elephant and stalk. We beat out one very likely looking swamp, but found nothing in it. On the edges of the belts of forest, pea fowl and jungle fowl are very common, and we saw quantities.

I observed that many (most) of the saul trees have a circular strip of bark taken off near the ground, leaving only a narrow strip connecting the upper and lower part of the tree together. This is done for the purpose of collecting the resin that flows freely from the incision and which is of a very good kind. The latter part of our march to-day has been over undulating ground, here and there interspersed and broken by nullahs. I am informed that much of this ground is under water during the rains—very difficult to believe as one sees it at this season of the year. We now seem to be almost at the foot of the hills, but I believe they are still six or eight miles distant : the trees growing on the lower ridges are distinctly visible to the naked eye, and the ravines and water-courses down which the mountain streams foam during the rainy season are very plainly seen.

Our encampment is on the banks of a small stream, the Kun-

dra, in a patch of very tall and graceful looking seesu trees, just putting on their bright green delicate looking foliage and their pretty delicate sweet-scented flowers, and near a village named Daruch, inhabited by Jaros, a race who claim descent from the Chowhan Chattries, but who are said to be the real aboriginal inhabitants of the Terai. They have not the appearance of hill people so much as that of the inhabitants of the plains, however they are the only members of the human race who can live all the year round in the pestiferous atmosphere of the Terai, and they are said, though I think the appearance of many belied the statement, not to suffer from the malaria. We had some of them in the mess tent after dinner to ask about shikar. After some hesitation and much reserve, one old fellow promised to take us to a tiger to-morrow, and to make him more secure, he offered to go through the process of an incantation by which the tiger being charmed would not be able to leave the place. Of course we were only too delighted, and the old gentleman set to work; the process seemed simple enough; but doubtless it was more difficult than it looked; all the instruments requisite were a brass dish and some dry rice. This was placed in a series of little heaps, counted and recounted and shifted from one place to the other, the charmer the while looking very solemn, as did all the spectators (not European), and as if he really believed it. At last the right conjunction of numbers was hit upon; touching his forehead he put the dish on one side, and looking up for the first time, he informed us that the tiger was now firmly spell-bound and that nothing but our guns could get him out of his scrape. They refreshed themselves all round with our brandy and seemed much pleased with it as a beverage.

They told us that about ten days ago a Rajah (I forget his name) had been shooting here with a good line of elephants and a large retinue of followers; that whilst they were after a particular tiger that had been already started, the Rajah had sent a man up into a tree to look where the brute went if he should break cover in that direction. The man foolishly got on to a branch about ten feet from the ground. The tiger not only broke cover, but he did so near the unfortunate wretch, and seeing him on the branch with his legs hanging down, sprung up and seized him by one of them, which the Jaroo said he bit off, (this I don't believe, of course), and he described the struggle between the man and the tiger most graphically. The tiger was killed and the man has since died. The Jaros are said to be a most ingenuous and truthful race, but I cannot answer for the truth of the details of this story.

B. and H. tell me that the character of this part of the Terai has quite changed during the last four years ; there is now so much more cultivation than there used to be, and many of the best tiger beats have entirely disappeared. This merely implies, that now there is a little cultivation where formerly there was none at all.

Elephant-catching seems to have been discontinued too, for though we saw many obis—the pits in which they are caught—they are all old and nearly filled up by decaying vegetable and other matter.

We set out this morning after breakfast at about 10 A.M. in search of the tiger, but for some good reason, of course, the charm had failed and he was not to be found. Our way lay through some magnificent saul forests ; many of the trees are either cut or being cut and roughly squared into logs. The price of a tree in this district is 8 annas, but ere it reaches Lucknow, what with carriage and repeated taxation, its cost has risen fifty-fold. The scenery of this part of the Terai is really very beautiful. The lower range of hills, now close to us, filling up the background of every break in the forest, which with the constantly recurring glades and undulating slopes give the charm of variety which had hitherto been wanting. There is said to be a continuous and unbroken narrow belt of forest at the very foot of, and partly on, the first ascent of the hills, but this we have not come to. Many of the sudden breaks in the forest, the maidaus that we have met with, are of considerable extent, a mile or more in length and breadth, many much longer. These plains are covered with long grass, and in some of them near the edge of the forest large swamps are found. Such a one was said to be the haunt of the charmed tiger, but the season has been hot and dry and the water had all dried up, so that in consequence we found no tiger ; we did get some hogdeer though, and other small game, and saw numbers of pea-fowl and jungle fowl.

The atmosphere is thickened, and the sky almost obscured by the smoke rising from the burning of the long grass and under-jungle, in the plains and forest, which at this time is set fire to in order that the ashes may promote the growth of the young shoots of grass for the cattle. These annual fires do much mischief to the young trees, many being totally destroyed ; indeed not only the young but the old and full-grown trees are withered and parched up by them. The logs of timber left in the ground ready for transport to the rivers are frequently burnt to ashes or remain like masses of charcoal, but yet the forest continues to flourish and thrive, until the slow encroach of cultivation and population shall continue to withstand what the few miserable inhabitants of

its recesses with their cattle, fires, and axes can do towards its destruction. After beating all over the cover to which the old Jaroo took us, and where the spell-bound tiger should have been, but was not, and listening to his explanations, which were to the effect that the charm had failed through no fault or ignorance of his, and that his confidence, and ours of course, ought not to be shaken in the efficacy of tiger-charming in general, we travelled away westward through the forest until we emerged in a large and open plain, partly under cultivation for the ensuing rice season ; here an Aheer joined us and said that he could show us a tiger close to his gowrie which was not far off. He took us to a large patch of deuse jungle consisting of catechu, mimosa, and seesoo jungle, surrounded by long grass, and altogether a very likely looking cover for a tiger as any I have seen ; it is so dense that the elephants with pads only could hardly penetrate it, and with nullahs running through it in all directions. In the long silky looking grass in the outskirts, we found the lair and the kill. There is no mistaking this when you see it, the beaten down grass, the bones and the other remnants of the last unfortunate animal dragged there, and the strong odour of the animal himself render it unmistakable ; if any doubt were left the elephants would soon remove it ; the trunks beat the ground or are curled aloft in the air, they trumpet, they kick the ground, and some of them if allowed will try to kick the remains of the "kill," with some vague idea that they are punishing the enemy himself. They soon get composed though, unless the tiger is in the immediate neighbourhood, when it is very difficult to keep them, except the very old and experienced ones, quiet. We stationed ourselves at different parts of the jungle where we thought the tiger might break cover, and sent in the pads to beat him out. He was there, for the Khas Burdars on the pads saw him, and we heard him, but the jungle was so extensive and thick that we could not beat it properly, and he kept back, refusing to take to the plain on any terms whatever. The mahouts said it was a tigress and that she was more than once close under the elephants' feet, but that she showed no inclination to fight and seemed only anxious to hide herself ; the jungle was too dense for the howdahs or we should have got her. Whilst I was waiting at my station at the corner of the jungle, a little carker (must jack) came out close to me and stood timidly staring at me with his great eyes, seeming to wonder what all the noise was about. I could have shot him with the greatest ease and certainty, but I could not fire whilst the tiger was a-foot, and I do not think moreover that I could have done so, for the little creature stood looking at me, apparently without fear. After staying for a moment he

stepped quietly into the jungle again and disappeared. We were obliged at last to give up the tiger, and we returned to our tents having only bagged two hog-deer, one florican, one horn, and one civet cat. Had we, all the time we were on a wild goose chase after the tigers, been shooting small game, we might have had a large bag to-day, but as usual when we were looking for the tiger game was plentiful; when we were not looking for him, game was not to be found. It is odd that as yet we have not seen a large deer of any kind, and but very few spotted deer, and yet they are said to abound in this district. This district of Khyreghur is I believe "Huzoor Tehseil," that is, pays revenue to the king and is not subject to the Amil in this respect. Rs. 18,000 per annum is all it is said to yield, but the timber alone if properly worked and managed ought to yield ten times this sum.

The present Talookdar is said to be a good man, and during his incumbency the population has increased and the cultivation been extended. All this is very proper and good, but it interferes with our tiger-shooting and consequently we do not approve of it. The Talookdar's name is Ram Sahai.

We move our camp to-morrow for there is nothing to be got here, and we have now had four blank days. The sun during the day until noon was intensely hot, but after that time a breeze sprang up from the south-west which blew steadily until the evening. This is probably the commencement of the hot winds, and I have no doubt that further south in the plains it is hot enough ere this, the nights and mornings though are still cold enough here.

We marched to-day in a south-west direction through broad belts of forest and over some extensive plains. Our ground to-day and yesterday has been broken and hilly, many of the hillocks of considerable height, and interspersed here and there with dry nullahs.

On the road we met our dâk, the first we have now received for four or five days. Whilst passing through an open glade in the forest, an Aheer who was grazing his cattle there ran after our elephant, and coming up to us, said he would show us a tiger, for he had met one in the forest a short time ago and that he knew the long grass cover in which he had hidden himself. We retraced our steps, and turning off to the left into the forest, he brought us to an extensive and irregular patch of long grass, surrounded by a very winding and deep but dry nullah—a capital cover, but though we beat it out all over and in every direction we could not find the tiger. I am certain that is in vain trying to find tigers in the forest; there are so many places where they can hide, and so many opportunities of slipping away unseen when they hear one

coming, that I look upon the attempt as waste of time. We beat for the wretched creature about three hours before we gave him up, and then I daresay he was miles off cooling himself in some forest swamp, of which there are several in the neighbourhood. We then proceeded towards our next encampment and before we reached it crossed the Mohaan again. On the other side of the stream we found an extensive plain on which we got some small game shooting; we bagged a hog-deer, 3 florican, 6 black partridges, and 3 hones. I shot my first florican here, a fine male bird, but I had to stalk him some time before I could get a shot; he was wild, and the grass was too short to hide him or prevent him from seeing me. I bagged him at last after firing long shots at him three times. During the day we have tried every likely looking tigerish place, and near one swamp in the forest, but which was too heavy to beat, we found a "kill" of about two days' standing but no tiger.

We reached our camp on the edge of the forest at about 6 P.M. The river is near the spot, and here makes many windings. We have had a long tedious march and very little to repay it; for the gharies it must have been at least a ten-mile march; we of course made much more of it. In the forest especially, and indeed everywhere, we find the flies most troublesome, but as yet we have been free from musquitos; at our new camping ground to-day we find the sandflies very troublesome. The tents are pitched on the side of a hill with a sandy soil and covered with fine forest trees, for we are on the edge of another belt of the forest. The ground is here strewn with the fallen leaves of the saul trees, which are very large, and at this season of the year bearing thin foliage, the little they retain being of almost every tint of color one can imagine; the effect mixed with other trees now putting on their spring foliage, as the seesu, is very beautiful and varied. In the evening B. received another dâk containing overland extras, the last news from the Crimea, and some ministerial changes, but no other news in the way of letters and local newspapers. The day has been close and warm; we felt it much in the forest where the great trees shut out the air, and that dead and depressing silence and quietude ever remains. About noon, as usual (lately), the south-west breeze sprung up and relieved us. The sun is now getting very powerful, and in the morning at breakfast the tents get very hot, the nights though still continue cool and pleasant.

(To be continued.)

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