

The Pet Rhinoceros.



"AND SIXTEEN COWS ALL LOST THEIR WITS."

A PASSION for Zoology
Is everywhere admired
By cultivated brains—and yet,
A young rhinoceros as a pet
Leaves much to be desired.

So found one naturalist of France,
Who owned, in such degree
As might excuse a gentle pride,
Knowledge exact and classified
Of all the beasts that be.

For one bright day his curious pet,
Which seemed both dull and sad,
Stood up, and said, "I wonder why
Like yonder lightsome butterfly
I, too, should not be glad?"

"Methinks I straightway will escape
From this unpleasant pen;
I'll be a prisoner here no more,"
He vowed, "I'll first break down this door"—
And did it, there and then!

"I cannot fly," he proudly said,
"Because I'm rather fat;
I cannot dance in joy and mirth"—
Yet where's the butterfly on earth
Could do a thing like *that*?

He started on his glad career
Across the orchard green,
Not light of tread, nor sweet of voice,
Yet bound with nature to rejoice
In such a beauteous scene!

Of that gay frisk, the dire effects
Let not the curious ask;
To tell what harm his romping wrought,
What wreck and what distress it brought,
Would be too hard a task.

Suffice it that the garden-beds
Were bared of leaf and bloom,
A *blanchisseuse* had several fits,
And sixteen cows all lost their wits,
Upon that day of gloom!

His master, then, with much regret,
And sadly drooping head,
Consigned him to a one-franc show.
"Unjust it is to treat me so,"
The young rhinoceros said.

"You oft remark, 'In this dark world'
True cheerfulness is sweet,'
Yet from my home I have to part,
Because, though wisely light of heart,
I'm heavy on my feet!"

ELIZABETH W. WOOD.

Young England: An illustrated magazine for boys
throughout the English speaking world, London 1896