

and, laying his hands on different parts of his body, addressed himself all the while with great devotion to his god, in intercession for his friend's recovery.

The priests, or tohungas, as they are called, are persons of great importance and authority in New Zealand, being esteemed almost the keepers and rulers of the gods themselves.

Many of the greatest of the chiefs and Areekees are also priests, as was, for example, Tupee, whom we have just mentioned. It is the priest who attends at the bedside of the dying chief, and regulates every part of the treatment of the patient. When the body of a chief who has been killed in battle is to be eaten, it is the priest who first gives the command for its being roasted. The first mouthfuls of the flesh, also, being regarded as the dues of the gods, are always eaten by the priest. In the case of any public calamity, it is the priest whose aid is invoked to obtain relief from heaven.

Marsden states that on occasion of the caterpillars one year making great ravages among the crops of sweet potatoes at Rangheehoo,* the people of that place sent to Cowa-Cowa† for a great priest to avert the heavy judgment; and that he came and remained with them for several months, during which he employed himself busily in the performance of prayers and ceremonies. The New Zealanders also

*Rangihoua, in the Bay of Islands.

†Kawa-kawa, in the same district.