

**SCENES FROM THE  
FROGS OF  
ARISTOPHANES**

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Scenes from The Frogs of Aristophanes by A. Sidgwick

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**T**HE Frogs is a comedy written to throw ridicule on Euripides, and on the tons of thought which he promoted and represented. Aristophanes was, if we may call him by a modern name, a rigid Conservative of the most unflinching type. He looked with the greatest abhorrence upon the gradual development of Democracy at Athens; as well the principle itself, as the admitted evils which accompanied it. In the old times, he thought, the state had been well ruled; the standard of patriotism, valour, piety and simplicity of life, developed by the Persian Wars, had been a very high and noble one; and since Democracy had begun to rear its head, everything had changed continuously for the worse. The government was in the hands of the vulgarst, loudest, and corruptest demagogues, whose valour was shamelessness, and whose patriotism was avarice; art was degenerate; manners were degraded; religion was undermined; morality was shaken; and all social stability was endangered.

Of those who had promoted this change, Euripides manifestly was one of the most eminent. In his poetry, which attained a vast popularity at Athens, and won a proportionate influence, Aristophanes found everything combined to excite his indignation. The grandeur, the nobility, the massiveness, the piety, the reverence for old institutions and modes of thought, which had rung through every line of Aeschylus, was lost. In its place was only infinite cleverness, as fatal as it was attractive. No old established belief was safe from the new spirit of questioning and subtle criticism. The Gods, the constitution, the wisdom of ancestors, the common principles of morality, the social and domestic virtues, all in their turn were submitted to the action of this novel scepticism, and all in their turn suffered by it. These blind guides were the worst enemies of the state; and against