

middle of the trail there was a much faded Chinese flag, a few Chinese soldiers, and an official who was very kind. He said that, excepting a robbery at Muang Rai, -three days' journey from the border inland, the trail was quiet, as was the whole Hsip Song Pan Na, as the territory up to Szemao is called. I wish you could see the trails over these high mountains. The Chinese do not know what grade is, and it is a continual going up and down over the rockiest road you ever saw. However, the scenery and the forests are grand. Pyrus was in bloom everywhere and so were Prunus and peaches, all wild. Only the Pyrus had fruits on them. I am not as yet certain what they are; they must be the wild Yunnan pear. For a few days we walked at over 5,000 feet altitude, going down twice a day to 2,000 and even 1,800 only to go back again to 5,500 or 6,000 feet. The trail led over territory marked 'unsurveyed' on the Davis map. I did enjoy those lovely forests of oaks, chestnuts, and pines. I have collected much and I am sending, besides seeds, several thousand specimens of plants. There are many flowering bamboos among them and also ferns. Nobody ever collected in this region before, and I never saw such chestnut country.

"The plain of Muang Hai was one mass of flowering pears and at one place there was an orchard with large-fruited trees. The people said the fruits were the size of a man's fist, but the last year's crop had all been pickled, and the trees are now in flower. Muang Hai is composed of two distinct villages, a Chinese village on the plain and a Tai or Shan village on the slopes of the hills above the Chinese village. It is certainly most picturesquely situated. I called on the Chinese official, who was very courteous, and served tea.

"I was told by the priest of Muang Hun that the road between that place and Muang Rai or Muang Hai (the 'H' and 'R' are interchangeable) was full of tigers - the famous blue tiger of Yunnan - and that within the last four months six people had been attacked on that road.

"Yesterday I arrived at Keng Huang, the capital of the Hsip Song Pan Na. The Chow Haw or Chinese Director lives in the Yamen, surrounded by three walls, each with a watchtower on the corners; it looks like a fort. Here in this place there is one lone American missionary family. Their joy on seeing us was great; they had not seen a white man's face for two years. The house in which they live is built of round stones from the Mekong river bed and held together by mortar."