

## SLAVE INDIAN LEGENDS

by

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The following folk-tales are the remainder of a certainly incomplete collection, part of which appeared in the first issue of ANTHROPOLOGICA, 1955. Brief introductory remarks regarding the circumstances of their collection prefaced the initial publication.

In the story of Ah Nontin, there is a possibility of the dialogue having been affected to some degree by modern influences, as the interpreter was a superficially acculturated woman influenced, among other things, by occasional exposure to third-rate Hollywood film performances, which sporadically occurred in the settlement of Fort Simpson, N.W.T.

There are two instances of chronological confusion in the stories of Eh'tsontsia, attributable possibly to the events having some basis in fact, (though much of the detail is obviously apocryphal) - thus there would be several accounts, of which this may be a synthesis, while other folk-tales which are more mythological and traditional in character would be more invariable and clearer in form.

There is evidence of the free admixture of tribal history with accounts of magical and mystic happenings, characteristic of earlier traditions.

### A STORY OF A GIANT

There was a giant, who trimmed a big tree with limbs long enough to kill and carry a person. There was a man travelling. He found a trail tramped deep into the ground. "This is queer," he thought, "no animal would do this." He was puzzled as to what this was. He was following snow-shoe rabbit tracks when he came to this pressed-down trail. The snow-shoe rabbit tracks crossed over this trail. As he went on he found a succession of abandoned camps. There were just blankets and weapons lying around, but no people.

He continued to follow the trail, when suddenly he heard singing. He came closer and realized that it was not singing, but someone crying. He found a family -- a man, his wife, and a girl; all of them in tears. At first he saw only the father and the mother. The old lady looked around sharply. She said, "It is sad to tell you that everyone is disappearing. You have seen all these empty cabins. Now we alone are left. Tonight we may perish, so we will give our daughter to you."

The traveller was reluctant to become acquainted with the girl. He first wanted to find out what the trouble was. The girl was so frightened that she clung to the stranger. The stranger said, "Not right now." The traveller went back to the tramped-down trail and camped at the side of it. He heard the ground rumbling. It sounded like thunder. He dug a hole in the middle of the trail, and then broke a red willow and set it over it. A terrible tree came rolling toward him, covered in blood. It pulled the willow out of the trail and disappeared into the hole. He could hear the tree grumbling in the hole. The stranger said to himself, "He's helpless down there and he'll have trouble."

The stranger went back to the old man and told him about the Death Tree. He said that he had done something to prevent it doing further destruction. It's job was to catch and carry food back to the giant. "Be at peace now," said the stranger, "it is all over." So the old people gave him the daughter, and they were married. The giant was left alone to die.

#### THE STORY OF THE LITTLE BOY

There was a little boy whose father had been killed. The poor widow was very careful with her son and never allowed him to play with the bigger boys. So they stayed a little way off from the other families, and the poor widow used to beg for fish to feed her son. They gave her fish one day, and she went home, very pleased that she could feed her son, and cooked it and placed it on a piece of bark to give to him. The boy smiled and thanked his mother and said that he would take his fish to a nearby rock which was flat, an ideal place for eating. The mother said, "Dear son, be very careful. Keep your eyes open all

the time and if you hear the least noise, or see anything unusual, don't run away, but walk quietly from there, so if anyone sees you he will not realize that you are worried." And the little boy promised to do as his mother asked.

He took his fish to a flat rock and after he had eaten a fair amount, he heard leaves moving and a little noise. He did not glance in the direction of the noise, but was too frightened to eat. He did not move. Suddenly the noise of moving in the bush was broken by the loud quacking of a mallard. He stood up, and without wishing to say anything, blurted out, "What is the mallard doing in the bush? I have never heard of a mallard walking in the bush where there is no water." He heard a great voice say, "Yes, mallard wants you all to stay alive." The little boy went to the stream and pretended to drink, and then he went home.

His mother was sewing and when she looked up and saw the face of her son, so white, she left her work and said, "What is wrong, my son?" He told her what had happened, and the mother ran to tell the other people what her son had said, but they would not believe, or care. The young boys laughed and said that her son was as timid as a girl. "We have just come all together this spring and want to play, so leave us alone." The mother went home very sadly because she knew that though she had given the alarm, they would not believe her, and they would all be killed. The little boy begged his mother to get ready to slip off into the bush. All the other people finally went to bed after much gambling and playing ball, but the mother and son, and two girls crept down the beach and took two canoes and paddled across the river. They arrived with difficulty because it was becoming very foggy. They slept without a fire. In the morning they heard some awful noise and screaming cries from the camp, and jumped into the canoe and started down the river; and in this way they were saved.

#### THE TWO BROTHERS -- EH LHEUN DEN

There were two brothers living on the Liard River. The older one had a wife and a little child. They saw the smoke of some people camped up river and a lot of people coming their way. Knowing only of people on the Mackenzie, they headed in that direction,

using snowshoes, as it was winter time. The woman became tired because she was carrying the child. She said, "A woman will not break trail for enemies." So they pretended to make camp and they put brush and branches on top of her and she set off, burrowing under the snow. The two brothers kept on the trail. They were becoming tired too.

Where the Liard River flows into the Mackenzie there is a large rock on the up-stream side known as Gros Cap. They climbed right to the top of Gros Cap by way of a narrow cleft in the rock face. They planned to kill the enemy as they climbed up after them. It was the South Nahanni Indians who were pursuing the brothers. As the fight continued, the brothers began to run short of arrows and the older brother said that they must make every shot count. Then he said to his younger brother, "Leave me some of your arrows and go down the Mackenzie River to the camp, and tell the people there what is happening. Meet me with anybody that you see."

The older brother continued to knock the enemy down as they climbed up the cleft, but now he was running short of arrows, so he too left, following the snowshoe tracks of his brother. As he ran down-stream on Mackenzie ice the enemies still chased him. Down below Harris Creek he shot two of the leading pursuers. Before he got to Marten River his brother met him with reinforcements. They set upon the Nahanni war party and killed them all. There were dead scattered all along the river.

The older brother said that he would go back to see what had happened to his wife and child. They returned, and came to the fire-place where the enemy passed right over, and did not notice the woman under the brush pile. She had dug her way toward the shore. They searched inland, and in amongst the thick spruce they found her.

Footnote by the narrator: The Nahanni were always fighting, and in the end wiped themselves out. The Nahanni always advance. When one is killed, and before one can withdraw one's arm and straighten it again, another one presents himself.

"Nahannies came on always. You kill one and before you can bring your arm in and straighten it again there is another one in front of you."

## THE SON OF LOUÂ METAH -- THE FISHERMAN

Once, long ago, there was a large number of people staying together near the fish lake. There were too many people to be fed with meat so they moved to a big fish lake for the winter.

(Narrator: Remember that the fish lakes were the most dangerous places in the world in those days.)

In the autumn everyone was very careful, and they watched the weather. When they saw the gray clouds they expected snow. Then the ice froze solid enough for them to walk on it, and they set their fish-nets. Even in mid-winter it was always dangerous, but, as the months went by, nothing had happened to them. Every day the men visited their nets and brought back lots of fresh fish for their families, but everyone was very careful about every movement he made.

There was one person who was wiser than all the others. There was a family with two grown-up sons, a small boy and a little girl. The little brother went to the nets with the other men every morning. The second of the older brothers always waited until evening, never going with the other men to the nets, as his other brother did. He waited until everybody came home, and then he would say to his parents, "I must go to the nets myself now, before it gets too dark." He used to dress warmly and take his club and pack-sack made from babiche and set off.

As he left, one evening, his mother took two fish by the tail and hung them up to cook. When he returned, he had a peculiar expression which they had never seen before, but they did not speak until he himself had said something. He threw his pack of fish down and then sat on his blankets without speaking. His mother placed the two fishes in a birch-bark dish and gave the food to her son. He took it, but could not eat. So his father said to the son, "What has happened to you, my son, and why do you not tell us? Speak up, because you know that we are never safe in this world." The small boy was sitting by his father, looking up at his face. The lad was four years old. The father pushed his young son with his elbows without saying anything. This was a signal which meant danger, and the child did not wait for another glance, but jumped up and ran to the nearby camp to raise the

alarm.

In a short time everybody was at his father's camp, asking all kinds of questions anxiously and becoming very excited. Women and children were whispering to each other, trying to find out what had happened.

The son demanded silence, and with a white face asked if everyone was safely home, and they all answered that they were. The son said, "I was going to the nets carefully; as usual I stopped at the shoreline to make sure that everyone had gone home. Before I could step on the trail on the ice toward my nets, I used to wait on the shore and make sure that all the spruce trees were really trees and not someone lying in wait for me. I bailed out the ice,\* taking out the fish and placed them in my sack. I got ready to go to the shore and towards home. As I stopped on the shore, I was amazed to find a pair of snowshoes that I have never seen before. They were strange, because our people have round snowshoes and these snowshoes were pointed at the head. I took up these queer snowshoes and brought them part of the way home, and then threw one away into the deep snow on the left, and the other to the right. Then I was even more frightened to make the least noise or even breathe, watching everything that made a black shadow, because it was already almost dark. Then, as I slipped into a clearing, I saw a movement out of the corner of my eyes. I let my pack of fish fall quietly into the snow so that I might have the freedom of movement that I needed. I could not possibly be more frightened than I was. I chose two spruce trees standing together and stepped between them, standing perfectly still, and holding my breath. The person who was coming towards me didn't seem to notice me, but I had my club ready.

This person was dressed entirely in heavy black clothes. When he was an arm's length away from me, I hit him and he fell to the ground. I didn't see him very well, but dragged him away from the trail." He turned to the people and said, "If this had happened to you I am sure you also would not return smiling and hungry; so let us now prepare."

\* These would be fragments of ice broken out of one of the holes where one end of the fish-net was supported on a pole.

There was great excitement that night. Some people were very happy, but they told each other that this was no time to be happy as they had to save their families. When their preparations were made, they came together to make plans so that they would know their movements towards the enemy, and not kill one of their own people in their excitement. The son was to be the guide for the warriors because he had just done the killing. At the shore-line they followed the snowshoe tracks back, always moving noiselessly. They smelt smoke, so they took a rest and one of them went ahead. A very short distance ahead a great fire was burning, so brightly that they could see the light a great way off. When the scout got back, he reported that all the strange people were dressed in black heavy clothes. The fisherman's son said, "It must have been their spy whom I killed." He told the warriors to make a big circle in the bush around the fire, but to take great care. He wished them all good luck. They all disappeared into the darkness without any noise, just like spirits.

They were all excited but did not breathe a word to each other. They heard the enemy talking and saying, "What is keeping our spy so long? He must have become interested in a woman." Suddenly the war party gave a great yell and advanced, shouting at the enemy on both sides of the fire. The enemy were very surprised and excited and began to cry out, pushing the fire so that they might see better. The arrows were flying in every direction, even into the fire, and the strange people crawled away from the fire, some of them bleeding from the chest. So the fisherman's son gave orders that they should be finished off with clubs.

The enemy had been killed because they were not careful and watchful, while the others were cleverer. They themselves might have been killed the following day if the old man's son had not been in the habit of going to his fish-nets each evening. The spy of the strangers was very careful but there had been another cleverer than he. The fisherman's son had saved all the people.

Now they moved to the other side of the lake so that if any more of the enemy were to follow them, they would not be found. It was snowing heavily and their tracks were covered up, and the place they chose gave them a long view of both sides of the lake. When spring came, they moved into the bush for meat, and

hides for blankets and moccasins. Thus they lived very well until the summer, when they all moved off, travelling to visit their various relatives. When they got to the Liard River they all began gambling, and playing ball and dancing. Thus they celebrated, for they knew they had been saved once more; but not for long, as there was always war.

#### WIDOW'S SON AND STRANGER BOY

A long time ago there lived a lot of people together because they didn't have any guns to hunt with and they depended on one particular young hunter who was always lucky. It so happened one day that another young boy who was also a lucky hunter wished to compare his skill with that of the first. The following day the first hunter, whose mother was a widow, set out on his hunt before anyone was awake. So did the other hunter but he went a different way. And the Stranger found no moose tracks, but on his way home he suddenly heard a noise and, stopping quickly, he listened intently. He went to find out the cause of the noise and was surprised to find a very young boy busily cutting up the meat of his hunt, removing the meat from the ribs with his (stone) hatchet.

The Widow's Son had his back to the Stranger but, sensing that someone was behind him, straightened up to find the Stranger watching quietly. To the Stranger's surprise the Widow's Son gave him a welcoming smile and, encouraged, the Stranger Boy told about his unlucky hunt. They agreed to go home together, the Widow's Son bearing meat for his mother.

As they walked, they became very tired and, seeing a squirrel, stopped on their way to rest and play with the squirrel, shooting at him with bows and arrows. They took turns, and the Stranger was the first to shoot. Then the Widow's Son shot, and his arrow got caught amongst the spruce boughs. So he said to the Stranger, "Please stand a little further away while I go and get my arrow." The Stranger did this, but thought it very curious and was on the alert to find out why the Widow's Son was so careful, both of them being boys. Then suddenly without considering the Widow's Son, he turned, and what he saw gave him a great surprise. His mouth dropped open and he was unable to speak. The Widow's Son fell to the ground

with a thud and began to cry very bitterly, frightening the Stranger so much that he trembled from head to toe. The Stranger ran forward to the boy and said, "I am so sorry that I bring this trouble to you. I hope you are not hurt." But the Widow's Son continued crying. Finally he got up and said, "My poor mother never had a son, so I wanted always to be a virgin so that mother will have me as a son. It was a secret she kept, intending never to betray the fact that I am a girl, but now you have come and interfered by finding out that I am not a boy. Now, in order to repay for your offence you will come with me to my mother."

When they got to the widow's home the daughter hung her head and said to her mother, "I greatly regret that his Stranger has come along. On his way home he found me while I was cutting meat and we set off home together. We were playing with a squirrel, trying to shoot it, and by accident my arrow was caught and I had to climb a tree. Thus he caught sight of my body, and I am now not worthy to be called your son any more," and the girl began to cry. The widow consoled the daughter and said, "You have been true and faithful to me, but I am now getting old and cannot hope for life to continue thus forever." So, the widow told the Stranger that she would give the daughter as his wife. The Stranger Boy gathered his belongings and settled with them.

But the girl always had the hunting blood in her heart and was not concerned with married life for several years, being always ready to help with the hunting whenever possible, and invariably she came home with sufficient meat to supply all the inhabitants around them. The husband was just as successful.

Then, one day she found out that she was pregnant, and became occupied with preparations. In due time a baby was born and, to their delight, it was a son. They had both greatly wished for a baby son. It was certain that he would be a good hunter and a good warrior, because in those days they were never at ease, (in fear of enemies.)

They brought up the son well, and later another boy was born. Nevertheless the mother of these children did not give up hunting and was always active in that pursuit, helping her husband. Thus they became a chief family and from then on they had about thirty families following them wherever they went.

Ultimately the sons took the place of their parents as good hunters and warriors and whenever they went to war, always returned home unscathed.

## THE STORY OF AH NONTIN

(Ah Nontin means "Brought back")

There was once one family living alone, as the other people had all gone off into the bush for meat and skins for their needs. This family had one son and one daughter. One day they were happy to see two strangers coming to them. The strangers were a young man and a young girl. They came to the camp-fire and said to them, "We are very glad to see you." And the young man introduced the girl as his sister and she spoke of him as her brother. She said that there was no one to mend his moccasins and that he was her only brother, though they had no parents, and were always travelling, and often seeing no-one for a long time. Thus they said they were very happy to meet the family. They were invited to stay with the family for a time, and the parents of the boy and girl were very pleased because they would now have companionship.

When they were settled in with the family, both boys became very friendly, and went out hunting together. They became as close as brothers; and the two girls were very pleasant to each other and worked at sewing or washing quills or tanning moose-hide. The stranger man began to take an interest in the family's daughter, and the stranger sister was very pleased to see the two becoming acquainted. One day the girl was going for water and he was waiting there, smiling, and said, "My dear, I have become weary waiting for you here, because I must tell you that I love you." The daughter started to blush, but did not say a word to him; so he kissed the girl and asked if he could marry her. The girl replied that he should ask her mother. "What she orders," said the girl, "I do."

In the evening she brought the water home, and the stranger said, "It is useless for me to stay here with you people any longer. I have to be on my way and try to find myself a wife. I am very tired of roaming with my poor sister." The father said to his wife, "What do you think about this? This young man

has been very good while he has been staying with us, helping to carry the meat when there was some to carry." They talked this over as the brother and sister were sitting apart at their own fire-place. The mother said to the stranger, "Why do you have to travel all over the world for a wife when you know that there is my daughter here, and I am willing that you should marry her?" The stranger was very happy and his sister married the son of the family.

After almost a month, the stranger said to his father-in-law, "I will go and hunt, for we are getting short of meat." He planned to take his wife and to travel with his brother-in-law. It was spring-time now and they said they would make a cache or a stage, "And then we will all come back to you," he said. The father gave them his blessing and they left on their hunt. They travelled hard all day and at night they made camp and, being very tired, they slept.

Next morning the stranger suggested that they should separate, and the son of the family was surprised to see his brother-in-law change his mind so quickly. But he agreed, and in a quick glance was surprised to see his brother-in-law with a very serious look, and his eyes were full of hatred. The son controlled himself and soon they were gone.

The stranger found a creek and followed it up until he came to a beaver lodge. Here he made camp and built a strong wooden trap for the beavers. When he returned to his wife, he found her looking very sad, but she didn't say anything. He asked her why she cried, but she smiled and said that she had not been crying and was always very pleased and happy. But she did not mean it. This was because as soon as he was gone she felt that something was wrong, but could not say what. Her husband always kept talking about his sister but never mentioned his brother-in-law, her brother.

One day she said that she was expecting a child, but the husband didn't seem at all pleased. She became very lonely, sitting alone all day, because every morning her husband left early for his traps, and she had no one to talk to. He never brought a beaver home and was always complaining about having bad luck with the beavers. At first he used to come home every evening, but later on he said that it was too much to be running to and fro and that he became very tired working at the traps. "So," said he to the

girl, "I shall not return tonight. Do not expect me." The wife said, "Please take me with you. I am very frightened of staying all alone. Please don't camp away from me. Can we move up to the creek or closer to the creek?" He looked at her sourly and said that it was impossible for her to travel so far, as she was heavy with child. To please him she agreed, and a few days later the baby was born.

It was a boy, and she took great care of him. She thought, "I don't think he loves me, but if he sees his son he might become a better husband and a good father to the boy." Two nights later he came back and noticed her very pale and thin. He said, "At last I have a small beaver. I could not bring it all home as I had to have some food while I was camping, so I have nearly finished it." The poor wife did not seem to hear him. Then he said, "I hope it is a son." She was very glad to tell him that he had a son and he smiled for a little while, but soon the old disgruntled look returned. His wife took the beaver meat and cooked it on the fire and ate it. Meanwhile her husband was fast asleep snoring. He did not want to sit, or sleep close to her, and she thought him very queer. He never told her what he did all day. The following day he said, "I must leave to see my beaver traps, but take good care of my son."

After three nights he had still not returned, and she became very worried because with her small son, she was always expecting danger of many kinds. She feared the coming of enemies, or fierce animals to eat them up in the night. She could not sleep as she imagined that she heard noises. She kept the baby at her breast so that she could run or hide if anything happened. Finally she went to sleep, and the next day her husband came back. She said to him, "Why do you go away for so long, and leave us alone for so long?" He said to her, "Do you not understand that I am doing my best to get good beaver blankets for the winter? Remember my son must not be cold." And he gave her a pat on the shoulder to reassure her and make her believe he cared for her. The son in time became big and playful. The husband kissed his wife and once again told her to look after their son. But the kiss did not mean anything and she did not respond. She still felt that all was not well, as she had since they first parted. She tried to remember the day they left her parents but she could not recall anything wrong. She remembered though, that as they were

about to part from her brother that the stranger said to his sister, "I hope you make a really good wife for my brother-in-law." After he said these words he took his sister's hands and looked for a long time into her eyes. That was when the daughter of the family felt ill at ease.

Thus she remembered all these things, but she put the thoughts away and made up her mind what she should do. She prepared for the return of her husband, and this time he stayed away for four nights. She was collecting wood when she heard him coming, and she brought her wood back to the fire. He picked up his son for a while, but he did not say a word to her. She took his pack and brought out a small beaver which she cooked. In the evening she took him by surprise when she said, "I wonder, how is my brother?" He jumped and looked startled. He replied, "I am surprised to hear you mention your brother's name. I hope they are well and happy together. I wonder how is my dear sister." He gave a very loud laugh but did not look at her. All the more now did the wife feel that something was wrong.

The following morning he told his wife to clean and tan the beaver skin for their son, as the autumn was near and it was time to prepare for winter. Having said this, he left for the beaver traps, as he always did. But this time, as soon as her husband disappeared along the trail, she got up and put the baby between the blankets and the other belongings and ran as fast as she could to pick some berries, placing them by her son. She said to him, "My son, do not move away, or crawl. I shall go and pick some more good berries for you so that you will not be hungry." Then she ran after her husband stealthily. He did not discover that she was following him, but he increased his pace as he got nearer to the creek to visit his beaver traps and she saw his face as he passed through a clearing. He was smiling and singing to himself. She was very surprised to see her husband so happy. Suddenly she realized that there was some secret that he had not told her, and did not want her to know. He rarely brought any beavers or rabbits or chickens home. She was very hungry so she began to eat some cranberries and then crept forward very carefully, trying not to break a twig, because she was frightened that her husband might find her spying on him.

When he reached the first trap, he took out a big beaver and, very pleased with himself, he gave a big chuckle and said, "This is a fine beaver. She'll be very pleased to get him." He re-set his trap, and in his second trap found another beaver and took it out, singing to himself. When he had finally finished inspecting his traps, he had three large beavers and one small one. He could hardly carry them, and had trouble getting on to his feet. His wife ran back a short way and then stopped to listen, and see if she could hear him coming. But instead his heavy footsteps faded away in the other direction. She was very excited and could not see which way he went. She realized that he had been getting many beavers and never brought them home. She began to follow him again. He was walking along by the creek and she saw ahead that there was a bridge which he had to cross. She hid behind a tree because she saw smoke on the other side of the creek. From that spot she could see and hear everything that was said.

As he crossed the bridge, just before he came to the other shore, he grasped hold of a large pole which was sticking out of the water. He pushed it up and down, smiling, and suddenly laughed out loud. Said he, looking down, "It is a good thing that you are out of the way." His wife suddenly began to feel sick and faint, but she had to control herself because she wanted to know what was the meaning of her husband's words and to hear what he said to his sister. She sighed sorrowfully fearing that some dreadful thing must have happened to her only brother. He greeted his sister with many affectionate words and kissed her tenderly. The daughter of the family could see that the woman was starting to cry but her husband was still holding her tightly. She heard him say, "I cannot stay away from you any longer." The sister said "What of the other wife? I am so tired of pretending to be your sister while you are taking care of that other dog. It is no pleasure for me to pass days and nights without you here." She showed great affection toward him. The husband said that it would not be long before they would always be together again as they had before. They both ate together, and then he prepared to leave. He told her always to be careful while he was away at his beaver traps and that if she was hungry to cook some meat, and to cook some fat so as not to starve, and be careful not to choke.

As the wife with the child heard and saw this, she was nearly fainting with hunger and grief. She could see much moose meat drying on poles and fat beaver tails, and was sorrowful that she herself was left to starve. She was unhappy to find that the stranger who had married her was never her real husband but the husband of the other woman who called herself his sister, and now she was left all alone with a child, to starve. She was sure that they had both got rid of her brother, because she did not see him around the fire-place.

Now she had found out all she wanted to know. She got up from her hiding place and stood bravely in full sight of the camp. She walked over the bridge and looked to see what was tied on to the end of the stick, and saw that it was her own brother. There was a rope tied around his neck and the other end of the stick, and his long black hair was flowing down the stream. The tears streamed down her cheeks but she recovered her courage and put on a smile as she came to the fire-place. The other woman did not seem to notice her, so she coughed loudly, and the other woman was very startled. She tried to hide the look of disappointment on her face and greeted her sister-in-law, asking what had caused her to come so far. The baby's mother said that she was looking for berries to feed the child as they were very hungry. "Your brother," she said, "always has bad luck and never brings anything home, but I am very pleased to see that my brother is having better luck and that you have so much meat and so many beavers." The woman said, half-aloud to herself, "Yes. Your brother always was lucky." And she laughed. The baby's mother said that she was in a hurry as her son was waiting for her.

The other wife was frowning and glaring at her and made a face, but the mother pretended that she didn't see. The wife got up and cooked meat and a beaver tail for the mother, but the thought of her brother at the bottom of the creek prevented her from eating anything. The mother of the boy wished that the real wife would become sleepy and ask for her knee as a pillow. She took a moose skin and extracted a long thin bone from it, whittling at it playfully with her knife, and telling the woman, "I remember that my parents used to have this as an awl. They are good if you can make them really sharp." Then she put it aside but near at hand so that she might grab it.

Then her wish was realized. The other woman started nodding, saying that she felt sleepy. She would rest for a while and have the mother's knee as a pillow. Thus she slept, frowning and smiling in her sleep. The mother took the thin sharp bone, placed it in the ear of the woman and gave it a hard push. The woman stretched out her legs without making a sound or waking up. There was not even any blood.

The mother got up very quickly and placed the meat and fat cooked by the dead woman at her side; rubbed grease and meat on the dead woman's hands, and filled her mouth with meat. Then she ran quickly across the bridge to hide behind a tree to watch to see what the man would do when he came back. She did not have to wait long before she heard him coming back to his wife, carrying a big pack containing about five beavers. He was very hot when he put the pack on the ground and spoke to his wife. He knelt beside her thinking at first that she was asleep; but he saw the meat and fat on the stick and that she had been eating, that her hands were greasy and her mouth full of meat. He began crying out in distress, and meanwhile, the mother got up and ran home.

She found her child and took a piece of meat and cooked it for the baby. As it was getting dark, she brought in her wood and water and kept the fire going all night. She was very frightened because she expected that her husband would come home very upset at losing his beloved wife, and that he might kill her. She remained watchful all through the night but he did not come. After five nights, she was putting the baby to sleep in the evening, and arranging him so that she could grab him quickly if anything happened. Suddenly she heard a noise and stood up to listen the better, as the fire was crackling rather loudly. Then she heard her husband coming home, sobbing, and staggering to the fire-place, but also carrying dried meat. He was making a great noise in the night. He threw down his pack, but kept on sobbing like a child.

The mother asked him what troubled him but he did not seem to hear. She asked him again "After five nights you come home and, for no reason, you come sobbing." The husband replied, still sobbing; "I dreamed that my mother died," -- and he could hardly finish his words before he started sobbing again. She knew now that it was time for her to act. For five days now he had been crying, so that his eyes

were nearly closed, and finally he fell asleep, snoring. She stepped over the fire to his side and took a spear and said to the child, "Some monster is killing your father." Saying this, she thrust the spear into him with all her strength. Then she took the child in a beaver blanket and ran as fast as her feet would carry her.

She stopped to rest, then she set out to go back to her parents. But first she remembered her brother, and so she turned and came back past the fire where the man's body lay; but she did not stop until she came to the creek where her brother was submerged. She took the body out of the water and went to the fire-place. She could not see the body of the woman she had killed. Then she saw that her husband had built a stage and, coming over to see, saw that he had placed her body upon it, wrapped in tanned moose-hide which was all white. She threw this down and in its place put her brother's body. She tore the clothes off the woman's body so that the ravens would feed on it. She noticed the signs left by her body having been dragged all over the ground by the husband who thought she had choked when eating and he had tried to relieve her.

Now she set off for her parents who were still living in the same place. When they saw her alone, they became angry, and the mother looked at her daughter and said to her, "Why are you all alone? Where are your brother and sister-in-law? Did you eat them? What kept you alive since there is no one left but you?" The girl did not have time to explain because her mother did not want to hear. Her mother chased her away and told her not to come back again, ever. They gave her no fish or meat, not even for her child. She cried and roamed about looking for berries to feed the child.

It was getting colder, and as she continued picking berries day by day she had to go farther every time and she now had to carry her baby. Once she found a pleasant large clearing full of berries. She laid the child down and started to pick them around the baby. As she worked, she did not notice that she was moving farther away from him and, quite suddenly, she was astonished to see that it was getting dark and she called to him. But there was no answer. She ran to the place where she had left the baby but she could not see him. She ran all around the area but could

find nothing. She became very frightened and did not know what to do, always calling out his name. She could not go home for fear of her parents. They would be even more angry because she had returned first with only the baby, and now even he was gone. Nevertheless she had to go and tell them what happened.

She threw away the berries and, still crying, went home very quickly, hoping that she might get help from them and find her child. At her parents' camp she said to her mother, "I was picking berries for my child because you gave us nothing to eat. I left him where he could eat berries and went out farther. When I returned he was gone. I could see large tracks leading to the place where I had put my son, and I could see that they led away into the bush. Her parents listened, so angry that they could not speak. Now they told her, "Go away before we kill you. We had pity on you for the sake of your child. Now you must go away and never come back again." So she crawled out and hid in the bush for a while. She made up her mind to find her son, even if it took all her life.

Next day she began travelling, until she got so tired that she fell asleep among a thick clump of trees. The following day she moved on again, and after a month she was still travelling, and the snow had come, covering the ground thickly. But she never gave up. At first she had followed the tracks of the enemy who had taken her son, but when the snow had covered them up she continued in the same direction. As the snow got deeper, she became more hungry and very wretched, until she could hardly walk.

She would sleep under a tree, but did not have the strength to build herself a fire. One sunny day, when she began to travel again, she discovered some tracks and began to follow them, very pleased. Finally she took a long rest and then, in the middle of the afternoon, got up and started walking again. At last, in the distance, she saw some smoke, but by now she was very feeble from lack of food and poor sleep. She came close enough to see that there were quite a number of families staying together. She became very excited and frightened, but she had to go to the fire to warm her hands because she was very cold and hungry. As she approached the nearest fire-place, she could see an old woman and an old man. It was getting dark and they didn't see her coming. When she stepped into the fire-light they both looked

up startled and opened their mouths to speak but no words came. They looked pale-faced and very frightened. She said to them, "Please do not be alarmed. I came to you because I am lost and cold and very hungry." The old people said to each other, "She is a poor bush Indian." The old lady took a small birch cup from her bosom and put in it some snow to melt. The young woman was thinking that as she was coming she had noticed a sled track with blood trailing behind it, so she knew that they had meat. The old woman said, "Dear grandchild, what has happened to your parents?" And the young woman said that she had not seen them for a long time.

As they were asking questions, a little boy came along and looked at her with big eyes. Then he ran away and told the others that he had seen an awful bony ghost. So everyone came running to see.

In the old days when a stranger came to the camp from afar off, the people were always curious and listened carefully to what was said, being on their guard for a spy; but when they saw this young woman, they changed their minds and were quite sorry for her as she was so starved and aged.

Suddenly she heard a great noise from the other end of the encampment. She became very frightened because there was much screaming and she could not tell what it meant. The old lady said, "Eh, eh. Listen to them screaming again." And she turned to the starved woman and said, "Do you hear that?"

Then the talk moved to the success of a hunter named Ah Nontin who had shot a moose. "Everyone must come and get themselves a piece of meat," she said. The young woman thought, "This is none of my business. I am tired and still have to make my own fire-place." She had spoken aloud and the old lady heard and said, "But first you must eat, and now you have a chance to get a piece of meat from Ah Nontin. You will be very surprised to hear about him, because he is very young, but very pleasant to talk to. Less than five months ago he was brought home by the man with whom he is staying, and we called him Ah Nontin, which means "Brought back." He grew very quickly and they found that he was very clever and most skilful at hunting. So they married him to two very young girls. Every time he goes hunting he always brings back meat."

As the old lady spoke these words, the mother felt her heart very tight for a while, and she wondered about the strange name. "But the world is very big," she thought, and she could not hope any longer. She went to the dwelling of Ah Nontin and as she stepped into their hut, he was dividing the meat and both girls were going out to give the pieces to every family. He looked up at her quickly but did not recognize her, as he was busy. Then, exposing her breast to the fire, she said, "This breast was once very near to someone. Now, what is wrong? It is freezing." When Ah Nontin heard her, he looked at her for a long time, and his face changed, as the woman looked at him.

Now the two wives came running in, laughing because they were both very young and happy, for they knew their husband was always lucky. They sat down on each side of him and would not say anything to her. So she could take a good look at the lad and, to her surprise, she saw a long scar on his right cheek and knew that it must be her son. As they looked at each other, the woman became convinced that he was her son and he took pity on her because she was so thin and frail. He said to his wives, "Cook all the meat she can eat, and feed her well. Then give her some to take home. She is starving." Ah Nontin's mother said, "I arrived here only this evening. I have no home, and don't know what brought me here after wandering all over the world. I have come far now, and am very tired." Ah Nontin bowed his head, and then, saying nothing to his wives, took his mitts and said, "Stranger, you stay here and eat all the meat you want. I will go and make a fire-place for you." With these words he went out of the hut.

While Ah Nontin was gone, the girls fed her and gave her some meat for the next day. She thanked them and finally left. Ah Nontin was still carrying wood, and he finished as she reached the fire. He came over to warm his hands. He said to her, "Tell me of your adventures. What brought you this far?" So she told him the story about losing her child while she picking berries to feed him. Someone had taken her only son. She had followed the tracks until the snow came, and then carried on in the direction in which they had gone, always seeking her dear son. She said, "I am very sure that my eyes are not deceiving me when I recognize that long scar on your cheek. I want to hear about it because when I was carrying my son his face got scratched with a willow bough -- and I wonder

why they all call you 'Ah Nontin' -- you know what that means."

He became very angry when he realized why he had been given this name by these people -- and he called them dogs. He looked at one of his mother's ears because he remembered that it was marked. It was split, and he had noticed this when she was carrying him. Suddenly the tears were running down his cheeks. He got up and told his mother to be careful and not to mention their discovery to anyone. "Come to me again for meat to-morrow," he said, and was gone.

The following morning everybody was going for meat and the woman took her pack-sack. Ah Nontin was dividing the meat when she came to him. He said to her, "Come, and take this moose meat and marrow." She was too happy to say anything because now she had found her lost son, and she was very careful not to betray herself. Everybody prepared to leave, carrying their meat. In the evening she went back to her fire-place at the far end of the camp.

While she was sitting by her fire, she heard someone coming, and saw her son, Ah Nontin, coming to visit her. She offered him some marrow but he told her to keep it. He sat with her for a short time and then left, saying that it was not wise for him to stay too long with her in case the people realized they had a secret. She was so happy that she did not sleep for a long time. Finally, she slept, but was up again very early in the morning. She had only just melted snow for drinking-water when suddenly she heard a great noise and loud screams. Ah Nontin was devouring his wives. She heard cries and screaming and sticks crackling in a horrible fashion. Ah Nontin called to her to stay at her fire-place and the noise decreased. Finally, she heard no noise of any kind but she kept her eyes on the fire. She did not dare look around. Then, out of the corner of her eyes, she saw a movement, and looking up, saw a huge monster lying on the trail licking blood off his paw. She was too frightened to look again, so she put a piece of marrow on the coals to burn and the smoke blew toward the monster. After a short time he came to the fire and she saw that the great animal was her son who changed back to human form when he smelt the burning fat. He said to her, "At last I have found my dear mother." And she replied that she had travelled far and now her only son was found. She was crying with happiness.

Ah Nontin told his mother to go to one of her daughters-in-law and ask for an awl for sewing. She went to their dwelling, but the place was deserted although there was blood everywhere. She took what she needed for sewing -- needles, an awl, and a knife. She had not had these things before because the bush Indians had no steel or iron, but these people were Crees.

She went back to her son and he brought his own sled to his mother and loaded it with utensils in preparation for a journey. Then he said, "Let us go. We cannot stay here any longer among these dead people."

They left in the direction in which his mother had come. They continued travelling, looking for a good place to camp with thick spruce and a lot of dry wood.

(Aside by the Narrator: It is good to choose a thick place to camp. You will keep warm in winter and make walls with spruce and have wood to burn all night.)

They continued travelling until the beginning of spring when Ah Nontin said to his mother, "Tell me when we are getting close to the camp of my grandfather and grandmother, for I must hunt for meat." After three more nights his mother said, "My son, we are now in our land and you may begin hunting."

The next day Ah Nontin went hunting, breaking trail with his snowshoes at the same time. They did not travel the next day, as Ah Nontin had to turn back, following fresh moose tracks. He moved well and caught up with the moose and shot it. Then he went back to his mother and they moved to the end of the trail where he had left the meat. They made a fire-place, and his mother cut all the meat and hung it up to dry, so that it would not be too heavy to haul with the sled. While the meat was drying, the mother was working the moose-hide, and finally, they were ready to move on. He killed another moose, and they were very busy again for a while, but at the same time the son was always breaking trail ahead.

At last they found some snowshoe tracks and followed them until they saw smoke. Ah Nontin had never heard of the anger of his grandparents, and how they had driven his mother away to roam about alone. She had not told him, because she knew that if she had

he would surely destroy them. So when they came to the camp they made a fire-place for themselves, and Ah Nontin knew that there was something wrong because the old people looked frightened instead of being happy to see their daughter.

One of his uncles came to visit them and Ah Nontin pulled out the package of dried meat and threw it at his feet. Without a word he began eating the dry meat, because he feared that if he did not, or even left it for a while, he would surely be killed. They knew that he never smiled at them or spoke to them, but they were always ready to do whatever he said, and they followed him wherever he went because he was so wise and had good fortune. He was the best of the warriors and always gained victory.

### EH'TSONTSIA SAGA - No. 1

Long ago, there lived a family, with three sons. The oldest son's name was Meccagostaye. The second was Kaatahly. The youngest was Eh'tsontsia. Their father was very wise and of course wanted his sons to replace him in his old age, but the two older boys were his greater favourites. The third was too young to arouse his interest because he was as yet unable to engage in manly pursuits. But their father was teaching them to become as wise as himself. Thus he would say to his sons, "Suppose there was an enemy who tried to shoot you, what would you do? If you are not clever and do not dodge quickly enough, you will be killed. I, your father, have done my best to teach you and bring you up amidst all dangers, and I would not like to see you die young. Now I will place my cap on my knee and you must try and knock it off. Whoever does this will take my place in the future."

So Meccagostaye shot an arrow, but his father was too quick. As soon as his son had released the arrow, he straightened his leg so that Meccagostaye missed. Meanwhile the other boy was very interested and watchful, and thus found out his father's trick, observing how he unbent his knee as the arrow was shot. He hoped that his father would give him a chance to shoot to try to remove the cap, because now he knew he could do it.

His father said to him, "You, Kaatahly, are my second son and I hope that unlike your older brother,

Meccagostaye, you will be the lucky one." But Kaatahly thought to himself, "He will not trick me as he did my brother. He is old and not as wise as he imagines himself to be." So he prepared his bow and arrow and his father said, "Go ahead, shoot." Kaatahly held his breath in order to make very sure that he didn't miss. He pretended that he was aiming at his father's cap. At the last moment he lowered his arrow, unobserved by his father, in order to forestall the trick. So Kaatahly shot his father in the knee and, in his surprise, the father cried out loud. "You, Kaatahly," he cried, "are the one who shot in the right place." Kaatahly wanted to pull the arrow out of his father's wound. His father, seeing the awful thing about to happen and knowing how painful it would be, begged his son to revolve the arrow. Kaatahly said, "Father, I did not do this purposely but you forced my hand when you tested us with your cap trick." Saying this, he pulled out the arrow. The father was proud to see the bravery of his son and happy that Kaatahly showed himself to be the wiser. From this day on, he always worshipped his second son, Kaatahly.

#### EH'TSONTSIA SAGA - No. 2

The poor little son, Eh'tsontsia, was becoming more useful daily. (This is an aside by the narrator: You have to understand that in the olden days it was necessary to become very clever while you were quite small. You had to be light on your feet and never eat too much, and always be watchful and obedient.)

One day Eh'tsontsia asked his father to take him to war but his father refused, saying that the boy was too small. Though more grown-up, the youngest son, Eh'tsontsia, was still too small to go with his two brothers and father to war. The father one day took his family to where there lived many other people, so that his wife would have company. He gathered all the young and old warriors around him and asked them to be ready to fight, as he had a feeling that an enemy was preparing to destroy them. The warriors were all very joyful and excited.

They began to travel from dawn onwards throughout the day, very watchful from the time they left their families and always alert to find a strategic and well-protected location, thick with

spruce and willows. Eh'tsontsia's father spoke to his warriors, "We must camp thus in a protective spot where the enemy will not see our fire, or we would all be destroyed." While the men were busy preparing a camping place, the chief sent one of the men ahead as a scout to discover if any danger was close at hand. The one that is sent ahead must be very careful, in case he betrays the presence of his friends. Soon the man that was sent ahead came hurrying back to the chief. He was very excited and breathless. He said that he had seen many enemies who were preparing to kill them all and their families as well. Thus he proved that Eh'tsontsia's father's premonition was right.

They set about preparations for the fight, and there was much excitement and whispering among the warriors. When they all were ready, they moved towards the enemy. They encircled the camp of the enemy very silently. Some of the young warriors were trembling from head to toe, waiting in the dark, deep in snow, knee high, their teeth chattering with both hate and fear. All this time the enemies were quite unconscious of what was happening about them. They were making preparations for battle on the morrow. Eh'tsontsia's father's people could hear the enemies talking and glorying in the thought of how they would surprise Eh'tsontsia's father's band. They called them dogs, and laughed greatly, not being at all careful or on their guard, believing themselves to be perfectly safe in the night. This was because they had no idea of Eh'tsontsia's father's premonition, and had no idea that he himself was on the warpath.

The warriors always waited for the chief to give his signal. The chief must have the first shot and give a yell. When this signal was given, everyone was trying to shoot the enemy down. Unfortunately, there were about fifty of the enemy, and the warriors of Eh'tsontsia's father only about thirty. Moreover, the enemy had long-barrelled flintlock guns. The enemies were falling in all directions, backwards, forwards, sideways, and face down. Some fell in the open fire, yelling with pain and hate, and asking among themselves where the arrows flew from so fast, killing half of their men. But Eh'tsontsia's father knew that they could not keep it up because there were too many enemies and also they were armed with guns. Fortunately, they were very slow with powder and flint and so frightened and shaky that they

didn't seem to know what they were doing.

(Interpolation by narrator: a reminder):  
When Eh'tsontsia had asked his father to take him with him, he had laughed and told his son that he was too small, and was foolish to talk in that way. So Eh'tsontsia was very angry and didn't speak and didn't eat. When his father went with his warriors to the war, Eh'tsontsia got up as soon as they had departed and went to his mother. He said, "Mother, I wish to go with the warriors." But his mother said, "No, dear child, you are speaking without thinking. You cannot go because there is no knowing what will happen to your brothers and father." Eh'tsontsia straightened his head and shoulders and said, "Well, I'm going anyway. No one can stop me." He screamed in rage at his mother, "What do you think I am? I am just as much a man as he, my father." The boy was about nine years old and his mother was surprised to see his eyes gleam with hatred, so the poor mother knew it was time to hold her peace and she bent her head and cried; but Eh'tsontsia was not to be pitied. He thought himself a man.

He went off into the night and found his way to his father's fire-place (camp). The men were occupied in warming their feet by the fire and the scout who had been sent ahead had not yet returned. It was during this time that Eh'tsontsia suddenly appeared by the fire. His father was angry, saying that this was no time for playing. He ordered Eh'tsontsia to go home, or hide somewhere until the war was over. Eh'tsontsia rose, and looking right into his father's eyes, said, "My father, I did not come all this way just to return or hide like a girl. Let me be what I am. Whether I am small or big, one thing is sure and that is that I will not return home tonight." His father told him to be a good boy and remain there until everything settled down. His father said that it gave him no pleasure to order him thus, but the boy was only nine years old, and being his youngest son, wanted him to stay behind and keep warm. Eh'tsontsia's father was trying to show him that while being severe, he still really loved and cared for him, but Eh'tsontsia would not be mollified by any of these soft words, and remained quiet.

Later, in the heat of the battle, his father forgot Eh'tsontsia. He was anxious, for he knew that the enemy was gaining. Amidst all the noise and

pouring blood, Eh'tsontsia's father was yelling with all his might in order to encourage his comrades, but they lost many of their men because the enemy was larger in number and more powerful. At last when they were too tired to care, knowing only that they were losing, they didn't notice a small figure moving about like lightning, striking out in every direction: and all the time the enemy kept up their fire. Quite suddenly, they heard the shooting decreasing, and finally all was quiet. Eh'tsontsia's father gave a big sigh of relief, happy to realize that he was still alive, but his sigh was not heard by the other fighting men who were still breathing heavily. They knew that they had killed about half of their enemy, but they also knew that the enemy was still strong and wild, eager to kill them and their families.

Next they looked with wondering eyes as they heard men crying for mercy, and they remembered the little face among the enemy, and every now and again they had heard someone yelling and they all jumped to their feet, amazed, because it was Eh'tsontsia's voice they heard, giving orders to the enemy. Before they had time to speak, the shooting started again. Eh'tsontsia's father's face turned white at the thought that his son would go amongst the enemy to be killed. Then the shooting stopped completely and they ran to see the son of their chief walking noiselessly toward the enemy's fire-place.

Before they got there, they heard Eh'tsontsia giving orders, but the sight was obscured by the spruce trees. When they were able to see Eh'tsontsia, he was less than ten feet away, standing with his feet far apart, looking at all the bodies of the enemy at his feet. Some were still alive but could not shoot because he had a club made of caribou horn, and was swinging this left and right, breaking their arms, so that they would not shoot. He then broke their skulls too. He taunted them, saying that thus they would learn who was the cleverest warrior, and mocking at their noisy guns with flint and powder. He puffed out his chest and removed his belt with a laugh. All the bullets that the enemy had shot at Eh'tsontsia were flattened against his body but he wasn't even scratched.

Eh'tsontsia's father was very happy and excited, so much that he could not say a word. Eh'tsontsia had left one wounded enemy without breaking his arms and legs, but he did not trust the enemy and took

one of the long guns and knelt by the man's side and asked him how to handle the weapon. The enemy told him how to put in the powder and flint and cap and how to fire. Then Eh'tsontsia shot him. Eh'tsontsia turned to his father and said, "You should have stayed at home and asked mother to take care of you." His father was very humiliated in front of his comrades. They all took a gun each and went home joyfully praising Eh'tsontsia.

### EH'TSONTSIA SAGA - No. 3

From then on his parents were always ready to do what he told them. One day when it was very sunny he awoke very happy and said to his brother, Meccagostaye, "Oh, brother, what a fine day for hunting!" The older brother agreed and Eh'tsontsia said, "We'll see how good the dogs are. Our father was always very proud of them."

So they started early, but there was no game of any kind, and when the sun rose high, it began to be very hot and the dogs became tired and wanted to rest. Their tongues were hanging out, as they wished for water but they did not find any. So Eh'tsontsia got to his feet and went ahead of the dogs but they did not seem to wish to follow him. Eh'tsontsia turned to his brother and said, "What does our father call these wretched dogs? I don't even know their names." -- and he became rather sulky. He called the dogs, "Father's dogs, father's dogs, come on, father's dogs." The dogs did not understand, so he took his horn club and went at them to break their skulls open. His brother was very sorry for his father's dogs, but he knew Eh'tsontsia too well and didn't say anything. They went home and their father said to the older son, "Why do you come home without the dogs? Where are my dogs?" And his son told him what had happened. But they did not dare to say anything about it to Eh'tsontsia because he was very strong and quick-tempered and did not fear anything.

Eh'tsontsia and Meccagostaye and Kaatahly made up their minds to go to war. Eh'tsontsia was the youngest son but he was the cleverest, and so he became the leader in the family. He gave orders to his brothers to bring all the men they could find to serve as warriors. They did this. They went to war against the Cree Indians.

As they approached the enemy, they camped where they could drink and make plans as to how they were going to surprise them. Eh'tsontsia first sent a man to find out how many tents there were in the enemy's camp. In those days they did not know how to count, so they carried a long stick of willow which they broke into as many pieces as there were tents, to make sure that they made no mistake. The messenger carried the pieces of broken willow in his mitt and came back to report to Eh'tsontsia. They slept a little and were up before dawn. They had their bows and arrows and guns ready to start forward.

They advanced without noise to the place where there were many tents, placing a warrior at each entrance; and then they began shooting freely. They greatly frightened the Cree Indians who were still half asleep. Eh'tsontsia's men moved in towards each other, killing as they went, and so they gained the victory. Eh'tsontsia chose two young girls, and took a sled to carry his selection of booty, including an axe, cooking utensils, pail, pots, cups, blankets, and other things. He took the two girls because he wanted them to pull the sled, not because he cared for them. He was interested only in fighting.

The girls started to pull the sled, and Eh'tsontsia yelled at them that they should go faster. When it became too dark to travel they stopped to make a fire-place and everybody was busy. The two girls did not speak to each other. They became his slaves, with never a kind word from him. He was always irritable. So, when they saw Eh'tsontsia's own family and other relatives, they hoped they might find among them a friend, but Eh'tsontsia was always angry with them, and he told them never to move further away than his tent door, all the time during their journey. The two girls had to make sure that he was

kept warm in the sled covered with beaver blankets. Then he got out of the sled, took his bone club, and with a very quick movement he broke open both their skulls and dragged them on to the ice of the river, saying to himself, "Here is good food for the ravens." He was still smiling to himself when his two beautiful wives came out to meet their husband. As soon as he saw his wives, he smiled gladly and his eyes were shining brightly with joy. He told them that they could have the utensils that he had taken, and his father and mother and other brothers were all happy to know that this, the youngest member of the family, Eh'tsontsia, was a hero.

#### EH'TSONTSIA SAGA - No. 5

Over half a month passed by without excitement. Then he suggested to his brothers that they hunt meat for their family, as they were becoming short of food. Spring was changing into summer now, and the following morning they began to prepare their spruce bark canoes.

They stayed away a week, waiting for each other, so that they were all ready to come back from their hunt together. When the women heard their husbands singing as they paddled back to the camp, they knew that it meant they were very pleased with their hunt. So the children and the wives all ran to meet their husbands and fathers. Eh'tsontsia was paddling close to the shore but it seemed that there was no one to meet him. He was beginning to wonder if there was something wrong when he saw his baby brother approaching in tears.

Eh'tsontsia jumped out of his canoe and asked his little brother what was the matter. The little brother said, "As soon as you left for your hunt, two strangers came and moved into your camp and took the girls for their wives." Eh'tsontsia became angry and broke his bone club and went to his tent, stepped inside with his arms first and grabbing the two fellows by their hair, he knocked their skulls together saying, "It is a waste to use my club on your skulls." Next he clubbed his two wives on the head saying, "This is what you deserve for being unfaithful." Then he took the meat to his parents.

When he returned to his tent he slept, without first eating. Then he went to the shore and slept for a month, neither eating or talking to anyone.

In this way all his life was passed either in worry or excitement. Every time the warriors wanted to fight, they would go and beg him to lead them, so as to be sure of victory. Thus Eh'tsontsia grew older very quickly, and in time his mother and father died of old age. His brothers all were married and had children. Eh'tsontsia never married again after he had killed his wives, as he said he would never trust women until his death.

#### EH'TSONTSIA SAGA - No. 6

Everybody knew about Eh'tsontsia and never did women or girls try to become acquainted with him, as everyone was frightened of him. So he moved restlessly all over the world; until one day he found out how lonely he was. He tried to find some of his relatives, but he failed, and so he became older, until he could hardly walk.

He was crawling along one day, very tired, preparing to make a fire, when a young man came along and discovered Eh'tsontsia. The young man gathered many dry sticks and much good wood and piled it all close to Eh'tsontsia so that he would not have to go far to get to the wood. He also fetched a lot of water in birch-bark pans, and some meat, and left them all near him. As he was moving away, he heard Eh'tsontsia knocking sticks together, and he glanced back. The old man was beckoning to him, so he returned. Eh'tsontsia thanked him for his kindness, and said that as a reward he was wishing the young man all the luck that he, Eh'tsontsia, had had in his life. "Come and visit me again in a month. I shall still be here." With this, he said, "Farewell," to the young stranger, and fell asleep.

The young man walked away very quietly.

Later he told his parents what had happened and his father was very pleased because in the olden days, when an old man wished anyone luck, he meant it, and their wishes always came true. If such men went to war, they came back safely.

Some time later, the young man's father said to his son, "My son, you should go and see the old man whom you told me about." The son said, "Father, I am sorry that I did not go sooner." And he promised to go the following day, spending the evening making preparations. His mother made his moccasins and prepared some pemmican for her son. The next morning he was up early and said that he would return as soon as possible. He left his mother busy drying fish and meat, and making fish-nets with willow bark.

Before very long the son returned and he said that the old man had told him that his name was Eh'tsontsia and that he was very old. He said the old man did not wish to be buried in the same way as everyone else in the world. Eh'tsontsia had said, "Tell the world I want to be something very special, and I wish never to be buried. Please watch over me and see that nothing happens to my body." So the young man stayed with him day and night; and then one day, to his amazement, he heard a grunting sound and he saw Eh'tsontsia melting down and turning into a black rock. That was the end of Eh'tsontsia. The young lad told the story to his father and so it has been kept on to this day.

Ottawa, Ontario.