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CHINESE "ANCESTRAL WORSHIP."

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Among the interesting legendary tales with which Chinese literature abounds, none is more beautiful than "The Legend of the Tablet." It runs somewhat on this wise :

Years ago a poor old widow, with her children, was struggling with poverty to maintain her family in food and clothing. She was a kind and loving mother, sparing neither time nor patience, and ever enduring suffering if thereby she could only provide some pleasure for the loved ones. Such devotion and love won the affection and reciprocal love from all her children save one. This one son neither kindness nor love could touch, labor she never so hard to please him. He found fault with everything. His dinner was either too hot or too cold, too early or too late ; his clothes too thick or too thin ; and every demonstration on his mother's part met with snarls and growls on his. The lad was a shepherd by occupation, and one day he failed to put in an appearance at dinner-time. The mother, notwithstanding all the abuse she had received at his hand, was exceedingly anxious about his non-appearance. She delayed the meal, and waited and waited until she found there was no need of waiting longer, when she took a little basket, filling it full of the choicest things, and set out to find her absent boy. She found him—not starving, but desperately sullen. The kind and thoughtful deed of his mother, instead of awakening affection, aroused his anger to frenzy. Becoming violently enraged, he began to abuse her, when, in an uncontrollable fit of passion, he struck her a blow that sent her staggering on the brink of a precipice near which they were standing, and before she could recover herself, she went over and down into the abyss below. Frantic with grief now, the shepherd boy rushed madly down the mountain-side in search of his mother ; but, look where he would, not a sign of her could he discover. The only thing he could see was a tiny "wooden tablet," into which, he was led to believe, the spirit of his mother had entered. Taking it up tenderly, he carried it to his desolate home, and ever after made it his shrine.