

this mid-continental basin of which the floor is below sea-level is of necessity very hot. Horses, cows, sheep, and camels die unless driven to the mountains. Only the hardy donkey can live through many seasons. In 1894, when a Russian expedition spent the year at Lukchun on the east side of the basin, the mean temperature of June and August was eighty-seven degrees Fahrenheit, and of July ninety-one, and the absolute maximum one hundred and eighteen. The year was not considered especially warm.

Such temperatures as those of Turfan render exertion of every kind almost impossible in summer; but they make the fruits of the region most luscious. At the beginning of March, I found in the markets fresh melons, grapes, apples, and pears, all of them most delicious and perfectly preserved. The only exception was a kind of pear which is never sold until it is rotted, as the flavor is then supposed to be best. In summer the variety of fruits is of course greater. The heat is so intense that melons are cut into strips and dried in the sun. In most parts of the world they would rot long before they became dry.

According to the Chinese, the summer is so hot that during the day the birds all gather in the shade of the trees beside the rivers. If one of them flies up, he is scorched to a cinder, and falls sizzling into the water. Another Chinese yarn affirms that the heat is so great that after blowing on your rice to cool it, you must ply your chopsticks as fast as possible. If you do not, the rice will become hot again and burn you.

In winter, as might be expected, Turfan is cold. The mean temperature in January, 1894, was fifteen degrees,