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978-1-108-04292-5 - Giraldi Cambrensis Opera: Gemma Ecclesiastica: Volume 2

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

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Rerum Britannicarum Medii Aevi Scriptores, or The Chronicles and Memorials of Great Britain and Ireland during the Middle Ages, usually referred to as the 'Rolls Series', was an ambitious project first proposed to the British Treasury in 1857 by Sir John Romilly, the Master of the Rolls, and quickly approved for public funding. Its purpose was to publish historical source material covering the period from the arrival of the Romans to the reign of Henry VIII, 'without mutilation or abridgement', starting with the 'most scarce and valuable' texts. A 'correct text' of each work would be established by collating 'the best manuscripts', and information was to be included in every case about the manuscripts used, the life and times of the author, and the work's 'historical credibility', but there would be no additional annotation. The first books were published in 1858, and by the time it was completed in 1896 the series contained 99 titles and 255 volumes. Although many of the works have since been re-edited by modern scholars, the enterprise as a whole stands as a testament to the Victorian revival of interest in the middle ages.

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. Noted for his vigorous Latin and anecdotal style, Giraldus gives a vivid portrait of medieval Britain and the intrigues of the Angevin court. Volume 2, edited by historian J.S. Brewer (1809–79) and published in 1862, contains the *Gemma Ecclesiastica*, Giraldus' handbook on sacraments and morals, addressed to his clergy. Comprising the Latin text with an editorial preface in English, it gives a vivid picture of the medieval ecclesiastical world, and also illuminates nineteenth-century interest in the period.

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Giraldi Cambrensis Opera

VOLUME 2:
GEMMA ECCLESIASTICA

EDITED BY J.S. BREWER,
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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.

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.



OF all his numerous writings, the Gemma Ecclesiastica appears to have been the favourite of Giraldus. He has referred to it on various occasions with manifest pride. Perhaps no more remarkable proof can be found of the complacency with which he regarded it than in the narrative of his own exploits, written by himself. He tells his readers that, whilst he was on a visit to the court of Innocent III. to defend his election to the see of St. David, he made a present of his works to that eminent pontiff. It was the fashion of other men to testify their liberality by laying money at the apostolic feet. His offering was more than money—*libri non libræ*; and considering the times he was not much mistaken in his estimate. Among other volumes, thus presented, was this of the Gemma Ecclesiastica, the pearl and jewel of the church. Nothing could have been more gratifying to the pride of an unknown author, born in the far west, native of a barbarous soil—it is his own expression—than the curiosity excited by his writings in the court of Innocent III. It might be questioned whether the tumults of applause which greeted him at the first recitation of his Topography of Wales, in the schools of Oxford, occasioned him half as much pleasure as did the importunity of grave bishops and cardinals to obtain a sight of these precious volumes. They besieged the chamber of the pontiff; they implored him for a loan of the manuscripts. The pope was deaf to entreaties. Next to

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his Bible and his Aristotle, like the student of Oxenford in the Canterbury Tales, Innocent kept the precious deposit at his bed's head. He would not part with a single volume; for he was a ripe scholar and loved good books.<sup>1</sup> He tantalized curiosity by pointing out to the cardinals, who surrounded him, the numerous beauties and choice sentences in the works before him. At last, and as a signal favour, he permitted each of his cardinals to take away for perusal a single volume; but the *Gemma Ecclesiastica* he would never allow to be out of his sight. It was reserved like pontifical wine for pontifical taste; no eyes below those of the successor of St. Peter must venture to profane its mysteries.

That book, hitherto reserved for the exclusive perusal of popes and archbishops, is now submitted to the reader. It has never been printed before, and no other MS. of it is known to exist except the one, now in the possession of his Grace the archbishop of Canterbury, to whose liberality and condescension I am indebted for the loan of it. Whether this be the very volume that was presented by Giraldus to pope Innocent III., or whether the papal copy still remains among the unsunned treasures of the Vatican, I can not undertake to determine. The Lambeth copy is worthy of presentation to pope or cardinal. It is a noble MS., very carefully written in double columns in a hand of the thirteenth century; the ink is still as glossy as a raven's down, and the vellum as rich as consular ivory. Strangely, too, some leaves in the middle are stained and shrivelled with sea water. But all theory on this subject I must leave to others. It is enough that a genuine MS. of the work is still preserved at Lambeth, whatever may have been the fate of that which Innocent once kept at his bed's head.

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<sup>1</sup> "Copiose literatus erat et literaturam dilexit." De Gest. iii. 18.

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In the introductory notice<sup>1</sup> prefixed to the first book, Giraldus states the purport of his work, and tells us for whom it was written. "As the sacraments of the church are our shield against the fiery darts of our ancient enemy, though absent in the body yet present with you in the spirit and in charity—(he is addressing the clergy of his archdeaconry),—I have deemed it not inconsistent with my duty to instruct you, in this writing, on those difficulties about which you were wont to consult me when I was still with you, and on others the knowledge of which is both needful for you, and with which it would be perilous for you to remain unacquainted. By this you will be able to judge of the love I bear you, and you will see that distance has not diminished my affection.

"It is not altogether undeserving of your praise and gratitude, that out of ponderous volumes, where, owing to the diffuseness of the authors, it is not easy to find what is more worthy and elegant, I have collected into a small compass all that savoured of sounder sense and was more adapted to your spiritual weal, and have made a compendium out of the waste and luxuriance of other men.<sup>2</sup> My task is that of the man who from the innumerable sands on the sea-shore picks out with much labour the precious gems; or who selects as he walks through spacious gardens from the foolish and fruitless herbs the useful and the virtuous, separating the lilies and roses from the nettles and brambles.

"The subject of my book falls under two heads, one of precept, the other of example. For, as Jerom tells us: 'Long and tedious is the way that leads

<sup>1</sup> P. 5.

<sup>2</sup> "Ex aliorum dispendiis compendiosum aliquid." P. 6. The play

upon the words is not easily preserved.

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“ ‘by precept; commodious and brief is the way that  
 “ ‘leads by example.’ So, from the legends of the  
 “ ‘holy Fathers, of which very few copies are to be  
 “ ‘found among you of Wales, and from the faithful  
 “ ‘narratives of ancient and of more recent times, I  
 “ ‘have compiled, with a view to your imitation, some  
 “ ‘things which will be not unserviceable to you. To  
 “ ‘the words of instruction I have subjoined examples  
 “ ‘in suitable places, that as from the perusal of the  
 “ ‘latter you may gain learning, from the former you  
 “ ‘may derive consolation and be provoked to emulation.

“ ‘I am well aware, that to learned ears and fas-  
 “ ‘tidious readers, to whom all these things are trite  
 “ ‘and common, my work will appear either tedious or  
 “ ‘superfluous. But I would have such men understand  
 “ ‘that this work is intended exclusively for my own  
 “ ‘country of Wales; and it is therefore set forth in  
 “ ‘phrase and matter intelligible and unrefined, without  
 “ ‘rhetorical ornament. I aim at being perspicuous, no  
 “ ‘more. But if, perchance, this work of mine, trans-  
 “ ‘gressing the limits prescribed to it, should flit across  
 “ ‘the Marches, fall into the hands of great ones, and  
 “ ‘presumptuously intrude upon the eyes of the learned,  
 “ ‘let such readers know that I prefer to set before them  
 “ ‘what they may consider superfluous than to withhold  
 “ ‘from my countrymen what I deem to be necessary.’”

In this passage the author has described so clearly the design and limits of his work, that very little more needs be said on that subject. Though a Welshman by his mother's side, and more than half a Welshman in affection towards the land of his birth and his adoption, Giraldus has never scrupled in this or his other writings to insist on the barbarous and uncivilized condition of Wales. That the clergy were but little in advance of the laity is obvious from this treatise alone. How, indeed, could it be otherwise, when our author should have thought it incumbent

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to give them instructions on the most obvious points of their clerical duties, and deem it needful to apologize to the rest of the world for descending to a style of writing and a selection of topics far below the pitch he would have adopted towards ordinary readers? The tacit reproach thus conveyed by his statements finds its confirmation in the total absence of Welsh MSS., whether chronicles, copies of the Fathers, or original works. His assertion that books commonly found in other parts of Christendom were not to be found in Wales is undeniable. And this penury is the more remarkable when compared with the abundance of ecclesiastical writings which have come down to us from the monastic foundations of England. All these facts concur in showing the rude and uncivilized condition of Wales in the thirteenth century, the paucity of its learned men, its scanty means of education, and the vast debt which it owes to the memory of Giraldus, from whom alone more complete information may be derived, as to its true condition, than from all others who have treated of its history and antiquities.

Perhaps of less direct historical interest than many of his other works, the *Gemma Ecclesiastica* is more valuable for the variety of strange anecdotes scattered throughout its pages, for the curious insight it affords into the local customs of Wales, and the state of learning and morals in its clergy and laity. The work belongs to a class of manuals, once numerous enough in the middle ages; one, and not the least eminent of which, is attributed to that very Innocent who was charmed, or at least professed to be charmed, with the MS. now submitted to the reader. The fashion of enforcing precept by example, for which Giraldus deemed it needful to apologize in the extract already quoted, was frequent enough in theological works of this nature before the Reformation. And from these

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unsuspected sources many of those fictions have been derived which afterwards adorned the pages of the novelist, and have since dribbled down into nursery tales and the remotest corners of modern literature. I am not now to inquire how that practice arose, whence its original, or where sprung the different currents which afterwards mingled their waters in one undistinguished stream. I am not to describe how pagan, oriental, heretical, neoplatonic legends were rebaptized into the service of the church, and fell in graceful accents from the lips of the unsuspecting preacher, who haply had never seen them in their anti-Christian form. The stronger man had invaded the goods of one less strong than himself; he had robbed the weaker not only of his arms in which he trusted for defence, but of his household gods and his household ornaments. To drop the metaphor, the church had not merely rifled the social institutions and laws of the old world, it had marshalled and pressed into holier ranks those popular fictions which in various forms still clung round and mixed their roots with the popular belief. To extirpate them was impossible. It moralized them. It compelled them to speak a language the authors of them never intended and never could have understood; and many a fable and many a legend did good service in an orthodox garb, which heretofore had kept watch and ward in the camp of the pagan mystic, the Mahomedan, or Manichee.

But though such books in their half-serious, half-grotesque forms form valuable contributions to the history of fiction, their direct historical worth and interest is frequently slight. The compilers of them were content to declaim by precept and example against the vices of their own times without caring to particularize. Their descriptions, consequently, wear that unsatisfactory air of indiscriminate censure which too often confuses, but does not convince, the reader. Levelled

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at all men, they hit none. In this the *Gemma Ecclesiastica* of Giraldus has an advantage over most works of a similar nature. The author was not addressing himself to an hypothetical audience, but to real flesh and blood. He was not denouncing imaginary vices, or solving difficulties of his own creation, but such as he had met with in his work as a parish priest, and as an archdeacon ruling over his clergy. He confines himself, as he tells us, to those cases which had come before him in his ecclesiastical capacity. He insists on such points of doctrine and discipline as were of practical importance, not to an algebraic formula or a clerical unknown quantity, but to the flesh and blood of his own archdeaconry. In fact, the work before us is exactly of the same nature as an archidiaconal charge, addressed to a living body of men, dealing with real abuses of the times, interpreting disputed points of doctrine, enforcing ecclesiastical practice, regulating services, and explaining rubrics;—with this only difference in its favour, that it is much more learned, genial, and lively than archidiaconal charges are in general.

The reader, therefore, who is only in search of amusement may not find his expectations gratified in this as in some others of our author's writings,—and no one would have felt more scandalized than Giraldus himself at such expectations,—yet he will find much in the book to repay perusal; much, certainly, which no one interested in the history of the period—and of Wales especially—can easily afford to dispense with. In vain shall we look elsewhere for such a picture of the Welsh clergy in the thirteenth century. No other book sets before us, in such true and vivid colours, the habits of a great and powerful body of men whose influence over the laity was paramount, and whose conception of their ecclesiastical duties was proportionably vague. If the very best transcript of Cicero's mind is to be found in his own ideal of a perfect Roman, as set forth in

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his *De Officiis*, and of Spenser's in his model of true knighthood, one may judge from this work of Giraldus how much he demanded for the just exemplification of a parish priest in his days, and how far the clergy of his archdeaconry fell short of that ideal. The faults which seemed most heinous to him, and the virtues on which he insisted most strongly, will help the historical inquirer to form a true conception of the temper, spirit, and morality of the age, as well as of the man. And even in the very order of the book something is to be learned, too often overlooked by those who interest themselves in the thoughts of these middle ages;—I mean the central point from which all doctrine radiated,—to which all discipline referred. With the schoolmen that followed in the wake of Giraldus, that centre was the mystery of the Trinity; with him, and before his days, it was sacrifice as set forth in its highest type of the mass. How much the church lost in popular influence by the change I cannot now stay to inquire. But the distinction is of paramount importance. The two principles affected all forms of doctrine and discipline, of practice and belief, during the two great epochs into which the middle ages fall, until they were superseded by the Reformation.

Beginning, therefore, with questions which were confessed by all to be of the deepest importance, Giraldus proceeds first to examine into those offences which troubled the conscience of his clergy and perplexed them in their ministration. They are such as constantly meet the eye of the reader of mediæval manuals. What shall be done if the priest, through negligence, spills the consecrated cup, or has allowed the elements to be nibbled by mice or vermin? What if he has lost or mislaid them?<sup>1</sup> In what cases may the priest delegate to a layman the office of baptism or extreme unction? Why may extreme

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<sup>1</sup> Ch. i.



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unction be repeated, and under what conditions? In what respect does the practice of the Cistercians<sup>1</sup> differ from the rest of Christendom? What are the seven ways in which sin is remitted? "By the sacraments, by martyrdom, by faith, by mercy, by charity, by prayer; and,"—which is worthy of observation for the doubt expressed by Giraldus,—“perhaps by pontifical indulgence.”<sup>2</sup> The caution he deems it necessary to add on this last head deserves attention. It points to the commencement of an evil which some years later was destined, in careless hands, to be productive of infinite mischief.<sup>3</sup> He then enters, in the sixth chapter, into various details as to the ceremonies to be observed in carrying the consecrated elements through the streets to the sick man's chamber. The priest, clothed in his surplice, is to be preceded by the deacon carrying a lighted candle in broad day. The host in the pix, covered with a stole folded in the shape of a cross, is to be adored by the bystanders holding their hands before their eyes.<sup>4</sup> In chapter vii. he discusses the much-disputed etymology of the word *Missa*; explains why a bishop in his sermon uses his pastoral staff, but lays it aside at the mass; determines under what circumstances the mass may be celebrated on a journey or a march, in a house or a tent, in the open air, or on board ship. The hour of its celebration he tells his clergy is the third hour,<sup>5</sup> or nine

<sup>1</sup> Ch. iii.<sup>2</sup> “Et forsam per pontificalem relaxationem.” P. 17.<sup>3</sup> The language of Giraldus here seems almost prophetic. “Dicimus tamen quod cum remissio fit, puta in fabrica ecclesiæ sive dedicatione, subintelligendum est, si in aliis suffragiis ad hoc institutis, veluti missis, psalteriis, orationibus et hujusmodi, seu in contritione, competens et sufficiens fiat recompensatio; præsertim si con-

“current caritas penitentis et ipsius indigentia, et sacerdotis sui licentia. Nec meretur talis plurimum dierum relaxationem propter minimi oblationem, sed propter caritatem et devotionem; sicut forsam fuit in legalibus sacrificiis. Causa quidem est devotio, cujus signum est exterior oblatio.” P. 19.

<sup>4</sup> P. 20.<sup>5</sup> “And it was the third hour, and they crucified him.” Mark xv. 25.

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

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o'clock; on Christmas Eve at midnight; in Lent and vigils the ninth hour, or three o'clock in the afternoon. These and other observances are in strict conformity with the canons; but he admits that different usages prevailed in different churches, and against such he has no objection to urge. In fact the inhabitants of the principality were far from that rigid observance of ritual and discipline which prevailed in countries more directly accessible to Roman influence. Their ancient ecclesiastical independence had never been disturbed by legates and nuncios. They did what seemed good in their own eyes, because they had never been deemed of sufficient importance to call for interference. The maxims of the Roman canonists, introduced by the Normans into England,<sup>1</sup> had, as yet, found no favour among a poor, rude, and illiterate clergy. It would have been of service to modern historians had Giraldus thought it worth while to have entered into more specific details of some of these peculiar usages. We might then have been enabled to discover how much of old Celtic practice and belief still existed side by side with a half-informed Christianity. But his own studies as a canonist, and his celebrity as a lecturer on the Decretals, led him to undervalue such deflections from the Romish standard; and perhaps, he thought it wiser to drop the veil over usages that would not have exalted the patrimony of St. David in the eyes of the rest of Christendom.

In this chapter we catch a glimpse of that sym-

<sup>1</sup> In the dispute between Thomas à Becket and Henry II., the archbishop stands up for the privileges of the clergy as they existed under the Norman dynasty. No doubt Henry II., an Anjevin, and an imperialist in his legal notions, was struck with the inconsistency of having one code for the clergy and

another for the laity; at the same time it is clear that this king was also actuated by the strongest anti-Norman prejudices, just as James I. disliked Elizabeth; and George I., had he been as able and ambitious as Henry II., would have thrown discredit on the measures, as he hated the ministers, of Queen Anne.

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bolism, which, at once losing sight of the historical origin and meaning of ecclesiastical usages, so much more important and significant, ran, at a later period, into extravagant analogies and luxuriant mysticism. After touching in chapter viii. on a number of minute and delicate questions relating to transubstantiation, with a sensible caution against a morbid spirit of speculation<sup>1</sup> which no doctrine tended more to engender, he winds up this part of his subject, in chapter ix., with four anecdotes.<sup>2</sup> In one of them he tells how Maurice, bishop of Paris, reproved the canons of St. Victor for endeavouring to delude him by offering him on his death-bed an unconsecrated instead of a consecrated wafer, supposing him to be in too weak a state to receive it.

Another is more to our purpose. "In the city of Paris," he continues, "I saw an Englishman, named Richard de Aubry, who was well learned in the liberal arts, and lectured there to a large audience on the fourth book of the Sentences.<sup>3</sup> He seemed to be the very mirror of religion and morality among the clergy; he afflicted his body with watchings and fastings, with much abstinence and earnest prayers; yet, when he took to his bed in his last sickness, and was offered the Lord's body, he could not receive it. Nay, he even averted his face, exclaiming that this punishment had happened to him through the just judgment of God, because he never could prevail upon himself to have a firm belief in this article of the faith. And so he entered the way of all flesh without the viaticum."

<sup>1</sup> "Tutius autem esse videtur circa hæc quæ miraculosa sunt omnia, non adeo ad unguem singula discuti, sed incerta potius Spiritui Sancto relinqui. Et quod ex auctoritatibus certum est profiteri, substantiam scilicet panis et vini in substantiam Do-

"minici corporis et sanguinis converti, modum vero conversionis non erubescendum ignorare fateri." P. 28.

<sup>2</sup> P. 32.

<sup>3</sup> Giraldus merely states, "de Sententia illa," sc. the eucharist.

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At the death-bed of Urban III., who was elected to the papacy from the archbishopric of Milan, an eloquent man, zealous for ecclesiastical rigour and justice, there sate a woman, as the story goes, who, at the suggestion of the devil, waited to take the viaticum out of his mouth, which he had been unable to swallow, either from too much weakness or from some unknown cause. Another example is found in pope Gerbert, who, "after his election to the papacy, when ever he officiated at the mass, and ought to have taken the host, deposited it secretly in a bag, which he carried about his neck. When this was discovered at his confession, a statute was made in the church at Rome that the pope at the time of communicating should turn his face to the people. This Gerbert afterwards became penitent, and had each of those members amputated, in his lifetime, with which he had given and devoted himself to the devil. They say that his marble tomb sweats great drops of water at the impending death of the reigning pontiff."

From the eucharist Giraldus turns to the consideration of the ecclesiastical vestments and ornaments required for its celebration. He tells his clergy, that the cup must be of gold or silver, or, if the church be very poor, of pure and solid tin at the least. On the right corner of the altar there is to be a piscina to carry off the rinsings. All these things, he adds, may be provided in the poorest churches, if the clergy will only refrain from superfluity in eating, drinking, and keeping of horses; and if they will learn to be moderate in their own dress and in that of their families. The books required for divine service are not to be left, at the death of the incumbent, to his sons, his daughters, his nephews, or his nieces, but to the church itself, out of the revenue of which these things have been provided. But if there be two or three sets of books, the best copies are to remain in the church,

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and the clergyman at his death may dispose of the others at his pleasure. If at the death of the incumbent there be no service books found in the church, or they be too few, or in bad condition, or if the roof of the church be in ruins, and especially the chancel, provision shall be made for due repairs out of the goods of the departed, or rather first of all from the revenues of the church itself, for the proper provision and maintenance<sup>1</sup> of the fabric.

Chap. xi. contains a number of wonderful stories relating to transubstantiation, of which the most novel and remarkable is that of a man in Germany, who, in the days of the author, from diffidence or defect of faith, hid the eucharist in a tree in his garden, where it was afterwards found enshrined by bees in a temple of wax, with all the necessary ornaments. After making the tour of the diocese, this miraculous fabric was sent to the archbishop, by the archbishop to the emperor, and by the emperor to the pope.

From the Eucharist he turns to the consideration of baptism.<sup>2</sup> He directs the clergy to inform their parishioners, on Sundays, how they may, in cases of emergency, administer baptism. If they are at a distance from the priest, and the child is in extremities, they may dip it three times, repeating the words either in Latin or their mother tongue: "Baptizo te in nomine Patris et Filii et Spiritus Sancti." He tells them it makes no difference in what language this sentence be pronounced, or how ungrammatically, provided only the essential words be retained; and he quotes the authority of St. Augustine and the Canonists against rebaptizing a child who had been baptized by a priest, ignorant of the Latin tongue, in the following barbarous

<sup>1</sup> P. 28.| <sup>2</sup> Ch. xii.

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terms: *In nomine patris et filii et spiritus sancti*.<sup>1</sup> As godfathers and godmothers, by standing sponsors for a child, acquire a spiritual relationship, the bridegroom and his betrothed (*sponsus et sponsa*) must not be allowed to act as godfather and godmother to the same child, otherwise they forfeit the right of becoming man and wife. To avoid this and similar evils the church limited the sponsors to three. If more than three persons wish to be present at the font to do honour to the child, they must appear only in the capacity of witnesses. If the godfather wishes to make the child a present, he is not to be prevented from so doing; but no priest may take a fee for baptism or burial, extreme unction, or any other sacrament; not even for marriage. He may accept a voluntary offering, but in no way to the violation of this enactment. The bans are to be published three Sundays before marriage; and if any one can allege just cause of impediment he must do so at the time of publication. No objection can be pleaded after the marriage contract. All these particulars are exceedingly curious, as showing how far the present English ritual is conformable with the ancient practice of the nation.

Giraldus then turns to confession;<sup>2</sup> and after noticing the spiritual relationship between confessor and confessed, proceeds to consider under what circumstances the church allows laymen to receive confession; what the church intended by confession; why confession for the same offence is not to be reiterated; and what is its efficacy. In proof of the efficacy of confession he tells a story of an evil spirit, in his own days at Poitiers, who by the mouth of an energumena railed at men for their secret offences, and published those crimes they would gladly have concealed. When these men, after

<sup>1</sup> P. 44.| <sup>2</sup> Ch. xiv.