

boys practicing archery occasionally knock over a longspur or a snow bunting, or a tiny shore bird, which go into the pot indiscriminately to gratify the pride of the juvenile hunter rather than as any great contribution to the food supply. The Eskimo cook usually boils birds, this being the most satisfactory method of treating sea-birds. Their custom of removing the entrails and boiling them in the pot with the rest of the bird is not inviting to a fastidious appetite, although I have been gravely informed by a sophisticated native that it is "all the same macaroni." Ptarmigan in general are grateful to the civilized taste, but a delicacy that is not so attractive is a ptarmigan intestine filled with bitter young willow buds, dropped for a minute into boiling water till it swells up like a wienerwurst, and eaten hot. The Arctic "salad," which seems to be favoured more in winter, when no vegetable food has been seen for months, is the first stomach or rumen of the caribou when it happens to be filled with freshly-chewed reindeer-moss or *Cladonia* lichens. This is frozen whole and sliced off very thin, the gastric juice supplying the acid, and a liberal mixture of seal-oil the salad dressing. The caribou stomach is seldom eaten except when filled with the succulent reindeer-moss, and when it contains woody grass-fibre is usually discarded. This food may properly be classed as "pre-digested," and under certain extenuating circumstances, such as a trail appetite, a long siege of one-course rations of meat, anything "different" may have some attractions, but few white men venture to experiment with it. The two almost omnipresent species—*Pediculus capitis* and *P. vesimenti* (the *Komuk* of the Eskimo or "ceotic" of current literature) are very commonly eaten, not so much for flavour or food value, I imagine, as a convenient means of disposing of these elusive parasites.

The fish of the Arctic are not very many in number of species, but are numerous as to individuals, and practically all of them are good, well-flavoured, and of firm flesh like most fish of cold waters,—various species of whitefish, salmon trout, lake trout, pike, grayling, herring, smelt, loche, connies, etc. As long as the fish are fresh, it matters little whether they are boiled, or spitted on a stick and roasted before the fire. Most Eskimos, however, will persist in boiling fish with the scales on, which makes eating rather unpleasant. Many are eaten sun-dried or smoked, without salting, and if dried quickly in suitable weather, are very good.

One thing which surprised me was the extensive eating of raw, frozen fish, and still more, how quickly the habit is picked up. I have never been able to endure a cooked fish unless it is well done, without a trace of rawness, but I ate my first piece

of raw, frozen fish with relish, and thought that they generally tasted like raw oysters, and fully as palatable.

The frozen fish, like sticks of stovewood, are brought into the warm house just long enough to soften the skin, then the skin is cut around the gills, and down the middle of the back, a corner loosened and the skin ripped off by a simple pull. The flesh is then cut away in chunks of "eating size," or eaten like corn on the cob, the skeletal portion of the fish being thrown away like the corn-cob. For an outdoor lunch on a cold winter day, a frozen fish does not appeal to me—I always felt chilled inside and outside for an hour afterward. Frozen fish-roe is also relished by the Eskimo, and is very nourishing: the Eskimo say it "makes you warm inside." Seal or whale-oil is eaten with frozen fish as preferred, but fall "connies" or salmon-bellies are rich enough without.

In many parts of the Eskimo country, the seals form almost as important a part of the food supply as the caribou. West of the Mackenzie, seal-hunting is not quite as important as formerly, but seals are still hunted for skins to make water-boots and other footgear everywhere. Among the Copper Eskimo, from Dolphin and Union Straits and eastward, the seal is still more important, and practically the whole population eat little else from the first of December until May, during which period the people move out on the ice and live in snow-houses on the sealing grounds. In spite of the scarcity of fuel, the seal-meat is usually eaten cooked, boiled in stone pots over blubber-lamps, for fortunately the seal has such an abundance of blubber that there is plenty to cook the meat as well as heat the habitations fairly comfortably. Indeed, in many winter sealing camps more blubber is brought in than can be used in proportion to the meat from the chase, and large slabs are thrown away. Towards spring, the surplus blubber is saved, and preserved in seal-skin bags for the next autumn.

Seal-meat contains a great deal of blood, and has a very dark colour, and the older animals generally have a rather fishy taste, so that very few white men acquire a real liking for it, at least enough to eat it when there is any other kind of meat around. The young seals have tender meat with scarcely any ill flavour, and the liver of most seals is very fine, equal to the best calves' liver, but occasionally an old specimen of the common Rough Seal (*Phoca hispida*) has such a strong, pungent odour, as if soaked in coal-oil or gasoline, that even an Eskimo dislikes to eat it.

I think that most Eskimos at heart prefer their own native foods, although they like to have certain white man's foods in the house and on their tables.