

would attack even us pretty constantly, but it was chiefly to the poor animals that they directed their attention, and the wretched mules were often covered with blood and driven wild by their attacks. Such were the conditions of travel in the deep recesses of the Manchurian forests.

At night we would put up in the sable-hunters' huts, met with every twelve or fifteen miles, each the head-quarters of a party of hunters who trap sables and also seek the ginseng root, a plant upon which the Chinese set great store for medicinal purposes. Such huts were suitable enough for the small parties who ordinarily inhabited them, but when our large party came in addition they were crammed to bursting. Yet we had to sleep in them, for to sleep outside amongst the swarms of mosquitoes and in the damp of the forest was an impossibility. We therefore packed ourselves into the huts, and were sometimes so tightly squeezed in the row on the kang, that we had to lie heads and tails with the Chinamen, to fit ourselves in at all. We had also to keep a fire burning to raise smoke for the purpose of driving off the mosquitoes; so the heat on a