

Whenever they perceived a cat they fixed themselves in an erect posture on their hind legs, as if they were preparing for an attack. Their inquietude in the night* was also remarkable, that being the natural time for seeking their prey, whereas in the day, especially after feeding, they generally slept an hour at a time, during which they might be taken up, rolled about, or carried to any distance without the smallest hazard of disturbing them."

These animals inhabit the banks of rivers in shady places, and also the thickest woods: they leap with great ease from tree to tree, and are said to be afraid of the sun; the rays of which tarnish the lustre of their robes in a very short time. It has also, though erroneously, been asserted, that they conceal themselves in holes, and remain torpid during the winter, whereas that is the chief time for hunting them, as their skins are then in the greatest perfection. They live on rats, fish, and wild fruit. They have the same disagreeable odour common to animals of this kind, and which is strongest during their rutting season. They are most numerous in Siberia, being very few in Russia, and still less in Lapland and other northern countries.

* This inquietude and motion during the night is not peculiar to sables: the same thing may be observed in ermines.