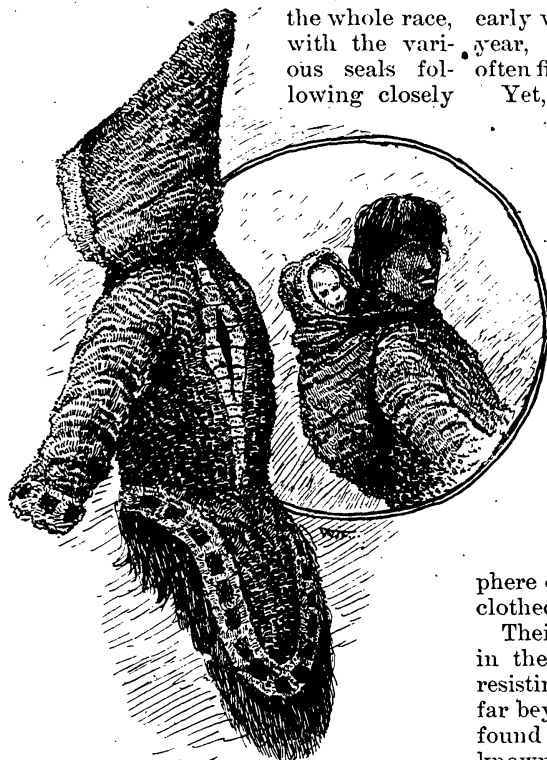


The walrus forms the principal food of the Eskimo race wherever it is found, and it is so generally distributed over the Arctic part of the North American continent that it undoubtedly makes up the bulk of sustenance for the whole race, with the various seals following closely



REINDEER COAT OF ESKIMO WOMAN.

behind, and both these kind of meats amply supplemented by salmon, cod, whale, musk-oxen, reindeer and polar bear, with an occasional tribe here and there preponderating in some of these latter foods over the walrus and seal. The walrus will not live where it is so cold that all the water channels are frozen over in the winter, as he cannot cut a breathing hole through the thick ice like the smaller hair-seal, which is found in about every part of the Arctic that man has penetrated, and at about all seasons of the year. The greater amount of fatty tissue in the animals of the sea make them more acceptable as food to the northerner whose system craves such diet during the rigorous winter of that zone. The seal and walrus are fat throughout

the year, although varying appreciably in this respect during the different seasons, while the reindeer—for musk-oxen are nowhere numerous enough to enter largely as food—are only in good condition for a few months in the fall and early winter, the coldest months in the year, January, February and March, often finding them livid in their leanness.

Yet, in spite of all this, my northern travels threw me in contact with a fair-sized tribe of Eskimo that lived largely on this kind of meat, catching only enough seal from an inlet that cut deep into their country to supply their stone lamps with a little light during the long dark winter night. Those living on seal and walrus had enough oil to warm their houses—though made of snow—many degrees higher than the intense cold outside, and would take off their outside suit of reindeer clothes when in the house, while the reindeer hunters seldom had a temperature even a little above that of the atmosphere outside, and often remained double clothed as if in the open.

Their homes were cold and cheerless in the extreme, but they had powers of resisting it that seemed phenomenal and far beyond human endurance as we have found it limited in our own zone. I have known one of these cold-weather cavaliers to take a reindeer hide that had been soaking in the water, and that was frozen as stiff as a plate of boiler-iron, and put it against his bare body, holding it there, not only until it was thawed out, but until it was perfectly dry. The skin was to be used as a drum-head for singing and dancing exercises, and had to be dry and hairless to answer that purpose, the soaking ridding it of the hair, while there were apparently no other means of drying it than the heroic method adopted. From the large number of reindeer killed by these Eskimo they are abundantly supplied with skins for bedding and clothing, and in the making up of these necessities they have displayed so much tact and talent with the limited means at hand that they are the best dressed natives in the North. From one of their fancy dis-