



in the Joss house there is much to attract the eye and offend the nose and ears, and there is a constant conflict between those organs for possession of the legs, the eyes urging them to remain and the nose and ears begging piteously to be taken away. Upon an altar is arranged a banquet that may be attractive to hungry ghosts of departed Chinamen, but makes no appeal to the appetite of a living Caucasian. Around the room are grouped a collection of metal images of all sizes, and a few more paper representations, prominent among which is a large white horse. Along the sides of the room are a number of ancestral tablets of some of those for whom the feast is spread, and before each burns a small taper. In a swinging balcony sits an orchestra, whose never-ceasing clatter, interspersed with the shrill piping of a Chinese song, seems to possess charms for the Mongolian ear.

At various times the sacerdotal procession reaches the Joss house, and enters it to perform some cere-

READING THE SACRED TABLETS AT THE ALTAR

mony at the altar. At the head marches the high priest, dressed in a flowing garment of red, with a white patch on the back bearing some of the meaningless Sanscrit words that are inscribed on the sacred tablet he bears in his hand, followed by half a dozen other priests, or acolytes, or neophytes, dressed in blue gowns unadorned with a patch. On either side of the altar the band take seats, while he of the white patch stands in front of it and the blue coated ones kneel on a mat in his rear. To the accompaniment of the