

THE FROGS

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The Frogs by Aristophanes

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ARISTOPHANES

THE FROGS

THE
FROGS OF ARISTOPHANES,

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TO
THE MARQUIS OF LANSDOWNE, K. G.
WHO HAS EVER BEEN THE WARM FRIEND
AND UNOSTENTATIOUS PATRON
OF LITERATURE,
THIS TRANSLATION IS RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED
BY HIS OBEDIENT SERVANT
CHARLES CAVENDISH CLIFFORD.

P R E F A C E.

IT is with much diffidence that I venture to publish a translation of this singular play. Many of the quotations are from books lost to us, and many of the allusions to persons of whom no other record has survived. What probably drew peals of laughter from a ready audience has nigh baffled the abstruse researches of anxious commentators, who seem to have taken their revenge by calling one another the hardest possible names. Unable to claim any merit of research myself, I have benefited by their labours, and in the case of a disputed passage have always adopted that reading which seemed most probable. Some of the jests are certainly not very refined, but any one acquainted with the original will at once perceive how considerably they have been softened down in the translation, and in one or two instances the real meaning has been altered. I fear much of the wit has evaporated in the process.

C. C. C.

CHARACTERS.

XANTHIAS.
BACCHUS.
HERCULES.
CORPSE.
CHARON.
CHORUS OF FROGS.
CHORUS.
ÆACUS.
MAID-SERVANT OF PROSERPINE.
LANDLADIES A & B.
EURIPIDES.
ÆSCHYLUS.
PLUTO.

THE FROGS OF ARISTOPHANES.

[Enter BACCHUS on foot dressed in the skin of the Nemean Lion, and the club of Hercules in his hand. —XANTHUS heavily laden on an ass.]

Xan. SAY, master mine, would you that I should crack

One of those standing jokes upon the stage
Which always make the tickled audience laugh ?

Ba. Say what you will, save that you are "knocked up ;"

Sink that, I pray you, it is threadbare worn——

Xan. Ought else you wish ? *Ba.* Don't feign yourself "dead beat."

Xan. May I speak nothing funny ? *Ba.* Pooh, man, pooh,

Pluck up good heart and try, only beware,
Don't let me catch you saying this. *Xan.* What's that ?

Ba. That you must shift your peck to ease yourself.

Xan. Well, may I say, unless some person kind

Take this tremendous burden off my back,
Saving your presence, I shall break——good manners !

Ba. Not so, unless you wish to make me sick.

Xan. Why what the deuce am I, all this to bear,

And yet may not repeat a single thing
That Phrynichus and Lycis and Ameipsias
Put in men's mouths, when on the boards they stagger
Beneath great weights ? *Ba.* When at the play I hear
These stale absurdities, I go away

Just older by a year than when I came.