

INDIAN RHINOCEROS AT SOUTH KENSINGTON.

FOR many years the great Indian rhinoceros (*Rhinoceros unicornis*) has been represented in the collection of the Natural History Museum by a very ancient and badly stuffed specimen, of which the surface has been polished black by constant handling on the part of visitors during the long period when it was unprotected by a case. Some time ago His Highness the Maharaja of Kuch-Behar was asked whether he would be disposed to present a specimen to the museum, and in due course there arrived both the skin and skeleton of a full-grown, although not aged, individual. The skin has been set up by Rowland Ward, and is now temporarily exhibited in the central hall of the Museum. As mounted, the specimen stands 5ft. 5½in. at the withers, and measures 10ft. 4in. in a straight line from the tip of the muzzle to the root of the tail. Owing to the fact of the animal being only just adult, the horn is comparatively small.

The geographical distribution of the Indian rhinoceros is now very restricted, including only some of the tall grass jungles in the Assam Valley. This makes the Maharaja's gift a very valuable one, especially as the skeleton is that of a wild animal. The museum now possesses mounted skins, as well as skeletons, of four out of the five living species of rhinoceros, namely, the great Indian rhinoceros (*R. unicornis*), the Sumatran rhinoceros (*R. sumatrensis*), the common or black African rhinoceros (*R. bicornis*), and Burchell's or the white rhinoceros (*R. simus*). Except that of a very young calf, there is, however, no example of the skin of the Javan species (*R. javanicus*), although efforts have been made during the last few years to procure one. There is not even a mounted head, although such specimens are far from uncommon in sportsmen's collections. A complete skin of the species in question would form a most acceptable gift to the museum.

While on the subject of ungulates, I may call the fact that the Duke of Westminster has presented the skull of Bend Or to the museum, where that of Stockwell is also preserved. A report has been circulated that the head of Hermit is in the collection, but this is a mistake.

R. L.