

## THE FOOLISH FROG

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This article is adapted from the "Young People's Magazine."



Looking through an old volume which friends had lent me, my eye lit on a piece entitled, "The Foolish Frog." Wondering what spiritual or moral lesson a foolish frog might have to teach, I read the article through and so found out. A minister had written it. He kept a horse in his barn, and it drank from a trough whose supply came from a spring quite a way up the hill. This had the good effect of giving a fast-running supply of the fine spring water. At the spring there was a tank, and the pipe leading from it to the trough in the barn was placed about six inches beneath the surface. In this position no floating dust or scum entered the pipe, nor did any of the sediment at the bottom. Now we can let the minister go on with the story.

"A little frog had found his way into the spring. He was bigger than a tadpole and smaller than a wise frog. He could go where he pleased, for he knew how to dive. He did not have to stay at the bottom with the dregs, for he knew how to swim. So he kicked out his little hind legs and swam all round the spring, doing just what he pleased.

"Eventually he saw the little round black hole which was the top end of the pipe. He wondered where it led to. He put his nose in and felt the pull of the water. This scared him a little, so he backed away. But it was such a funny feeling to be sucked that way; it felt kind of good around his nose; so he swam up and looked in again. He went in about half an inch, and then the water took a hand and he was drawn in completely. So, along he went, half swimming, half being drawn along by the flow, and wondering all the while where this dark and mysterious journey would lead him. At last he came to where the pipe makes a bend for my barn and parts company with the main pipe, which continues further downhill to a neighbor's. Here the little frog found quieter water, and a kick of his legs took him up into a very still, dark place close by the trough where the horse drinks. 'Well,' said he, 'it's a snug place here, but rather lonely and dark.'

"Now and then he thought of the spring, and the light, and the splendid room he used to have to swim in, and he tried to swim back. But always he was defeated by the current and finished up back in the quiet place beside the trough. By-and-by he grew contented there. The water brought him enough to eat, so he shut his eyes, stopped exercising altogether, and became fatter. Yet, as he had no room to grow very big in

the pipe, he had to grow long instead. But he grew as big as he could, till at last he stopped the pipe.

"Then I had to go out and see what was the matter, for the horse had nothing to drink. I removed a little plug and probed the pipe with a thick wire. Yes, there was a leathery, springy something which yielded to my pushing and allowed some water to come up. What could it be? I wondered. So I removed the big plug as well and, selecting a long, strong rod, stabbed and churned several times and then let the water run. With the water came a great, long, red and white, and bleeding frog. He was too injured to live. Anything that gets sucked into a pipe and grows up in those dark places has to come out dead, and all in pieces. I wondered how such a big frog could ever have gotten into so small a pipe. Then a wise lady in the house told me, 'Why, he went in when he was young and foolish, and grew up in there.'



"I cannot get that poor frog out of my mind. He was so like some young folks I have seen. They frolicked up to the door of a theater, or they stood and looked into a barroom, or they just wanted to go to one ball, or got out behind the barn to smoke a pipe, or went off riding with someone without asking leave or some way put their foolish noses into a dark hole which felt funny, and led, they didn't know where. Pretty soon, in they go. When they want to get back, they can't; and they grow bigger and more wicked, and all out of shape in that dark place. If they come out at last, they are all jammed up, knocked to pieces, sick, or dying, or dead. When I see them in their last sleep, I hear folks ask, 'How came he to waste his life like that?' 'What made him drink himself to death?' 'How happened she to go off to infamy?' 'How came he to be gambling mad?'

"Then I shall answer as the wise lady told me about the frog: 'They went in when they were little and foolish and grew up there.' An evil habit hugs a man tighter and jams him out of shape worse than my pipes did that poor frog."

Since neither human nature nor temptations change, the lesson to be learned from the foolish frog is as appropriate today as it was when this story was written. The stage of life when young people emerge from the shelter and safety of the home-circle and enter the world of adult responsibilities and privileges is a dangerous one. Some leave school and in their employment encounter people holding very different religious views and moral standards. The taunt, "Behind the times," the sneer, "Goody-goody," the pressure to join in new social activities may be hard to resist. These new ways and pastimes may have the same pleasurable attraction as the feel of the water suction to the nose



of the little frog. But once entered upon, these ways may prove to be paths of no return leading on to irreligion and ungodliness. *"There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death"* (Proverbs 16:25).

The same danger faces the young student away from home at college or university. He encounters so many new ways of thinking and new courses of action that are contrary to what was learned in his home, that he has more need than ever of reading and praying over the Word of God, seeking Him in the public means of grace, and choosing the company of those who fear the Lord. Above all, there is the urgent need that these young men and women should seek grace to obey the divine command to repent of sin and believe on Christ for salvation. Only as they receive grace to renounce all ideas of personal righteousness and thankfully receive by faith the righteousness of Christ to be their only covering and standing before God, shall they have spiritual life and eternal salvation. And only as they are given to realize that their own power of will to resist evil is a delusion, and cast themselves wholly upon the care of the Savior, will they be delivered out of all temptations and enabled to live uprightly and honorably, to the glory of God, the joy and satisfaction of friends, and the good of society in their day.