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Folklore from Eleuthera, Bahamas

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## FOLKLORE FROM ELEUTHERA, BAHAMAS

BY H. H. FINLAY

### OLD STORIES

#### RABBIT MAKES BOOKIE MURDER

There was a time  
When Monkey chew tobacco and spit white lime,  
And Cockroach keep up the high low time.

One day Bul Bookie and Bul Rabbit went for a walk on the bay. They meet a little boy to his father cane field. Each decide to kill the boy, but each one want the other to begin. Last of all they get to fuss. Bul Rabbit kick Bul Bookie foolish. When Bookie came to his sense, Rabbit say to him, "Eh war (what) de madder wid yer? Look how dar lily boy do yer!" Bookie start at the little boy and kill him. Rabbit say to Bookie, "I gane tell yer kill der man chil'." Off goes Bookie, running as fast as he can, until he meet a man. When he was asked, "What's the matter?" Bein' short winded, began, "Ar ar ar sah, sah, can't tell yer war de madder wid me." By that time Rabbit catch him and tell the content of the matter. Then they flog Bul Bookie near to death. He scream and hollow, "Oh Lard, Oh Lard 'top! 'top! Oh Lard, me gut cost me to this, and I ain't get none of the cane." Bul Bookie decide never again to walk with Bul Rabbit.

#### FALSE MESSAGE : TAKE MY PLACE.

Now a certain man had a large cane field, and every other day Bul Rabbit goes there and when he meet the man son to the field he always says, "Boy, I and your dardy just done talk. He say tie me in the best cane field he has." Things went on in this way for a long time until one day the little boy say to his father, "Father, how you can send Rabbit every day to the cane fields for me to tie him in the very best field and you would not give me none?" So the old man told him if he should ever come back, "See that you tie him good and don't loose him. Come home and let me know." The very next day Rabbit came back, saying the same thing. The boy tied him very good. Rabbit had a sharp eye on the boy and say, "Look out yer dar tie me very tight." Off goes the boy to his father, told him Rabbit is caught. So they put him in a large boiler pot and covered it until they get some boiling hot water to scald him.

As they went away up comes Bul Bookie, commence, "Ber, war yer dar do yer ? " Rabbit answer, " Oh, Ber, dem people gone hum to cook some food for me and I de (?) wait on dem." Rabbit say again, " Oh Ber Bookie, we nor bin treat yer good the other day you come. Wait until dem people come wid my food and yer can take 'em all. " Bookie been so greedy, agree at once, lift off the boiler cover and set Rabbit free, and went into the boiler to wait for the food. Rabbit came out and goes up a large pear tree so he can see everything. As Bul Bookie heard the people coming, he began to dance and sing, thinking of how great Rabbit love him. And while in such a glee down came the hot water. He pitch round, say, " Oh damn fool who yer ! Oh Lard, me back ! " After they finish they let him go. He goes to the pear tree. As soon as he get there one pear fell, he eat it, another likewise and so on till his belly was full. Said to himself, " Rabbit fool me first time, but I got pear to eat and Rabbit ain't got none," not knowing Rabbit is giving him all the time. Rabbit stay in the tree till Bookie fell asleep, then down he came, run away. Bookie ain't know who do it yet. End.

#### PROVERBS.

1. When man dead, grass grow to him door.
2. Don't talk all you know, talk some and left some.
3. Follow fashion, kill monkey. <sup>1</sup>
4. Don't carry all your eggs in one basket.
5. Don't hang your basket higher than you can reach it. <sup>2</sup>
6. Don't t'row away dirty water until you have clean one. <sup>3</sup>
7. There are four things that can't be wrong : Believe not all you hear ; tell not all you know ; do not all you can, and spend not all you have.
8. When cockroach make dance he no ask fowl. <sup>4</sup>
9. Duck have water to wash skin, poor fowl have none to drink.
10. Don't be in a hurry to get clear with a one-eyed man, you may get one with no eyes.
11. Tik for tack, butter for fat, you kill my dog, I'll kill your cat.
12. Better for belly burst than good victual waste. <sup>5</sup>
13. Gum older than teeth, but when teeth come, teeth bite the hardest.
14. Eye winkers older than beard, but when beard come, beard grow the longest.
15. You take time you will find ants got gut.
16. Lawyer's house build on fool's head.

1. Cp. Abaco, Bahamas, JAFI 30 : 274, no. 5. Jamaica, Anderson and Cundall, no. 518.

2. Cp. Jamaica, *ibid.*, no. 14.

3. Cp. Jamaica, *ibid.*, no. 708. Abaco, *op. cit.*, no. 708.

4. Cp. Jamaica, *op. cit.*, no. 105. Abaco, Bahamas, *op. cit.*, no. 7.

5. Cp. Jamaica, *op. cit.*, no. 25.

17. In time of prosperity friends will be plenty,  
But in time of adversity not one in twenty.
18. When a man belly full he tell hungry man to keep heart. <sup>1</sup>
19. You play with puppy, him lick your mouth. <sup>2</sup>
20. Don't wade in water where you can't see the bottom.
21. Smooth water run deep. <sup>3</sup>
22. Small pilchard have big ears.
23. Every bush don't hate rabbit, yet rabbit say, "Trust no mistake  
for every bush will shake."
24. No man knows what he will come to before he die.

# RIDDLES AND PUZZLES.

1. If a good laying hen lay twenty six eggs on land, how much will  
a ship lay to sea ?

Ans. Lay two (to) the wind.

2. If a man fall from the foremas' of a square rigged ship, what will  
he fall against ?

Ans. Fall against his will.

3. What is that the more you take from it the more it grow ?

Ans. A ditch.

4. In what way you can subtract 45 from 45 and yet leave 45 ?

Ans. Simply put down the figures from

	987654321	add up to	45
Sub.	123456789	ditto	45
add up	864197532	leave	45

5. Go and bet his Majesty or the President of the United States that  
you can go in Parliament or his house and sit where he can't sit.

Ans. Sit in his lap and you can defy him that he can't  
sit in his own lap.

6. Why is it right that B should come before C ?

Ans. Because we must be before we can see.

7. If a man was studying his music lesson and walking on a slippery  
place, what should he study most ?

Ans. C sharp or B flat.

8. Why does A resemble twelve o'clock ?

Ans. Because it is in the middle of day.

9. Me riddle me riddle me yander,

Though me father have a thing, it is a very good thing,  
I hope you may clare this riddle, and I hope you may not.  
Four feet sitting in four feet waiting on four feet ?

Ans. The cat sitting in the chair waiting on the rat.

1. Cp. Jamaica, *op. cit.*, no. 20.

2. Cp. Jamaica, *ibid.*, no. 180.

3. Cp. Jamaica, *ibid.*, no. 614.

10. Me riddle me riddle me yander,  
 Though me father have a thing, it's a very good thing,  
 I hope you may clare this riddle and I hope you may not.  
 Me father have seven fruit trees and yet he can't eat none.

Ans. A man with seven daughters and he can't marry none.

11. What kind of a hen lay the longest ?

Ans. A dead hen.

12. D father is B Brother, A Sister is E Mother, A and B is the children  
 of C, now what relation is E to D ?

Ans. First cousin.

#### TOASTS.

1. Home is best, east and west.
2. One day as I was going up Nassau Street,  
 The street was number nine,  
 I meet three ladies passing by,  
 And out of the three one was mine.
3. Jig jig your main boom, Harry got the fawl,  
 Let go your tiller rope, jib, sheet and all.
4. Cheese is like cherry,  
 Cherry like rose.  
 And whosoever don't love a pretty girl,  
 Only the best man he only knows.
5. Rum is red as ruby  
 And whoever refuse it is a booby.
6. When I was a little boy and living by myself  
 All the bread and cheese I get I put it up in the shelf.  
 The rat and the mice come picking up and get their full suffice,  
 But now I am a man and I am looking for my wife.
7. Massachusetts have some good looking girl,  
 But the Bahamas Island just the same,  
 And before I rather carry the blame,  
 I'd weed them off the sugar cane.
8. Drink today to drown all sorrows,  
 Perhaps you may not do it tomorrow.  
 So whiles is life let's drink it now  
 For there are no drinking after death.

9. I love my wife as well as anybody,  
But when I am off she is loving everybody,  
But when I am home she is calling me honey,  
She is trying her best to win all my money.
10. Here is to the man that love his wife  
And love his wife alone,  
For many a man loves another man's wife  
When he ought to be loving his own.
11. The Frenchman love his native wine,  
The German love his beer,  
The Irishman love his whiskey straight  
Because it give him zizeness.  
The Englishman love his 'alf and 'alf  
Because it give him good gear,  
But the American have no choice at all,  
So they drink the whole d — business.
12. Whilks and conch is plentiful along the sho',  
Black crab live in the land,  
But when the sho' get rough and muddy  
You can't get whilks nor conch :  
Black crab still in the land.
13. Here is to one and only one,  
And may that one be she  
Who love but one, and only one,  
And may that one be me.
14. A pledge I make no wine to take,  
Nor brandy red that turn the head,  
Nor fiery rum that ruin the home.  
Nor will I sin by drinking gin.  
Hard cider, too, will never do.  
To quench my thirst I will always drink  
Cool water from the well or spring.  
So here I pledge a perpetual hate  
To all who can intoxicate.
15. I am the queer little boy that been to school,  
And I warrant I am up to all kinds of tricks.  
I can turn nine upside down and make it pass for figure six.  
Yesterday I was asked my age by a good old dame.  
I said, " Lady I am nine years of age when I stand on my feet  
like this,  
But six when I stand on my head. "

16. Gin and rum is the thing that make us all compose,  
 But gin and rum is the thing that make us all wear old clothes.  
 You put gin down to your toes and up to your nose,  
 And down she goes.
17. Here is a glass of whiskey,  
 It look so red and gay.  
 It enough to make the cripple kick  
 And all the lawyers shet their books.
18. There was once an old lady in Jamaica  
 Who wipe her eyes with a piece of brown paper.  
 The paper was that thin and her finger slip in,  
 And that was a stew that old lady was in.
19. All hail the powers of old Jamaica !  
 Let Holland gin appear !  
 Bring forth the royal demijohn  
 And call the drinkers in !

20.

## A SAILOR TOAST.

A stand for the anchor that hang over our ship bow.  
 B stand for the boson (boatswain) of our ship.  
 C stand for the capstan where we all goes around.  
 D stand for the davit where our boat do hangs.  
 E stand for the engine of our ship.  
 F stand for the flag our ship do fly.  
 G stand for the galley of our ship.  
 H stand for the halyards of our ship.  
 I stand for the iron that hang over our ship rail.  
 J stand for the jib sheet to which you all very well known.  
 K stand for the kelson down to our ship keel.  
 L stand for the lanyards of our ship.  
 M stand for the main mast so stout and so fair.  
 N stand for the needle that never goes wrong.  
 O stand for the oars for our jolly boat.  
 P stand for the pennant of our ship.  
 Q stand for the quarter deck where our captain sometime walk.  
 R stand for the royal that seldom ... the storm.  
 S stand for the sail that drive us on so fast.  
 T stand for the tiller of our ship.  
 U stand for the union of our ship.  
 V stand for the vase of our ship.  
 W stand for the wheel where we all do steer.  
 But the next t'ree letter  
 I wouldn't bring them in rime,  
 Will be for next time.

21. Here's to the man that don't lie, nor steal, nor swear.  
And if he does, he lie in his bed when he lie.  
And when he steal,  
He steal away from bad company.  
And when he swear,  
He swear to the truth.
22. Summer may change to winter,  
Flowers may fade and die,  
But I shall ever love you  
Whiles you do think of me.
23. Take this letter to my darlin'  
Far across the deep blue sea.  
It will fill her (his) heart with pleasure,  
She will be glad to hear from me.  
How she wept when last we parted,  
How her heart were full of plain,  
When I said good by, God bless you,  
We may never meet again.
24. Old Mr. John Esau  
Went to Nassau  
To buy him a saw.  
He saw a saw,  
He bought that saw  
And of all the saw  
I never saw,  
I ever saw  
A saw sawed as that saw sawed  
That John Esau  
Bought from Nassau.
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