

The Frogs Asking A King

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A certain commonwealth aquatic,
Grown tired of order democratic,
By clamouring in the ears of Jove, effected
Its being to a monarch's power subjected.
Jove flung it down, at first, a king pacific.
Who nathless fell with such a splash terrific,
The marshy folks, a foolish race and timid,
Made breathless haste to get from him hid.
They dived into the mud beneath the water,
Or found among the reeds and rushes quarter.
And long it was they dared not see
The dreadful face of majesty,
Supposing that some monstrous frog
Had been sent down to rule the bog.
The king was really a log,
Whose gravity inspired with awe
The first that, from his hiding-place
Forth venturing, astonished, saw
The royal blockhead's face.
With trembling and with fear,
At last he drew quite near.
Another followed, and another yet,
Till quite a crowd at last were met;
Who, growing fast and strangely bolder,
Perched soon on the royal shoulder.
His gracious majesty kept still,
And let his people work their will.
Clack, clack! what din beset the ears of Jove?
"We want a king," the people said, "to move!"
The god straight sent them down a crane,
Who caught and slew them without measure,
And gulped their carcasses at pleasure;
Whereat the frogs more wofully complain.
"What! what!" great Jupiter replied;
"By your desires must I be tied?
Think you such government is bad?
You should have kept what first you had;
Which having blindly failed to do,
It had been prudent still for you
To let that former king suffice,
More meek and mild, if not so wise.
With this now make yourselves content,
Lest for your sins a worse be sent."