a point to which he had more than once alluded, without obtaining a satisfactory reply:

> Then said the king, ' By Godys grace,
> Thou wert in a merry place,
>   To shoot should thou lere ;
> When the foresters go to rest,
> Sometyme thou might have of the best,
>   All of the wild deer ;
> I wold hold it for no scathe,
> Though thou hadst bow and arrows baith,
>   Althoff thou best a frere.'

The hermit, in return, expresses his apprehension that his guest means to drag him into some confession of offence against the forest laws, which, being betrayed to the King, might cost him his life. Edward answers by fresh assurances of secrecy, and again urges on him the necessity of procuring some venison. The hermit replies, by once more insisting on the duties incumbent upon him as a churchman, and continues to affirm himself free from all such breaches of order:

> ' Many day I have here been,
> And flesh-meat I eat never,
>   But milk of the kye ;
> Warm thee well, and go to sleep,
> And I will lap thee with my cope,
>   Softly to lye.'

It would seem that the manuscript is here imperfect, for we do not find the reasons which finally induce the curtal friar to amend the king's cheer. But, acknowledging his guest to be such a ' good fellow ' as has seldom graced his board, the holy man at length produces the best his cell affords. Two candles are placed on a table, white bread and baked pasties are displayed by the light, besides choice of venison, both salt and fresh, from which they select collops. ' I might have eaten my bread dry,' said the king, ' had I not pressed thee on the score of archery, but now have I dined like a prince — if we had but drink enow.'

This too is afforded by the hospitable anchorite, who despatches an assistant to fetch a pot of four gallons from a secret corner near his bed, and the whole three set in to serious drinking. This amusement is superintended by the friar, according to the recurrence of certain fustian words, to be repeated by every compotator in turn before he drank — a species of high jinks, as it were, by which they regulated their pota-