

native city, near which our house was situated. Old General Wang was very friendly, and used to get up dinner-parties for us in his barracks, and insisted upon calling me by my Christian name. Like all Chinese military officials, he was very indifferently educated, and having learnt the art of writing long scrolls with quotations from classics, he was very proud of it. The barracks in which his men lived were really extremely comfortable. Chinamen—at any rate the inhabitants of North China—seldom live in squalor, and these barracks were well constructed, roomy, and comfortable. The officers' houses were really very neat. The only things that were badly looked after were the arms. The Chinese never can look after their guns and rifles properly; and although there were many good breech-loading rifles in the hands of these men, they would probably be perfectly useless on account of the rust. I think what chiefly struck me about the arrangements of these barracks was the family-party air which pervaded the whole. Here was the comfortable old general, only bent on taking things as easily as possible, and the officers and men appeared to be merely there to attend to his wants. They had to look after him a little, and hang about him generally; but they might be quite sure that he would not trouble them with any excess of military zeal, and they might go on leading a quiet, peaceful existence till their turn for command came round. The men worked hard at their vegetable gardens outside the barracks, and we had opportunities of testing the excellent quality of the vegetables which they turned out; but drill and rifle-practice were very seldom carried on. As far as our personal comfort was concerned, this was lucky, for one day when rifle-practice *was* going on, I had just turned the corner of a wall when a bullet came whizzing close by my head; the troops were at rifle-practice, and firing right across a public way, without taking any precaution to warn people.

But my intercourse at Kashgar was not only with the