

The husband sighed heavily, the daughter burst into tears, and the poor little infant made the moment more distressing by calling in a plaintive tone on its mother, by whose side it was lying. I determined on burying the woman on shore, and the husband was much pleased at my promising that the body should be drawn on a sledge by men instead of dogs. Takkeelikkeeta, her husband, had told me that when he left the huts with his wife, a dog was devouring the body of another Esquimaux, as he passed it.

Takkeelikkeeta now prepared to dress the dead body, and in the first place stopped his nose with deer's hair and put on his gloves, seeming unwilling that his naked hand should come in contact with the corpse. I observed in this occupation his care that every article of dress should be as carefully placed as when his wife was living, and having drawn the boots on the wrong legs, he pulled them off again and put them properly; this ceremony finished, the deceased was sewed up in a hammock, and at the husband's urgent request her face was left uncovered. An officer who was present at the time agreed with me in fancying that the man, from his words and actions, intimated a wish that the living child might be enclosed with its mother. We may have been mistaken, but there is an equal probability that we were right in our conjecture; for according to Crantz and Egede the Greenlanders were in the habit of burying their motherless infants from a persuasion that they must otherwise starve to death, and also from being unable to bear the cries of the little ones while lingering for several days without sustenance; for no woman will give them any share of their milk, which they consider as the exclusive property of their own offspring. My dogs being carefully tied up at the man's request, a party of our people accompanied by me drew the body to the shore, where we made a grave about a foot deep, being unable to get lower on account of the frozen earth. The body was placed on its back at the husband's request, and he then stepped into the grave and cut all the stitches