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978-1-108-04291-8 - Giraldi Cambrensis Opera: De Rebus a se Gestis, Libri III. Invectionum Libellus. Symbolum Electorum: Volume 1

Edited by J.S. Brewer, James F. Dimock and George F. Warner

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### Giraldi Cambrensis Opera

Despite a frustrated ecclesiastical career – his ongoing failure to secure the See of St David's embittered him – Giraldus Cambrensis (Gerald of Wales, Gerald de Barry, c.1146–1220/3) composed many remarkable literary works, initially while employed as a royal clerk for Henry II and, subsequently, in semi-retirement in Lincoln. Eight volumes of his works were compiled as part of the Rolls Series of British medieval material. Volume 1, edited by historian J.S. Brewer (1809–79) and published in 1861, with an introduction in English to the Latin texts, consists of Giraldus' polemical-apologetic account of his life and the St David's case, and a collection of his letters, poems, and prefaces. Giraldus is noted for his vigorous Latin and anecdotal style, and this volume gives a vivid portrait of medieval Britain and the power struggles of the Angevin court, while illuminating nineteenth-century interest in the period.

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VOLUME 1:

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RERUM BRITANNICARUM MEDII ÆVI  
SCRIPTORES,

OR

CHRONICLES AND MEMORIALS OF GREAT BRITAIN  
AND IRELAND

DURING

THE MIDDLE AGES.

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THE CHRONICLES AND MEMORIALS  
OF  
GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND  
DURING THE MIDDLE AGES.

PUBLISHED BY THE AUTHORITY OF HER MAJESTY'S TREASURY, UNDER THE  
DIRECTION OF THE MASTER OF THE ROLLS.

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ON the 26th of January 1857, the Master of the Rolls submitted to the Treasury a proposal for the publication of materials for the History of this Country from the Invasion of the Romans to the Reign of Henry VIII.

The Master of the Rolls suggested that these materials should be selected for publication under competent editors without reference to periodical or chronological arrangement, without mutilation or abridgment, preference being given, in the first instance, to such materials as were most scarce and valuable.

He proposed that each chronicle or historical document to be edited should be treated in the same way as if the editor were engaged on an *Editio Princeps*; and for this purpose the most correct text should be formed from an accurate collation of the best MSS.

To render the work more generally useful, the Master of the Rolls suggested that the editor should give an account of the MSS. employed by him, of their age and their peculiarities; that he should add to the work a brief account of the life and times of the author, and any remarks necessary to explain the chronology; but no other note or comment was to be allowed, except what might be necessary to establish the correctness of the text.

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The works to be published in octavo, separately, as they were finished; the whole responsibility of the task resting upon the editors, who were to be chosen by the Master of the Rolls with the sanction of the Treasury.

The Lords of Her Majesty's Treasury, after a careful consideration of the subject, expressed their opinion in a Treasury Minute, dated February 9, 1857, that the plan recommended by the Master of the Rolls "was well calculated for the accomplishment of this important national object, in an effectual and satisfactory manner, within a reasonable time, and provided proper attention be paid to economy, in making the detailed arrangements, without unnecessary expense."

They expressed their approbation of the proposal that each chronicle and historical document should be edited in such a manner as to represent with all possible correctness the text of each writer, derived from a collation of the best MSS., and that no notes should be added, except such as were illustrative of the various readings. They suggested, however, that the preface to each work should contain, in addition to the particulars proposed by the Master of the Rolls, a biographical account of the author, so far as authentic materials existed for that purpose, and an estimate of his historical credibility and value.

*Rolls House,  
December 1857.*

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OPERA.

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AND READER AT THE ROLLS.

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P R E F A C E .  
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## P R E F A C E.

GIRALDUS DE BARRI, called from his native country Cambrensis, and by his enemies Sylvester,<sup>1</sup> or the Savage, was born at the castle of Manorbear,<sup>2</sup> in

<sup>1</sup> The word Sylvester seems to have been used as a general term of reproach against the Welsh in the twelfth century. Walter Mapes employs the term in his treatise *De Nugis Curialium*. See also Giraldus *De Jure M. E.* p. 558. The enemies of Giraldus did not confine themselves to this epithet for expressing their malice; they punned on his name Barri, quasi *a barathro*. See the poem at the end of this volume, p. 386.

<sup>2</sup> We owe to Giraldus himself the most picturesque and faithful description of his natal spot. "The castle called *Maenor Pyrr*, i.e., *Mansio Pyrr*, is about three miles distant from the castle of Pembroke. It is conspicuous for its turrets and battlements, and stands on the top of a hill stretching from the west to the sea-port. On the north side is an excellent fish pond, close to the walls, remarkable for its extent and the depth of its water. On the same side there is a beautiful orchard, enclosed on one side by a park, on the other by a grove, famous for the wildness of its rocks and the height of its hazels. On the right

"hand of the promontory, between the castle and the church, close by the pond and the side of a mill, a rivulet of never-failing water makes its way into a valley sandy by the violence of the winds. To the west, and at some distance from the castle, the Severn, in a winding angle, enters the Irish sea, and if it ran somewhat more to the north, would make a most excellent roadstead. From this point you may see the ships driven from Britain by the east wind towards Ireland, bravely daring the fearful inconstancy of the winds and the furious blind rage of the sea. The land is well stored with wheat, fish, and wine imported; and, better than all, from its nearness to Ireland, it enjoys a salubrious climate. As Demetia is the fairest of all the seven cantreds of Wales, and Pembroke the fairest of Demetia, and this spot the fairest of all Pembroke, it follows that *Maenor Pyrr* is the most pleasant spot in Wales. Let the writer be excused for saying so much in praise of his birthplace."—*Iter. Camb.* p. 851.

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Pembrokeshire, in the year 1147.<sup>1</sup> He was the youngest son<sup>2</sup> of William de Barri, by his second wife, Angareth, daughter of the celebrated Nesta, granddaughter of Rhys ap Theodor, prince of South Wales.<sup>3</sup> From descent, political connexion, personal bravery and genius, his family exercised considerable influence. William de Barri, the father, had enjoyed the favour of the English monarch. He and his sons could bring large bodies of retainers into the field. With their direct and indirect kindred, the line of de Barri had been the chief instruments in the conquest of Ireland under Strong-bow; and their names were associated in the memories of their countrymen with deeds of heroism, which recalled the days of the Round Table. David, our historian's uncle, the bishop of St. David's, was the friend of the celebrated Robert Fitz-Stephen, and with his wealth, talents, and influence had assisted Dermot, the exiled king of

<sup>1</sup> Wharton places the date of his birth about 1150. But it seems to me that it may be referred to the year 1147, with a probability amounting almost to certainty. Speaking of the death of the bishop of St. David's in the year 1176, and his own election the same year, Giraldus says of himself, that he was not yet in his thirtieth year. It is clear from the manner in which he speaks, that he had taken his age at the furthest limit ("cum necdum ageret tricesimum ætatis annum;") in other words, he was then twenty-nine.—*De Gestis*, i. 9.

<sup>2</sup> He speaks with warm approbation of his half-brother Walter in his *Expug. Hibern.* p. 781. To his uterine brothers Philip and William

constant references will be found in this and his other works.

<sup>3</sup> The adventures of Nesta procured for her the title of "The Helen of Wales." By Henry I. of England she had a son, Henry, father of Meyler Fitz-Henry and Robert Fitz-Henry. By her first husband, Giraldus of Windsor, constable of Pembroke, she had three sons, William, Maurice Fitzgerald, and David, bishop of St. David's, the uncle to whom Giraldus the historian owed his education. Her second husband was Stephen, constable of Cardigan (*Aberteivi*). It will thus be seen how intimately Giraldus was connected with all the leaders of that heroic band who were engaged with Strong-bow in the conquest of Ireland.

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Leinster, in recovering his throne. Their rank, their pretensions, these Irish wars, which had been to the Welsh chieftains what the Crusades were to the rest of Europe, made the profession of arms the sole and congenial occupation of the Barri. Giraldus alone showed an early inclination for more humanizing and peaceful employments. Though the pure blood of his race ran in full vigour through his veins—and what that implied will be seen in the sequel—whilst the warlike instincts of his brothers displayed themselves, whilst they were yet children, in constructing forts and palaces, the natural aptitudes of Giraldus were seen in mimic monasteries and churches in the sand. When a sudden attack was made by night on his father's lands, and all the inmates, in the bustle of preparation, were buckling on their arms, the child, seeing the tumult, begged, with tears in his eyes, that he might be carried to the neighbouring church. At so early an age, he informs us, did he display that affection and regard for the Church of which he was afterwards to prove so zealous a protector.

Delighted with these unusual indications, his father was accustomed to call him “the little bishop.” Preference for a profession so precocious, so much at variance with the tastes of his brothers, and by no means common in Welsh noblemen of his rank and riches, was considered to mark him out as a child of no ordinary promise. It was an age of fierce delights and tumultuous excitement; when logic and theology had their crusades, and the pen was sharper than the sword. Who knows whether Giraldus shall not prove as great a champion in the lists of the Church as his brothers and uncles had shown themselves in the field?

Of his early proficiency in learning we have no other evidence than that which is furnished by himself. But making allowance for the pardonable exaggeration of vanity, and judging rather by the unmistakeable testi-

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mony furnished by his numerous writings, his assertions may, in this instance, be accepted without hesitation. He tells us that he soon outstripped his contemporaries, not so difficult a task as would appear at first sight, not implying any extraordinary efforts of learning or genius. These contemporaries were Welshmen like himself; whatever their education, the rudiments of it, at least, must have been picked up in the palatinate. The wonder is that, in a country so indubitably barbarous and uncivilized, any Welshman could be found at that time capable of giving even elementary instruction. The little learning that did exist, and the scanty knowledge of the arts, were probably kept alive by the Norman bishops and dignified ecclesiastics, who, much to the disgust of the native clergy, held all the richer preferments in the Welsh dioceses, and kept up their connexion with the more polished court of England. His uncle, the bishop of St. David's, supplied the incentive to his flagging industry, and afforded those opportunities and means of study which would have been sought in vain by one less favoured by birth and circumstances than Giraldus. But his ecclesiastical predilections had faded with his childhood. Boylike, full of restless activity, he would much rather have followed the military sports of his brothers, for which the spirit of the times, heated by the Crusades and the unsettled condition of his own country, offered an unusual stimulus. But, he says,—and the anecdote is very characteristic of the writer, and not unworthy modern educationists,—whilst he was thus loitering on the path he was afterwards destined to occupy with so much distinction, two chaplains of his uncle reprimanded him for his idleness, one by declining to him *durus, durior, durissimus*,<sup>1</sup> and the other *stultus*,

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<sup>1</sup> *De Gestis*, i. 2.

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*stultior, stultissimus.* The rebuke had the desired effect, and never required repetition.

It would have proved an essential service to readers of this century had Giraldus entered into the details of his school and college education with any portion of that minuteness devoted by him to the long story of his struggles for the independence of St. David's. To whom he was indebted for his early training, what means existed in Wales during the twelfth century for classical instruction, he has given us no means of discovering. In his panegyric upon Wales and its virtues, whilst enumerating all that could be urged in its praises, Giraldus is silent as to its schools or places of learning. A perilous silence! Welsh patriotism had never yet risen to the height of a scholastic foundation. As a body the Welsh clergy were grossly and notoriously ignorant;<sup>1</sup> their Welsh flocks without habits of industry. The inhabitants upon the English borders were glad of any excuse to abandon the spade and plough and join in the frays, not less from the love of plunder, than thirst for excitement. Restless, uncivilized, needy, without arts or settled occupation, the interior was in worse condition. Barbarous chiefs, unwilling or unable to repress disorder, were

<sup>1</sup> Giraldus rates them for their undue attention to the advancement of their families: "Non canonici quidem sed concubinarij sunt dicendi.—Non honori ecclesie suae intendunt miseri illi nec miserandi, non libris, non ornatibus aut etiam dignitatibus, sed propriis tantum utilitatibus, filiis scilicet et familiis atque focariis, totis indulgent affectibus. Non ergo libris intendunt sed liberis, non foliis sed filiis, non librorum lectioni sed liberorum dilectioni pa-

riter et promotioni."—*De Jure M. E.* p. 611.

We may justly demur to these remarks considering the animus from which they proceed. But when we find in the process of his narrative that the Welsh prelates were great in cows, and their clergy in pig-feeding or breeding of sheep, we may perhaps find a reason why, with the exception of Giraldus, Wales produced no names of literary note in this or the next century.

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engaged in petty wars among themselves, great in nothing but their monstrous cruelty, and unparalleled even in the days of their heathenish forefathers for disgusting brutality. It may be asked—and more easily asked than answered—how could Giraldus acquire that proficiency in the Latin tongue, and that copious knowledge of the best Roman authors, of which so many indications are found in his works? His Latin poems, at the close of this volume, now published for the first time, and written before he was twenty,<sup>1</sup> though violating rules of prosody and syntax, no school-boy would violate now, indicate a careful study of the Latin poets. The faults to be found in them must be referred to the indiscriminate imitation of models, rejected now by nicer taste and more refined criticism, not in the absence of careful or extensive reading. His are the errors of his age, such as might have been expected in times more willing to defer to established authority than careful to scrutinise its rightful claims. His prose works are studded with the phraseology of the Latin classic poets; quotations from Terence, Virgil, Horace, Ovid, Juvenal, and Statius, from Cicero and Seneca, are thickly sown throughout his writings. Whatever may be thought of his taste, the labour implied in this familiarity could not be small, or the means of acquiring it easy. And however those acquisitions were made, they must have been the fruits of his earlier studies. For in conformity with the usage of the times, his adult years were devoted to theology, philosophy, and the canon law. His own country apparently furnished no means and no masters for these higher subjects. To make himself acquainted with these studies, he must look beyond St. David's. Consequently, as he informs us, "he took three successive journeys into France for the sake of improvement,

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<sup>1</sup> *Juvenilibus annis.*

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“ and after three stated intervals of study for several  
 “ years at Paris, in the liberal arts and procuring the  
 “ most efficient teachers, he lectured in the Trivials,  
 “ and obtained great reputation in the art of rhetoric.”  
 At Paris, if we may trust his own commendation of  
 himself, he devoted himself to study with so much  
 assiduity that he was pointed out by his masters as a  
 pattern to others of piety and good scholarship.<sup>1</sup>

He returned to England about the year 1172, in  
 the twenty-fifth year of his age, shortly after the  
 death of Thomas à Becket. I have no intention to  
 enter upon the merits of the great controversy on which  
 the eyes of all Europe were fixed, or the effects pro-  
 duced by the archbishop's martyrdom; for such at least  
 that age regarded it; and in that light must it be  
 viewed by those who desire to understand the sensa-  
 tions it created in the minds of men, whether favour-  
 able or unfavourable to the archbishop's cause. Such  
 a death, and under such circumstances, would have  
 sanctified a feebler cause than that of which Becket  
 was the champion, and blotted out from the memory  
 of his contemporaries deeper imperfections than any  
 with which his enemies could tax him. Henceforth his  
 name became identified with the liberty and aggran-  
 dizement of the Church. An indolent, or an easy, or  
 an indulgent prelate was warned of his vices or his  
 danger by the example of his illustrious predecessor;  
 an ambitious one was encouraged in opposition to the  
 secular arm by the glories which had sanctified the  
 name of St. Thomas. Sagacious and fearless as was  
 Henry II., he was compelled to yield to the storm—  
 to abandon the design of controlling the Church by the  
 regal arm, of openly interposing in its jurisdiction and  
 limiting its authority. One expression of fretful impa-  
 tience had lost him the victory which in another

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<sup>1</sup> *De Gestis*, i. 2.



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moment had been his. Henceforth he must espouse humbler counsels. It was easier to follow the more modern policy—to rule the Church by churchmen themselves. But if this was needful for England, it was still more needed for Wales. Reduced to subjection by William II., atrociously punished for disaffection by the inexorable Henry I., the difficulties of the first Norman kings, and the confusions that followed, had encouraged the Welsh to throw off the yoke and carry devastation into the English borders. In the failure of severer measures, it had been the state-craft of Henry I. to rule that country by setting up one chieftain against another. Their numerous feuds, their petty ambition, offered continual opportunities for embroiling the strife and ruining an obnoxious leader. But it not unfrequently happened that such a policy recoiled upon its author; the engineer was hoisted by his own petard. With characteristic national inconstancy, the chieftain who had been strengthened and flattered to keep rebellion in order, became himself a rebel, augmenting the evil he was employed to subdue. Henry II. adopted the measures which afterwards found favour with the Tudors. He determined to rule Wales not by its chieftains, but by its clergy, to appoint Norman, not Welsh, bishops to the different dioceses. Surrounded by numerous retainers, encircled by an ecclesiastical police, the bishops could readily give assistance and send timely warning to the garrisons stationed on the frontiers. With interests distinct from the natives, they would lend no countenance to rebellion. They could gather information, which would have been denied to all others, when danger was at hand, whilst the sacredness of their functions exempted them from fear and from suspicion.

Useful, however, as this device might be for the temporal authority of the English sovereign, it did not contribute to the spiritual welfare of the Welsh people or the efficiency of the Church. The hierarchy of Wales



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and their flocks presented a spectacle far from edifying to the rest of Christendom. Happily it was far removed.

But English rule and the canonical subjection of Wales to English ecclesiastical jurisdiction became the more galling to all men of genius or pretension. The fitness of a Norman for promotion in Wales was measured by his devotion to the English court. Merit in a Welshman, influence over his compatriots, were a disqualification which no piety, no genius or learning could countervail. The effect was to render the hierarchy hateful to the people, to throw into the ranks of opposition all natives of real ability and incline them to schemes of ambition and disorder. The life and adventures of our author will afford numerous illustrations of these remarks.

Happily for his first entrance into life, though Welsh by his mother's side, by his father Giraldus was a Norman. His uncle was still bishop of St. David's. When, therefore, he returned from his studies, he found little difficulty in obtaining preferment and recommendation to the metropolitan of England. In the year 1175 he was created archdeacon of Brecknock, was entrusted with an important commission from the archbishop, and soon found occasion to signalize himself as an ecclesiastical reformer in his own immediate neighbourhood. Observing that, through the negligence of the prelates of St. David's, the people of Pembroke and Cardigan neglected to pay tithes of wool and cheese, Giraldus visited the archbishop of Canterbury, at that time legate of the Holy See, and directed his attention to these ecclesiastical enormities. As a reward for his zeal, he was sent back armed with the archiepiscopal authority to bring the delinquents to a better mind. He succeeded so well that, with the exception of the Flemings of Ross—a mixed colony settled on the borders by the English monarchs,

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and consequently on ill terms with the Welsh—the refractory tithe-payers were readily brought to submission, remunerating themselves for their compliance and signaling their piety by a general foray upon the disobedient Flemings. Among the ringleaders who still held out and set the new minister at defiance was William Karquit, the high sheriff of the county. To mark his contempt of Giraldus and his novel authority, the reprobate carried off, under the very nose of our commissioner, eight yoke of oxen from the priory of Pembroke. Three times was he summoned to restore his plunder, and three times without effect. A young official fresh from his books would never venture to launch the censures of the Church against the king's officer;—so thought William Karquit. But he had mistaken his man. Giraldus sent the sheriff word that as soon as all the bells of the monastery sounded at triple intervals, he might rest assured—if he could rest then—that he was no longer within the pale and protection of the Church. On the return of his messenger Giraldus forthwith convened the monks and the clergy, and with bell, book, and candle proceeded to carry the sentence into execution. The doleful clanging of bells announced to all the surrounding country that William Karquit, high sheriff of Pembroke, was deleted from the muster-roll of the saints. Henceforth, whatever he might be in the transitory honours of the world, he was but a dead dog in the estimation of the faithful. It was too tremendous a penalty for eight pair of Welsh oxen. Next day the thief (it is the title conferred on him by our author) hastened to the castle of Lanwadein, made his humble submission to his diocesan and Giraldus, restored the plunder, was duly birched and absolved.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> “Virgis verberari meruit.”—*De Gestis*, i. 3.

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But the reforms of our new commissioner were not to be confined to the laity or exhausted on refractory tithe delinquents. The clergy, as may well be anticipated, stood not less in need of reformation than their disorderly flocks. The Welsh bishops took no more heed to the learning and morals than they did to the tithes of their clergy. Their laxity on this head is not to be attributed to indifference alone. Whatever modern arts and appliances may have accomplished for the improvement of St. David's at this day, in the thirteenth century it would be hard to imagine a more desolate spot. A bluff and ragged headland, devoid of all traces of comfort and humanity—"stony and barren, neither clothed with woods nor adorned by waters, visited only by storms and winds, exposed to the attacks of the Flemings on one side, of the Welsh on the other":<sup>1</sup>—even national affection and national vanity could not divest it of its more repulsive features. No wonder the Norman ecclesiastics appointed to that see found it often convenient to be absent. Selected for any other than their spiritual attainments, a residence at St. David's was more onerous than honourable. From birth and education they had little sympathy with their Welsh subjects; their indifference was returned with

<sup>1</sup>These are the words of Giraldus in his *Itinerarium Cambriae*, ii. 1. Sir Rich. Colt Hoare, the zealous antiquarian, cannot refrain a sigh at his compatriot's description, and is too honest to attempt a palliation. "Such," he says, "is the dreary and well-pictured account given by Giraldus of the local situation of this once celebrated ecclesiastical establishment; and such, I fear, will every traveller find it on

"his approach to the wretched village of St. David's, where misery and beggary stare him full in the face."

This, I think, affords the best explanation of the celebrated line,—

"Roma dedit quantum bis dat  
"Menevia tantum."

that is, one pilgrimage to St. David's was a severer discipline to the flesh than two to Rome.

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interest, if with nothing worse. Nominally included in the province of Canterbury, and therefore responsible to the same ecclesiastical authority, the Welsh clergy stood out as much as they dared on their spiritual independence; and if the regal authority, backed by an armed force, failed to command respect, the spiritual rule of the archbishop met no better acceptance.

Among other irregularities of the Welsh clergy was their marriage, and its inevitable consequence in those times, the conversion of ecclesiastical benefices into hereditary property. "The churches," says Giraldus,<sup>1</sup> "have almost as many incumbents and partners (*per-sonæ et participes*) as there are principal men in the parish. The sons, at the death of their fathers succeed to the living by inheritance, not by election, and so pollute the sanctuary. And if a bishop should attempt to select and institute a stranger, the whole family would be up in arms against institutor and instituted."

Opinions so decided against the marriage of the clergy, coinciding with his canonical maxims and his Roman predilections, were not long in finding a suitable victim. Whilst in pursuit of his mission, Giraldus fell in at Brecknock with an aged archdeacon living openly in what he called concubinage. The archdeacon was not inclined to put away his wife and tamely submit to the peremptory mandate of his junior. He even ventured on an indignant remonstrance, which sounded like infatuation and presumption in the ears of Giraldus. That he should set an example of corruption to the flock, who was bound by his exalted office to reprove and correct them, was altogether intolerable. The same weapon was effectual in silencing and deposing the archdeacon

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<sup>1</sup> *De Illaud. Wall.* vi.

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which had brought to his knees the sheriff of Pembroke. The archdeacon was suspended, and at the close of his labours the zealous commissioner was rewarded by the archbishop with the vacant preferment.

Now become an archdeacon, which he had resolved should lose nothing of its dignity and authority in his hands, Giraldus proceeded on the work of reformation with renewed activity. In the licence of the times, in the various loopholes afforded by the state of the law, and the facility of appeal, more than one class of offenders had contrived to evade the archiepiscopal authority and laugh at the empty menace of his minister. The Flemings had interest enough with the king to procure exemption from archiepiscopal jurisdiction; in other words, they would pay tithes or no tithes at their pleasure. Such an immunity was fatal; no Welshman would submit if his hereditary enemies were exempted from the burthen. Again our archdeacon hies away to the court, gets the hated immunity revoked from all but the Flemings of Ross, enjoys the satisfaction of having done his work thoroughly, defeated his enemies, gratified the clergy, and brought down upon himself that concentrated load of envy, malignity, and detraction, which follow inevitably the successful revival of ecclesiastical rights and privileges. It must be confessed, however, if he wielded the spiritual sword with a surprising alacrity, dazzled his enemies and awed his friends with his meteoric movements, he was not less prompt in extending the grace of absolution on submission and repentance. One night, after a fatiguing campaign, as he lay at Kerren, with his uncle the bishop of St. David's, a great storm arose, blowing the rain and hail in their faces. The bishop, who slept in the next bed, urged him to slumber till daylight. "No," answered Giraldus, "delays are dangerous when those who have been excommunicated are expecting absolution." That day, as

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the bishop sate at dinner, and the storm continued to rage with horrible gusts, he looked round at his suite, as he saw some of them making free with the wine, and others indulging in unrestrained conversation<sup>1</sup> with the ladies, and exclaimed in a tone of regret: "He that has left us to-day, in such a storm as this, never neglects his duty for gluttony, sloth, or licentiousness." For Giraldus used to say, it was not manly to watch and to wait for the weather when business had to be done. That was a weakness pardonable only in seamen.

Another anecdote has been preserved, connected with this period of his life, too characteristic of himself and his times to be omitted here.

A new church had been erected at Keri, on the borders of the diocese of St. Asaph, the right to which was a subject of dispute between the bishop of that see and the chapter of St. David's. One morning Giraldus was apprized by the chapter that the bishop of St. Asaph had determined on the next Sunday to dedicate the church, and thus substantiate the claims of his see. This was the beginning of sorrows; a long vista of episcopal aggression opened beyond. This conquest gained, the bishop would extend his jurisdiction without interruption to the banks of the Wye. His machinations would know no end. St. David's trembled at the prospect. Giraldus must crush the bishop's designs before they could advance to maturity. Alone and unsupported, it was a service he was not at all unwilling to undertake. He prepared for the forthcoming conflict—for a bishop was a redoubted opponent—with the skill and alacrity of an experienced veteran. Messengers were despatched on Saturday to his brethren and kinsmen, requesting

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<sup>1</sup> *Licentius atque lascivius.* De Gest. i. 4.