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## FOLK-LORE OF THE BAHAMA NEGROES.

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BY CHARLES L. EDWARDS.

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The Bahamas include over 3,000 islands, but most of these are small, grouped about a few larger islands and these groups are not separated by great distances, so that as a whole the Bahamas present a striking homogeneity, both in their origin as coral formations, and in the life and surroundings of the people. As the biologist of to-day gains a better insight into the complex problems of structure and relation presented by living things, by mastering the life history of one or a few species, so, in the study of the folk-lore of a people, can we gain a better knowledge of its philosophy by considering the physical environment and the history of some particular community of that people.

The material for this paper I gathered during the summer of 1888 at Green Turtle Cay, one of the "out islands" of the Bahamas, which because of its isolation presents the simplest conditions in the life of the people and has all of the physical features peculiar to the Bahamas. One of the broken parts of an ancient fringing reef to the island of Great Abaco, of only a few square miles in area, this island, as its name (from the Spanish *cayo*) indicates,

is only *a rock* in the ocean. Like a hundred others in the same series it appears from a distance as a dark low-lying sand-bar, but when closely approached is seen to be covered, for the most part, with short trees and bushes, while occasionally a clump of tall cocoa-palms is sharply outlined against the bright sky. The vegetation is of as deep a green as the sea is blue beyond the present coral reef, while between the vegetation and the water the triturated skeletons of corals and echinoderms and the shells of molluscs, constituting an intensely white coralline sand, glare in the sub-tropical sun. The shoals about are also of this constantly shifting sand, and so the shallow water is rendered a chalky green shade, beautifully contrasting with the wonderful blue of the deeper sea.<sup>1</sup>

The island of Great Abaco, or in native vernacular, "the main," lies about three miles away to the South-west, while to the North and East, unbroken but by the top of the present coral reef, marked at each wave by a white line of spray, extends the vast Atlantic.

It is on the south-west side where the wide channel between the Cay and "the main" affords such an excellent roadstead for vessels, that the town has been built. In this channel, the swell of the ocean, so much broken by the outer reef and the line of cays, is perceptible only in the small passages between cay and cay, and to a less extent along the shore of Great Abaco, while for the most part this water is as smooth as a lake, disturbed only by the tides and winds. It is a sight of peculiar beauty to see on a summer morning the small boats of the "Conchs," as the natives both white and black are called, scudding over the blue waters of

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<sup>1</sup>These shoals sometimes reach gigantic proportions, as in the Great Bahama Banks where over hundreds of square miles the water is but a few fathoms in depth.

the channel to points on "the main" for ten miles on either hand. They go to the "pine fields;" for the raising of pine-apples is the principal farming industry at Green Turtle Cay, and most of the men who cultivate the plants live in the town on the cay, sailing to their farms in the morning and back at night.

There is practically no soil as nature leaves the land, and so the plants found there are such as can adapt themselves at the root to crannies in the rock and there gain some sustenance from the mould of their ancestors, while from the air, the leaves may breathe in the rich supplies of gasses and moisture, always emanating under the sub-tropical sun. So farming implements in the Bahamas, as has been aptly and almost truthfully said, are the pick-ax and *machete*. With the former a natural crevice in the rock is somewhat widened, and therein a pine-slip or some seed is planted, while with the *machete*, a long, broad-sword sort of knife, the weeds and bushes are cut down.

The town of Green Turtle Cay was founded by a family of loyalist refugees who fled from the American colonies during the revolution. It has grown slowly, for the most part by the natural increase of the few first families; and, because of repeated intermarrying among these family stocks, at present nearly all of the people are inter-related. The population, about evenly divided on the basis of color, is of some fifteen hundred souls.

If one will imagine a sea-coast town in North Carolina, (as much as possible isolated from railroads and ocean steamers, and its people leading a seafaring life with farm work at odd intervals,) transported to a small coral island, then one can gain a very fair outline for the picture of Green Turtle Cay. But there are touches of local coloring quite necessary to complete the picture.

There being no horses and carriages on the cay, roads for their accommodation are not essential, and so the streets are not wider than a city sidewalk, and the squares, into which the town is divided, are proportional to the streets in size. The streets are formed by smoothing off the naturally jagged points left by the action of water upon the coral sandstone of which the cay is composed, and they are of dazzling whiteness. The houses are generally of frame, three or four sometimes crowded upon the same small lot, and, whenever the owner can afford the display, painted white, a most disagreeable reflection of the glare from the street and sea-shore.

The people are intensely pious. The whole social life centers in the church. Those mad days of the Buccaneers and their nominally more respectable descendants, the Wreckers, are gone. For the ribald song of the riotous pirates, we have the solemn hymns of the Wesleyans, and the chant of the English church. Light-houses have taken from the coral reefs their former terror. But after some residence among the people, one is compelled to suspect a shallowness in their piety, a great deal of selfishness in their character. Their conceit and petty social distinctions are such as all isolated provincials exhibit.

The laws against swearing are quite severe and, what is even more necessary, the good old patriarch who holds all of the offices from chief magistrate to street commissioner, is quite strict in the enforcement of the laws, so that the ordinary street talk is quite a relief to one who is familiar with the profanity of American streets.

The colored people, everywhere gossipy, good-natured and religious, having here been emancipated for over fifty years, have become somewhat educated and unusually independent. Socially the races are more nearly equal than anywhere else on the globe.

Schools and churches are occupied in common. Miscegenation, so prevalent in Nassau, the capital, has not prevailed in this colony to any extent. The first few negroes who came to the cay were slaves of the loyalists, and then from a shipwreck about 1837 a few more from America were stranded in this colony, but aside from these, the large majority indeed, have come as direct descent from native Africans, and there yet lives one old negro "Unc' Yawk," who, bowing his grizzled head will tell you : "Yah, I wa' fum Haf'ca."

It is with the negroes that one associates the picturesque and beautiful surroundings in the Bahamas. Their huts, so often thatched with palmettos, are built on the low, sandy soil of the town. There grow the graceful cocoa-palms with long green leaves whose leaflets rustle as sadly as do those of oak and chestnut in the autumn woods of the north. There, too, the prickly pear, like an *abatis*, bristling all over with needles, seems to guard the luxuriant blossoms of the great oleander bush, dispensing sweetest perfumes from its midst. Apparently every hut has its quota of a dozen little black "Conchs" of assorted sizes, who think it a palace beneath the palmetto roof and the yard a menagerie wherein the pigs, and chickens, and dogs are animals worthy of study.

There are no chimneys in the Bahamas and but few stoves. Boiling and frying are done in a small shed over an open fire, built on a box of sand; while for the baking is employed an oven of the same sort as our foremothers knew by the name of the "brick oven." It is a cone made of coral sand-stone into the upper half of which is hollowed an oven. In this oven a fire is built and kept burning for several hours until the rock is quite hot, then the fire is raked out and the food to be baked is placed in the oven. The "mammy" and children do most of the

work while the lord and master plays checkers or lies in a hammock reading a novel.

There is one piece of work however in which man and wife share, and that is the chastisement of the children. They chastise with a club, and regularly every twenty-four hours the screaming of the tortured child comes from the hut or surrounding bushes, to tell its sad tale of remaining barbarism ; but the negro child has a disposition full of sunshine, and in a few moments after being beaten, will sing like the happiest being on earth.

In the evening is the play time of the negroes. The children gather in some clump of bushes or on the sea-shore and sing their songs, the young men form a group for a dance in some hut and the old people gossip. The dance is full of uncultured grace ; and to the barbaric music of a clarionet, accompanied by tambourines and triangles, some expert dancer "steps off" his specialty in a challenging way, while various individuals in the crowd keep time with beating of feet upon the rough floor, and slapping of hands against their legs. All applaud as the dancer finishes ; but before he fairly reaches a place in the circle, a rival catches step to the music and all eyes are again turned toward the centre of attraction. Thus goes the dance into the night.

The strangest of all their customs is the service of song held on the night when some friend is supposed to be dying. If the patient does not die they come again the next night and between the disease and the hymns, the poor negro is pretty sure to succumb. The singers, men, women and children of all ages, sit about on the floor of the larger room of the hut and stand outside at the doors and windows, while the invalid lies upon the floor (which Bahamans generally, both white and black, prefer to the bed) in the smaller room. Long into the night they sing their most mournful hymns and

dirges and only in the light of dawn do those who are left as chief mourners silently disperse. The following dirge is the most often repeated, and with all their sad intonation accented by tense emotion, it sounds in the distance as though it might well be the death triumph of some old African chief :

*mf*  
If hev - ry day vvas judg - ment day

*p*  
Some - bod - y's dy - ing here to - day.

*mf*  
O John - ny, fur true you' called to - day,

*p* *pp*  
Some - bod - y's dy - ing here to - day!

REFRAIN.

*ff*  
Hev - ry day pass - ing a - vay,

Hev - ry day pass - ing a - vay

*ff* *mf*  
Hev - ry day pass - ing a - vay,

*p* *pp*  
Some - bod - y's dy - ing hev - ry day!



Each one of the dusky group, as if by intuition, takes some part in harmony, and the blending of all pitches in the soprano, tenor, alto and base makes such peculiarly touching music as I have never heard elsewhere. As this song of consolation accompanies the sighs of the dying one, it seems to be taken up by the mournful rustle of the palms and lost only in the undertone of murmur from the distant coral reef. It is all weird and intensely sad.

The folk-tales are most popular among the children, and, indeed, are no doubt handed down from generation to generation principally by them. After the short twilight and the earlier part of the evening, when singing and dancing amuse the children, comes the story-telling time *par excellence*. This is usually about bed-time and the little "Conchs" lie about upon the hard floor of the small hut and listen to one of the group, probably the eldest, "talk old stories." With eyes that show the whites in exclamation, and ejaculations of "O Lawd!" "Go!" "Do now!" etc., long drawn out in pleasure, the younger ones nestle close together so "De Debble" wont get them as he does "B' Bookey" or "B' Rabby" of the story.

These tales are divided into two classes—"old stories" and fairy stories—the former particularly constituting the negro folk-lore, while the latter have been introduced from the same source as the ordinary fairy-tales of English children. It is a curious fact that some of the fairy-tales have been translated, so to speak, into old stories, and one easily recognizes in such a tale as "B' Jack an' de Snake" its English ancestor of "Jack the Giant-Killer."

The folk-lore proper is mostly concerning animals which, personified, have peculiar and ofttimes thrilling adventures. Where, in our own negro-lore,

the animals are called "Brer," among the Bahama negroes this term is contracted to "B," and so one finds in "B' Rabby, who was a tricky fellow," the "Brer Rabby" whom Uncle Remus has made famous to us as the hero of the folk-lore of the South.

The conventional negro dialect, used in our American stories, will apply to the Bahama negroes only in part, for their speech is a mixture of negro dialect, "Conch cockney," and correct English pronunciations. In the following stories, which are given as nearly as possible verbatim, this apparent inconsistency will be noticed, for in the same story such expressions, for example, as "All right" and "Never mind," may be given in the cockney, "Hall right," in negro dialect, "Ne'r min'," or pronounced as written in correct English, and one may never know which pronunciation to expect.

In these stories one readily detects the influence of physical environment and the play of native invention, in the predominance given to those animals and plants locally prominent, acting their parts among scenes borrowed from local surroundings. On the other hand, the introduction of the lion, elephant, and tiger suggests an heredity from African ancestors, while similarly the rabbit, in the title rôle of hero, as rabbits are not indigenous in the Bahamas, points to the influence of American negro-lore. The isolation of the Bahamas from foreign influences, the scanty supply of books and newspapers, and the great lack of what are generally termed amusements, has given especially good conditions for the development of a folk-lore at once recognized as peculiar and sectional.

An atmosphere, that paper cannot hold, is added to these tales by the physical conditions;—an island out in the Atlantic, arising with low shores from that indescribable blue water, covered by the paler blue

of the skies of "Summerland," heated by the glaring sun of mid-day, or bathed in silver radiance by the queen of night; the querulous gulls, catching fish in the shallows or "white water;" the cunning little lizards which, from orange tree and stone wall, watch your every step; the dazzling white of the streets, and the superficial piety of the people; the sea gardens, where, in the clear water, one beholds the fans and feathers of the sea waving in response to tide and billow; beneath them the creeping stars, the spiny urchins and long cucumbers crawling among the tentacled anelids and anemones, and chasing in and out, above and around these more simply organized creatures, the fishes, banded in gold and black and orange, with long, waving filaments to their fins and high foreheads, which solemnly suggest an intellect only developed in higher forms; and then, finally, those colonies of coral animals, which inhabit the top of a submarine precipice built of the skeletons of their ancestors through millions of generations, and which ere long will die to complete the foundation for another island or series of islands.

There is perpetual beauty on land and in the sea, while the balmy, even-tempered air invites one to sail over the blue waters or to lie in a hammock beneath the palms and listen to some black "Conch" "talk old stories." One boy named Dennis was very much the best story-teller on the cay, and from him I took most of the following tales, but the quick, short gesture, the peculiar emphasis on the exciting words and phrases, the mirth now bubbling from eyes which anon would roll their whites in horror, in short, the *Othello* part of the tales, I cannot give.

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II.<sup>1</sup>

## B' RABBY IN DE CORN-FIELD.

Once 'twas a time, a very good time,  
De monkey chewed tobacco, an' 'e spit white lime.<sup>2</sup>

So dis day, it vvas a man ; had a big fiel' ; peas, corn and potato. De man didn't used to go in de fiel.' 'E send his boy. So dis day B' Rabby come vw'ere de boy vvas. 'E say, "Boy, you' pa say, gi' me some peas, corn and potato." 'E let 'im eat as much as 'e vwant. De nex' day B' Rabby come back again. 'E say, "Boy, you' pa say, gi' me some peas, corn an' potatoes." So now vw'en de boy vwent home de boy say, "Pa, you tell B' Rabby to say, I say must give 'im peas, corn an' potatoes?" De man say, "No, I aint see B' Rabby." 'E say, "De nex' time B' Rabby come dere you mus' tie B' Rabby an' let 'im eat as much peas, corn an' potatoes as 'e like." 'E say, "You mus'n' let 'im go." De nex' day B' Rabby come. 'E say, "Boy, you' pa say, 'Gi' me some peas, corn an' potatoes.'" B' Boy say, "Le' me tie you up first." B' Rabby say, "All right, but vw'en I done eatin' you mus' let me go." B' Boy say, "All right," too. Now vw'en B' Rabby vvas done eatin', B' Rabby say, "Boy, le' me go now !" B' Boy say, "No !" B' Rabby say, "Min', you better le' me go !" B' Boy say, "No !" B' Boy vwent to call his pa. B' Boy say, "Come pa, got 'im to-day !" De man vwent over in de fiel'. Dey ketch B' Rabby. Bring 'im up; put 'im in de hiron cage. Now dey had on six big pots o' hot vwater. B' Tiger vvas

<sup>1</sup> As the purpose of this paper is more to be a record of fact than a literary production, I must again call attention to the fact that there is not an invariable dialect among the Bahama negroes, the same word often being pronounced differently in succeeding phrases or sentences. My effort therefore has been to report these tales phonetically as I heard them, and not upon themes given to write new stories.

<sup>2</sup> The old stories are almost always introduced by this doggerel verse, and very often some expression, as, "Twant my time; twant you' time; was old folks' time;" is added.

comin' past. 'E say, "Vw'ats de matter, B' Rabby?" 'E say, "Dey got me in here to marry de Queen's daughter, an' I don' vwan' to marry 'er." Now 'e say, "D' see dem six pots dere? Dey got dem full, *full* o' cow'-eads for my weddin'." B' Tiger say, "Put me in, I vwan' to marry de Queen's daughter." B' Rabby say, "Take me up!" B' Rabby jump up. 'E fasten up B' Tiger. Now B' Rabby *gone*! 'E git in one hollow, hollow pison-wood tree.

De boy come out an' say, "Pa, dey big one here!" De man say, "Don' care if 'e big one or little one, I goin' to scal' 'im. De man come out. 'E git de hot vwater. 'E take de big pot full, *boilin' up*; 'e swash on B' Tiger. B' Tiger, 'e holler, "*Tain' me! tain' me!*" De man say, "Don't care 'f tain,' you or vw'at, I goin' scal' you." 'E scal' B' Tiger. B' Tiger 'e give one jump; 'e knock de cage all to pieces. B' Tiger *gone*!

'E come to dis same pison-wood tree B' Rabby vwas in. 'E sit down right on de stump o' de tree vw'at B' Rabby vwas in. B' Rabby had one sharp, sharp stick, an' 'e shove right into B' Tiger. B' Tiger say, "*My goody!*" 'e say, "Hants here!" B' Rabby take de stick; 'e shove it out; 'e stick B' Tiger. B' Tiger say, "No dis aint hants; B' Rabby here." Den B' Tiger look down in de hole an' 'e see B' Rabby settin' dere. B' Tiger say, "*Ha-an!* B' Rabby! Never min', you cause me to get scalded;" 'e say, "N'er min'! I goin' ketch you!" B' Rabby say, "Move boy! Le' me git out! Doan' min' me!" B' Rabby *gone*!

B' Rabby see one dead goat in de road. De goat dead; stink and be rotten. All de goat back vwas rottin' away. B' Rabby *gone*; 'e git inside de dead goat.

B' Tiger vwas comin' fas'! Vw'en B' Rabby look, 'e see B' Tiger comin'. B' Rabby vwas doin,

"*Huhn! huhn!*" vwas doin' so in de goat, "*Huhn! huhn!*" B' Tiger say, "Vw'ats de matter, B' Goat?" 'E say, "B' Rabby vwen' past here just now; poin' he finger at me an' rottin' away all my back." B' Rabby *gone* out de dead goat.

B' Rabby vwas fishin.' 'E see B' Tiger. B' Rabby had he finger bent. B' Rabby say, "Min', I goin' poin'!" B' Tiger say, "*Do* B' Rabby, doan' poin'!" Dats vw'at B' Tiger say. B' Rabby didn' poin'.

<sup>1</sup> E bo ban, my story 's en',  
If you doan' believe my story 's true  
Hax my captain an' my crew.  
Vw'en I die bury me in a pot o' candle grease.

#### B' HELEPHANT AND B' VW'ALE.

Once it vwas a time, etc.

Now dis day B' Rabby vwas walkin' 'long de shore. 'E see B' Vw'ale. 'E say, "B' Vw'ale!" B' Vw'ale say, "Hey!" B' Rabby say, "B' Vw'ale, I bet I could pull you on de shore!" B' Vw'ale say, "You cahnt!" B' Rabby say, "I bet you tree tousan' dollar!" B' Vw'ale say, "Hall right!" 'E *gone*.

'E meet B' Helephant. 'E say, "B' Helephant," 'e say, "I bet you I could pull you in de sea!" B' Helephant say, "Me!" 'E say, "Dey aint ary man in de worl' can pull *me* in de sea!" B' Rabby say, "I'll try it to-morrow at 12 o'clock."

'E gone an' get a heap o' rope. 'E say, "Now to-day we'll try it." 'E tie one rope aroun' B' Vw'ale's neck, and den 'e tie one aroun' B' Helephant's neck. 'E say, "Vw'en you hear me say, '*Set taut*,' you must set taut." 'E say, "*Pull away!*" Vw'en B' Vw'ale pull, 'e pull B' Helephant in de surf o' de sea. 'E say,

<sup>1</sup> The first three lines of this doggerel verse form the customary ending of a story, while the last line may be added to suit the individual fancy of the narrator.

"You tink dis little B' Rabby doin' all o' dat!" W'en B' Helephant pull taut, 'e pull B' Vw'ale in de surf o' de sea. B' Vw'ale ketch underneath one shelf o' de rock, and B' Helephant ketch to one big tree. Den de two on 'em pull so heavy de rope broke.

B' Vw'ale went in de ocean and B' Helephant vwent vay over in de pine-yard. Das vy you see B' Vw'ale in de ocean to-day and das vy you see B' Helephant over in de pine bushes to-day.

'E bo ban, etc.

### B' RABBY, B' SPIDER AN' B' BOOKY.

Once it vwas a time, etc.

B' Rabby, B' Spider an' B' Booky wen' in de field. As evenin' vwas comin' dey was comin' home in de boat. An' dey had one bunch o' bananas to share an' dey didn' know how to share it. An' B' Spider did say to B' Rabby, "Trow de bunch o' bananas overboar' an' den who could *dive* de mostest could *have* de mostest."

Den dey pull off der close. B' Rabby had de furst dive. Vw'en 'e vwent down to bottom 'e bring up four bananas. Vw'en B' Booky vwent down 'e bring two. B' Spider vw'en 'e pitch overboar' 'e float.

B' Rabby pitch overboar' again an' 'e bring up six. B' Booky pitch overboar' again an' 'e bring up four. B' Spider pitch overboar' again; 'e *float*. 'E say, "You no tie de grapple to me an' le' me go down an' get hall." An' 'e vwent down; 'e ketch hall on 'em; an' 'e couldn' come hup no more.

An' B' Rabby take his knife an' cut away de rope. An' den dey vwent home. An' B' Spider——; vw'en dey hax 'em, "Whey B' Spider?" An' B' Rabby say, "B' Spider 'e did have such a big eye;

'e did vwant all de bananas an' 'e couldn' dive." 'E say, "B' Spider did say, 'You no tie dis grapple to me an' le' me get hall.'" An' de Spider's mudder say, "'F you don' go fetch 'im I put you in prison." An' dey say dey aint gwine. An' de vwoman did carry 'em to prison. An' B' Rabby did put de vwoman in jail. An' de judge did say, 'e couldn' put B' Rabby in prison fur dat, cause 'twas B' Spider's fault.

E bo ban, my story 's end, etc.

### B' MAN, B' RAT AN' B' TIGER-CAT.

Once it vwas a time, etc.

So now dis day; ebry time de rat use' to go in de man' field eatin' de man' peas, potatoes an' his corn. So now dis day de man ketch de rat; 'e had de rat in de cage to kill 'im. De rat say, "*Do*, B' Man, spare my life, I'll never come back any more!" De man say "*Hall* right!" 'E let de rat go. B' Rat vwent vay hover in de vwood; 'e never come back any more.

Dis day de man vwent shootin' pigeons. 'E vwent vay over in de vwoods; 'e shoot a big bunch o' pigeons. Now 'e *gone*, 'e see tree young tiger-cats. De man vw'en 'e gone 'e take all tree de tiger-cats. Soon as 'e make one step de hold tiger-cat, 'e after 'im an' growl. De tiger-cat say, "Taint no good to put down my young ones so you might as well keep 'em. B' Tiger-cat say, "B' Man, le' me tell you vw'at to do."

B' Tiger-cat vwas hup in one tree ready to pitch on de man. B' Tiger-cat say, "You let de dog heat de pigeons; you heat de dog, an' let me heat you." De man stan' up an' 'e study. B' Tiger-cat say, "Talk fas', B' Man; talk fas'!" 'e say, "Let de dog heat de pigeons; you heat de dog, an' le' me heat



you." Den dat same rat w'at de man let go jump out de road. 'E say, "Yes, B' Man, do dat; give de pigeons to de dog; you heat de dog, an let B' Tiger-cat heat you, an' let me heat B' Tiger-cat."

B' Tiger-cat stan' up; 'e study. B' Man say, "Talk fas', B' Tiger-cat, talk fas!" B' Man vwent towards his gun. B' Tiger-cat jus vwas studerin' on vw'at B' Man say. Den de man pick up his gun. Vw'en 'e fire 'e shoot B' Tiger-cat dead. Den B' Rat jump up an' say, "One good turn deserve another! One good turn deserve another! One good turn deserve another!"

E bo ban, etc.

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#### B' BOOKY AN' B' RABBY.

Once it vwas a time, etc.

It vwas B' Rabby; 'e use' to go to de Queen's pasture ebry night an' take de bigges' sheep from de flock. So dis night vw'en' 'e wen', de Queen's servant did put a lion at de head o' all de huder sheeps. B' Rabby vwas takin' dat to be a sheep, an' 'e carried 'im a little vays in de road an' 'e say, "Look 'ere, dis t'ing don' vwalk like sheep, dis t'ing vwalk like lion!" An' 'e call out for B' Booky. 'E say, "B' Booky, 'ere, take dis sheep, I got to go up 'ere in de wood for de huder one I got tied in de fence!" An' vw'en B' Booky get a little vays, 'e sing out, 'e say, "Dis t'ing don' vwalk like sheep!" 'E say, "Dis t'ing vwalk like lion!" Den 'e hollered out to his vwife an' children, tell dem all to get up in de roof o' de house. 'E holler out, say "De lion comin' to tear you to pieces!" An' vw'en de lion get to de house, 'e walk in tr'u' de door an' 'e see all on 'em up in de roof an' 'e look up at 'em.

An' de smalles' chil' say, "Fadder an' mudder, I

know you love me, but I cahnt hold out no longer!" An' de fadder say, "See lion 'ere!" An' vw'en de chil' drop de lion tear her to pieces. De huder one say, "Fadder an' mudder, I know you love me, but my harms is tired!" An' his fadder say, "See lion dere!" An' vw'en 'e drop de lion tear 'im to pieces. Dis de bigges' one now; 'e say, "Fadder an' mudder, I know you love me an' I love you, but I cahnt hold out no longer!" An' de fadder say, "See lion dere!" An' vw'en 'e drop de lion tear 'im to pieces. His vwife say, "I know you love me," an' she say, "I love you too!" De husband was so pitiful 'e couldn' talk, an' 'e jus' pint his finger down to de lion an' his vwife drop. An' after 'e see all on 'em vwas gone 'e vwent out tr'u' de roof o' de house an' 'e stay dere until de mornin', an' dats how 'e vwas save. B' Lion couldn' jump an' 'e vwen' away.

E bo ban, my story 's end, etc.

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B' BARACOUTI<sup>1</sup> AN' B' MAN.

Once it vwas a time, etc.

Once it vwas a man; 'e had a fiel' 'pon a differ'n' part o' de shore. Dis day 'e did vwan' to go to his fiel'; 'e met a shark. 'E said to de shark, "Please carry me 'cross to my fiel'!" B' Shark say, "All right!" an' 'e carried him 'cross. Vw'en 'e got 'cross 'e give B' Shark a good cut. B' Shark say, "*All* right!"

'E come out again from his fiel'; 'e meet B' Shark again. 'E say, "B' Shark, *please* carry me 'cross, once more!" B' Shark say, "All right!" An' B' Shark carried him 'cross again. An' 'e give B' Shark a heavy cut again. B' Shark say, "*All* right!"

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<sup>1</sup> The Baracouti is an eel-like fish, with numerous, strong, sharp teeth, and is very savage when attacked.

De nex' day de man did vwan' go 'cross again. 'E say, "B' Shark, *please* carry me 'cross to dat shore;" 'e say, "I'll give you a fortune!" B' Shark carry 'im again, an' 'e give B' Shark *such* a cut, till B' Shark had to lay awake till 'e come out again.

Sun vwas nearly down vw'en de man come out. 'E say, B' Shark, *please* carry me 'cross again;" 'e say, "I'll pay you vw'en I get 'cross." B' Shark say, "Get on my back." De firs' fish B' Shark meet vwas a Corb.<sup>1</sup> B' Shark say, "B' Corb, you do man good an' man do you harm;" 'e say, "vw'at you mus' do to'r' him?" B' Corb say, "Cut 'im in two!" Nex' vwas a Porpy.<sup>2</sup> 'E say, "B' Porpy, you do man good an' man do you harm, vw'at you mus' do to'r' 'im?" B' Porpy say, "Leave it to God!" De nex' vwas a Baracouti. 'E say, "B' Baracouti, you do man good an' man do you harm, vw'at you mus' do to'r' 'im?" B' Baracouti say, "Cut 'im to hell!"

B' Shark see B' Rabby on de rocks. 'E say, "B' Rabby, you do man good an' man do you harm, vw'at you mus' do to'r' him?" B' Rabby say, "Come in little further, I ain' hear you!" (B' Rabby vwan' to save de man.) 'E come in. 'E say, "B' Rabby, you do man good an' man do you harm, vw'at you mus' do to'r' 'im?" B' Rabby say, "Come in little bit further; still I ain' hear you!" B' Shark come in a little bit further. 'E say, "I cahn' come no further else I get 'shore!" B' Shark say, "You do man good an' man do you harm, vw'at you mus' do to'r' 'im?" B' Rabby say, "Vy, let' im jump 'shore!" Before de Shark could turn 'round to go with 'im de man jump 'shore an' B' Shark commence to cry.

E bo ban, my story 's en', etc.

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<sup>1</sup> Flat-headed shark, particularly dreaded as a man-eater.

<sup>2</sup> Porpoise.

## B' LOGGERHEAD AN B' CONCH.

Once it vvas a time, etc.

Dey vvwanted de King's daughter. King told de two to have a race, de one dat beat de race to have his daughter. Dey hask him, "Vw'at sort o' race dey mus' have." 'E said 'e wanted to see who could vwalk de fastest' out o' two. Dat vvas de Loggerhead and de Conch. De Conch knowed dat de Loggerhead could beat 'im walkin' 'so de Conch vwent an' hired hother Conchs an' put 'em to de marks' stake. Den after dat 'e vwent down to de river whe' de Loggerhead vvas en' told 'im 'e's all ready for de race.

'Im an' de Loggerhead started off together. De first mark de Loggerhead get to 'e meet a Conch dere, takin' it to be de one dat 'e start off to race with, but standin' talkin'. De one dat went to race, 'e went ahead o' de Loggerhead. Den de Loggerhead started from the place where de Conch vvas, expectin' it vvas de same Conch. Vw'en 'e git to de nex' pole 'e meet a Conch again still thinkin' it vvas de same Conch. Stand dere dey small-talk; whilst talkin' give de Conch vw'at hired de other Conchs a chance to chat with 'im, den de Conch had chance to go 'is vway. Vw'en de Loggerhead git to King's palace, 'e met de Conch 'head of 'im. De Conch had beaten de race an' 'e got de King's daughter. Den after dat de Loggerhead say 'e vwould take de sea for 'is dwellin' place.

E bo ban, my story 's en', etc.

## B' CRANE-CROW, B' PARROT AN' B' SNAKE.

Once it vvas a time, etc.

It vvas a heagle, layin' in a tree. Hafter she had young ones dis snake use to plague de tree. So

afterwards B' Heagle lef' B' Crane-crow an' B' Parrot to watch dese young ones, vw'en B' Snake come, to call 'er. So vw'en de snake come, dey call dis heagle Dey say, "Ma hoo heagle! De snake comin'!" So she come. Therefore she kill de snake. She said, "Hafter he het my young ones;" she say, "Therefore I'll go nord, I'll live dere all my life on de nordern part of Baltimore.<sup>1</sup> I no more to say. De snake had het my young ones." Dats makes so you see heagle live hover dere to-day; dey won' come dis side.

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#### B' CRICKET AND B' HELEPHANT.

Once it vvas a time, etc.

So it vvas palm-ile tree whe' dey use' to go to feed. So hevery time B' Helephant use' to go dere, 'e use to meet B' Cricket. 'E say, "B' Cricket, I bet I can mash you up some o' dese days." So B' Cricket say, "B' Helephant, you cahn' mash me up, fur it don' stan' fur de bigness o' man; little man could make big man run." B' Helephant say, "Go vay, B' Cricket!"

So dis day vw'en B' Helephant come to de tree B' Cricket vvas dere. B' Helephant didn' see 'im. 'E vwen' in B' Helephan' ear-'ole an' e' git to sing-in, an' B' Helephant 'e did put off a runnin'. Every-whe's 'e put 'is foot it vvas river. So 'e meet B' Lion. 'E say, "B' Lion, man' mo'n me to-day;" 'e say, "I 'bout de bigges' beast in de fores' an' you 'bout de stronges'; an' still, if you vvas to hear vw'at I hear to-day, make you run."

"Let 'im come, I'm a man fur anything," dats de

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<sup>1</sup> To the people of Green Turtle Cay, Baltimore, from whence come the schooners in the pine-apple trade, is one of the great places beyond the sea of which the children, especially, have peculiarly vague ideas.

word B' Lion say. B' Cricket jump out B' Helephan' ear'-ole an' gone in B' Lion ear'-ole, an' vw'en B' Cricket sing out in B' Lion ear'-ole, 'im an' B' Helephan' start together. B' Helephan' see B' Lion runnin', taught de soun' o' de cricket vvas still in 'is ear'-ole. Some iron-wood tree dere vvas six times big as dis house. B' Lion tear 'em right square up by de root.

Vw'en dey get dere dey meet B' Jack standin' on de hill. Jack say, "Vw'at you no runnin' 'ere 'bout?" Dey say, "B' Jack, man 'ere to-day mo'n you an' me an' you two together!" B' Jack say, "I'm de man to heat you an' de man too!" So B' Cricket jump out de lion ear'-ole an' vwen' in B' Jack own to tell 'im de hargemen' B' Helephan' an' 'im had under de palm-ile tree. So B' Helephan' 'e quiver so much 'e drop down dead. B' Jack say, "My deah man, dat vvas de harge vw'at you an' B' Cricket had." B' Cricket say, "I tell you 'bout a little man every day;" so a puff o' win' come an' end dis story.

E bo ban, etc.

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#### B' JACK AN' B' SNAKE.<sup>1</sup>

Once it vvas a time, etc.

De Queen say, "B' Jack, if you can kill dis snake, I don' know how much money I wouldn' give you!" So Jack say, "I wan' five hundr' dollars to go on a spree." So 'e gone up dere now. 'E say, "B' Snake, vw'at you tink dese foolish people say; dey say you' body cahn' go in dis half-hitch." 'E come out de hole an' 'e vwen' in de half-hitch. Den Jack draw de half-hitch taut. Den all dese soljers come around; dey cut 'im up in pieces.

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<sup>1</sup> Probably founded upon "Jack the Giant-Killer."

So den de Queen say, "Jack, I got one more trial fur you to do." 'E say, "Vwell, vw'at dat is?" "If you could go up 'ere in dis corn fiel' an' kill all de rice-bird, I let you git married to my daughter," dats vw'at the Queen say. 'E vwen' to de fiel' to de rice-bird. So B' Jack say, "B' Rice-birds, vw'at you no tink dese foolish people say; dey say all o' you no rice-birds cahn' full up dis basket!" De rice-birds say, "Vy people so foolish, no all us rice-birds cahn' full up dat basket!"

So all de rice-bird vwent in de basket. So B' Jack drawed de basket together with de rice-birds in it. So B' Jack vwen' home to de Queen with dese rice-birds. Say "Her' de rice-birds." Queen say, "Vwell, B' Jack, you can get married to my daughter."

E bo ban, etc.

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B' CRANE-CROW AN' B' MAN.

Once it vwas a time, etc.

Now dis day the Queen did vwant a man to see if 'e couldn' ketch dis Queen Crane-Crow. De man gone whey all de Crane-Crows use' to come. Now de man lay down an' make believe 'e vwas dead. Now hall de Crane-Crows come. All on 'em vwas singin'. Crane-Crows vwas say'n, "Hunte man dead to-day; Hunte man dead to-day." Dis Queen Crane-Crow say, "Save 'is eye-ball fur me!" Dey didn' vwan' believe 'e vwas dead. 'E sen' one o' de hudder Crane-Crows to pick 'im.

Dis little Crane-Crow *gone*, 'e pick de man. B' Queen Crane-Crow say, "Pick 'im again!" 'E pick 'im; de man ain' move. Now hall on 'em vwas comin'; begin to pick de man. Vw'en dis Queen Crane-Crow come to pick hout de man heye; de

man hold de Queen Crane-Crow. De Queen Crane-Crow holler, "Tain' me! Tain' me! Tain' me!" De man say, "No good, I got you now, you got to go." 'E put 'im inside 'e bag; 'e carry 'im to de Queen. De Queen give 'im a fortune an' de man vvas rich fur 'is life time. (Dats hall.)

E bo ban, dat story 's en', etc.

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#### DE BIG WORRUM.

Once it vvas a time, etc.

So dis day it vvas a man; he had two sons; dey didn' have no fire. Hall dey had to heat vvas raw potatoes. Now de man sen' dis boy to look for fire. De boy vwalk; he vwalk; he vwalk till vw'en 'e look 'e see one smoke. Vw'en 'e gone 'e git to dat fire. Vw'en 'e get dere, de worrum vvas full o' fire. De boy say, "Dimme some fan!" (Give me some fire). De worrum say, "Tain', tain' none; jes do fur me." De worrum say, "Come in little closer " *Good!* Soon as de boy vwen' a little closer, vw'en 'e vwent to reach de fire de worrum swallow 'im down. Den de boy vwen' down, right down, down inside de worrum till 'e stop. De boy met whole lot o' people vvat de worrum did swallow.

So now the man tell de hudder son, "I wonder whey my son gone!" De hudder son say, "Pa, I goin' look fur him." 'E vwalk, 'e vwalk, 'e vwalk till 'e come to this big worrum vw'at had de fire in his mouth. So now the boy vwent to de worrum. De boy say, "Dimme some fan!" De worrum say, "Keelie o' fire" (Come and get fire). De boy say, "*Do i en e,*<sup>1</sup> dimme some fan?" De worrum say, "Come a little closer." De worrum say, "Time for

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<sup>1</sup> A phrase, the original meaning of which, had it any, is lost.



Joe come" (Time to go home). De worrum say, "Keelie o' fire." Vw'en de boy vwen' to get the fire so, de worrum swallow him down. De boy vwen'; 'e vwen' down; 'e vwen' down, till 'e met 'e brudder.

Now de boy fadder say, "My two sons gone an' I might as vwell gone too." De man take 'e lan' (lance); it fairly glisten, it so sharp. Vw'en 'e git dere whey de worrum vwas wid de fire in he mouth, de man say, "Dimme some fan?" De worrum say, "You too do fur me!" (You're too much for me). De worrum say, "Keelie o' fire." Vwen de man vwen' to get de fire, so, de worrum vwen' to swallow 'im. De man take he' lan'; as 'e vwas goin' down 'e cut de worrum; 'e cut de worrum till 'e cut de worrum right open an' all de people come, an' dat vwas a big city right dere.

E bo ban, dis story 's en', etc.