

WEAPONS OF THE GREAT INDIAN
RHINOCEROS

By RICHARD GLOVER

The following note on the Great Indian rhinoceros appeared in *The United Services Journal*, November, 1849. Though it bears out Mr. Shebbeare's opinion, given in the last *Oryx*, that in general this rhinoceros uses his "tushes" not his horn in attack, it does also suggest that the horn may sometimes be of use as a secondary weapon.

The writer is identified only as "T. S." It appears that he was some twenty years in India and was assistant resident in Nepal under Brian Hodgson, when that distinguished naturalist was resident there.

Commissioned to kill a rogue elephant, "T. S." also killed "many deer, eleven tigers and seven rhinoceroses"—evidently fauna needed, or at least received, little preservation in those days. It was the seventh of these rhinoceroses which assaulted the elephant of "T. S.'s" companion, Sirdar Delhi Sing. On being charged "the elephant immediately turned tail and bolted, but the rhinoceros was too quick for him, came up to the elephant in a few strides and with his tusks cut the fugitive so severely on the stern, nearly severing his tail, that he attempted to lie down under the pain. But the rhinoceros was again too quick for him, and *bringing his horn into play* (my italics), he introduced it under the elephant's flank; the horn tightened the skin and then with his two frightful tusks he cut the poor animal so severely that his entrails came rolling about his legs as he fell, undergoing the dreadful assaults of his antagonist". At this point "T. S." shot the rhinoceros; he would then have shot the wounded elephant also, but its mahout dissuaded him, and the animal died in two hours.

"T. S." makes a final comment that is in perfect agreement with Mr. Shebbeare's conclusion. "The rhinoceros," he writes, "is armed with much more formidable tusks than the boar. These are the weapons he brings into such deadly operation and not the horn, as so many people are led to believe."