

huts or shanties; the well-to-do tradesmen in comfortable brick or frame houses, two or more stories high and the nobility in palaces. In the latter, the interior apartments are the largest and best, while those fronting the street are smaller and less handsomely decorated; since orientals do not invite the entrance of burglars by an outer display of their wealth, but are content with the ownership and enjoyment thereof, among themselves. But whatever may be the size of the dwelling—whether palace or hut—there is sure to be a corner, if not a room, dedicated to 'the worship of ancestors and the gods'—a household altar, where are inscribed the names of their forefathers, and the images they worship. Here at stated seasons, the various members of the family prostrate themselves in adoration, and fresh incense is lighted every morning and evening—the new being invariably lighted before the old has been burned out, so that perpetual incense may be said to arise from these household altars of the Chinese. I fear that *this also is in contrast* to many family altars in our own dear land."

PEARL.—"This household worship is not all that the religion of the Chinese, calls for, is it?"

MRS. F.—"No, there is always the temple worship, with its gorgeous display of gilded altars and robed priests, its perfumed incense and rich offerings, to which the rich contribute their gold, and the poor their loaf of serie or tiny dipper of rice. But every man, woman and child gives something, and hence, feels that he has an interest in the concern. The Chinese worship also, at the tomb of their ancestors; and once a year burn upon each grave a full suit of life size paper garments which are supposed to supply the spirits of the dead with needful clothing in their new abode."

FANNIE.—"The Chinese do not seem to wish to forget their departed friends, nor to seek to drive off, as so many people do, the memory of everything associated with death."

MRS. F.—"No, but they are strangely inconsistent. For while they meet death with stoical indifference and seem unconcerned as to a future state, they regard the quality of the coffin as a matter of vital importance, frequently purchasing one beforehand, and laying it up in a conspicuous place till it is needed. In fact a handsome coffin, with silver plate and

name engraved thereon, is deemed an appropriate present from a dutiful son to his sire; and it is always, when so given, placed among their handsome furniture, in the best drawing room, to be seen and admired by guests, as long as the owner may live."

ANNIE.—"What a queer idea! Are the arrangements for the funeral in keeping?"

MRS. F.—"Quite so; for their mourning color is *white* instead of black; they beat gongs and tontoms to express their grief; and they wind up the funeral with a sumptuous feast—going to the late home of the dead *en masse* from the grave, and spending the remainder of the day, in feasting and merriment. The grave is shaped exactly like the Greek letter, Omega, and amid the peal of scores or hundreds of gongs, the body is laid away, while each person in the procession burns a strip of gilt money, i. e. paper of gilt tinsel, on the new made piles, and then turns away to discuss the feast of fat things spread for their benefit. The viands consist of roast pig, fowls and game, with huge pyramids of rice, fruits and confectionery; while wines, tea, and arrack circulate freely, accompanied by uproaring mirth."

"All this takes place beneath a large canopy erected on the side-walk in front of the dwelling, and there, too, the corpse has its last resting-place before being borne to the tomb; and as the procession starts, one of the sons of the house sets fire to a huge sedan chair made entirely of paper, saying, as the fragile vehicle ignites: 'Here father (or mother), is a sedan for your journey; depart in peace.' This portion of the ceremony seems so tender and beautiful as the son takes his *last* farewell of the loved one, that despite its frequency, it always brought the tears to my eyes, and a touch of sympathy for the bereaved."

LUCY.—"Do the relatives of the deceased take part in the wailing, or is it done exclusively by the hired mourners?"

MRS. F.—"The sons and sons-in-law always *lead* the wailing and lamentations; and all the relatives who can be present join in these dolorous duties, a husband being the solitary exception. According to Chinese usage a man may mourn for his parents, brothers, children or friends, but *never for his wife*, however much he may have loved her. A woman bewails her husband, children, and parents, but never a *son-in-law* or *daughter-in-law*."