

The hides are brought in from the hunt just as they are taken from the animals, and given to the women, who stretch them upon a rude framework of poles and flesh them with iron or bone scrapers. They are then slowly dried, and during this process various things are applied to render them pliable.

The final work is painting the inside with pigments, a labor bestowed only upon unusually fine skins. We have seen some robes thus ornamented that were beautiful specimens of Indian decorative art. The designs used in most instances are of the calendar style. The intention seems to be to keep a record of certain years on the buffalo robe by some symbol representing an event that took place in that year. The events selected are not always the most important of the year, but such as were, in some sense, the most striking, and could be best represented by symbols. For example, stars falling from the top to the bottom of the robe represent the year 1833, an event from which the Indians frequently count. The etching of an Indian with a broken leg and a horn on his head stands for a year in which Mr. Hay-waujina, One Horn, had his leg "killed," and so on. The symbols are placed in a spiral form, beginning in the centre, and going a little to the left; the line then turns on itself to the right and below, and so on, turning with the sun. These designs are copied many times, of course, so that in a pack of painted robes, nine-tenths of them will be decorated in exactly the same manner.

The work of dressing a buffalo skin perfectly is a very