

During my stay in the Lop basin, I received the most perfect courtesy at the hands not only of the natives, but of the Chinese officials. On leaving Ulachi, we had not ridden half an hour when we met a horseman, who obsequiously dismounted as we appeared. He bowed almost to the ground and presented a bunch of sheets of red paper, in the midst of which were two other pieces of similar thin red paper, six inches by three, the calling cards of the Chinese "amban," or local governor of Kiliyan, a town and district forty miles to the west, which I did not visit. This official sent his compliments, and a message to the effect that he had sent a present of two sheep, a hundred pounds of grain for our horses, forty pounds of flour, twenty of rice, and four donkey-loads of hay. All this had been despatched into the mountains, but had failed to meet us because we had come by an unexpected route. The messenger, together with the interpreter of another "amban," had been waiting for us nearly two weeks. All the ambans of the region had been advised that two American officials were coming to Chinese Turkestan, and accordingly they were on the watch for us. At our request, the United States Department of Agriculture had commissioned us to collect seeds of grain and other forage plants. Accordingly, we were described in our Chinese passports as American officials. Orders had come from Peking, so it appeared, that we were to be treated with all honor, and provided with every facility for the prosecution of our work. The Chinese officials carried out the orders most faithfully and heartily, the only partial exception being a peevish official of minor rank at Charklik. His ill-temper was amply excusable, indeed, I ought rather to