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AN ABENAKI "WITCH-STORY."

THE following story was told by Beulah Tahamont. She is an Abenaki, about sixteen years of age. Her home is at Lake George, New York, but she has visited New York city, where this story was obtained. It is given as nearly as possible in her words.

An old "witch" was dead, and his people buried him in a tree, up among the branches, in a grove that they used for a burial-place. Some time after this, in the winter, an Indian and his wife came along, looking for a good place to spend the night. They saw the grove, went in, and built their cooking fire. When their supper was over, the woman, looking up, saw long dark things hanging among the tree branches. "What are they?" she asked. "They are only the dead of long ago," said her husband, "I want to sleep." "I don't like it at all. I think we had better sit up all night," replied his wife. The man would not listen to her, but went to sleep. Soon the fire went out, and then she began to hear a gnawing sound, like an animal with a bone. She sat still, very much scared, all night long. About dawn she could stand it no longer, and reaching out, tried to wake her husband, but could not. She thought him sound asleep. The gnawing had stopped. When daylight came she went to her husband and found him dead, with his left side gnawed away, and his heart gone. She turned and ran. At last she came to a lodge where there were some people. Here she told her story, but they would not believe it, thinking that she had killed the man herself. They went with her to the place, however. There they found the man, with his heart gone, lying under the burial tree, with the dead "witch" right overhead. They took the body down and unwrapped it. The mouth and face were covered with fresh blood.¹

M. Raymond Harrington.

¹ The narrator intimated that the "witch" was a man. She said, "There is more to the story, but I have forgotten it."