

priest (for 'tis the same), and sayeth thus:—"Sir, go, I pray, and inquire of our God whether my father shall be healed of this infirmity or shall die of it." Then the priest and he whose father is ill go both unto the idol, which is made of gold or silver, and make a prayer to it, and say:—"Lord, thou art our God! and as our God we adore thee! Answer to that we ask of thee! Such an one is ailing grievously; must he die, or shall he be delivered from his ailment? We ask thee!" Then the demon replies by the mouth of the idol, and says:—"Thy father shall not die, but shall be freed from that ailment. And thou must do such and such things and so he shall recover." And so the demon shows the man all that he is to do for his father's recovery; and he returneth to his father accordingly, and tendeth him diligently until he be entirely recovered. But if the demon reply that the father will die, then the priest goeth to him and putteth a linen cloth over his mouth, and so suffocateth him and he dieth. And when they have thus slain him, they cut him in pieces, and invite all their friends and relations and all the players of the country round about to come to the eating of him, and eat him they do, with singing of songs and great merry-making. But they save his bones and bury them underground with great solemnity. And any of the relatives who have not been invited to this wedding feast (as it were) deem themselves to have been grievously slighted.

I rebuked these people sharply for so acting, saying to them:—"Why do ye act thus against all reason? Why, were a dog slain and put before another dog he would by no means eat thereof; and why should you do thus, who seem to be men endowed with reason?" And their answer was:—"We do this lest the flesh of the dead should be eaten of worms; for if the worms should eat his flesh his

² MIN. RAM. "And the kinsfolk rejoice when any one gets ill, in hope of eating him and having a merrymaking."