

any official in the heart of China. In whatever part of the Chinese Empire you visit an official, you will always find both his residence and his official dress precisely the same: the loose blue silk jacket and petticoat, and either the mushroom hat in summer, or the pork-pie hat in winter. No change or variation, whether the office is civil or military. Difference in rank is shown only by a slightly increased amount of gold for the higher grades on the square plate of embroidery in the centre of the jacket, and by the colour of the button on the top of the hat.

The Governor of Yarkand received me in one of his private rooms, and we had a long conversation together. He had never been to Peking, and asked many questions about it, and about the road by which I had come, which he said no Chinese officials ever thought of using. An hour after I had reached the inn again, he came to make a return call upon me, and in every way showed a friendly feeling. This Amban was one of the best governors Yarkand has had, and, contrary to the usual custom of the Chinese officials, he had taken considerable pains to construct canals for the extension of cultivation, and to build new bazaars in the city.

Yarkand is the largest town I had seen in Turkestan. There are, as everywhere in this country, two towns, the native and the Chinese, but at Yarkand these are connected by a bazaar a few hundred yards in length. The latter is almost entirely new, but the native town is old and dilapidated. The houses are built of mud, as a rule, and there are no very striking buildings to arrest one's interest. All the streets have that dusty, dirty, uncared-for appearance so characteristic of Central Asian towns, and outside the bazaars there is little life. Yarkand, however, is the centre of a considerable trade, and in the autumn large caravans start for and arrive from India at frequent intervals, and the bazaars are then crowded.

A large number of the merchants engaged in this trade