

THE DEATH OF "BEGUM."

By the death of "Begum," the hairy-eared rhinoceros, the elephant house at the Zoological Gardens has just lost an interesting inmate. When this animal arrived in England, in 1872, she was described as a new species; but there is some reason to think that this form is only a variety of the Sumatran rhinoceros. The hide is thin, and has none of the strong-marked tubercles characteristic of the Indian species; there are some slight skin folds about the neck and the base of the limbs, a deep groove behind the shoulder blades, and one less conspicuous on each flank. The body is covered with long fine reddish hair; the hinder margins of the ears have long hairy fringes, and the tail is short and hairy. The story of the capture of this animal is interesting. In 1868 she was discovered by some natives stuck in a quicksand in Chittagong, and they set to work to get her out. When this was accomplished, they tied her to a tree, and left her for the night. In the morning, however, they were alarmed at her struggles, and sent off information of their capture to the nearest British Magistrate, with a request for help. Two English officers started with some natives and elephants, only to find that the rhinoceros had freed itself and bolted. They started in pursuit; but when they came up with the prize they found that the elephants were frightened at the strange beast. Some time was spent in quieting the elephants, to one of which the rhinoceros was at last fastened by a rope, and the Englishmen hoped that their difficulties were at an end. This was far from being the case, for the elephant bolted in terror, and had not the rope parted the rhinoceros must have been killed. At last a staunch elephant was moved up on each side the rhinoceros, which was secured to them, and in this fashion she was brought to the settlement, whence she was sent to England. The price paid for the animal was £1,250. She lived in the Gardens over twenty-eight years, a period only exceeded among the large animals in the case of "Jim," the Indian rhinoceros, who was brought to the menagerie in 1864. "Begum" had been ailing for some time, and old age is said to have been the cause of death. The skin and skeleton will probably be mounted for the British Museum (Natural History), though no decision has as yet been come to, for the death only occurred during Friday night.

