

THE WINTER HOME OF THE BARREN GROUND CARIBOU.

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Among the few large animals still found in great numbers on this continent, the Barren-ground Caribou (*Rangifer Grænlandicus*, Linn.) is probably the most interesting and important. It is the principal occupant of the great lonely wastes that extend southward from the shores of the Arctic Sea, not only in America but also in Europe and Asia. The Indians who people the northern part of Canada, including the Chipewyans, Yellow-knives and Dog-ribs, subsist very largely on its flesh, while its light warm skin with its thick covering of light grey hair furnishes them with beds and winter clothing, and the tanned hides, sewed with the sinews from the back, supply them with footgear and comfortable tents. In fact all their necessities, except their ammunition, tea and tobacco and a small amount of summer clothing, are supplied by the Caribou.

In size the Barren ground Caribou is much smaller than the woodland species, an adult female shot by the writer near Lake Athabasca being about as large as the common Virginia deer of this vicinity, and weighing about one hundred and fifty pounds; while an adult male of the woodland species, obtained in the rocky country east of Lake Winnipeg, the head of which is now in the Museum of the Geological Survey, weighed between three and four hundred pounds.

The horns are very large and irregular, very few of them being alike, and all being apparently unsuited to travel through the thick woods. The males are said to shed their horns in November, while the females retain theirs throughout the winter and shed them early in the following spring.

Their winter coat of long hair is shed early in July, and by August or the beginning of September the hide is in excellent condition, and the hair is soft and not too long, so that at this season the Indians endeavour to kill a sufficient number to furnish themselves with clothing for the winter. Later in the year the hair becomes harder and more brittle, and the hide is said to be riddled with holes made by the larvæ of a bot fly.