

to show his love. But if he marries again shortly after her death, without coming to an agreement with the friends of the deceased, the nearest of her relatives will rob him and strip him of all he possesses at their first meeting; and that man will allow [187] all his property to be taken from him without saying a word, for such is the custom of the country.

Presents among these peoples despatch all the affairs of the country. They dry up tears; they appease anger; they open the doors of foreign countries; they deliver prisoners; they bring the dead back to life; one hardly ever speaks or answers, except by presents. That is why, in the harangues, a present passes for a word. Presents are given to excite men to war; to urge them to make Peace; to attract a family or a nation to come and reside near you; to satisfy or indemnify those who have suffered an injury or received a wound, especially if blood has been shed. The presents given on account of the death of a man who has been killed are very numerous. And observe, if you please, that it is not usually the assassin who gives them, but his relatives, his village, or his nation, according to the quality or condition of the person who has been put to death. Do not imagine, however, that this proceeding gives any liberty to violent persons to do an evil deed. So far from that, the trouble caused by a [188] murderer to an entire community exercises a powerful restraint over them. Moreover, if any relatives of the deceased come across the murderer before satisfaction has been given, they put him to death at once, without any form of trial.

Presents speak, as I have already stated. They all