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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 3, edited by historian J.S. Brewer (1809–79) and published in 1863, consists of Latin texts with an editorial preface in English, continuing from Volume 1, Giraldus' polemical-apologetic account of the St David's affair, and a life of the eponymous saint. 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 also illuminating nineteenth-century interest in the period.



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Giraldi Cambrensis Opera

VOLUME 3:
DE INVECTIONIBUS, LIB IV.
DE MENEVENSI ECCLESIA DIALOGUS.
VITA S. DAVID

EDITED BY J.S. BREWER,
JAMES F. DIMOCK
AND GEORGE F. WARNER





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RERUM BRITANNICARUM MEDII ÆVI SCRIPTORES,

or

CHRONICLES AND MEMORIALS OF GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND

DURING

THE MIDDLE AGES.





978-1-108-04293-2 - Giraldi Cambrensis Opera: De Invectionibus, Lib IV. De Menevensi Ecclesia Dialogus. Vita S. DavidGemma Ecclesiastica: Volume 3

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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He proposed that each chronicle or historical document to be edited should be treated in the same way as if the editor were engaged on an Editio Princeps; and for this purpose the most correct text should be formed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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SCILICET,

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II. DE MENEVENSI ECCLESIA DIALOGUS.

III. VITA S. DAVID.

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IT was intended, in the first instance, that this volume should have included the Speculum Ecclesia, the most interesting and, in many respects, the most important of all the works of Giraldus. But after it had been prepared for the press, the earlier portions of his treatise De Invectionibus, of which the fifth and the sixth books had already appeared in the first volume of this edition, were found at the new Record Office among the papers of the old Record Commission. In my preface to the first volume 1 it was stated that I had accidentally fallen in with a transcript of the two books which I then printed, and I expressed my surprise that this recovery of a mediæval MS., unquestionably the most important of all the researches undertaken by that Commission, had never attracted attention before. added also that no trace could be found of the four missing books. To this conclusion I had been led by the fact that in the collection of papers, among which the transcript was found, no notice was given of the existence of any other portions of the work; the paging ran on consecutively with the rest of the volume; and even in the table of contents prefixed to the collection, there was no intimation that more than the fifth and sixth books had been copied; although it has now been

P. xciii.



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ascertained that the whole of the work had been forwarded to England at different intervals, I must beg my readers to believe that before the fifth and sixth books were sent to the press I had not failed to examine all the papers within my reach, or of the existence of which I had any suspicion. The recovery of so remarkable a fragment, unknown to all writers of English bibliography, would have been sufficient of itself to have stimulated curiosity and exertion, independently of all other considerations. No one who knows the mass of confusion into which the papers of the Record Commission were thrown, when its labours were suspended, or the total absence of anything like system or order in which those labours were prosecuted, will feel surprised that I should have fallen into the mistake of supposing that the fifth and sixth books only of the missing treatise had been recovered and that the remaining portions were irretrievably lost. Since those remarks were penned, the different portions of the transcript have been bound together, and all traces of their former separation have disappeared, with the exception of the original difference in the pagination. These observations have therefore become necessary for my own justification; for without them this omission might hereafter appear inexplicable.

It is much to be regretted that the transcriber of this unique and hitherto unknown MS. should have proceeded on a different method in the earlier and in the latter books. In the fifth and sixth books he has adhered to the original exactly; in the first, second, third, and fourth he has contracted or omitted parts, which seemed to him less valuable or less necessary. Had I been aware of this fact at the time, or had I been able to examine those portions of the transcript at a less advanced stage of my labours, I should have hesitated before committing to the press so imperfect a copy. But no alternative remained. As I had already given



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to the world the latter portions of the work, it was imperative upon me to add, as soon as possible, the rest. The MS. is preserved at Rome, as I have stated already, and a fresh collation of it is impossible at present. On the whole, therefore, it seemed more desirable to give it to the world in its present state rather than risk the omission of it, perhaps its total disappearance.

We are now enabled to gain more full and correct information of this celebrated invective, unquestionably the bitterest of the author's works, than could be derived from his own brief notice of it, or the fragment The title indicates its printed in the first volume. purpose. It is a merciless attack on the real or supposed enemies of Giraldus; upon such of them more especially as had taken an active part, at Rome or in England, in hindering or contesting his advancement to the see of St. David. Foremost² among these, as might be supposed, stands Hubert Walter the archbishop of Canterbury; foremost, but not alone. The archbishop's officials, his witnesses, and his dependents, come in for their share of that "black salt" which Giraldus administers with unsparing hand, and with a ruthless disregard to the conventional decorum of later times. The archbishop of St. David's in posse launches the weapons of ridicule and abuse at the archbishop of Canterbury in esse, with an unction and absence of discrimination which show that the task was by no means an unpalatable one. though he professes that he entered on this strife, not merely from a sense of his own wrongs, but at the invitation of Innocent himself 3-a reflection on the memory of that pontiff we take the liberty to disbelieve—he is hardly at the pains to conceal the delight

² Pref.

³ P. 11.

¹ Vol. i. p. xciii.



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with which he holds up to the world's laughter the imperfect scholarship of his dignified adversary, and reproduces the scandalous anecdotes which circulated from mouth to mouth among the ribald followers of Richard I. and King John.

Here is a specimen, if Giraldus is to be trusted, which the cynical Italians of Innocent's court would not fail to appreciate. "Last year," says Giraldus, "when the "archbishop was paving his way at the Court of "Rome to the dignity of the cardinalate, and was "boasting about it in public, a parasite of his grace "presented him not unprofitably with the following "verse:—

" 'Successor Thomæ succedes baculo Romæ.'

"The archbishop, in admiration of this poetic tribute, ordered the poet a donative of ten crowns, and after studying all night returned the compliment with the following line:—

"'Ora frater pro me, ne sim deterior Thomæ!'"

Here is another, which is scarcely less ridiculous, and is of more historical interest, as showing Richard I. in a new light.² "It happened on one occasion that Richard I. "was speaking in Latin and made use of the following expression: 'Volumus quod istud fiat coram nobis.' The archbishop, who stood by among other nobles and prelates, wishing to correct the king, cried out, "Coram nos, my liege, coram nos.'" On which the king, casting a glance at Hugo, bishop of Coventry, a man of learning and eloquence, replied, amidst much laughter: "Stick to your own grammar, my lord archibishop, because yours is more valiant than mine "(plus valet)."

¹ P. 23.

² P. 30.



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Little as it may appear consistent with modern notions for two men of high position in the Church thus to signalize their animosity against each other in the face of the world, Giraldus does not scruple to avow his purpose of retaliating on the archbishop all those real or fancied wrongs of which he had been He would have thought it too contemptible to have suffered in patience; still more to threaten and not execute; to bite and not to bark. The old crusading spirit still burnt fiercely in the hearts of men; and wrong for wrong was deemed more consistent with Christian charity than malice and hatred and evil speaking in secret. Besides, the archbishop was an Englishman, and all kinds of weapons were lawful in a war where defeat entailed such momentous consequences on Giraldus and his country. All forms of annoyance were allowable against an arch offender, whose professed purpose it was to crush the ecclesiastical independence of the see of St. David, not less than to ruin the suit of Giraldus in the Court of Rome. "Holy Father," 1 he exclaims to Innocent III., "it is the property of dogs, as you know, " and their impudence, to bark, where they cannot " bite; and therefore I have deemed it right in your " hearing to make answer to the letter of the arch-" bishop, in which on pretence of dissuading you, he " undertakes to write invectives against me-I wish it " had been with his own and not another man's pen " -and thus defend my own character; so he may " learn how idle and unprofitable a thing it is, how " easily open to retaliation, when one who is without " learning ventures to make an attack on a man of " letters, and by insulting writings, to provoke a " reply from those who are skilful in writing."

¹ P. 16.

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Sallust and St. Jerom furnished him with valid excuses 1 for retaliating in a style of invective, for which no parallel certainly was to be found in the language of the archbishop, or his unhappy partners in the suit. Foliot, one of his witnesses, was suggestive of a fool, who finding it impossible to gain notoriety by good deeds, acted like the malefactor who set fire to the Temple of Diana; "ut qui in bono notus 2 esse non potuit saltem " in malo notus existeret." The poor abbot of St. Dogmael another, was an illiterate monk who could not read his psalter; all, in short, who had taken part against Giraldus, were prompted by the threats and instigation of the king and the archbishop to rise up against the champion of the rights of St. David.3 They were propagators of errors and scandals against whom the papal thunders could not be directed amiss:-weeds if not vermin, whose rampant growth must be trodden down, to prevent their pernicious luxuriance.

But his bitterest indignation, as might be expected, was reserved for the archbishop, the only opponent whose hostility was of real importance, and whose temper was as cool as it was inflexible. It was quite enough to irritate one of so fiery a temperament, and proud of his Welsh descent, as Giraldus, to find that a man of obscure parentage, and of no reputation for scholarship, should not only calmly and successfully counteract all his measures, and frustrate his most cherished designs, but reject almost scornfully those proffers of accommodation, which Giraldus more than once stooped to make. The archbishop would listen to no terms:—he could be moved by no threats, and no promises. No desire of peace, no dread of annoyance, from one so capable of causing

¹ P. 11.

² P. 33.

³ P. 28.



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annoyance, could for a moment disturb the fixedness of his purpose. He had resolved that Giraldus should not be bishop or archbishop of St. David; and that resolution taken, no influence on earth could With the dogged determination, which belonged to his nation, the archbishop set to work to resist and counteract the appointment. His opposition was the more provoking, because it was of a nature that no conciliation on the part of Giraldus could overcome. It was not founded on any canonical objection; it rested on no defect of morals, of scholarship, or orthodox doctrine. He was a Welshman, that was enough; allied by blood or affinity to all the magnates of Wales, and proud of his descent. Those very accomplishments which would have been meritorious in another man, in the archdeacon formed only so many additional objections to his promotion. He might by their fascination circumvent the Pope, he would certainly by his eloquence exercise an influence over the excitable minds of his countrymen, which might prove dangerous to the peace of the two countries, and injurious to the ecclesiastical supremacy of Canterbury. There was something plodding and unromantic in the character of the archbishop in striking contrast to that of his rival, exhausting his strength and means, sacrificing ease, preferment, friends, and popularity for an idea, which had no charms for any one except himself. And such an idea! the more captivating to the imagination of Giraldus in proportion as it was dim and visionary; the more enchanting the less capable it proved of realization. "If," writes the archbishop to "the Pope, Giraldus should obtain consecration from " you, he would not rest satisfied with this success; but " as men who have obtained what they never expected,

P. 15.

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" conceive more vast and ambitious designs, so Giraldus " would extend his aims to higher and more per-" nicious purposes. Under the plea of his consecration " by you, he would claim exemption from the jurisdic-"tion of the Church of Canterbury, (which by God's " will and your refusal, he shall never obtain!) and " thus he would sow the seeds of dissension hereafter, " to the best of his power, between the English and " the Welsh. For the Welsh who trace their descent " in unbroken succession from the early Britons, boast " that the possession of the whole of Britain is theirs " by right. Unless therefore the barbarity of this " fierce and lawless people be curbed by ecclesi-" astical censures and restrained by the archbishop of " Canterbury, to whose province they are subject by " law, they will rise in frequent or unbroken rebel-" lion against the king, to the unavoidable disquiet " of the whole realm of England."

With a perfect knowledge of these sentiments on the part of the archbishop, and this determination, it is not surprising that Giraldus regarded him as his bitter enemy. It was enough that the archbishop trampled on and opposed his favourite idea; an opposition few men can forgive or are ever willing to forget. But in this instance the archbishop's hostility assumed every form that could mortify the pride of the Welsh scholar and extinguish all his hopes of reward or distinction. He laboured under a ban of exclusion, which no virtue and no services could surmount,—the most bitter, and the most unjust;—he was a Welshman, and in the estimation of the archbishop, who spoke in this instance the sense of the English nation, disqualified in consequence from advancement in the church.

Smarting under the sense of injustice, Giraldus could not prevent his thoughts from reverting to his own condition and that of his great rival, and drawing comparisons by no means favourable to the



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latter. "If he that is so mighty, and 'plus quam "'dignissimus,' can fairly hope to aspire to the loftiest post in the church, why may not I, moderate in my "wishes, as compared to him, aspire to the least?"

"Mopso Nisa datur; quid non speremus amantes?"

As if the poet would say, "If so noble a damsel is given " to so vile a shepherd, none surely need despair." 1 And elsewhere, "I admit my insufficiency, because I " acknowledge that I am not sufficient or fit for the " rule of one moderate-sized parochial church.2 " him with Pharisaical pride boast, if he will, that he " is more than competent for the rule of almost the " whole church of England. He reckons a monk his " physician, a simple, foolish, and illiterate man, as " a very fit person for such preferment, and is always " attempting to thrust him upon the chapter of St. " David, as one under whom he may enjoy repose " for sooth without disturbance." In the same spirit Giraldus has collected and preserved a number of little traits and anecdotes of the archbishop, not to be found elsewhere. Many of these are doubtless exaggerated; many rest on no better foundation than public report, into the credibility of which Giraldus was not disposed to make searching inquiry.

Throwing aside the more scandalous, to which he himself attaches no credit, and which he afterwards publicly retracted,⁴ these charges amount mainly to two; first, an absence of that ecclesiastical scholarship which was to be found in most of Hubert's contemporaries, and secondly, an excessive devotion to secular occupations, more suited to his position as the highest judicial officer in the realm than to his spiritual functions as archbishop of Canterbury. It is thus that

¹ P. 24.

² Diocese.

³ P. 20.

⁴ Vol. i. p. 426.



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Giraldus taxes him in this treatise, and repeats the charge in his Retractations: 1 "From the time of the " archbishop's boyhood, when he ought to have been " laying the foundation of his education in Donatus " and Cato, he was mixed up with the public officials of " the realm, and did not fail to oppress the poor with " arbitrary exactions." "That good man, the bishop " elect of Bangor," he tells the Pope,2 "was called " from the cloister, and I from study. But from what " place was the archbishop called? From the Exchequer, " forsooth! And what is the Exchequer? It is the " place of the public treasury in England, viz., a kind " of square table in London where the king's dues are " collected and counted. This was the study, and this " the gymnasium in which the archbishop had grown " old, this was the training from which he was sum-" moned to all gradations of his promotion in the " church; like most of your English bishops. " in England, 'qui bene computat, bene disputat!'" It was at this period of the archbishop's life, and during the fiscal disorders doubtless of the reign of Richard I., that those acts took place of which Giraldus on public report accused the archbishop, though probably he was acting only in his official capacity. Thus Giraldus states 3 that Hubert was deposed from the justiciariship the year before for sending letters abroad in the king's name without the king's authority. "And besides " similar letters and other acts of dishonesty contrary " to the statutes of the realm, victuals and vendibles " were shipped by the archbishop into France; and on " this charge before I had left England he had been " several times summoned to Normandy to make his " answer before the prince." Another accusation is

¹ P. 38.

² P. 28.

³ P. 37.

⁴ That is, in 1198.



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of a graver character, but rests on no better foun-It arose probably from the archbishop's disputes with the monks of Canterbury, with whom he was no favourite. "In his negociations," says Giraldus, "he uses two kinds of measures; " sells by the small and buys by the large. Through " the whole of the lands belonging to the church of " Canterbury, which are many and extensive, he has " issued an enactment that no one shall sell a blade " of corn to any but himself or buy of any except " himself." 1 Instead of supplying the necessities of the churches in his province, as his predecessor St. Thomas did, Giraldus accuses him of exporting corn in bad years; of buying up arms and armour when a war was imminent between France and England, foreseeing, and in fact advising a muster and scrutiny to be made shortly after, and thus enhancing the price. "His wickedness," he continues, "is incompa-"rable. The convent of the Holy Trinity at Canter-" bury has felt the effects of it. So has the church of " St. Mary, London, when it was set on fire. Barbatus " felt it, when he was hanged, though innocent. Wales " felt it shortly after in the bloody massacre of 3,000 " of its inhabitants. The elect of Bangor felt it, over " whose head an Englishman was thrust. And now · in the last place the abbot of St. Augustine's, Can-" terbury, has felt it; -that special son of the church " of Rome, who was thrown upon the ground in his " own church as he was celebrating mass, beaten, and " thrust out of doors."2

It would not be easy to disentangle the truth from the falsehood of these charges, prompted partly by irritation, and resting as they did almost exclusively on popular report. They appear, with others of a similar

¹ P. 38.



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nature, in various pages of this and other works of Giraldus. And though in the general review of his writings compiled by himself late in life, after he had been reconciled to the archbishop, and when the latter had closed his career, Giraldus in a more genial mood admits that he was prompted in these accusations more by a feeling of bitterness than strict regard to justice, and guided rather by common fame than actual sight and hearing; yet even with these admissions he has reiterated the charge of worldliness and ambition with which he here taxes the archbishop. "To "say truly and briefly what I think of him; he " was a man of high stomach and great activity, " and among all his other good qualities he was re-" markable for unparalleled munificence.1 To obtain " the means and money proportioned to the gran-" deur of his conceptions he outstepped the bounds of " moderation in acquiring riches, and was every way " too careful and anxious. Would that he had been " as wise in spiritual as he was in worldly things; " as great a lover of divinity as he was a hankerer " after vanity; as fervent in charity as he was full " of cupidity; as hungry and thirsty for divine grace " as he was for worldly pomp and popular favour! " However, he was a bridle to the king (John), and " a bulwark against tyranny; the peace and comfort " of the people; a refuge in his own days for great " and small alike against the oppression of the govern-" ment, as was seen shortly after. For immediately " after his death tyranny reigned supreme,2 and as if " the bar imposed by his presence upon imprudent and " impudent self-will had been swept away and broken,

¹ Dapsilitate.

² Giraldus probably alludes to the current anecdote told of king John.

When he heard of the death of the

archbishop, he exclaimed with a feeling of exultation: "Now I shall be king of England!"



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" it raged high, not only against human but divine "things." In conclusion Giraldus expresses his conviction that if the piety and learning of Hubert's predecessor could have been combined with his activity, firmness, and courage, he might have proved a worthy successor to the martyred St. Thomas.1

As these and other accusations of a similar nature are scattered up and down the pages of Giraldus, it may be better to examine them here collectively. The real value and credibility of them will be determined more easily by a short sketch of the archbishop's life

Hubert Walter was born at West Dereham in Norfolk, and as he passed for an old man at his death in 1205, the date of his birth may presumptively be carried back to the earlier years of the reign of king Stephen. No record has been preserved of his parents or of his early education. The first notice found of him is as an inmate of the house of Ranulph de Glanville, chief justiciary of England, in the reign of Henry II. In memory of De Glanville's kindness, Hubert, when dean of York,² founded a Premonstratene house at West Dereham, "for the sal-" vation of his own soul, the souls of his father and " mother, of Ranulph de Glanville and Bertha his " wife, who educated and brought him up." Among the attesting signatures to this charter are the names of Theobald Walter, his brother, Ranulph and Osbert de Glanville, and Baldwin the chancellor. It is probable that this early intimacy of Hubert with De Glanville and his training under the justiciary may have given occasion to the sarcasm of Giraldus, that

Retract. p. 427.
 A. D. 1169. De Glauville | founded a house of the same order at Leyston in Suffolk, 1167.



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whilst other lads were employed on Donatus and Cato, Hubert was less creditably engaged in mastering the quirks of the law or counting money at the table of the Exchequer. It is observable also that Hubert's name never appears in the voluminous correspondence of that age; -- a fact which lends some countenance to this assertion of Giraldus. It is admitted, in fact, by Hubert's admirer, Gervasius. The future archbishop, according to his account, was tall in stature, and such an excellent soldier that even Cœur de Lion admired him. But, adds Gervasius, he was more a man of the world than a scholar; more prudent in advising than skilful in rhetoric, "ingenio callens licet non eloquio In conjunction with Ranulph de Glan-" pollens." ville, according to the same authority, he ruled in a measure the whole kingdom of England, for the justiciary had great faith in Hubert's advice. "So devoting " himself to politics and intent on the business of " the state, he cared more for human than divine " things, and was skilled in all the laws of this king-" dom." 1 With the exception of these scanty memorials we hear no more of him until the year 1189, when Richard I. ascended the throne. At that period the see of York was vacant, and had continued vacant since the death of its last archbishop Roger, in the year As dean of York the temporalities of the see remained in the hands of Hubert. Richard was desirous of appointing his natural brother Geoffrey to the vacant archbishoprick; the chapter, equally willing to comply, elected him in the absence of the dean. But so powerful was Hubert's influence, that on his appealing against these proceedings the election was quashed, the archbishop disappointed of his preferment, and the custody of the see returned once more to the dean.3

¹ Act. Pont. 1679.

² Stubbs, 1723.

⁸ Hoveden, 373 b.