

A CREATURE WHOSE ONLY SERIOUS ENEMY IS MAN: THE GREAT



A GREAT INDIAN RHINOCEROS BULL (*R. UNICORNIS*) STANDING IN MUDDY WATER: DURING THE HEAT OF THE DAY THESE ANIMALS LIE DOWN IN SHALLOW STREAMS OR POOLS IN THE HUMID, CLOSE JUNGLES IN WHICH THEY SPEND THEIR LIVES.

THE rhinoceros, according to the "Encyclopædia Britannica," is a "large, massively-built animal, with little intelligence and a bad temper." Shakespeare refers to it as the "armed rhinoceros," and its thick hide was long considered to be bullet-proof, yet it is a vegetarian creature and has suffered greatly from man's cruel destructiveness. On these pages we reproduce remarkable photographs of the Great Indian rhinoceros in its native jungle, taken by Mr. H. E. Tyndale, who writes the following description of the animal. "Formerly in India there were three species of rhinoceros—the Great Indian (*R. Unicornis*), the Burmese, or Lesser One-horned (*R. Sondaicus*), and the Hairy Two-horned (*R. Sumatrensis* or *R. Javanensis*). Of these, the first and the last-mentioned are still to be found in India, but *R. Sondaicus* has almost certainly been exterminated, and it is even doubtful if there are any survivors anywhere in the world, although it is possible that there may still be a few individual specimens alive in Burma or in Sumatra. The two-horned species is still to be found in the forest of the Chittagong district of Bengal. But for protective measures, there is little doubt that the Great Indian rhinoceros would also by now be almost extinct. A number are still living in the Nepalese Terai, where they are allowed to be shot only on very special occasions, in the Kaziranga Sanctuary, in Assam, and in the Jaldapara Sanctuary, in North Bengal. The Jaldapara Sanctuary (which includes about 40 square miles of forest), through which flows the Toorsa River and many smaller perennial local streams,

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RHINOCEROS PREFER REGIONS IN WHICH THERE ARE LARGE AREAS OF *KAGRA*, TALL, COARSE GRASS WHICH REACHES 12 TO 15 FT. IN HEIGHT: THE BULL IN THIS PHOTOGRAPH STANDS AMID SUCH A PART OF THE JUNGLE WHICH HE INHABITS.



A GREAT INDIAN RHINOCEROS COW WITH HER CALF: THIS PHOTOGRAPH SHOWS CLEARLY THE ARRANGEMENT OF THE FOLDS OF THE SKIN IN THE *UNICORNIS* VARIETY, AND THE ROUNDED TUBERCLES WITH WHICH THE SKIN IS STUDDED.

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was proclaimed a special reserve for rhinoceros in 1932. Prior to 1930 it was estimated that there were about eighty in this area, but during 1930 and 1931 considerable poaching took place, and in 1932 and 1933 fifty skulls were collected. It is probable that there are now, after fourteen years of preservation, about fifty rhinoceros in this sanctuary. The rhinoceros has no natural enemy in the jungle, with the possible exception of the tiger, as a rhinoceros calf has been found badly mauled by a tiger. The only serious enemy is man, and he kills the rhinoceros almost entirely for gain, based on superstition. The horn of the male, which is composed of compressed hair, is greatly valued, both as an aphrodisiac and as an antidote to various poisons, including opium. The present market value of the horn is about £2 sterling per ounce, and a good horn will weigh over 60 ozs. Rhinoceros blood can be sold at about three shillings a pint. Dried skin and meat are worth about 1s. 6d. a pound. It is therefore easy to estimate the tremendous value of a dead rhinoceros, and to realise that the most rigid protection is necessary to ensure that the species does not become extinct. Although the rhinoceros is held in great sanctity by all Hindus living in North-East India, such religious awe is insufficient to afford any noticeable degree of protection. The Great Indian variety frequents low-lying, humid jungle and seems to prefer regions where there are large areas of *Kagra* (the local name for a coarse grass which grows to a height of 12 to 15 ft.). During the heat of the day the animals will lie down in shallow streams or

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muddy pools in dense jungle. They are rarely seen in the open by day unless they happen to be moving from one piece of thick jungle to another. On a good elephant it is possible to approach to within 15 or 20 yards of a bull rhinoceros or of a cow if she has no calf with her, but only in thick cover such as the *Kagra*. If more than one elephant be used to try and move a rhinoceros from dense jungle to more open country, the result is generally a stampede, and the rhinoceros, which can move very much faster than an elephant, will be off at speed, and it may take a very long time to come up to him again, for they are by no means easy to track in *Kagra* jungle. The Great Indian rhinoceros has very poor eyesight, which is not surprising, seeing that he spends his life in close jungle. He appears to have good scent and hearing, but is very inquisitive, and is not normally afraid of an elephant. He is a very noisy animal, and it is usual to hear one before seeing him in dense jungle. Rhinoceros feed on young grass, grass roots and various aquatic plants and their roots. They are also very partial to grain crops, particularly maize and rice, and will travel some considerable distance across open country at night to raid crops being grown near villages in the vicinity of the forest. The rhinoceros, it is interesting to recall, has inspired many artists, from Dürer (1471-1528) to Picasso. The former did a woodcut and a drawing of a rhinoceros in 1545, and the latter an aquatint as one of his series of illustrations to Buffon's "*Histoire Naturelle*," shown at the 1945 Arts Council of Great Britain exhibition of French Book Illustrations.

INDIAN RHINOCEROS, PHOTOGRAPHED IN ITS NATIVE JUNGLE.



A GREAT INDIAN RHINOCEROS BULL FEEDING: RHINOCEROS EAT YOUNG GRASS, GRASS ROOTS AND VARIOUS AQUATIC PLANTS AND THEIR ROOTS, BUT ARE ALSO PARTIAL TO GRAIN CROPS, PARTICULARLY MAIZE AND RICE, AND WILL TRAVEL CONSIDERABLE DISTANCES ACROSS OPEN COUNTRY AT NIGHT TO RAID CROPS GROWING NEAR THE FOREST.