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? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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FROGS AS RAIN-MAKERS

The intimate association of frogs and toads with water, says Frazer in "The Golden Bough," has earned for these creatures a widespread reputation as custodians of rain, hence they often play a part in the processes by which superstitious races attempt to draw water from the sky.

"Some of the Indians of the Orinoco," he says, "held the toad to be the god or lord of the waters, and for that reason feared to kill the creature, even when they were ordered to do so. They have been known to keep frogs under a pot and to beat them with rods when there was a drought. It is said that the Aymara Indians of Peru and Bolivia often make little images of frogs and other aquatic animals and place them on the tops of the hills as a means of bringing down rain. In some parts of southeastern Australia, where the rainfall is apt to be excessive, the natives feared to injure Tidelek, the frog, or Bluk, the bull-frog, because they were said to be full of water instead of intestines, and great rains would follow if one of them were killed.

"Some of the Queensland aborigines imitate the movements and cries of frogs as part of a rain-charm. The Thompson River Indians of British Columbia and some people in Europe think that to kill a frog brings on rain. In order to procure rain people of low caste in the Central Provinces of India will tie a frog to a rod covered with green leaves and branches of the nim tree and carry it from door to door singing --

'Send soon, O frog, the jewel of water!
And ripen the wheat and millet in the field.'

In Kumaon, a district of northwestern India, one way of bringing on rain when it is needed is to hang a frog with its mouth up on a tall bamboo or on a tree for a day or two. The notion is that the god of rain, seeing the creature in trouble, will take pity on it and send the rain.

"Some of these customs and beliefs may be, at least in part, based on the frog's habit of storing up water in its body against seasons of drought; when it is caught at such times, it squirts the water out in a jet. On seeing a frog emit a gush of water when all around was dry and parched, savages might easily infer that the creature had caused the drought by swallowing all the water, and that in order to restore its moisture to the thirsty ground they had only to make the frog discharge its secret store of the precious liquid."

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