

killed^r. The reason given in the author, why a person so nearly allied to the Great Man was assigned to the office, is this, ' Ne procuraretur aliquid venenorum, quod nimis [i. e. valde] timebat legatus; ' and it is certain that poisoning was but too much in vogue in these times, both amongst the Italians and the good people of this island^s; so that this was a post of signal trust and confidence. And indeed afterwards, a person was employed to *taste*, or *take the assaie*, as it was called^t, both of the messes and the water in the ewer^u, at great tables; but it may be doubted whether a particular person was appointed to this service, or it was a branch of the *Sewer's* and cup-bearer's duty, for I observe, the *Sewer* is sometimes called *Prægustator*^x, and the cup-bearer tastes the water elsewhere^y. The religious houses, and their presidents, the abbots and priors, had their days of *Gala*, as likewise their halls for strangers, whom, when persons of rank, they often entertained with splendour and magnificence. And as for the secular clergy, archbishops and bishops, their feasts,

^r M. Paris, p4. 69.

^s Dugd. Bar. I. p. 45. Stow, p. 184. M. Paris, p. 377. 517. M. Westm. p. 364.

^t Lel. Collesan. VI. p. 7. seq.

^u Ibid. p. 9. 13.

^x Compare Leland, p. 3. with Godwin de Præful. p. 695. and so Junius in Etymol. v. Sewer.

^y Leland, p. 8, 9. There are now two *ycomen of the mouth* in the king's household.