

THE FROGS WHO ASKED FOR A KING

THERE were once some Frogs who lived together in perfect security in a beautiful lake. They were a large company, and were very comfortable, but they came to think that they might be still happier if they had a King to rule over them.

So they sent to Jupiter, their god, to ask him to give them a King.

Jupiter laughed at their folly, for he knew that they were better off as they were; but he said to them, "Well, here is a King for you," and into the water he threw a big Log.

It fell with such a splash that the Frogs were terrified and hid themselves in the deep mud under the water.

By and by, one braver than the rest peeped out to look at the King, and saw the Log, as it lay quietly on the top of the water. Soon, one after another they all came out of their hiding places and ventured to look at their great King.

As the Log did not move, they swam round it, keeping a safe distance away, and at last one by one hopped upon it.

"This is not a King," said a wise old Frog; "it is nothing but a stupid Log. If we had a King, Jupiter would pay more attention to us."

Again they sent to Jupiter, and begged him to give them a King who could rule over them.

Jupiter did not like to be disturbed again by the silly Frogs, and this time he sent them a Stork, saying, "You will have some one to rule over you now."

As they saw the Stork solemnly walking down to the lake, they were delighted.

"Ah!" they said, "see how grand he looks! How he strides along! How he throws back his head! This is a King indeed. He shall rule over us," and they went joyfully to meet him.

As their new King came nearer, he paused, stretched out his long neck, picked up the head Frog, and swallowed him at one mouthful. And then the next—and the next!

"What is this?" cried the Frogs, and they began to draw back in terror.

But the Stork with his long legs easily followed them to the water, and kept on eating them as fast as he could.

"Oh! if we had only been—" said the oldest Frog. He was going to add "content," but was eaten up before he could finish the sentence.

The remaining Frogs cried to Jupiter to help them, but he would not listen. And the Stork-King ate them for breakfast, dinner, and supper, every day, till in a short time there was not a Frog left in the lake. Poor, foolish Frogs, not to have known when they were well off.