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978-1-108-04294-9 - Girdaldi Cambrensis Opera: Speculum Ecclesiae. De Vita Galfridi
Archiepiscopi Eboracensis: Volume 4

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

Frontmatter

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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.

Girdaldi 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.1146–1220/23) 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 4, edited by historian J.S. Brewer (1809–79) and published in 1873, contains two texts, one a moral, quasi-pastoral critique of the monastic orders, the other a life of Geoffrey Plantagenet (1151–1212), Archbishop of York, focusing on power struggles at the Angevin court. Noted for his vigorous Latin and anecdotal style, Giraldus gives a vivid portrait of medieval Britain, while the English editorial preface illuminates nineteenth-century interest in the period.

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Frontmatter

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Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Giraldi Cambrensis Opera

VOLUME 4:
SPECULUM ECCLESIAE.
DE VITA GALFRIDI
ARCHIEPISCOPI EBORACENSIS

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Frontmatter

[More information](#)

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Frontmatter

[More information](#)

RERUM BRITANNICARUM MEDII ÆVI
SCRIPTORES,

OR

CHRONICLES AND MEMORIALS OF GREAT BRITAIN
AND IRELAND

DURING

THE MIDDLE AGES.

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Frontmatter

[More information](#)

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Frontmatter

[More information](#)

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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Frontmatter

[More information](#)

4

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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Frontmatter

[More information](#)

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OPERA.

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J. S. BREWER, M.A.,

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AND PREACHER AT THE ROLLS.

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Frontmatter

[More information](#)

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Frontmatter

[More information](#)

GIRALDI CAMBRENSIS
OPERA,

SCILICET,

SPECULUM ECCLESIAE.

DE VITA GALFRIDI ARCHIEPISCOPI EBORACENSIS: SIVE
CERTAMINA GALFRIDI EBORACENSIS ARCHIEPISCOPI.

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Frontmatter

[More information](#)

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Frontmatter

[More information](#)

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Frontmatter

[More information](#)

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

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

P R E F A C E.



THE *Speculum Ecclesie* of Giraldus, in many respects the most interesting, has been in all respects the most unfortunate of his writings. One MS. of the work is known to exist, and one only.¹ Unhappily there is too much room for believing that there never was more than one; for no trace of another can be found in any library at home or abroad. The quotations made from the *Speculum* by Anthony Wood, in his "Antiquities of Oxford,"² were certainly derived from the same copy as that which is now preserved in the Cotton Library. Giraldus was in many respects the most-popular author of his age. The manuscripts of his Description of Wales, and again of Ireland, are numerous even now. They were repeatedly quoted; and if any defects existed in the surviving copies, they might be supplied in a great degree from these second-hand authorities. Further, he had insured the popularity of these books and their general acceptance by a method of advertisement, if not wholly new in those times, or without precedent in ours, as ingenious as it was rare. He had feasted the members of the University of Oxford on three successive days, and enhanced the pleasure of the entertainment by reading to his guests on these three successive occasions, the choicer passages of his topographical descriptions. But no such good fortune was in store for the *Speculum Ecclesie*, or *Mirror of the Church*. It was his latest

¹ Cotton, Tiberius, B. xiii., from which the text of this volume is taken.

² See p. 4.

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Frontmatter

[More information](#)

production. He had grown old, and like old men had fallen out of favour. It might well be doubted whether if he had been younger and still popular, he would have ventured on repeating the experiment, or have read before the most select assemblage of any university, of that period, the whole or even the larger portions of a work, in which he scathed with no sparing hand the monastic degeneracy of his times. It may even be questioned whether his free-spoken friend, Walter Mapes, never accustomed to spare the feelings of Cluniacks and Cistercians, would not have felt his ears tingle at the recital of enormities, some of which it is to be hoped were untrue, and most of which were probably exaggerated. A collection of monastic scandals,—for it is a mistake to consider them ecclesiastical, and confound monastic congregations, by a vulgar error, with the clergy,—though mainly affecting one class only,—could not be acceptable to monks in general. Eager enough to dispute among themselves, and contend for influence and acceptance with the laity, they would look with no complacency on an author, who brought their whole body into contempt by piquant stories of the ambition, the worldliness, and the hypocrisy of individual members. Unfortunately for Giraldus, the only publishers and transcribers of books, in those days, were the monks. From them alone could he expect coöperation, and without their care in the custody of his writings, his ablest productions had no chance of escaping destruction. Monasteries, it is true, had relaxed much of their ancient discipline. The old strictness of their rules had been broken down. The possession of large estates, and the necessity of studying economy in all its branches, had converted abbots and priors from simple religious men, exclusively devoted to God's service, into great land-owners, with all the troubles and annoyances of land-owners, surrounded by grumbling and refractory tenants, who speculated on the reluctance felt by the abbots in

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Frontmatter

[More information](#)

PREFACE.

ix

going to law and prosecuting their rights in the secular courts. "If monks are to labour with their hands and "stick to the cloister, as St. Austin commanded;" Chaucer makes his monk to say in the Canterbury Tales, "how shall the world be served?" How shall the Cistercian sell his wool and his horses, or the Cluniack the produce of his farms, his cheeses, and his honey, without chaffering and chapmanship? Or, how shall the Benedictine rebuild his churches and his barns, or enforce his rents, except he understand the world? How shall he defend himself, if needs be, from those who in all ages imagine that it is a religious property, in men devoted to religion, to permit themselves to be fleeced and defrauded and give their backs, like their Master, to the smiter, and their cheeks to him that plucketh off the hair? It is an admitted maxim, that worldly men may be religious, the converse is not so generally admitted, that religious men should have anything to do with the world. And though these monks were in fact laymen, and nothing more than laymen, except so far as they had bound themselves, as Fellows of Colleges do now, to vows of celibacy and obedience, and community of goods (to which Fellows of Colleges at present are not bound), their purely laical character was forgotten by the world, and their lay employments considered by their enemies as irreconcilable with the strictness of their profession. Yet, what, it may be asked, was the essential difference in itself, as distinct from its consequences, whether a monk laboured in the fields, as St. Augustine commanded, or superintended those that did? Whether the abbot, as in earlier centuries, handled the trowel and stooped his back to the mortar, or arranged with his tenants and others for the performance of such drudgery by deputy? Of course the temptation was great, as St. Benedict foresaw but could not prevent, and the necessities of their position drew the monks more into the world and into worldly occupations than was salutary for them. But

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Frontmatter

[More information](#)

though they were thus becoming every year less strict, and more indulgent in the literal application of the rules of their founder, they were not inclined to lend a willing ear to the admonitions of Giraldus, which seemed to emanate more from contempt of their order, than from any pious hope or desire for their reformation. The bitterest sarcasms levelled against the monastic houses, by sovereigns like Henry II., by wits like Walter Mapes, even by the thoughtless and the vulgar, find a welcome resting place in the pages of Giraldus. "A monk's hood is not always a sign of sanctity." "Don't put your trust too much in the habit of the religious." "The Cistercian has a white exterior, but an interior the contrary of whiteness;"—these and similar sayings, copiously illustrated by stories and anecdotes collected from all quarters, were not calculated to procure for our author's manuscript admission into the *Scriptorium* of the abbey, or cause it to be copied by those who in his days were the sole custodians and disseminators of literature. He was compelled, therefore, to let his manuscript perish with him, or procure for it a transcriber at his own cost, and that was considerable. This is probably the reason why there never existed more than one copy of the book, and that was the author's own. That such is the case, that the MS. from which the text of this volume has been taken, was that very original and came from the hands of Giraldus himself, is put beyond all doubt by other evidence. In the prefatory epistle to the book, in which he points out its more important parts, and solicits the attention of his readers to certain passages as especially worthy of their attention, he says: "The epistle premised and placed at the head of the book, in which I lament the degeneracy of literature, learned men will at least consider as worthy of perusal. I have set little marks against the more remarkable sentences and discourses, to which the eye of the reader, by noticing the mark, may be easily

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Frontmatter

[More information](#)

PREFACE.

xi

guided."¹ At p. 48, where he gives a curious account of the opening of Arthur's tomb at Glastonbury, and at other passages of more than ordinary interest, a finger is placed in the margin to direct attention. These marks and directing signs, made by a plummet or crayon, are in a totally different hand from the text, and must evidently have been placed there by the author himself. It is to be regretted that he was not equally anxious to correct the errors of his scribe; for though the handwriting is skilful enough, it is clear, from the numerous blunders and mis-readings in every page of the manuscript, that the scribe was not an adept at his task. These errors I have, in most instances, tacitly corrected; some have defied my ability to rectify; a few I have preserved at the foot of the page, for the judgment and ingenuity of my readers.

Thus it will be seen that the work of Giraldus labours under considerable disadvantages. Yet these disadvantages are as nothing compared with the injuries the manuscript has sustained from the carelessness of those into whose hands it fell, and from the fire of the Cottonian Library. In the second book (*Distinctio* II.), six chapters had disappeared before that untoward accident occurred.² The heads of these were fortunately preserved by Wharton, but the contents of the chapters had been totally lost even in his time. The injury inflicted by the fire was, however, far more damaging than reckless laceration or careless transcription. The top and bottom, and in many instances the side margins, have been so much destroyed that column after column of the manuscript is mutilated or defaced. The pith of a story, the point of an anecdote, are irretrievably lost. In some instances valuable historical details are rendered unintelligible by the loss of four or five lines, to the great vexation of the reader; and no

¹ See p. 14.

| ² Chaps. xviii. to xxii., inclusive.

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Frontmatter

[More information](#)

sooner has he overcome his disappointment and proceeded with the narrative than he is met at the end of the next page with a corresponding lacuna, equally long and equally tantalizing. The worst injury of all is the almost total destruction of the introductory epistle, a loss, at all events, so deplorable, as to render the few detached sentences of it that remain and can be read hardly intelligible. The subject of this proem was of the profoundest interest, and was evidently treated by Giraldus with a freedom of criticism not common in his age. It exposed the corrupting influences then at work in the two Universities which eventually brought their sounder and earlier culture into disrepute, and closed the days of great scholarship. He complains that careful training and mature study were thrown aside for the more noisy pursuit of logic; that young men after three or four years' study mounted the professor's chair to teach others badly what they themselves had learned imperfectly. Law and physics, as more lucrative pursuits, bade fair to eclipse and extinguish all others. He speaks also of the neglect of the Latin poets and philosophers which had introduced barbarisms into style and entire forgetfulness of Latin quantity. "I wish," he remarks, "that in the see of Canterbury, supreme over all other churches in England, the vicious pronunciation nightly and daily of words, in the choir, should cease for the future, and the grace and the glory of literature be after long interval restored to its pristine honor." Then, after some remarks, now lost to us by the mutilation of the manuscript, he adds, "laying aside the laws of the laity and their verbose and clamorous constitutions, without pith or marrow, men might by turning their attention to the liberal sciences and to liberal arts, build upon them canonical and theological studies necessary to the salvation of mankind" (p. 9). It is clear also that he regretted the recent importation from Spain of certain logical treatises, "lately found and

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Frontmatter

[More information](#)

PREFACE.

xiii

“ translated, pretended to have been written by Aristotle “ (*tanquam Aristotelis intitulati*),”¹ and he thought they should be prohibited as tending to foster heresy. What more the preface contained, or how Giraldus illustrated these topics, we are left to guess, for unfortunately, with the exception of Anthony Wood, neither Leland, nor any other writer or copyist, seems to have thought it worth his while to preserve any extracts from the *Speculum Ecclesiae*.

These mischances have not tended to lighten the task of the editor. The shrivelled condition of the manuscript in some parts, its fragmentary state in others, the mistakes of the transcriber, and the uncertainty of the punctuation, make it often difficult to determine the precise meaning of the author. His style, too, is not seldom affected and fantastic ; and he luxuriates through interminable fields of quotations, often without any intimation when he is following his author or departing from him. He has besides a habit of losing himself occasionally in such a thicket of parentheses, that he cannot find his way out of them, and throws his reader into the same predicament. I shall trust, therefore, the more to the indulgence of my readers if under so many disadvantages I shall occasionally be found to have adopted a less satisfactory conjecture or punctuation than may be thought desirable.

As to the contents of the work, they can scarcely be considered by the most enthusiastic admirers of the author to correspond very correctly with the title. The *Speculum Ecclesie* is not an adequate representation of the state of the church in general, or of the Church of England in particular. To the condition of the church abroad, there is scarcely any allusion, although it was fast arriving at the dawn of a new and important epoch, when a candid retrospect of its past history and future

¹ P. 9.

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Frontmatter

[More information](#)

prospects, of its defeats and its conquests, would have been extremely valuable to all readers. The foreign travels of Giraldus, the countries he must have passed through, either in his enforced exile or his voluntary visits to the court of Rome, gave him excellent opportunities for the preparation of such a work had he felt inclined to enter upon it. But this never seems to have been his intention. As a view of the condition of the church at home the *Speculum Ecclesiae* is equally disappointing. Of the state of the parochial clergy and of their flocks, of the influence of their teaching on the morals, the manners, the education of the people, we learn next to nothing. These are subjects which do not engage the attention of Giraldus. He is exclusively occupied with the enormities of the monastic bodies, their ambition, their wealth, their profusion, their wide and flagrant departure from the strict observance of their rules. And yet even here, large and luxurious as was the theme, the author is narrow, partial, and unsatisfactory. Chivalry and monasticism divided England as well as Europe between them. A comprehensive estimate of either of these great factors of mediæval civilization might have worthily employed the pen of the historian. If he had been content to have held up to us the mirror of one only, we might have forgiven him for totally ignoring the other. But even of monasticism he is not either a faithful or comprehensive chronicler, nor yet an earnest satirist. His picture of it is derived from the most contracted view, and the most meagre materials. Of the great monastic bodies, then established in every county of England, and in almost every corner of it, by far the most numerous, influential, and important were the Benedictines; next to them were the Cluniacs, and, last of all, though at that time, perhaps the most active and unscrupulous, were the Cistercians. Yet of the first of these very little is said, if we except the remarks on the luxurious meals of the monks of St. Augustine's,

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Frontmatter

[More information](#)

PREFACE.

xv

Canterbury,¹ and the pride of the monks of St. Alban's.² The second are stigmatized, and that justly to all appearance, for the laxity of their discipline, occasioned by their practice of sending out single monks to single cells,³ and the remarks of Giraldus upon this practice and its consequences are deserving of attention. But the main shafts of his censure and his bitterest animadversions are reserved for their rivals, the Cistercians. He even admits that the Cluniack monks in England were more strict and orderly in their lives than their fellows in France and Italy, whilst in regard to the Cistercians, the reverse, he assures us, was the fact.⁴

This, the youngest branch of the Benedictine order, first settled in England at Waverley, in Surrey, in the year 1128, had increased so rapidly in favour as to excite the jealousy of other religious bodies; whilst their profession of greater austerity seemed to reflect on the laxity of those who, bound from the first by a less strict rule, had not even attempted to fulfil its easier requirements. The object of St. Benedict was not austerity. It was not exclusively devotion or religious meditation. *Orat qui laborat*⁵ was his favourite maxim, if not in words, yet in the whole spirit which animated his system. He was, in fact, as much concerned in regulating the labours of his monks in the garden, the kitchen, the field, and the vineyard, as their devotions at matins or compline. With the exception therefore of flesh meat—no great restriction in such a country as Italy—the daily food and drink allowed by him to his monks was abundant, and in harvest time or hot weather, or in cases of necessity, the superior was allowed, if he thought proper, to grant even further

¹ See p. 39.

² P. 92.

³ P. 36.

⁴ P. 45.

⁵ The words of his Rule are even more emphatic: "Tunc vere
" monachi sunt si labore manuum
" suarum vivunt."

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Frontmatter

[More information](#)

indulgence.¹ The clothes of the Benedictine were adapted to the season and the necessities of the climate. The misuse of an axe or a spade, a towel or a dish left dirty or in disorder in the kitchen, neglect to be ready for work when the signal for work sounded, or to leave work at the appointed minute,—these were the tasks which exercised the thoughts of St. Benedict as much as the religious instruction and edification of his flock, if not more. And with reason ; for manual labour, and still more, labour in the fields, was odious alike to the Roman and his Gothic conqueror. Entrusted to slaves of the lowest class, it was, in the eyes of both, servile and degrading. Honest toil, free labour, were unknown to the contemporaries of St. Benedict. It was something then when the senator and the patrician laid down the latidivide to assume the Benedictine dress,—in other words, the frock of the rustic labourer,—to take his turn in the field with the stuttering Goth or manumitted slave, or share in the round of menial drudgery from which none were exempt.² Early in the morning, after prime, the brethren assembled in the chapter house ; a few prayers were offered ; the implements of labour were produced, the tasks of each were assigned, and two and two they marched in silence to their respective employments. And as no service which courtesy required could degrade the knight, so it had thus come to pass that no toil, however offensive, could degrade the monk.³

But it was not mere labour, nor labour regulated by

¹ Every monk was allowed daily 18 ounces of the best bread, and almost a pint of wine. He had two meals a day, and two dishes, with apples or legumes, according to the season. The rule was still more relaxed in the case of old men and children, and flesh meat was allowed to the sick. There was

no restriction as to fish, or oil, or lard.

² Even if a priest joined a monastic body no exception was made in his favour. Seniority alone determined priority.

³ “No service loathsome to a gentle kind.” Faerie Queene, iv. 8. § 22.

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Frontmatter

[More information](#)

PREFACE.

xvii

rule, in the midst of the social and political disorders of the time, which attracted the attention of St. Benedict. He had to consider the materials out of which his congregation of monks was formed, to provide and rule accordingly. They were not ascetics, like the Fathers of the Desert, practising austerities far beyond the reach of ordinary men, nor devotees, nor scholars abstracted from the world by the love of learning. Slave and noble, Goth and Roman, mortal enemies outside the cloister, must, within it, live in peace and harmony together. The noble must be content to rise up and remain standing before the slave, if the latter had entered the monastery only one hour before him, for the rule insisted on respect to seniority and good manners. The Roman with his learning and his culture must take directions from the coarse and unlettered Goth.¹ Christian brotherhood alone levelled all distinctions of rank, of genius, of art, and of learning.

How he prospered it is needless for me to relate, or how much that prosperity was due to the exquisite adaptation of the Benedictine rule to the circumstances of his time and the condition of his age. But when the great purposes of St. Benedict were answered, when Christian cities were no longer, like the Rome of his days, the sink and draught-house of immorality and corruption,—when it was no longer needful to seek in deserts and inaccessible recesses that repose and leisure for pious exercises which were denied in capitals,—when monasteries were numerous, labour no longer despised,

¹ Giraldus makes an excellent remark. Speaking of the pecuniary embarrassments of many religious houses in his own days, he observes that careful men of business were better suited than scholars to rule monastic houses; and therefore, he says, “in the primitive times abbots and chief rulers were

“generally taken from laymen and illiterate monks, provided only they were sagacious, prudent, and provident men,” p. 237. He attributes many of the evils of monasteries to the adoption of a different practice in the choice of their rulers. Perhaps modern colleges might take a lesson from this remark.

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Frontmatter

[More information](#)

nor fields unreclaimed, when Teuton and Roman were fused into one society, then this older form of monasticism, as a religious life, lost its attraction; and its votaries seemed too little removed from the world around them to satisfy the cravings and aspirations of religious enthusiasm. From time to time new congregations of monks sprang up from the bosom of the old order, but inspired with sentiments very different from those of St. Benedict; not like him, wisely regarding the condition of men in general, and of human nature in its strength and its weakness, but attempting higher and less attainable aims. So from the Benedictines started the Cluniacks, and from the Cluniacks the Cistercians, each new progeny adding severity and rigour to its rules, and out-doing its parent in austerity.

The Cluniacks were never popular in England. The authority exercised over them by their original foundation in Burgundy caused them to be regarded here as aliens; and whenever war happened between England and France, the property of the Cluniacks was seized by the King, as if they had been foreigners, though in fact they were "free-born Englishmen."¹ It was otherwise with the Cistercians, and a glance at the dates of the foundation of their religious houses, within ten years after their arrival here, will show with what rapidity they started forth on their career of popularity. Giraldus admits this, and states the reasons for it. They studiously renounced all those indulgences in dress and diet which the older orders did not think incompatible with the strictness of their profession. St. Benedict was not precisely scrupulous in either of these particulars. The meals of his monks, as we have seen, though frugal were plentiful, bating the allowance of flesh meat, and that restriction might be withdrawn at the option of the

¹ See their petition, 5 Edw. III., | obtained letters patent of naturalization, for the first time, they | zation.

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Frontmatter

[More information](#)

PREFACE.

xix

prior. Their clothes were suited to the seasons, and it is expressly stated in the rules of their founder that the texture and colour of them were of little importance.¹ "Let vestments be given to the brethren" (says the rule)² "according to the nature of the places where they dwell and the state of the climate. In cold countries more clothing will be required, in hot countries less. Therefore these things must be left to the consideration of the abbot. In temperate climates, I am of opinion, that a long frock with a hood³ and a close-fitting vest (*tunica*) are sufficient; in winter, the former is to be warm and fleecy, in summer, pure or old, with a scapular (short frock) for working in. For their feet, they are to have shoes and woollen socks. For their clothes, they are not to trouble themselves about the colour or the texture, but wear such as they find in the province where they dwell, or cheaper, if cheaper can be had. The abbot must look to the measure of them that the vestments be not too scamped for those who are to wear them, but full size. Two outer and two inner vestments are enough for a monk, one for night (they slept in their clothes), and for washing (they were made of flannel). When they are on a journey they shall take breeches out of the vestiary, and return them duly washed when their journey is done. And generally their dress, when they travel, shall be somewhat better than what they use within the walls of the monastery."

The whole passage is noticeable as showing the feel-

¹ So much was this the case, that all sorts of colours seem to have been worn by the Anglo-Saxon disciples of St. Benedict of both sexes; and their partiality to jewelry, fine linen, and furs had to be restrained by various canons.

² § 55.

³ Cuculla, a dress originally intended to protect the head and shoulders, afterwards extended to the whole body. When the Roman peasant worked in the fields he threw this off, as Virgil advises: *Sere nudus*.

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Frontmatter

[More information](#)

ings by which St. Benedict was actuated. It was otherwise with the Cistercians. Labour and asceticism, both somewhat too obtrusively, were the objects of their rule. They avoided, as Giraldus tells us,¹ all coloured vestments, wearing only woollen, and declining the use of linen. *Femoralia*, enjoined upon the priesthood in the Book of Leviticus, for decency, the Cistercians forbore. As they retrenched all superfluity in dress, they also retrenched all superfluity in diet, never eating meat in public or private, or even in sickness, except on great emergencies. They never protect the body (he remarks) by furs or skins of any kind, nor wear warm clothing, nor drive away the cold by fire or fomentations. They are conspicuous for their charity and renowned for their hospitality. Their gate is never closed; but at morning, noon, and evening it stands open to all comers; and in their hospitality to strangers they excel all other religious orders. "Furthermore, seeking
" out the desert places of the wilderness and shunning
" the haunts and hum of crowds, earning their daily
" bread by manual labour, and, preferring uninhabited
" solitudes, they seem to bring back to one's eyes the
" primitive life and ancient discipline of the monastic
" religion, its poverty, its parsimony in food, the
" roughness and meanness of its dress, its abstinence
" and austerities."²

He adds that the Cistercians were repaid by the goodness of God for their resolution to live exclusively by the sweat of their face and the labour of their hands,

¹ P. 112.

² "Then began," says the chronicler of Meaux, "abbots and monks
" to get their daily food by the
" labours of their hands, eating
" their bread in the sweat of their
" face, and planting in their blood
" the vineyard of the Lord of Sa-
" baoth. The people of the pro-

" vince flocked to them from every
" quarter, some to assist and some
" only as spectators; for the stolid
" populace wondered to see a set of
" people in their cowls, at one time
" engaged in divine service, at
" another time occupied with rustic
" works," I. 83.

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Frontmatter

[More information](#)

PREFACE.

xxi

instead of trusting, as the other orders did, to annual rents derived from farms and manors, from churches and the cure of souls. The example thus set by them in an age of spiritual degeneracy was not without its influence and reward. Not individuals merely, but whole bodies of men hastened to join them; and besides the example mentioned by Giraldus¹ of an entire congregation of Cluniack monks going over bodily to the Cistercians, with their abbot, we have a similar instance here in England of the prior of St. Mary's Abbey, in York, with a train of monks, deserting their house, to follow the same example.²

Adorned with such distinguished virtues, continues Giraldus, their fame, like ointment poured out, filled the whole earth with its fragrance. Not only abbots and priors, of different orders, with their monks and their convents, but famous masters of the schools, with their pupils, abandoned their studies, bishops their cathedrals, and, weary of an active life, betook themselves in shoals to the life of contemplation, disdaining the weak eyes of Leah and delighted with the beauty of Rachel, so flocking to this order as to a place of repose and the port of salvation. Of a truth, he says, far beyond all others the order of the Cistercians was the order of all orders; and as their habit, outwardly, was in colour the reverse of black—as used by the Cluniacks, for whom the Cistercians seem to have entertained a special aversion—so inwardly, were they conspicuous for their snowy piety and innocence.

This reputation for sanctity and innocence they did not long retain either in the estimation of our author, nor, it must be confessed, did they deserve to retain it. Coming last in the field when the zeal of many had lost its fervour,

¹ P. 114.

² This is the history of the foundation of the celebrated Cistercian abbey of Fountains, Yorkshire.

See the Memorials of the Abbey, p. 10, in the publications of the Surtees Society.

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Frontmatter

[More information](#)

and, what was more, when land, reclaimed by the skill and labour of the Benedictines, was far more valuable than in the sixth and seventh centuries, the world admired the holiness and austerities of the new order, but was not eager to enrich them. Even when the piety of founders and benefactors was exercised in their favour, a glance at any of their religious foundations will show how far inferior they were in worldly advantages and possessions to the great Benedictine monasteries of Malmesbury, Glastonbury, St. Augustine's, or St. Alban's. The rich and fertile plains of England were already occupied, and there remained only for the Cisterians, at least in the infancy of their order, the rocky highlands of Yorkshire, more conspicuous for their beauty than their fertility, or the gleanings of grapes in the dismal flats and unreclaimed swamps of Lincolnshire. Their poverty and their frugality, it is true, preserved them from those grosser vices into which monks of the richer orders were apt to fall, but it exposed them to the more hateful temptations of pride and avarice. None were more greedy in adding farm to farm, none less scrupulous in obtaining grants of land from wealthy patrons; and, what was far worse, in appropriating the tithes and endowments of parish churches and pulling down the sacred edifice to suit their own interests.¹ Giraldus offers some sort of apology for their misdeeds in this respect, which, true in some degree, cannot be accepted as a complete justification of their conduct. "A good intention, I suppose, is the occasion
 " of this greed of theirs, which is denounced throughout
 " the world; it arises from the hospitality, which the
 " members of this order, although in themselves the most
 " abstemious of all others, indefatigably exercise, in their
 " unbounded charity to the poor and to strangers. And
 " because they have no revenues, like others, but live en-

¹ See pp. 135, 136, 177. A similar instance mentioned in the Memorials of Fountains Abbey, p. 90, note.