

That evening, as my host was entertaining me by playing on a marvelously slender and long-necked mandolin, he remarked: —

“This wind is nothing. You just wait.”

Two days later, we were camped in the reedy salt plain twenty miles to the east beside a white wall made of blocks of rock-salt. An evening gale came up, and blew over my tent and that of the men.

“This is nothing,” said the host, who had become our guide. “Just wait till April or May. Then the wind takes the roofs off houses, and leaves the young wheat with two or three inches of its roots swept bare of earth. All this wind comes from a little lake on the way to Urumchi. There is an iron gate in the lake, and it is only half shut. If any one could shut it, the wind would stop.”

I visited the lake on the way to Urumchi. Two monoliths, about seven feet high, stand near the shore. Near them there are a number of artificial mounds of various sizes, and several lines composed of groups of stones. Each group consisted originally of about eight boulders from one to three feet in diameter arranged in a circle perhaps six feet across. The whole aspect of these relics of an unknown race is almost identical with that of certain mounds and stones which I saw in 1903 with Professor Davis at Son Kul and Issik Kul, six hundred miles to the west.

The climate of Turfan is characterized by extremes in other respects, as well as in its winds. On March 5, a quiet, sunny day, the temperature was two degrees below zero, Fahrenheit, at sunrise, but rose to fifty-four degrees above zero at noon in the shade of a high cliff. The summer in