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AT A PUBLIC MEETING ***

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The Donkey
The Elephant
and The Goat

At A Public Meeting

By
J. P. BUSCHLEN



Price Twenty-five Cents

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The Donkey, the Elephant and the Goat

At A Public Meeting

By

J. P. Buschlen

ELEPHANT

You see me here, an elephant,
A symbol of the mighty--

DONKEY

The while you listen to his cant
Remember he is flighty....
I come to you, a donkey wise,
With pedigree unlowly--

ELEPHANT

Beware this fellow's sleepy eyes
And manner smooth and holy....
As Barnum used to say to me
When oft we strolled together,
"The people seem to like to be
Led round upon a tether."
And so, I see, I've got to speak
With these unwholesome creatures,
Since you, dear folks, have been so weak
As to invite such preachers.

DONKEY

If I may but inject a word,
I think it most plebe'an
To class me with a goat. Absurd!

GOAT

A mule is always mean.

ELEPHANT

When P. T. bade me fond adieu,
Good people, I departed
To where I could be serving you
More whole-and-single hearted;
I packed my grip and trumpeted
The news of my arrival,
That you might follow where I led
And join a great revival.

DONKEY

His boastful manner ill becomes
A thing of such proportions.

ELEPHANT

I made this land a world of homes--

GOAT

And laws with strange contortions.

DONKEY

I do not wish to interpose,
But, sir, you are addressing
A body whom we may suppose
Would call your death a blessing.
If you could boast a lineage
Like mine, you might be pardoned
For occupying all the stage
And holding views so hardened.

GOAT

I'm glad I'm but a simple goat
With humble beard and frocking;
My people were of little note--

ELEPHANT

I think, sir, I was talking.
And I would have it understood
That I will put my prestige
Against a Southern neighborhood,
Or aught of Southern vestige.
Besides, if Noah didn't lie,
The morning he went arking,
My wife and family and I
Were also there, embarking.
I'd grudge the honor to a goat,
But this presumptive donkey,
Although he gets the southern vote,
Descended from a monkey.

GOAT

In view of what I've done to you
I forego the distinction
Of being dragged the ages through
From ape to near-extinction.

ELEPHANT

If I would seem, as Mule implies,
Inclined myself to flatter,
Is not some credit due to size
And to a good standpatter?
Has not the jungle that I rule
Been growing more efficient?
Go ask most any knave or fool
And get you proof sufficient!

DONKEY

You seem the fact to quite ignore,
You tusky, trunky sinner,
That I have been in power; what's more
Will be again the winner.

GOAT

Come now, we'll get nowhere with this--
Why not attack the issue,
And tell the people how it is
We're made of different tissue?

DONKEY

We are indeed, and that's a fact
For which I'm truly grateful;

ELEPHANT

And so I am, to be exact.
(Aside to D.) This goat is very hateful.

DONKEY

Your challenge, Goat, do I accept.
I represent a party
Which never through the years has slept
And still is hale and hearty.

GOAT

How could it sleep when both its eyes
Were flirting with the bosses?
May not you later realize
Your gains were often losses?...

ELEPHANT

If I may say a word or two
About this great Republic:
The party I have given you
Has made its actions public;
No secret has it e'er denied
The masses it protected.

GOAT

So ably has the rascal lied,
The ass is quite dejected.

ELEPHANT

The best of old New England blood
Within its veins is flowing;
Its sons have fought for every good--

GOAT

Old grafter in the "showing."

ELEPHANT

When donkeys in the cotton states
Were riding on the niggers
We cancelled all their riding dates--

GOAT

And made them all blind-piggers.

ELEPHANT

We built a mighty commonwealth
Against great opposition,
Improving faith and moral health--

DONKEY

And fostering sedition!
I think it's time for me to speak,
In patriotic phrases:
To sit in silence here were weak,
The while himself he praises.
The party that I represent
And have the voice and manner
To here so faithfully present,
Has carried high its banner.
From fine old Southern gentle stock
Its stalwarts have arisen--

GOAT

To better populate the dock,
The army and the prison.

DONKEY

We would have won the Civil War--

GOAT

Had Palmer then existed--

DONKEY

But several southerners were for
The armies that resisted.
For office we have never run
A man who lacked in breeding,
As these Republicans have done,
Their low traditions heeding.
And did not we, the Democrats,
Win out against the German,
When all the world was dogs and cats--?

GOAT

And soldiers fought the vermin?

ELEPHANT

Good donkey, we have had enough
Of your election wheezing;
Besides, that ancient family-stuff
Has got the goat, here, sneezing--
And when a thing's too strong for one
So strong for Townley jingo,
I think it time that you had done
With your disgusting lingo.

GOAT

Again I beg to urge you two
That you confine your phrases
To what you've done and aim to do
To earn the people's praises.

ELEPHANT

I've done as much as one could wish
Since Wilson ruled the nation--

DONKEY

He shows the judgment of a fish
In his absurd inflation.

ELEPHANT

All eyes are fixed on me, I say,
Nor will I disappoint them;
With thanks will I their faith repay--

GOAT

And oily words anoint them.

ELEPHANT

I'll bring back Lincoln from the grave,
Converting all the Palmers;
The world for business will I save--

GOAT

And jail the blasted farmers.

DONKEY

When I again am called to reign,
As I will be this autumn,
I'll show you men of brawn and brain--

GOAT

Obeying them who bought 'em.

DONKEY

I'll rule with e'en a firmer hand
Than you have seen me doing,
And make the alien understand--

GOAT

His blood requires blueing...
Now look here, boys, the audience
Is patiently awaiting
A dozen facts, a little sense--
You've done enough bull-baiting.
Give them the thing you're standing for--
They're standing for aplenty!--

DONKEY

I'd like to now discuss the war--

ELEPHANT

He rambles on like Henty!

DONKEY

We showed the flag to every land,
We swept the boundless ocean,
And yet we never showed our hand,
Nor truckled to emotion.
We made the foreigner behave,
The mighty and the small; and
We sent the Kaiser to his grave--

GOAT

I thought he was in Holland?

DONKEY

We made the pacifists obey
Our able war-directors,
And handled things without delay--

GOAT

Especially war-objectors.

ELEPHANT

We grant you this to brag about,
But when our party's saddled
We'll give you ample room for doubt--

GOAT

On issues ably straddled.

ELEPHANT

I think you'll then admit that while
You did what you were able,
You lacked our more successful wile
In keeping business stable.

GOAT

Your windy generalities
Have left the country gasping--

DONKEY

He's started in again to wheeze!

ELEPHANT

His voice is very rasping!

GOAT

You've camouflaged the issue, boys,
As people are perceiving,
With waving flags and vocal noise--

ELEPHANT

(To D.) His whiskers are deceiving!

GOAT

The cry is for a loaf of bread--
You offer but a promise;
The methods you employ are dead--

DONKEY

(To E.) He'd take our living from us!

GOAT

You're living in a day gone by,
Oblivious of the present,
While women weep and children die--

ELEPHANT

He's getting most unpleasant!

GOAT

The world is full of concrete needs,
And this land's no exception,
Of problems that will yield to deeds
But never to deception.
I've sat here list'ning to the views
That you have ventilated:
Now maybe for the sake of news
You'll hear **my** doctrine stated?

DONKEY

I cannot see how anything
A billygoat might proffer
Could any new idea bring?

ELEPHANT

'Tis not a legal offer.

DONKEY

And while about it might I say,
I fail of comprehending
Just why this meeting here today
Has been so condescending
As to invite, with you and me,
Dear tusky friend, this creature
So lacking in camaraderie
And so uncouth of feature!

ELEPHANT

Indeed I cannot but agree,
Dear Donkey, with your premise,
And much I doubt that you should see
Me weeping at his demise.

GOAT

Are these the gentlemen we saw
So recently atussle,
Inventing words, within the law,
Each other's goat to hustle?
How strange that at a word of mine
They swing around together?
You will, perhaps, recall a line
That mentions "birds o' feather."

DONKEY

The atmosphere is getting close--
Will some one draw the curtain?

ELEPHANT

(Whispering) I wonder does he just suppose,
Or does he know for certain?

GOAT

If I'm beyond your courtesy,
I still have vocal powers,
So lend those mighty ears to me
For half a dozen hours.
I know that I am but a goat
All battered by the weather,
But in this land I have a vote,
And I won't sell it, ne'ther!
I represent a class of men
And women who have struggled
Against the tide, while you have been
"Retained" and dined and--juggled.
While you and yours have raked the gold
We've raked the burning stubble;
While we lay frozen in the cold
You froze our chances double.
We went to you for years and years
In bitter anguish pleading:
You answered us with silent jeers
And left us bruised and bleeding.
As long as mortals could endure
We stood your joint oppression,
And then we sought and found a cure--
Which now is your obsession.

DONKEY

A cure, he says, a cure--ha! ha!
He means to say affliction!

ELEPHANT

A goat can only bunt and bah,
Its wisdom is a fiction!

GOAT

You see, you will not challenge me,
You merely hurl invective;
You fear the home-made guns that we
Have turned on our objective.
Well, be it so, I still can speak,
As long as ears will listen,
And give you facts to fill your beak,
O birds I cannot christen!
Where I was born we give the farms
And homes to those who need them;
We have a method that disarms
The man who would misdeed them.
We make the law the advocate
Of common people, mainly,
By placing it **beneath** the state,
Where it can serve humanely.
We guard the tiller of the soil
Before the speculator;
The man who lives on others' toil
We count a second-rater.
The state is servant to the mass--
I don't go much on Nietzsche,
And so the Elephant and Ass
Are anxious to impeach me!
But where, O symbols of the wise
In statesmanship and honor,
Were nations ever known to rise
Who catered to a donor?
What people ever reached the heights
Of art and all we cherish,
By local threats and foreign fights?
Their fate is but to perish!
The only thing that made this land
As great as we have found it,
Was justice to whatever band
Saw fit to cluster round it.
Our fathers met them at the shore,
The stranger and wayfarer,
And gave them all they asked, and more--
Became their burden-bearer.
But now how different it is!
The timid voice that raises
A feeble cry for what is his
Gets hustled off to Blazes!

DONKEY

He very much exaggerates,
And what atrocious wording!

ELEPHANT

He merely bellows, bahs and bleats--
A habit formed in herding.

GOAT

The workers that I represent
Are not of one vocation,
But every one who earns a cent
Has there an invitation.
The platform that we stand upon
Is not a sheet of paper,
A speech about the rosy dawn,
A song of purple vapor;
You'll find it in the farmer's home,
And on the worker's table,
Where mortgagers would like to come--
If only they were able.
You'll find it in the common school,
The mine, the shop, the kitchen,
And where the wheat's begun to stool,
And Hi the Ford is hitchin'.
You'll find it, Brother Elephant,
In frigid North Dakota,
Where "Frazier, Ladd and Townley can't
Affect us one iota!"
You'll find it, Donkey, on the flood,
If you've a will to find it,
And if your promises are good
You'll get right in behind it!

DONKEY

(To the Elephant) The interview is at an end
So far as I'm concerned.

ELEPHANT

(To the Donkey) And as for me, my dearest friend,
The meeting is adjourned.
(Donkey and Elephant shake hands and go
offstage together.)

GOAT

Good citizens, the hour is late,
And you are doubtless tired;
I leave you to your bitter fate,
Since Jack and Jill retired.
But may I urge before you go:
Preserve that sense of humor,
For often it will serve to show
The folly of a rumor!
A laugh will often kill a lie,
Where sermons fail completely;
So let us laugh until we die--
And even then smile sweetly.

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