

DEATH OF "JIM," THE INDIAN RHINOCEROS.

THE Zoological Society has just sustained a serious loss by the death of the old Indian rhinoceros, presented in July, 1864, by Mr Grote. It was brought home, with two females, from Calcutta by Mr James Thomson, the head keeper, and the arrival of three examples of this species at one time is probably a record. One female was for the Dublin Gardens; the other was exchanged in the following year for the famous Jumbo. The age of Jim when he came to the gardens is not known, but Dr Sclater wrote of the animal as being then "very young," so that he was probably some years off half a century. In 1870 he wrenched off his horn in trying to break down the palisade separating his paddock from that in which another rhinoceros was exercising. The consequences were not serious; Mr Bartlett dressed the raw place with oil, the horn grew again, and that which had been torn off was kept for a long time at No. 11, Hanover-square, but seems now to be lost. An abscess in the jaw, some years later, gave Mr Bartlett an opportunity for some heroic surgery; but the wound never closed, and half-masticated hay worked out through the opening; this was removed by the keepers, the animal thrusting its head between the stout wooden bars for this purpose. In his prime Jim was a very fine animal, and measurements taken in 1875 made him 10ft. 3in. from the nose to the insertion of the tail along the dorsal ridge, and 5ft. 3in. at the shoulder. Of late he fell off considerably, so that one could count his ribs, and the dorsal ridge stood up prominently. But he continued to feed well, and was let out into the paddock, where all went as usual till last Saturday, when he stumbled and fell just by the door leading into the stall. He was quite unable to rise, though the keepers tried to induce him to do so. There was consequently nothing for it but to get him in by means of ropes and pulleys. Nor did he rise when in the stall, though he took the hay spread in front of him. On Sunday he looked so bad as to attract attention from visitors, and the authorities recognised the fact that nothing could be done for him, though he continued feeding to the last. When the house was visited on Tuesday night he was still alive, but was found dead when it was opened the next morning. Messrs Gerrard and Son, the well-known taxidermists, of Camden Town, have purchased the remains, and commenced the skinning and fleshing as soon as the body had been examined. This was carried out in the stall, as it would have been very difficult to remove the huge mass to the prosectorium. There was no trace of disease, but on examining the jaws it was found that one of the upper molars was imperfectly cut, not being down to the level of the rest. This was possibly due to the abscess referred to above. The incisors were much worn down; so were also the lower molars, so that mastication must have been a laborious task. The period passed by this animal in confinement entitles the Gardens to a record for keeping a rhinoceros north of the equator. This has been beaten, however, by the owner of a private menagerie in India—no doubt a native prince—who kept one for forty-five years, and then the animal was sent to the Calcutta Gardens, where it lived another two years, making in all forty-seven years in confinement.