

country of the Ostyaks on the Obi. The winter-dwellings of the people are not, strictly speaking, underground, but they are flanked with earth piled up against the walls. The same is the case with those of the Yakuts in Eastern Siberia, and these often have the floors also sunk 3 feet in the earth. Habitations really subterranean, of some previous race, have been found in the Samoyed country. (*Klaproth's Mag. Asiatique*, II. 66.)

CHAPTER XXI.

CONCERNING THE LAND OF DARKNESS.

STILL further north, and a long way beyond that kingdom of which I have spoken, there is a region which bears the name of DARKNESS, because neither sun nor moon nor stars appear, but it is always as dark as with us in the twilight. The people have no king of their own, nor are they subject to any foreigner, and live like beasts. [They are dull of understanding, like half-witted persons.¹]

The Tartars however sometimes visit the country, and they do it in this way. They enter the region riding mares that have foals, and these foals they leave behind. After taking all the plunder that they can get they find their way back by help of the mares, which are all eager to get back to their foals, and find the way much better than their riders could do.²

Those people have vast quantities of valuable peltry; thus they have those costly Sables of which I spoke, and they have the Ermine, the Arculin, the Vair, the Black Fox, and many other valuable furs. They are all hunters by trade, and amass amazing quantities of those furs. And the people who are on their borders, where the Light is, purchase all those furs from them; for the people of the Land of Darkness carry the furs to the Light country for sale, and the merchants who purchase these make great gain thereby, I assure you.³