



*The guard of honour at the  
Djentai's on the occasion  
of the author's visit.*

similar hats. There are no introductions, you simply greet each other. On a couple of occasions I made vain efforts by approaching a very dignified Chinaman to provoke the charming smile that always accompanies a Chinese greeting, but his demonstrative stiffness convinced me that he was a servant.

Tea was served at once. I was given the place of honour, on one of the bearskins spread on the sofa in the background, with the Taotai on the right of a small table between us. The other guests occupied the armchairs upholstered in red cloth that faced each other in two rows towards the exit, strictly observing the order of precedence. The general sat furthest off. A company of amateurs — soldiers — in bright costumes performed a noisy play of some former dynasty. While the table was being laid for dinner in the courtyard between the hall and the stage, the general proposed that we should do some target shooting. A target was placed against a massive clay wall built for shooting at one end of a large training ground lying within the area of the yamen. On the opposite side of the ground there was one of those clay pavilions, all built to the same pattern, from which the superior officers watch the drilling and shooting. The general forced me to shoot first, standing in the pavilion, where a crowd of servants had brought tea and various kinds of cakes. My first shot was a hit, my second a miss, the three others hits. The general scored 5 hits. After us three colonels, about a dozen junior officers and about 15 others, either soldiers or officers of the lowest rank, shot kneeling on the left of the pavilion. The distance was 200 metres. The practice shooting of the Chinese army, at any rate in this province, is always done at this distance. Each man fired three shots — every one a hit. The hits were signalled by some soldiers behind a protecting wall waving a flag and beating a muffled drum. The host invited us to shoot from a greater distance in a back courtyard. Again a large open space with the traditional clay pavilion, still within the spacious walls of the yamen. The distance was now 300 metres. As the place was divided into garden plots and beds of flowers, I suppose that the range, made by a wide opening in the wall,