

Animal Parliament





Dear Comrades,

As we approach the end of this legislature, in which we have shared the pains and pleasures of working for the construction of Europe, I am taking the liberty of sending you this Chronicle of *the Animal Parliament*, wherein Balzac, Grandville and other writers set out their aspirations for a united and democratic Europe.

I hope that, as in the evolution of Darwin, we may be able to recognise ourselves in some of the interlocutors in order that we might be capable of emulating them.

With best wishes

Enrique Barón

President of the Socialist Group in the European Parliament, 1999-2004



REPORT

on the drafting and illustration of the “Scenes from the Private and Public Lives of Animals”.

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

- CONSIDERING the publication in weekly pamphlets of a satire by the writer Jules Hetzel, inspired by the July Revolution and, dates from 20 November 1840 to 11 December 1842,
- GIVEN that this writer, born on 15 January 1814 into an old Alsatian family, took up law in Strasbourg in November 1834 after his brilliant Latin studies,
- GIVEN that the student Jules Hetzel, preferred to cut short his studies, to work in a publishing house, then opened his own bookshop,
- CONSIDERING that Jules Hetzel with his friendly ties with numerous other writers including Balzac, Alfred and Paul de Musset or George Sand, whom he asked to take part in these “Scenes from the Lives of Animals”,
- GIVEN that the “artist” Grandville, born Jean Ignatius Gérard on 3 September 1803, had become famous by his caricatures of Men with animals’ heads featured in newspapers,
- GIVEN that from 1835 the freedom of the press was greatly restricted, and Grandville chose to illustrate books like Robinson Crusoe, Gulliver’s Travels, the Fables of Florian or Don Quijote,
- CONSIDERING that one of Grandville’s favourite reads was the “Natural History” by Buffon,
- RECALLS that Grandville died insane in a Vanves asylum in 1847, and that Hetzel became the Lamartine Head of Cabinet at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and that after the coup d’Etat on 2 December 1848 he fled to Brussels,

– POINTS OUT that this set of circumstances seem cyclic and endemic,

– NOTES that the success of the work, in particular the first part entitled “The Parliament of Animals”, was heralded throughout France’s neighbours, both near and far,

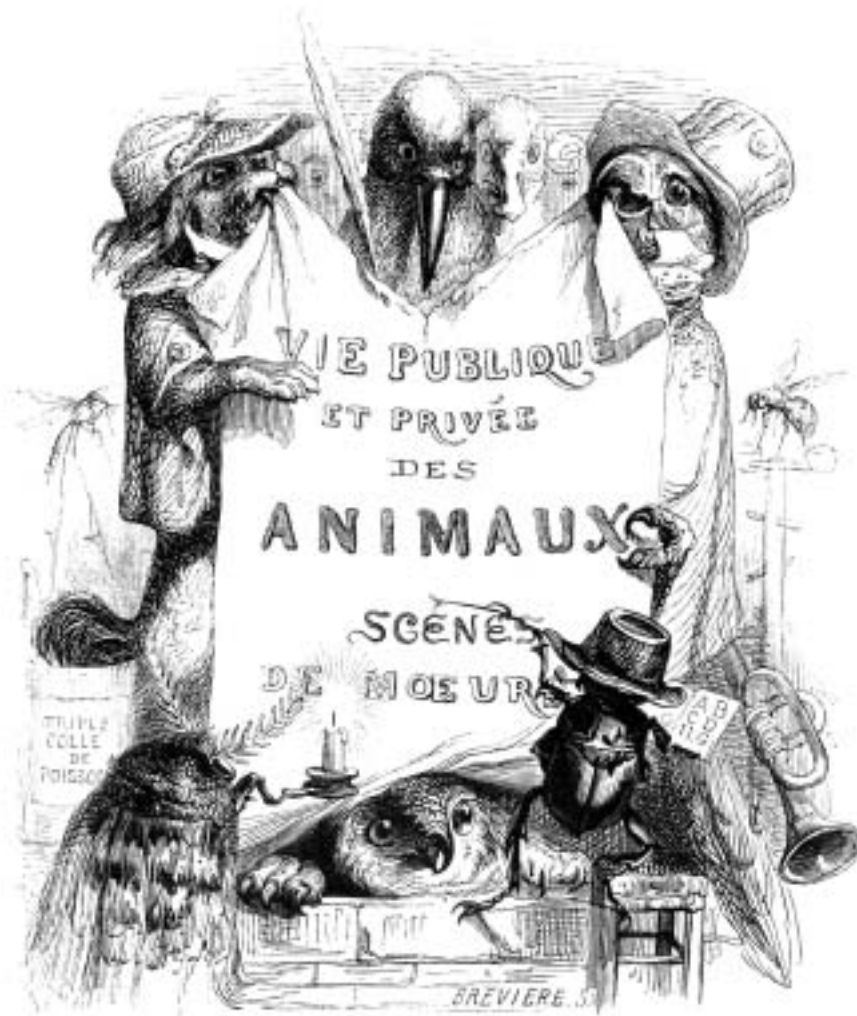
– RECALLS that no translation would be worthy without strictly adhering to the particular characteristics of the different national identities,

– POINTS OUT that these adaptations, even though summarised differently at times, in no way betray the collective spirit of these sublime pages entitled “The Parliament of Animals”,

The President of the Socialist Group of the European Parliament instructs the author of this report to extend the pleasure he had in its reading to all his fellow Members of Parliament and the members of the Secretariat.

STATEMENT OF INTENT

During the five years of this 1999-2004 legislature, extensive legislative work in Group or committee meetings or in plenary sessions has brought together many people like those that Messrs. the Animals in the quoted work call ‘the sincere Men who wish to show impartiality, and who fear no truths which are good to say», one of them being that it is not because one is serious that one must take oneself seriously. Treasure the memory of these good times - it will serve to justify this (own initiative) report. ■



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ANIMAL PARLIAMENT

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HETZEL **GRANDVILLE**
1814-1886 1803-1847

Éditions originales

Scènes de la vie privée et publique des animaux, Hetzel, Paris, 1842.

Grandville Bilder aus dem Staats- und Familienleben der Tiere, Dr. A. Diezmann, Frankfurt-am-Main, 1846.

Public and private Life of Animals, S. Law, Marsion, Searle & Rivington, London, 1877

Escenas y costumbres de la vida publica y privada de los animales, Celestino Verdaguer, Barcelona, 1880.



I N T R O D U C T I O N
INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS
OF ANIMALS

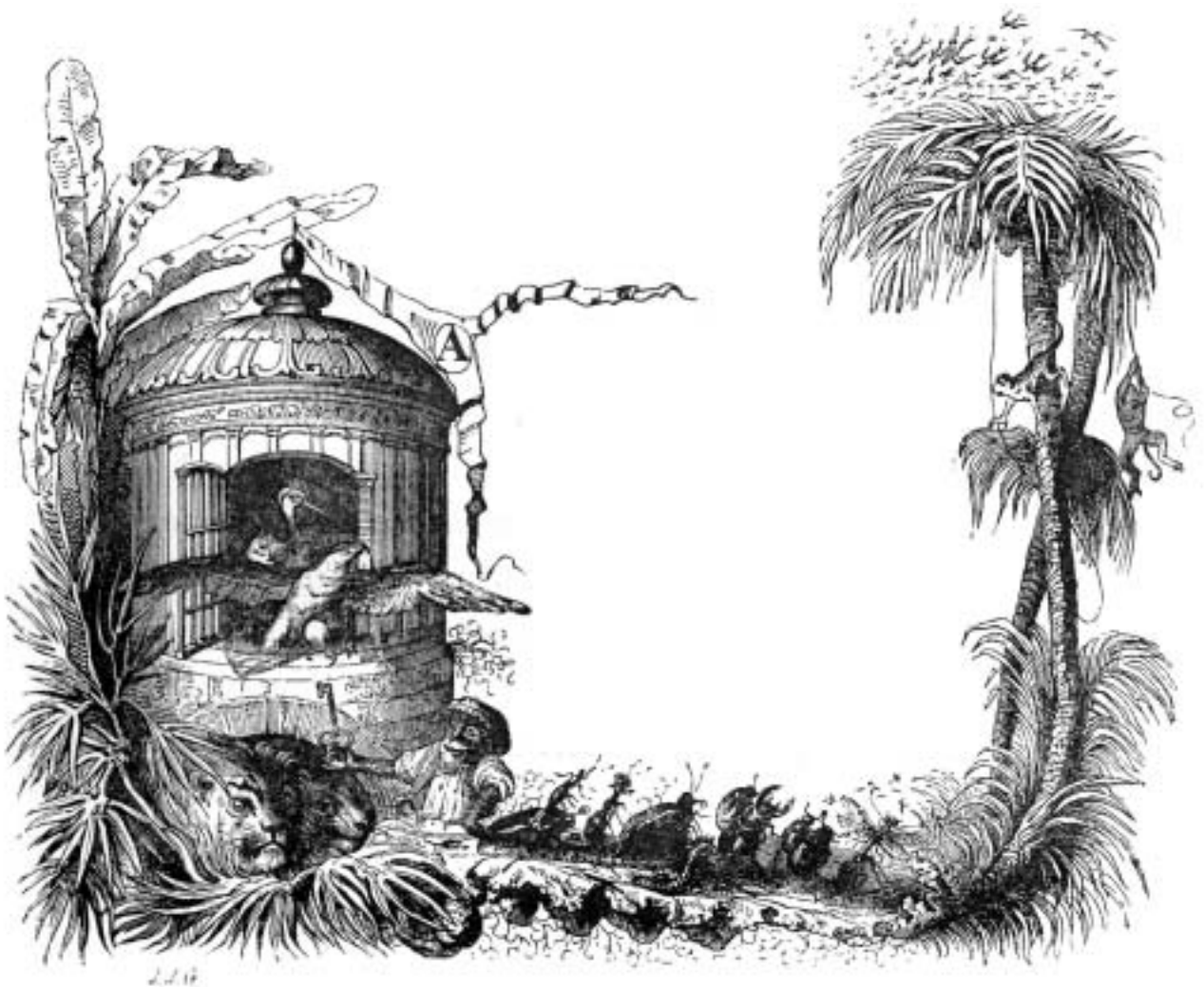


INTRODUCTION

Weary of insult, ignominy, and the constant oppression of man, we, the so-called Lower Animals, have at last resolved to cast off the yoke of our oppressors, who, since the day of their creation, have rendered liberty and equality nothing more than empty names.

A DELIBERATIVE ASSEMBLY HAS BEEN CONSTITUTED, with the full sanction of the Great Animal Powers, to whom we look with confidence for the guidance and support which will enable us to carry out the measures framed for our advancement.

The Assembly has been already convoked. Its first sitting took place, on a lovely spring morning, on the green sward of the Jardin des Plantes. The spot was happily chosen to secure a full attendance of the animals of all nations. In justice to ourselves, let it be known that the proceedings were conducted with the harmony and good manners which the brutes have made peculiarly their own.



INTRODUCTION

An ORANG-OUTANG, fired by his love of liberty, mastered the mechanism of locks, and at night, while the great world slept, opened the iron gates to the prisoners, who walked gravely out to take their seats. A large circle was formed, the DOMESTIC ANIMALS on the right, the INDEPENDENT WANDERERS on the left, and the MOLLUSCS in the centre.

The rising sun, struggling through the gloom, fell upon a scene at once imposing, and full of great historic interest. No assembly of men that ever met on earth could possibly display a more masterly control of passion than did the non-herbivorous and carnivorous members of their powerful instincts. The HYAENA became almost musical, while the notes of the GOOSE were full of deep pathos.

The opening of the Congress was marked by a scene most touching. All the members embraced and kissed each other, in one or two instances with such fervour as to lead to the effusion of blood. In the interests of the Animal Kingdom, it must be recorded that a DUCK was strangled by an overjoyed FOX, a SHEEP by an enthusiastic WOLF, and a HORSE by a delirious TIGER. As ancient feuds had existed between the families, these events were clearly referable to the power of ancestral usage, and the joy of reconciliation.

A BARBARY DUCK chanted a solemn dirge over the body of her companion, who had fallen in the cause of freedom. Before resuming her seat, the member for Barbary made an eloquent speech, urging the Congress to overlook the accidents, and proceed with the orders of the day.

At this moment an unfortunate Siamese Ambassador ELEPHANT was about to propose the abolition of capital punishment. Being a devout Buddhist, he advocated the preservation of life in every form. Unluckily for his doctrine, he had placed his huge foot on a nest of Field-mice, killing both parents and children. A young TOAD, drawing his attention to the melancholy fact overwhelmed him with remorse.

In simple courtesy to the reader, we must state that the report of the proceedings was obtained from a PARROQUET, whose veracity may be trusted, as he only repeats what he has heard. We crave permission to conceal his name. Like the ancient senators of Venice, he has sworn silence on State affairs. In this instance alone he has thrown off his habitual reserve. ■



RESUME OF PROCEEDINGS

ORDER OF THE NIGHT

ONE HOUR AFTER MIDNIGHT

Nomination of President. – Questions relative to the suppression of MAN. – The members of the Left vote for war, the Right for arbitration. – Discussions in which the LION, TIGER, HORSE, NIGHTINGALE, BOAR, and others take part. – The opinion of the FOX, and what came of it.–

This publication is edited conjointly by the APE, PARROQUET, and VILLAGE COCK.

The garden paths are thronged with powerful deputies from the menageries of London, Berlin, Vienna, New York, and St. Petersburg. The Congress promises to be the most successful ever held in Paris. The death of a great French author, who devoted his pen to Natural History, has cast a gloom over the garden. The cultured animals wear crepe, while the bolder spirits, proudly disdaining such symbols of grief, drop their ears and drag their tails along the ground. Here and there distinguished parties are hotly discussing the formation of the Congress, the framing of rules, and the choice of President. The WOLF sits beneath a tree, intently gazing on the Ape, whose careful attire and well-poised eye-glass proclaims man's far-off cousinship to his family.

The CHAMELEON considers the get-up of the APE a graceful tribute to his human kinsman.

The WOLF suggests that «to ape is not to imitate!»

The SNAKE in the glass hisses.

An erudite CROW croaks from his perch, «It would be extremely dangerous to follow in the footsteps of man,» and quotes the well-known line,

«Timeo Danaos et dona ferentes.»

He is loudly congratulated on the happy quotation by a German OWL, well versed in the dead languages.

The BUZZARD devoutly contemplates the two scholars, while the MOCKING-BIRD jeeringly remarks, «One way of passing for a learned biped is by talking to others of things they do not understand.»

The CHAMELEON blushes, and then looks blue. At this moment the MARMOT awoke, to pronounce life a dream. «A dream?» said the SWALLOW, «nay, rather a journey.» The EPHEMERA gasped out, «Too brief, too brief,» and died.

The question of the Presidency brings the scattered groups to the centre of the garden, and to business. When all are seated and expectant, the Ass brays out silence, quite needlessly, as the only audible sound was caused by a FLEA sneezing in his ear. His supporters had prepared a speech for him, and his assurance, gravity, and weight obtained him a hearing. It was whispered that the honourable member was about to move that his ancient policy of progressing backward should be steadily kept in view. The orator, so adjusting his ears as to catch the faintest murmur of applause, flourished his tail impressively, and proceeded—«Fellow-quadrupeds, and brother brutes of all climes and conditions, the question of the Presidency of this noble Assembly is one of primary importance. In order to lift the burdens from your backs, as the lineal

descendant of Balaam's ass, I offer myself as candidate for the position, hedged round as it is with difficulty and danger. It is needless to remind you of the hereditary attributes which qualify me for the office of President - firmness verging on obstinacy, patience under affliction and a rooted determination to kick against all opposition.» Here the speaker was interrupted by the WOLF, who protested against the presumption of this slave of man. Stung to the heart, the honourable Ass was about to indulge his time-honoured habit of kicking up his heels, when he was called to order by the BEAR.

«Brothers,» said the BEAR, «let not the heat of party feeling, added to the stifling air of Paris, compel me to return to my native clime, the North Pole. There my suffering has been great, but in the Arctic Circle I can grin and bear it as becomes my nature. Here, in a circle so refined, such brawling is only fit for men whose fiery tempers dry up the fountain of their love.» The Seal trembled at the sound of the dreaded voice.

The LION roared and restored order, while the FOX unobserved slipped into the tribune, and in a brief but subtle speech so eulogised the MULE - who carried a useful appendage in the shape of a bell - that he was chosen President.

The MULE takes the chair, and the tinkling of his bell is followed by silence broken for an instant by the WATCH-DOG - who fancied himself at his master's door - gruffly inquiring, «Who's there?»

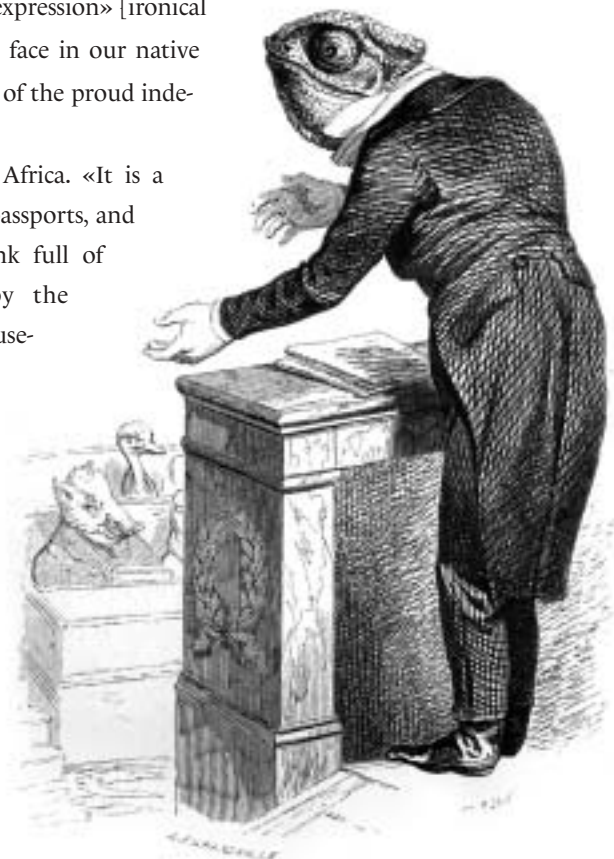
The WOLF casts a scornful glance at the poor confused brute.

The PARROQUET and CAT, preparing quills supplied by the GOOSE, seat themselves at the table as Secretaries.

The LION ascends the tribune with imposing gravity; «shaking the dewdrops from his mane,» he denounces in a voice of thunder the tyranny of MANKIND, and continues: «There is but one way of escape open for all! Fly with me to Africa, to the sweet solitudes of boundless deserts and primeval forests, where we can hold our own against the inroads of degenerate humanity! Far from sheltering walls man is powerless against the noble animals I see around me. Cities are men's refuge, and few there are of the lion-hearted among them, if I may use the expression» [ironical cheers from the Tiger], «who would meet us face to face in our native wilds.» The speaker concluded with a glowing picture of the proud independence of animal life in Africa.

The ELEPHANT advocated emigration to Central Africa. «It is a land,» said he, «where teeth and tusks are excellent passports, and where every traveller ought to carry his own trunk full of water.» This latter remark was objected to by the HIPPOPOTAMUS, who held that water would be more useful if left in swamps and rivers.

Hereupon the DOG protested that nothing could equal city life, and was put down by the TIGER, WOLF, and HYAENA. As for the TIGER, with a terrific howl he leaped into the tribune bellowing out, «War! blood! Nothing short of the utter extermination of man will establish the security of the Animal Kingdom. Great generals seize great occasions. Did not Rabbits undermine Tarragona? Did not liquor conquer Alexander the Great? The doom of the human race is sealed, its world-wide sway ended!



The savage despots have driven us from our homes, hewn down our forests, burned our jungles, ploughed up our prairies, scooped out the solid world to build their begrimed cities, lay their railroads, warm their thin blood, roast our flesh for food.

Torturing, slaying, and playing the devil right and left, men have trod the skins of my ancestors under foot, worn our claws and teeth as talismans, poisoned us, imprisoned us, dried and stuffed us, and set us to mimic our bold natures beside mummies in museums. Down with them, I say! Down with the tyrants!» Here the orator paused, he caught sight of a tear glistening in the eye of a lamb, his teeth watered, and his claws crept out at the sight of this gentle tribute to his eloquence.

«Well may you weep, sweet one. He, man, robbed your mother of her fleece to clothe his guilty limbs, stole her life and devoured her, head and all. But why recall our wrongs? Is it not enough that he deprived us of our birthright? The world was ours before his advent, and he brought with him misery, confusion, death!» The TIGER concluded with an appeal to all beasts of prey to fight for liberty.

An old RACE-HORSE, now a poor hack, begged permission to say a few words.



«Noble beasts, I must confess myself more familiar with sporting life than politics, or with the questions under discussion. I have, in my day, lived in clover; latterly the neglect and brutality of my human taskmasters have caused me much suffering. I am descended from a noble stock, the bluest blood of the turf circulates in my veins; but alas! I disappointed my first owners, and was soon sent adrift on the world. I was yoked in the last Royal Mail on the road, and earned my hay gallantly, until the accursed railways ruined my prospects. I beg humbly to move the abolition of steam traffic, and that the influential members of Congress should send me to grass, that I may end my days in the green fields, enjoying some State sinecure. Depend upon it, no one is more deserving of your sympathy and support than the reduced member of a noble family.»

The President was so moved by this appeal, that he left the chair, announcing an interval of ten minutes.

The tinkle of the bell summons the delegates to their places, which they take with a promptitude that bears witness to their zeal.

The NIGHTINGALE alights on the tribune, and in a gush of melody prays for bluer heavens and serener nights. He is called to order, as, notwithstanding the purity of his notes, he had proposed no tangible measure of reform. The ASS takes exception to the songster's low notes, as wanting in asinine richness.

A modest CAMEL from Mecca proposes that men should be taught to use their legs in place of the backs of higher animals. This proposal is greeted with the applause of equine animals, including the President, who, discovering that the claims of this distinguished foreigner had been overlooked, inquires as to the future of Turkish finance.

The CAMEL replies with much good sense, «There is one God, and Mahomet is his prophet!»

The PIG here gave it out as her opinion that trouble will never end until men are compelled to abjure the faith of Mahomet, respect Pigs, supply unlimited food and drink, and abolish sanitary law, so as to give nature free scope to expand.

An old BOAR - accused by his foes of wandering about farmyards - complimented the PIG on her good taste, suggesting, at the same time, that the absence of sanitary law might tend to poison the political atmosphere. Mrs Pig protested against insinuations calculated to mix up piggeries with politics.

The Fox, who had been taking notes, ascended the tribune and commenced -

«It is with great satisfaction that I rise to offer one or two remarks on the able speeches of the honourable members of this Congress. Before reviewing the various propositions, I take this opportunity of saying, that never throughout my diplomatic career have I witnessed harmony more perfect.



Never has there been a more profound display of unanimity of sentiment than in the wagging tails of this wise assembly. The tail is the chief attribute coveted by man.

'Right you are,' growled an old SPORTING-DOG.

That by the way; to return to business, nothing could be nobler than the proposal of the LION to establish and defend our animal commonwealth in Africa. It must not, however, be forgotten that that continent is distant, and inaccessible to many useful members of the Congress, industrial animals, who might succumb to savage warfare or malaria.

«The allusion of the DOG to the joys of city life is not without interest; but he is the slave of man. Mark his collar, inscribed with some barbarous name!» The subject of comment scratches his ear, and the MOCKING-BIRD observes that his ears must have been cropped to imitate man.

«For an instant - carried away by the tide of his eloquence - I shared the ardour of the TIGER, and almost lent my voice to the war-cry. War is very good for those who escape; but it leaves in its train orphans and widows to be provided for by the survivors. Therefore it is not an unmixed good, more especially as right does not always triumph.

«The reasoning of the PIG is both good and bad, and like that of the BOAR, is more calculated to affect pork than progress.

«I take you all to witness that peace, war, and liberty are alike impossible for all. We are all agreed that evil exists somewhere, and that something must be done.

- Loud cheers. -

I have now the honour to propose a new, untried remedy.

- Great excitement. -

The only reasonable, lawful, and sacred course to follow is to struggle for knowledge.

Why not take a leaf from human experience, and employ the Press to make known our wants, aspirations, customs, and usages, our public and private life.

«Naturalists imagine they have done all when they have analysed our blood, and endeavoured to find out the secret of our noble instinct from our physical organisation.

«We alone can relate our griefs, our patience under suffering, and our joys - joys so rare to creatures on which the hand of man has pressed so heavily.» The speaker paused to conceal his emotion. He continued: «Yes, we must publish our wrongs.

«A word to the ladies. The circle which they most adorn is that of home, and to them must we look for information - jotted down in leisure hours - on domestic subjects. Let them eschew politics.



A lady politician is a creature to be avoided. I have further to crave the indulgence of this noble assembly in submitting the following articles-

«ARTICLE 1ST. - It is proposed to vote unlimited funds to carry out the Illustrated Public and Private History of Animals; the funds to be invested in Turkish Securities and Peruvian Bonds.»

A Member of the Left proposes to take charge of the money-bag. The MOLE suggests that the funds should be sunk in certain dark mining companies, of which he is an active director.

This proposal is negated by the CODFISH, who is of opinion that they would be safer at the bottom of the sea, as molehills have hitherto proved unremunerative. A HEN came forward with her CHICKENS, saying, as she had a number of little bills standing open and which must be honoured, she would take part of the coin as a temporary loan, and do her best to lay golden eggs.

This suggestion was referred to a select committee, and here the matter dropped.

«ARTICLE 2D. - The Journal of the Animals must combat ignorance and bad faith, the joint enemies of truth. This entire matter to be edited by competent brutes, in order to disarm criticism.

«ARTICLE 3D. - Men must be employed to perform the drudgery of printing.

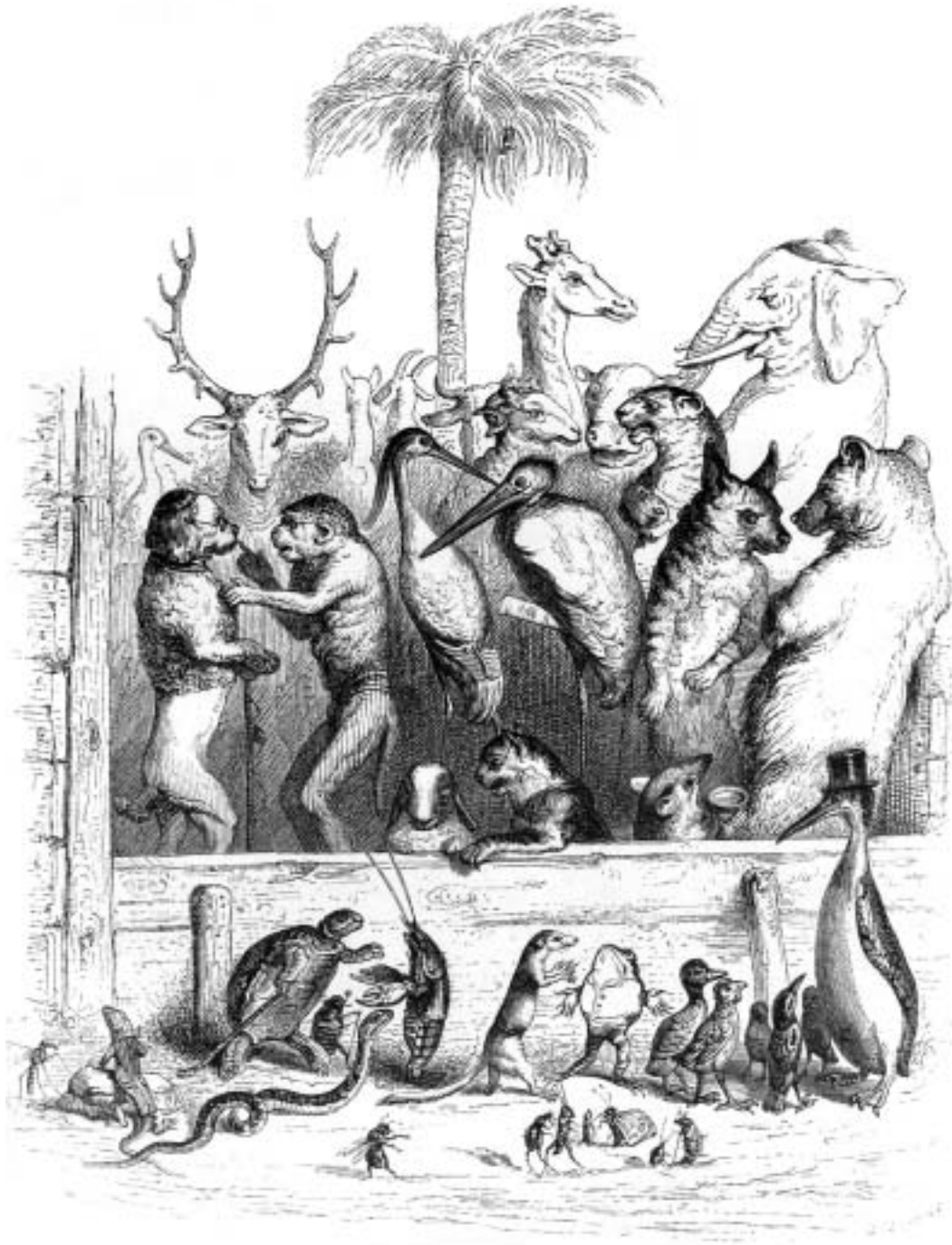
«ARTICLE 4D - The FOX must find an intelligent philanthropic publisher.»

Here the FOX shook his head dolefully, and said he would try.

«I have,» he continued, «imposed on myself the severest task of all, as the profits of publication must, for a long time, be absorbed in corrections, discounts, and advertising.

A vote of confidence passed in favour of the speaker's integrity and ability closed the proceedings. Before the Assembly broke up, it was announced, amid loud applause, that the APE, PARROQUET, and VILLAGE COCK would enter at once on their duties as Editors in Chief of the *Public and Private lives of Animals*, and that the work would open with the «History of a Hare.»







*We may be able to recognise ourselves
in some of the interlocutors.*

Enrique Barón

Les textes figurant dans cet ouvrage sont extraits des éditions suivantes :

Scènes de la vie privée et publique des animaux, Hetzel, Paris, 1842, sous la direction de P.J. Stahl.

Grandville Bilder aus dem Staats- und Familienleben der Tiere, Insel Verlag Frankfurt am Main, 1976, d'après l'édition rédigée par le Dr. A. Diezmann en 1846.

Public and private life of animals, Paddington Press, 1977. Reprint de l'édition de 1877 publiée par S. Law, Marsion, Searle & Rivington, London.

Escenas y costumbres de la vida pública y privada de los animales, José J. de Olañeta Editor, Palma de Mallorca 1984. Fac-similé de la publication originale de Celestino Verdaguier, Editor, Barcelona, 1880.

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“Three times the speaker issues a war cry. The Ox and the Donkey cry out from their seats, ‘yes, yes’. The Bittern asks for a call to order. The Pig grunts to ask for an interruption of the sitting. The Lion, who is chairing the sitting, roars like thunder.”

This session report, drafted by an administrator from Strasbourg and a regular in the hemicycle, will probably cause “the bitterness of interrupted sympathies”. Enrique Barón, President of the Socialist Group in the European Parliament, runs the risk, in offering this text, “The Animal Parliament”, of also reviving excellent memories.

The Monkey, adjusting his pince-nez, says, “the sweetest of victories is our intellectual struggle .” That is the best we have. Yes, that is the best we will have.

