

and while it may "cherish self-respect and impose moral restraint" from the living (more of it in books, however, than in real practice), yet its larger and irrevocable demands are witnessed in the time and money expended and the adoration and worship bestowed upon the dead.

Every son of China, upon the decease of his father, erects to his memory a little wooden tablet, consisting of two thin pieces of wood, closely fitting—some gilded and others ungilded—about twelve inches high, three inches wide, and altogether three quarters of an inch thick, and set in a wooden base three inches square. This practice of erecting tablets was probably introduced in the early years of the third dynasty, B.C. 2205–1766, and has remained in vogue ever since with but one single exception. The kings of Chau made an innovation. During the period of the fifth dynasty—i.e., the Chau dynasty—living personages were substituted for these wooden tablets, who took the place of them in every respect. This practice, however, passed away with the dynasty in which it prevailed. On the outside piece an inscription of this order is written, "The son (or sons) of So-and-So erect this tablet to his memory, and come to worship." On the inside piece is written the name of the father in full—viz., his given name at birth and his name at the time of his death—for a Chinaman may have, and does have, new names as one has new clothes. In fact, he seems to be constantly changing—a name for his childhood, youth, manhood, and old age, etc. Also there is written on this inside strip the names of the reigning emperors and the year of the reign, and the day and month on which the ancestor was born, and a similar inscription in regard to his death. Before these shrines "incense is burned morning and evening for forty-nine days after the decease of the father, and upon stated times thereafter during the lifetime of the survivors." "When a scholar obtains a degree, when an officer is advanced in rank, upon anniversaries of births and deaths" worship must be performed before these tablets. A family is mentioned in Canton having twenty-two hundred tablets in their rooms, arranged from above downward, the oldest being at the top. Not only every house is a shrine, on whose altars these tablets ever stand, but each clan has its own particular "ancestral hall," where the tablets of ancient ancestors are deposited, and where, on stated occasions, members of the clan congregate to worship them.

Besides this, there are numerous feasts, occurring semi-occasionally, or more frequently observed in honor of the illustrious dead. One of these of particular importance is deserving of more than a passing notice, called the "Feast of the Tombs," celebrated at the spring and autumn solstice, when special rites and ceremonies are performed at the graves in family and public cemeteries. This feast day is made a veritable gala day, a sort of a family excursion in the country affair, or, as Professor Leggs puts it, "Grand family reunions, where the dead and the living meet, eating and drinking together, where the living worship the dead and the dead bless the living." Dressed in gorgeous robes—i.e., Chinese gorgeousness, with