



The Description of Wales
Cambrensis, Giraldus
(Translator: Sir Richard Colt Hoare)

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About Cambrensis:

Gerald the Welshman (Giraldus Cambrensis) was a mediaeval ecclesiast. Of noble birth, with mixed Saxon-Welsh-Norman ancestry, he described himself as "a Welshman", and was employed by the Archbishop of Canterbury on various ecclesiastical missions in Wales. Appointed archdeacon of Brecon at the age of only 28 (and frustrated in his desire to become Bishop of St David's), he then spent two years on a royal commission to Ireland, which gave him material for two books about the land and its people. In 1188, a year after his return, he accompanied Baldwin, Archbishop of Canterbury, through Wales to preach the Third Crusade, a journey which provided him with material for a much more affectionate book about the land of his birth and those he considered his countrymen. Naively vainglorious and boastful, Gerald displayed intense interest in many intellectual subjects (he has been called the Father of Comparative Linguistics), and is considered the most "modern" (as well as the most voluminous) of all mediaeval writers.

Also available on Feedbooks for Cambrensis:

- *The Itinerary of Archbishop Baldwin through Wales* (1191)

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INTRODUCTION

THIS e-text is a companion to *The Itinerary of Archbishop Baldwin through Wales*, by the same author, Gerald the Welshman - or, as he signed himself in Latin, Giraldus Cambrensis. The two works were published in a single volume by J.M. Dent in 1912, under the title, *Itinerary through Wales; and the Description of Wales*, edited by W. Llewellyn Williams, MA (1868-1922)¹. Williams was a native of Llansadwrn, educated at Llandovery and Brasenose College, Oxford. He was called to the bar but divided his interests between law and journalism. He was an active member of the *Gorsedd Beirdd Ynys Prydain*, the Welsh national bardic community.

Williams provided an extensive Introduction to his volume, in which he summarised Gerald's career and his influence on our understanding of his times. Williams' Introduction concludes:

"Probably the most valuable of all [Gerald's] works, from the strictly historical point of view, are the 'Itinerary' and 'Description of Wales,' which are reprinted in the present volume. Here he is impartial in his evidence, and judicial in his decisions. If he errs at all, it is not through racial prejudice. 'I am sprung,' he once told the Pope in a letter, 'from the princes of Wales and from the barons of the Marches, and when I see injustice in either race, I hate it.'

"The text is that of Sir Richard Colt Hoare, who published an English translation, chiefly from the texts of Camden and Wharton, in 1806². The valuable historical notes have been curtailed, as being too elaborate for such a volume as this, and a few notes have been added by the present editor. These will be found within brackets. Hoare's translation, and also translations (edited by Mr. Foster) of the Irish books have been published in Bohn's Antiquarian Library.

"The first of the seven volumes of the Latin text of Gerald, published in the Rolls Series, appeared in 1861. The first four volumes were edited by Professor Brewer; the next two by Mr. Dimmock; and the seventh by Professor Freeman.

1. [[This etext edition was prepared from the 1935 *Everyman* printing.]]

2. [[Sir Richard Colt Hoare (1758 – 1838), having received an ample allowance from his grandfather, was able to pursue his interests in archaeology both in Britain and in Europe. His translations of Giraldus Cambrensis followed his own first journey through Wales (1793), using Gerald's work as a guide. In 1798 and again in 1810, Hoare was first to perform archaeological excavations at Stonehenge. His most important work was his self-illustrated *Ancient History of North and South Wiltshire* (1812-1819).]]

"W. LLEWELYN WILLIAMS. January 1908."

The *Itinerary* was the earlier of the two works (1191); the *Description* appeared three years later.

Footnotes encased in [[double brackets]] have been inserted by the present editor (2009).

FIRST PREFACE—TO STEPHEN LANGTON, ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY

I, WHO, at the expense of three years' labour, arranged, a short time ago, in three parts, the Topography of Ireland, with a description of its natural curiosities, and who afterwards, by two years' study, completed in two parts the Vaticinal History of its Conquest; and who, by publishing the Itinerary of the Holy Man (Baldwin) through Cambria, prevented his laborious mission from perishing in obscurity, do now propose, in the present little work, to give some account of this my native country, and to describe the genius of its inhabitants, so entirely distinct from that of other nations. And this production of my industry I have determined to dedicate to you, illustrious Stephen³, archbishop of Canterbury, as I before ascribed to you my Itinerary; considering you as a man no less distinguished by your piety, than conspicuous for your learning; though so humble an offering may possibly be unworthy the acceptance of a personage who, from his eminence, deserves to be presented with works of the greatest merit.

Some, indeed, object to this my undertaking, and, apparently from motives of affection, compare me to a painter, who, rich in colours, and like another Zeuxis, eminent in his art⁴, is endeavouring with all his skill and industry to give celebrity to a cottage, or to some other contemptible object, whilst the world is anxiously expecting from his hand a temple or a palace. Thus they wonder that I, amidst the many great and striking subjects which the world presents, should choose to describe and to adorn, with all the graces of composition, such remote corners of the earth as Ireland and Wales.

Others again, reproaching me with greater severity, say, that the gifts which have been bestowed upon me from above, ought not to be wasted upon these insignificant objects, nor lavished in a vain display of learning on the commendation of princes, who, from their ignorance and want of liberality, have neither taste to appreciate, nor hearts to remunerate literary excellence. And they further add, that every faculty which emanates from the Deity, ought rather to be applied to the illustration of celestial objects, and to the exultation of his glory, from whose abundance all our talents have been received; every faculty (say they) ought to be employed in praising him from whom, as from a perennial source,

3.[[Stephen Cardinal Langton (c. 1150 - 9 July 1228) was Archbishop of Canterbury between 1207 and his death in 1228.]]

4.[[Zeuxis of Heraclea was a painter who flourished during the 5th century BC.]]

every perfect gift is derived, and from whose bounty everything which is offered with sincerity obtains an ample reward. But since excellent histories of other countries have been composed and published by writers of eminence, I have been induced, by the love I bear to my country⁵ and to posterity, to believe that I should perform neither an useless nor an unacceptable service, were I to unfold the hidden merits of my native land; to rescue from obscurity those glorious actions which have been hitherto imperfectly described, and to bring into repute, by my method of treating it, a subject till now regarded as contemptible.

What indeed could my feeble and unexercised efforts add to the histories of the destruction of Troy, Thebes, or Athens, or to the conquest of the shores of Latium? Besides, to do what has been already done, is, in fact, to be doing nothing; I have, therefore, thought it more eligible to apply my industry to the arrangement of the history of my native country, hitherto almost wholly overlooked by strangers; but interesting to my relations and countrymen; and from these small beginnings to aspire by degrees to works of a nobler cast. From these inconsiderable attempts, some idea may be formed with what success, should Fortune afford an opportunity, I am likely to treat matters of greater importance. For although some things should be made our principal objects, whilst others ought not to be wholly neglected, I may surely be allowed to exercise the powers of my youth, as yet untaught and unexperienced, in pursuits of this latter nature, lest by habit I should feel a pleasure in indolence and in sloth, the parent of vice.

I have therefore employed these studies as a kind of introduction to the glorious treasures of that most excellent of the sciences, which alone deserves the name of science; which alone can render us wise to rule and to instruct mankind; which alone the other sciences follow, as attendants do their queen. Laying therefore in my youth the foundations of so noble a structure, it is my intention, if God will assist me and prolong my life, to reserve my maturer years for composing a treatise upon so perfect, so sacred a subject: for according to the poet⁶,

"Ardua quippe fides robustos exigit annos;"

"The important concerns of faith require a mind in its full vigour;"

5.[[Gerald was born around 1146 at Manorbier Castle in Pembrokeshire, of a Norman father and Anglo-Welsh mother.]]

6.[[Lucan (M. Annaeus Lucanus), *Belli Civilis*, Book 8.]]

I may be permitted to indulge myself for a short time in other pursuits; but in this I should wish not only to continue, but to die.

But before I enter on this important subject, I demand a short interval, to enable me to lay before the public my Treatise on the Instruction of a Prince, which has been so frequently promised, as well as the Description of Wales, which is now before me, and the Topography of Britain.

Of all the British writers, Gildas⁷ alone appears to me (as often as the course of my subject leads me to consult him) worthy of imitation; for by committing to paper the things which he himself saw and knew, and by declaring rather than describing the desolation of his country, he has compiled a history more remarkable for its truth than for its elegance.

Giraldus therefore follows Gildas, whom he wishes he could copy in his life and manners; becoming an imitator of his wisdom rather than of his eloquence - of his mind rather than of his writings - of his zeal rather than of his style - of his life rather than of his language.

7.[[Saint Gildas (c. 516 - 570), a 6th century British cleric, born in the district of Strathclyde, is remembered for his sole surviving work, a sermon in three parts, entitled *De Excidio et Conquestu Britanniae*, or *On the Ruin and Conquest of Britain*.]]

SECOND PREFACE—TO THE SAME

WHEN, amidst various literary pursuits, I first applied my mind to the compilation of history, I determined, lest I should appear ungrateful to my native land, to describe, to the best of my abilities, my own country and its adjoining regions; and afterwards, under God's guidance, to proceed to a description of more distant territories. But since some leading men (whom we have both seen and known) show so great a contempt for literature, that they immediately shut up within their book-cases the excellent works with which they are presented, and thus doom them, as it were, to a perpetual imprisonment; I entreat you, illustrious Prelate, to prevent the present little work, which will shortly be delivered to you, from perishing in obscurity. And because this, as well as my former productions, though of no transcendent merit, may hereafter prove to many a source of entertainment and instruction, I entreat you generously to order it to be made public, by which it will acquire reputation. And I shall consider myself sufficiently rewarded for my trouble, if, withdrawing for a while from your religious and secular occupations, you would kindly condescend to peruse this book, or, at least, give it an attentive hearing; for in times like these, when no one remunerates literary productions, I neither desire nor expect any other recompense. Not that it would appear in any way inconsistent, however there exists among men of rank a kind of conspiracy against authors, if a prelate so eminently conspicuous for his virtues, for his abilities, both natural and acquired, for irreproachable morals, and for munificence, should distinguish himself likewise by becoming the generous and sole patron of literature. To comprise your merits in a few words, the lines of Martial addressed to Trajan, whilst serving under Dioclesian, may be deservedly applied to you:

“Laudari debes quoniam sub principe duro,
Temporibusque malis, ausus es esse bonus.”⁸

8. [[Gerald seems to have this quotation either from a speech of Thomas à Becket, now preserved in the library of Canterbury Cathedral, or (more probably) from the same source as Becket (Maaz, *Lateinische Epigrammatik im Hohen Mittelalter*). In the received form, Martials' *Epigrams*, Book 12, 3(4), lines 11-12, reads, “nunc licet et fas est. sed tu sub principe duro” (etc.). In the form cited by Gerald and Becket, the text translates as, “Praiseworthy art thou, seeing that under a harsh prince, / And in evil times, thou didst dare to be generous.” The same text is found in a thirteenth-century sermon fragment from England.]]

And those also of Virgil to Mæcenas, which extol the humanity of that great man:

“Omnia cum posses tanto tam carus amico,
Te sensit nemo posse nocere tamen.”⁹

Many indeed remonstrate against my proceedings, and those particularly who call themselves my friends insist that, in consequence of my violent attachment to study, I pay no attention to the concerns of the world, or to the interests of my family; and that, on this account, I shall experience a delay in my promotion to worldly dignities; that the influence of authors, both poets and historians, has long since ceased; that the respect paid to literature vanished with literary princes; and that in these degenerate days very different paths lead to honours and opulence. I allow all this, I readily allow it, and acquiesce in the truth. For the unprincipled and covetous attach themselves to the court, the churchmen to their books, and the ambitious to the public offices, but as every man is under the influence of some darling passion, so the love of letters and the study of eloquence have from my infancy had for me peculiar charms of attraction. Impelled by this thirst for knowledge, I have carried my researches into the mysterious works of nature farther than the generality of my contemporaries, and for the benefit of posterity have rescued from oblivion the remarkable events of my own times. But this object was not to be secured without an indefatigable, though at the same time an agreeable, exertion; for an accurate investigation of every particular is attended with much difficulty. It is difficult to produce an orderly account of the investigation and discovery of truth; it is difficult to preserve from the beginning to the end a connected relation unbroken by irrelevant matter; and it is difficult to render the narration no less elegant in the diction, than instructive in its matter, for in prosecuting the series of events, the choice of happy expressions is equally perplexing, as the search after them painful. Whatever is written requires the most intense thought, and every expression should be carefully polished before it be submitted to the public eye; for, by exposing itself to the examination of the present and of future ages, it must necessarily undergo the criticism not only of the acute, but also of the dissatisfied, reader. Words merely

9. [[*Elegiae in Mæcenatem*, I, lines 15-16: “In any company thou canst be a friend so greatly esteemed; / No-one ever thought thou couldst do harm.” The *Elegiae* is part of the *Appendix Vergiliana*, attributed to Vergil’s youth, but now generally thought to be spurious.]]

uttered are soon forgotten, and the admiration or disgust which they occasioned is no more; but writings once published are never lost, and remain as lasting memorials either of the glory or of the disgrace of the author. Hence the observation of Seneca, that the malicious attention of the envious reader dwells with no less satisfaction on a faulty than on an elegant expression, and is as anxious to discover what it may ridicule, as what it may commend; as the poet also observes:

"Discit enim citius meminitque libentius illud
Quod quis deridet, quam quod probat et veneratur."¹⁰

Among the pursuits, therefore, most worthy of commendation, this holds by no means the lowest rank; for history, as the moral philosopher declares, "is the record of antiquity, the testimony of ages, the light of truth, the soul of memory, the mistress of conduct, and the herald of ancient times."

This study is the more delightful, as it is more honourable to produce works worthy of being quoted than to quote the works of others; as it is more desirable to be the author of compositions which deserve to be admired than to be esteemed a good judge of the writings of other men; as it is more meritorious to be the just object of other men's commendations than to be considered an adept in pointing out the merits of others. On these pleasing reflections I feed and regale myself; for I would rather resemble Jerome than Croesus, and I prefer to riches themselves the man who is capable of despising them¹¹. With these gratifying ideas I rest

10. [[Horace, *Ars Poetica*, lines 262 – 263: "Most of us learn more readily, and retain more perfectly, tales of scandal, than such as merit our approbation." Paraphrased by the earl of Cork, in these beautiful lines: "There is a lust in man no power can tame ; / Of loudly publishing his neighbour's shame ; / On eagle's wings immortal scandals fly ; / Whilst virtuous actions are but born and die." (Moore, *Dictionary of Quotations*).]]

11. [[Saint Jerome, or Hieronymus (c. 347 – September 30, A.D. 420) is best known for his translation of the Bible from the original Greek and Hebrew into the "vulgar tongue" of his time (Latin). The Vulgate is still an important text in the Roman Catholic church, and (incorporating earlier Latin translations) of great interest in the history of the biblical text. Jerome took up an ascetic life in the Syrian desert, and mediæval paintings depict him with no furniture to his cell other than a cross, a skull, and a bible. In contrast, Croesus, king of Lydia in Asia Minor from about 560 B.C., was legendary for his vast wealth ("rich as Croesus"), which derived from his gold mines and from the gold-bearing sands of the River Pactolus. Croesus' wealth was his downfall, for it attracted the covetousness of Cyrus the Great of Persia, who overthrew Lydia about 546 B.C. (the date is uncertain) and had Croesus put to death.]]

contented and delighted, valuing moderation more than intemperance, and an honourable sufficiency more than superfluity; for intemperance and superfluity produce their own destruction, but their opposite virtues never perish; the former vanish, but the latter, like eternity, remain for ever; in short, I prefer praise to lucre, and reputation to riches.

Part 1
BOOK I

Chapter 1

Of the length and breadth of Wales, the nature of its soil, and the three remaining tribes of Britons

CAMBRIA, which, by a corrupt and common term, though less proper, is in modern times called Wales, is about two hundred miles long and one hundred broad. The length from Port Gordber¹² in Anglesey to Port Eskewin¹³ in Monmouthshire is eight days' journey in extent; the breadth from Porth Mawr¹⁴, or the great Port of St. David's, to Ryd-helic¹⁵, which in Latin means *Vadum salicis*, or the Ford of the Willow, and in English is called Willow-forde¹⁶, is four days' journey. It is a country very strongly defended by high mountains, deep valleys, extensive woods, rivers, and marshes; insomuch that from the time the Saxons took possession of the

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12. Port Gordber, written Gordwr by Humphrey Lhwyd in his Breviary of Britain, probably a corruption from Gorddyar, a roaring, applied to the sea, as Gorddyar môr, the roaring of the sea. [["In the Triads, the extreme port from Portskewitt is given as *Porth Wygyr*, or Bed Wharf Bay ; and possibly Gorddwr, literally ' the upper water,' was another name for that port. Hoare's idea, that the name was derived from Gorddyar, the roaring of the sea, is not a very just one."-Stephens.]]
 13. This harbour, now known by the name of Portscwit (and recorded in the Triads as one of the three passages or ferries in the Isle of Britain), is situated on the Welsh side of the Bristol channel, at a short distance from the lower passage. [[The distance by modern roads would be about 180 miles or 290 km.]]
 14. Port Mawr, or the large port, is thus mentioned by Leland in his Itinerary, torn. v. pp. 28, 29:—"About a mile of is Port Mawre, where is a great sande with a shorte estuary into the lande. And sum say that there hath beene a castel at or aboute Port Mawr, but the tokens be not very evidente."
 15. Rhyd-helyg, or the Ford of the Willow. I imagine this place is Walford in Herefordshire, near the banks of the river Wye. [[The distance by modern roads is about 130 miles, or 210 km.]]
 16. [[The etymology of *Walford* is disputed. No-one seems to doubt the "ford" element, but the "Wal-" prefix has been variously interpreted as representing either Old English *wælla*, "a spring", or West Saxon *weall*, "a wall" ("the ford near a Roman fortification": Black). A linguistic connection between "Willowford" and "Walford" seems unlikely.]]

island the remnants of the Britons, retiring into these regions, could never be entirely subdued either by the English or by the Normans. Those who inhabited the southern angle of the island, which took its name from the chieftain Corinaeus¹⁷, made less resistance, as their country was more defenceless. The third division of the Britons, who obtained a part of Britany in Gaul, were transported thither, not after the defeat of their nation, but long before, by king Maximus, and, in consequence of the hard and continued warfare which they underwent with him, were rewarded by the royal munificence with those districts in France¹⁸.

17. Brutus, according to the fable, in his way to Britain, met with a company of Trojans, who had fled from Troy with Antenor and Corinaeus at their head, who submitted themselves to Brutus, and joined his company; which Corinaeus, being a very valiant man, rendered great service to Brutus during his wars in Gaul and Britain; in return for which, Brutus, having subdued the island, and divided it amongst his people, gave Cornwall to Corinaeus, who, as it is said, called it after his own name, Cernyw. [[Modern etymology derives Cornwall from the Brythonic tribal name Cornovii (the "horn" or "Peninsula" people, and the Old English *walh*, "foreigner" (whence also "Wales").]]

18. [[Magnus Maximus, (ca. 335-August 28, 388), was a Spanish-born Roman general who served in Britain under the Comes Britanniarum, Theodosius the Elder. Assigned as Comes himself in 380, Maximus was proclaimed emperor by his troops in 383, and took many of his British troops to Gaul to pursue his imperial ambitions against the degenerate Gratian, who was shortly assassinated. Maximus forced the young Valentinian II to flee Rome for shelter with the eastern emperor, Theodosius I, but the two then invaded from the east, and Maximus was eventually captured and executed. The tradition that he stationed a large number of British troops in Armorica, from whom the peninsula subsequently took the name, "Little Britain" ("Brittany"), stems from Nennius' *Historia Brittonum* (c. 835). Nennius, and other authors of the period, also mention a second wave of British settlers in the fourth century, fleeing the invading Germanic tribes from the east and Irish from the west. Maximus lives on in Welsh tradition and song as *Macsen Wledig*, "Lord Maximus".]]

Chapter 2

Of the ancient division of Wales into three parts

WALES was in ancient times divided into three parts nearly equal, consideration having been paid, in this division, more to the value than to the just quantity or proportion of territory. They were Venedotia¹⁹, now called North Wales; Demetia, or South Wales, which in British is called Deheubarth²⁰, that is, the southern part; and Powys²¹, the middle or eastern district. Roderic the Great, or Rhodri Mawr²², who was king over all Wales, was the cause of this division. He had three sons, Mervin, Anarawt, and Cadell, amongst whom he partitioned the whole principality. North Wales fell to the lot of Mervin; Powys to Anarawt; and Cadell received the portion of South Wales, together with the general good wishes of his brothers and the people; for although this district greatly exceeded the others in quantity, it was the least desirable from the number of noble chiefs, or Uchelwyr²³, men of a superior rank, who inhabited it, and were often rebellious to their lords, and impatient of control. But Cadell, on the death of his brothers, obtained the entire dominion of Wales²⁴, as did his successors till the time of Tewdwr²⁵, whose descendants, Rhys, son of Tewdwr, Gruffydd, son of Rhys, and Rhys, son of Gruffydd, the ruling prince in our time, enjoyed only (like the father) the sovereignty over South Wales.

19. [["Land of the *Venedoti* tribe", whence modern Gwynedd.]]

20. [[Deheubarth, "Southern part", was the kingdom founded by Hywel Dda about 920 from the territories of Seisyllwg and Dyfed. The latter name derives directly from Demetia, "land of the Demetae tribe".]]

21. [[Powys, "land of the country folk," from Latin *pagensis*.]]

22. [[c. 820 - 878.]]

23. *Uchelwyr*, so called from *Uchel*, high, and *gwr*, a man [[plural *gwyr*]].

24. This assertion is unfounded, if we give credit to the Welsh Chronicle, which dates the death of Cadell in 907, and that of Anarawdin in 913. [Howell Dda, the son of Cadell, reunited Wales under one sovereign.]

25. [["Tewdwr Mawr", Tudor the Great (c 997 - c. 1089), grandson of Hywel Dda and King of Deheubarth.]]

Chapter 3

Genealogy of the Princes of Wales

THE following is the generation of princes of South Wales: Rhys, son of Gruffydd; Gruffydd, son of Rhys; Rhys, son of Tewdwr; Tewdwr, son of Eineon; Eineon, son of Owen; Owen, son of Howel Dda, or Howel the Good; Howel, son of Cadell, son of Roderic the Great²⁶. Thus the princes of South Wales derived their origin from Cadell, son of Roderic the Great. The princes of North Wales descended from Mervin in this manner: Llewelyn, son of Iorwerth; Iorwerth, son of Owen; Owen, son of Gruffydd; Gruffydd, son of Conan; Conan, son of Iago; Iago, son of Edoual; Edoual, son of Meyric; Meyric, son of Anarawt (Anandhrec); Anarawt, son of Mervin, son of Roderic the Great. Anarawt leaving no issue, the princes of Powys have their own particular descent.

It is worthy of remark, that the Welsh bards and singers, or reciters, have the genealogies of the aforesaid princes, written in the Welsh language, in their ancient and authentic books; and also retain them in their memory from Roderic the Great [[back]] to B.M.²⁷; and from thence to Sylvius, Ascanius, and Æneas; and from the latter produce the genealogical series in a lineal descent, even to Adam.

But as an account of such long and remote genealogies may appear to many persons trifling rather than historical, we have purposely omitted them in our compendium.

26. [[Rhodri Mawr.]]

27. B.M. This abbreviation, which in every manuscript I have seen of Giraldus has been construed into *Beatam Mariam*, and in many of them is written *Beatam Virginem*, may with much greater propriety be applied to Belinus Magnus, or Beli the Great, a distinguished British king, to whom most of the British pedigrees ascended; and because his name occurred so frequently in them it was often written short, B.M., which some men, by mistake, interpreted *Beata Maria*. [Sir R. C. H.] [[Beli Mawr, or Belenos, appears to have been a Celtic solar deity, in whose honour Beltane ("Bel's fires") was celebrated. He may have been the original of the Arthurian King Pellinore.]]

Chapter 4

How many cantreds, royal palaces, and cathedrals there are in Wales

SOUTH WALES contains twenty-nine cantreds; North Wales, twelve; Powys, six: many of which are at this time in the possession of the English and Franks. For the country now called Shropshire formerly belonged to Powys, and the place where the castle of Shrewsbury stands bore the name of Pengwern, or the head of the Alder Grove. There were three royal seats in South Wales: Dinevor, in South Wales, removed from Caerleon; Aberfraw²⁸, in North Wales; and Pengwern, in Powys.

Wales contains in all fifty-four cantreds. The word *Cantref* is derived from *Cant*, a hundred, and *Tref*, a village; and means in the British and Irish languages such a portion of land as contains a hundred vills²⁹.

There are four cathedral churches in Wales: St. David's, upon the Irish sea, David the archbishop being its patron: it was in ancient times the metropolitan church, and the district only contained twenty-four cantreds, though at this time only twenty-three; for Ergengl, in English called Urchenfeld³⁰, is said to have been formerly within the diocese of St. David's, and sometimes was placed within that of Landaff. The see of St. David's had twenty-five successive archbishops; and from the time of the removal of the pall into France, to this day, twenty-two bishops; whose names and series, as well as the cause of the removal of the archiepiscopal pall, may be seen in our Itinerary³¹.

28. Aberfraw, a small town at the conflux of the river Fraw and the sea, on the S.W. part of the isle of Anglesey, and twelve miles S.E. of Holyhead.

29. [[**Vill:** In medieval England, the smallest administrative unit under the feudal system, a subdivision of a hundred roughly corresponding to the Anglo-Saxon tithing and the modern parish; a feudal township.—*New Shorter Oxford English Dictionary*.]]

30. A great lordship in Herefordshire, including the district between Hereford and Monmouth, bordering on the river Wye.

31. [[*The Itinerary of Archbishop Baldwin through Wales*,]] Book ii, chapter i.

In South Wales also is situated the bishopric of Landaff, near the Severn sea, and near the noble castle of Caerdyf; bishop Teilo being its patron. It contains five cantreds, and the fourth part of another, namely, Senghennyd.

In North Wales, between Anglesey and the Eryri mountains, is the see of Bangor, under the patronage of Daniel, the abbot; it contains about nine cantreds.

In North Wales also is the poor little cathedral of Llan-Elwy, or St. Asaph, containing about six cantreds, to which Powys is subject.

Chapter 5

Of the two mountains from which the noble rivers which divide Wales spring

WALES is divided and distinguished by noble rivers, which derive their source from two ranges of mountains, the Ellennith³², in South Wales, which the English call Moruge, as being the heads of moors, or bogs³³; and Eryri³⁴, in North Wales, which they call Snowdon, or mountains of snow; the latter of which are said to be of so great an extent, that if all the herds in Wales were collected together, they would supply them with pasture for a considerable time. Upon them are two lakes, one of which has a floating island; and the other contains fish having only one eye, as we have related in our Itinerary.

We must also here remark, that at two places in Scotland, one on the eastern, and the other on the western ocean, the sea-fish called mulvelli (mulletts) have only the right eye.

The noble river Severn takes its rise from the Ellennith mountains, and flowing by the castles of Shrewsbury and Bridgenorth, through the city of Worcester, and that of Gloucester, celebrated for its iron manufactories, falls into the sea a few miles from the latter place, and gives its name to the Severn Sea. This river was for many years the boundary between Cambria and Loegria³⁵, or Wales and England; it was called in British

32. [[Elenydd, a vast central Welsh upland forming the largest and most remote area in the Cambrian Mountains. It provides the headwaters of the river Elan, from which it probably takes its name (*-ydd, "district of"). "Elan" may be related to *elain*, "fawn" (plural *elanedd*), from British **elant*.]]

33. [["Moruge" is not otherwise recorded, but speculation relates it to French *marais*, "marsh", referring to the marshlands atop Elenydd.]]

34. [[Eryri: Probably from *eryr*, "eagle"; but *eryr*, *eryri*, also means "bank, rise, ridge; region, border".]]

35. [[Modern Welsh Lloegr, England; of unknown origin. In Arthurian romance, "Logres" is that part of (southern and central) England which was the king's principle realm. In Geoffrey of Monmouth, "Loegria" refers to most of England except for Cornwall.]]

Hafren, from the daughter of Loocrinus³⁶, who was drowned in it by her step-mother; the aspirate being changed, according to the Latin idiom, into S, as is usual in words derived from the Greek, it was termed Sarina³⁷, as hal becomes *sal*; hemi, *semi*; hepta, *septem*³⁸.

The river Wye³⁹ rises in the same mountains of Ellennith, and flows by the castles of Hay and Clifford, through the city of Hereford, by the castles of Wilton and Goodrich, through the forest of Dean, abounding with iron and deer, and proceeds to Strigul castle, below which it empties itself into the sea, and forms in modern times the boundary between England and Wales. The Usk⁴⁰ does not derive its origin from these mountains, but from those of Cantref Bachan; it flows by the castle of Brecheinoc⁴¹, or Aberhodni, that is, the fall of the river Hodni⁴² into the Usk (for Aber, in the British language, signifies every place where two rivers unite their streams⁴³); by the castles of Abergeveni and Usk, through the ancient city of Legions, and discharges itself into the Severn Sea, not far from Newport.

The river Remni⁴⁴ flows towards the sea from the mountains of Brecheinoc, having passed the castle and bridge of Remni. From the

36. [[In Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia*, the oldest son of Brutus of Troy, after whom Loegria was named.]]

37. [[Actually (Latin) *Sabrina*, a supposedly pre-Celtic river name of unknown meaning.]]

38. [[The relationships are sound, but Gerald's etymology is inverted; the initial *s-* is original (Indo-European **sal-*, **semi-*, **septm*); the *h-* is an independent development in Greek and Welsh. Replacement of *s-* with *h-* has occurred in the histories of several language families worldwide.]]

39. [["Wye", Welsh *Gwy*: The traditional derivation is from the supposed Welsh word *gwy*, *wy*, meaning "water, liquid", and formerly held to be an element of many British place-names. It was used in *forming* (and in "correcting") place-names in the nineteenth century (temporarily converting the Aman, for instance, into the "Amanwy"). But the "word" *gwy* is not attested before the early 18th century, and etymological dictionaries describe it as "an invented word, not in general use". Mills (1991) says that "Wye" is "an ancient pre-English river name of unknown origin and meaning".]]

40. [["Usk", Welsh *Afon Wysg*; possibly "fish-filled"; but probably simply "water" (Welsh *wysg*, Brythonic **i: sca:*), like many Celtic river names in the British Isles (Ash, Axe, Ease, Es, Esk, Exe, Ock, Ose, Ouse, Ux).]]

41. [[Brechinia, Brechin; Brecknock, Brecon. Brychan, after whom the place is named, was a 5th-Century prince.]]

42. [["Aberhodni" is *Aberhonddu*, the river name meaning "pleasant" (*hawdd*).]]

43. [[And also "river-mouth".]]

44. [[The Rhymney, Welsh *Afon Rhymni*. The name is an adjective formed from *rhwymp*, "auger", from the river's boring action.]]

same range of mountains springs the Tâf⁴⁵, which pursues its course to the episcopal see of Landaf (to which it gives its name), and falls into the sea below the castle of Caerdyf. The river Avon⁴⁶ rushes impetuously from the mountains of Glamorgan, between the celebrated Cistercian monasteries of Margan and Neth; and the river Neth⁴⁷, descending from the mountains of Brecheinoc, unites itself with the sea, at no great distance from the castle of Neth; each of these rivers forming a long tract of dangerous quicksands. From the same mountains of Brecheinoc the river Tawe⁴⁸ flows down to Abertawe, called in English Swainsey⁴⁹. The Loughor⁵⁰ joins the sea near the castle of the same name; and the Wendraeth has its confluence⁵¹ near Cydweli⁵². The Tywy⁵³, another noble river, rises in the Ellennith mountains, and separating the Cantref Mawr from the Cantref Bachan, passes by the castle of Llanymddyfri, and the royal

45.[[Afon Tâf, the River Tâf(f). The name may be pre-Celtic, and is traditionally (by philologists) believed to mean "dark", but see below on the Teifi for more recent ideas. There are other Tâfs or Tav(e)ys elsewhere in Wales and England.]]

46.[["Avon" (Welsh *afon*, Irish *ab(ha)*) is a widespread Celtic word for "river". In this case, however, the river is the *Afon Afan*, "River Avan" rather than "River Avon". The Welsh word means "rapberries", but the river name is believed to come from some personal name.]]

47.[[Neath, Welsh *Nedd* (perhaps "the shining one"). The Yorkshire Nidd may be related, but not the Scottish Nith (British **Noudo-*, "new river").]]

48.[[Another river name in the "Tâf", "Tywy", "Teifi" set.]]

49.[[Swansea. The modern name is descended from Old Norse "Sweinn's Ey" ("Sven's Eyot" or island), reinterpreted as though "Swan Sea". Who Sweinn or Sveinn was is unknown, but the island may have been that recorded in 1432 as "Iselonde", lying in the Tawe estuary. This island was apparently removed during the construction of the docks in the nineteenth century.]]

50.[[The River Loughor (*Afon Llŵchwr*) flows from an underground lake at Y Mynydd Ddu, the Black Mountain. This is proposed as one basis for the origin of the name (*llŵch*, "lake"), but another proposal is (in modern Welsh) *llychwr*, "(day)light, brightness; ardour".]]

51.[[The *Afon Gwendraeth* has two near-equal branches that meet at their joint estuary at Carmarthen Bay. The larger is called "Gwendraeth Fach" or "Fychan" ("Little Gwendraeth"), while the smaller is "Gwendraeth Fawr" ("Big Gwendraeth"). The Gwendraeth estuary joins with the estuaries of the Rivers Tywi and Tâf to flow together into the bay. To the south of the estuary are the great flat sands of Cefn Sidan and Pembrey, from which the twin rivers get their name, "white beach" (*gwyn-* = white + *traeth* = beach).]]

52.[[English "Kidwelly", also "Biwater". The latter is from a traditional etymology, that the town was named from the confluence of the two rivers in a common bed (*cyd*, "a joining, a coupling, junction; sexual intercourse, copulation" plus *weli*, "marital bed". Modern scholars, working from the oldest recorded form of the name, interpret it as "Cadwal's territory". Who Cadwal was is unknown.]]

palace and castle of Dinevor, strongly situated in the deep recesses of its woods, by the noble castle of Caermarddin, where Merlin was found, and from whom the city received its name⁵⁴, and runs into the sea near the castle of Lhanstephan. The river Tâf⁵⁵ rises in the Presseleu mountains, not far from the monastery of Whitland, and passing by the castle of St. Clare, falls into the sea near Abercorran and Talacharn. From the same mountains flow the rivers Cleddeu, encompassing the province of Daugleddeu, and giving it their name one passes by the castle of Lahaden, and the other by Haverford, to the sea; and in the British language they bear the name of Daugleddeu, or two swords⁵⁶.

The noble river Teivi⁵⁷ springs from the Ellennith mountains, in the upper part of the Cantref Mawr and Caerdigan, not far from the pastures and excellent monastery of Stratflur⁵⁸, forming a boundary between Demetia and Caerdigan down to the Irish channel; this is the only river in Wales that produces beavers, an account of which is given in our

53. [[The River Towy (Afon Tywi) is the longest river that flows entirely within Wales. It shares its estuary with the rivers Tâf and Gwendraeth. The river name is probably related to "Teifi" and "Tawe": either "dark river", or simply "flowing river".]]

54. [["CARMARTHEN is an Anglicized form of Caerfyrddin. The Welsh Chronicle derives the name from Myrddin, the pseudo-prophet and bard, and many are the traditions that boldly, but absurdly, support the derivation. History rejects this popular etymology by stating that the town was called 'Maridunum' by the Romans, during and after the Roman subjugation, long ere the prophet was born. The Kaerfyrddin of the Britons is the 'Maridunum,' the city by the sea, of Ptolemy ... Some think that the Latin name is a translation of the Welsh one, and derive the latter thus: Caer, fortress, wall; fyr, a mutation of mor-myr, the sea; din-ddin, a hill; signifying a fortified hill upon or near the sea... . We are inclined to think that "Maridunum"; is the etymology of the name." -Morgan, *Handbook of the Origin of Placenames in Wales & Monmouthshire*.]]

55. [[*Afon Tâf*. The river name is another in the constellation of Celtic river names, widespread through Britain and Europe, that may have a root either in *tam-, *tem-, "dark", or (more likely) in *ta-, *te-, "flowing".]]

56. [[The Eastern and Western Cleddau, a plural from *cledd*, *cleddyf* meaning "sword"-referring perhaps to the way in which the rivers have cut into the Pembrokeshire landscape. They unite at Milford Haven (*Aberdaugleddau*).]]

57. [[Welsh *Teifi* is usually connected with "Thames", "Teme", and other *tam-*, *tem-* river names connected with an Indo-European root, *tam-, *tem-, "dark"-related to Sanskrit *tamasa*, "dark", Latin *tenebra*, "shadow". Welsh *f* (pronounced as English "v") is often derived from an earlier *m*. But such river names are found widely throughout western Europe, and not many of them have notably dark waters. Moreover, the earliest recorded form of the "Teifi" is *Touegobios* or *Touerobios* (Ptolemy, 2nd Century AD). A more recent suggestion derives both "tam-/tem-" and "ta-/te-" from an Indo-European root "to flow".]]

Itinerary; and also exceeds every other river in the abundance and delicacy of its salmon. But as this book may fall into the hands of many persons who will not meet with the other, I have thought it right here to insert many curious and particular qualities relating to the nature of these animals, how they convey their materials from the woods to the river, with what skill they employ these materials in constructing places of safety in the middle of the stream, how artfully they defend themselves against the attack of the hunters on the eastern and how on the western side; the singularity of their tails, which partake more of the nature of fish than flesh. For further particulars see the Itinerary⁵⁹.

From the same mountains issues the Ystuyth⁶⁰, and flowing through the upper parts of Penwedic, in Cardiganshire, falls into the sea near the castle of Aberystuyth. From the snowy mountains of Eryri flows the noble river Devi⁶¹, dividing for a great distance North and South Wales; and from the same mountains also the large river Maw⁶², forming by its course the greater and smaller tract of sands called the Traeth Mawr and

58. [[Strata Florida Abbey (*Abaty Ystrad Fflur*) was a Cistercian abbey founded in 1164, and dissolved under Henry VIII. Now in ruins, the artistic achievement of Strata Florida is still reflected in some noteworthy survivals, one being the richly decorated and justly celebrated round-headed west door of the church.]]

59. Book ii, c. 4. [[Hoare is in error; Gerald's discussion of beavers is in Book ii, c. 3]]

60. [[The Ystwyth, or "bending" river. The modern town of Aberystwyth actually lies at the mouth of the Rheidol, but is named after the Norman castle built in 1120 on the Ystwyth, to the south.]]

61. If by the mountains of Eryri we are to understand the Snowdonian range of hills, our author has not been quite accurate in fixing the source of the river Dovy, which rises between Dynas-y-mowddu and Bala Lake, to the southward of Mount Arran: from whence it pursues its course to Mallwyd, and Machynlleth, below which place it becomes an estuary [[estuary]], and the boundary between North and South Wales. [[The *Afon Dyfi* derives its name from the Brythonic word *dubi:sa:*, "dark", whence modern Welsh *du*, "black".]]

62. Our author is again incorrect in stating that the river Maw [[from Mawdd, Mawddach; apparently a personal name]] forms, by its course, the two tracts of sands called Traeth Mawr and Traeth Bychan. This river, from which Barmouth derives the name of Abermaw [[In fact, "Barmouth" derives from "Abermawdd", via a mistaken construction of "Abermawdd" as *Y Bar Mawdd*]], and to which Giraldus, in the fifth chapter of the second book of his Itinerary, has given the epithet of *bifurcus* ["two-forked"], runs far to the southward of either of the Traeths. The Traeth Mawr, or large sands, are formed by the impetuous torrents which descend from Snowdon by Beddgelert, and pass under the Devil's Bridge at Pont Aberglaslyn, so called from the river Glaslyn; and the Traeth Bychan, or little sands, are formed by numerous streams which unite themselves in the vale of Festiniog, and become an estuary near the village of Maentwrog.

the Traeth Bachan. The Dissennith⁶³ also, and the Arthro⁶⁴, flow through Merionethshire and the land of Conan⁶⁵. The Conwy⁶⁶ rises from another side of the same mountain, and passes by the castle of Ruthlan to the sea. The Doverdwy, called by the English Dee⁶⁷, draws its source from the lake of Penmelesmere, and runs through Chester, leaving the wood of Coleshulle, Basinwerk, and a rich vein of silver in its neighbourhood, far to the right, and by the influx of the sea forming a very dangerous quicksand; thus the Dee makes the northern, and the river Wye the southern boundary of Wales.

63. [[The *Afon Dysynni* flows from the western end of Tal-y-llyn Lake and enters Cardigan Bay to the north of Tywyn near Tonfanau.]]

64. [[*Afon Artro*]]

65. [["Conan"-This is Cynan Dindaethwy ap Rhodri, King of Gwynedd 798 - 816]]

66. [[*Afon Conwy* (Anglicised "Conway"), "reedy river". The name "Deganwy" is not related.], springing from the northern side of the Eryri mountains, unites its waters with the sea under the noble castle of Deganwy. The Cloyd [[The *Afon Clwyd*, the "Hurdle", perhaps from a causeway or weir made of hurdles.]]

67. [[The *Afon Dyfrdwy*, literally "Waters of Dee" (**du:bra:s de:ua:s*, where "Dee" stands for the name of a river Goddess. The first half of the name is one of several common Celtic names for "water", found also at "Dover", named from the stream now called the Dour.]]

Chapter 6

Concerning the pleasantness and fertility of Wales

AS the southern part of Wales near Cardiganshire, but particularly Pembrokeshire, is much pleasanter, on account of its plains and sea-coast, so North Wales is better defended by nature, is more productive of men distinguished for bodily strength, and more fertile in the nature of its soil; for, as the mountains of Eryri (Snowdon) could supply pasturage for all the herds of cattle in Wales, if collected together, so could the Isle of Mona (Anglesey) provide a requisite quantity of corn for all the inhabitants: on which account there is an old British proverb, "*Mon mam Cymbry*," that is, "Mona is the mother of Wales." Merionyth, and the land of Conan, is the rudest and least cultivated region, and the least accessible. The natives of that part of Wales excel in the use of long lances, as those of Monmouthshire are distinguished for their management of the bow. It is to be observed, that the British language is more delicate and richer in North Wales, that country being less intermixed with foreigners. Many, however, assert that the language of Cardiganshire, in South Wales, placed as it were in the middle and heart of Cambria, is the most refined.

The people of Cornwall and the Armoricans⁶⁸ speak a language similar to that of the Britons; and from its origin and near resemblance, it is intelligible to the Welsh in many instances, and almost in all; and although less delicate and methodical, yet it approaches, as I judge, more to the ancient British idiom. As in the southern parts of England, and particularly in Devonshire, the English language seems less agreeable, yet it bears more marks of antiquity (the northern parts being much corrupted by the irruptions of the Danes and Norwegians), and adheres more strictly to the original language and ancient mode of speaking; a positive proof of which may be deduced from all the English works of

68. [[The name "Armorica" for the north-west peninsula of France, now called Brittany, first appears in Caesar, *De Bello Gallico*. It has a clear and simple etymology in Gaulish: **Aremori*, (the land) "by the sea" (Welsh, *ar for*.]]

Bede, Rhabanus, and king Alfred, being written according to this idiom⁶⁹.

69.[[English, thanks to Bede, was the first western language "that was neither sacred nor Latin" to achieve cultural and intellectual status (Wright). Rhabanus was a pupil of the Englishman Alcuin, but while he advocated scholarly use of the vulgar tongue alongside Latin, his "vulgar tongue" was German and not English. Alcuin was apparently not interested in writing in either German or English, but his possible influence over Rhanabus appears in the use of some Anglo-Saxon letter shapes in what are believed to be manuscripts written by Rhabanus himself (Bostock).]]

Origin of the names Cambria and Wales

CAMBRIA was so called from Camber son of Brutus, for Brutus, descending from the Trojans, by his grandfather, Ascanius, and father, Silvius, led the remnant of the Trojans, who had long been detained in Greece, into this western isle; and having reigned many years, and given his name to the country and people, at his death divided the kingdom of Wales between his three sons⁷⁰. To his eldest son, Locrinus, he gave that part of the island which lies between the rivers Humber and Severn, and which from him was called Loegria. To his second son, Albanactus, he gave the lands beyond the Humber, which took from him the name of Albania. But to his youngest son, Camber, he bequeathed all that region which lies beyond the Severn, and is called after him Cambria; hence the country is properly and truly called Cambria, and its inhabitants Cambrians, or Cambrenses. Some assert that their name was derived from *cam* and *Graeco*, that is, *distorted Greek*, on account of the affinity of their languages, contracted by their long residence in Greece; but this conjecture, though plausible, is not well founded on truth⁷¹.

The name of Wales was not derived from Wallo, a general, or Wandolena, the queen, as the fabulous history of Geoffrey Arthurius⁷² falsely maintains, because neither of these personages are to be found amongst the Welsh; but it arose from a barbarian appellation. The Saxons, when they seized upon Britain, called this nation, as they did all foreigners, Wallenses; and thus the barbarous name remains to the people and their country⁷³.

70. [[Gerald gets this nonsense from Geoffrey of Monmouth, in the first part of his influential 12th-century pseudohistory, *Historia Regum Britanniae*, "History of the Kings of Britain".]]

71. [[The true etymology lies with the Brythonic (early Welsh) word *cumbrogi*, "compatriots".]]

72. [[Gruffudd ap Arthur,]] Better known as Geoffrey of Monmouth [[(c. 1100 - c. 1155), whom Gerald has just quoted with apparent approval!]].

Having discoursed upon the quality and quantity of the land, the genealogies of the princes, the sources of the rivers, and the derivation of the names of this country, we shall now consider the nature and character of the nation.

73. The Anglo-Saxons called the Britons Wealhas, from a word in their own language, which signified literally foreigners; and hence we derive the modern name Welsh. [[The word is widespread, in various forms, among European languages, all deriving from a Germanic word for "foreigner". "Walloon" and "Walachian" share the same origin. The form "Welsh" is specifically Anglian and Kentish in origin.]]

Chapter 8

Concerning the nature, manners, and dress, the boldness, agility, and courage, of this nation

THIS people is light and active, hardy rather than strong, and entirely bred up to the use of arms; for not only the nobles, but all the people are trained to war, and when the trumpet sounds the alarm, the husbandman rushes as eagerly from his plough as the courtier from his court; for here it is not found that, as in other places,

"Agricolis labor actus in orbem,"

returns⁷⁴; for in the months of March and April only the soil is once ploughed for oats, and again in the summer a third time, and in winter for wheat. Almost all the people live upon the produce of their herds, with oats, milk, cheese, and butter; eating flesh in larger proportions than bread. They pay no attention to commerce, shipping, or manufactures, and suffer no interruption but by martial exercises. They anxiously study the defence of their country and their liberty; for these they fight, for these they undergo hardships, and for these willingly sacrifice their lives; they esteem it a disgrace to die in bed, an honour to die in the field of battle; using the poet's expressions,

"Procul hinc avertite pacem,
Nobilitas cum pace perit."⁷⁵

Nor is it wonderful if it degenerates, for the ancestors of these men, the Æneadæ, rushed to arms in the cause of liberty. It is remarkable that this

74.[[Virgil, *Georgics* II:40. Hoare has misquoted Gerald; "returns" is part of Virgil's verse: *redit agricolis labor actus in orbem / atque in se sua per vestigia volvitur annus*, "Moving in great circles, work returns to the farmer as the year wheels around in its own tracks".]]

75.[[Far hence remove peace; With peace, Nobility cometh to naught.]]

people, though unarmed, dares attack an armed foe; the infantry defy the cavalry, and by their activity and courage generally prove victors. They resemble in disposition and situation those conquerors whom the poet Lucan mentions:

—— "Populi quos despicit Arctos,
Felices errore suo, quos ille timorum
Maximus haud urget leti metus, inde ruendi
In ferrum, mens prona viris, animaeque capaces,
Mortis et ignavum rediturae parsere vitae."⁷⁶

They make use of light arms, which do not impede their agility, small coats of mail, bundles of arrows, and long lances, helmets and shields, and more rarely greaves plated with iron. The higher class go to battle mounted on swift and generous steeds, which their country produces; but the greater part of the people fight on foot, on account of the marshy nature and unevenness of the soil. The horsemen as their situation or occasion requires, willingly serve as infantry, in attacking or retreating; and they either walk bare-footed, or make use of high shoes, roughly constructed with untanned leather. In time of peace, the young men, by penetrating the deep recesses of the woods, and climbing the tops of mountains, learn by practice to endure fatigue through day and night; and as they meditate on war during peace, they acquire the art of fighting by accustoming themselves to the use of the lance, and by inuring themselves to hard exercise.

In our time, king Henry II., in reply to the inquiries of Emanuel, emperor of Constantinople, concerning the situation, nature, and striking peculiarities of the British island, among other remarkable circumstances mentioned the following: "That in a certain part of the island there was a people, called Welsh, so bold and ferocious that, when unarmed, they did not fear to encounter an armed force; being ready to shed their blood in defence of their country, and to sacrifice their lives for renown; which is the more surprising, as the beasts of the field over the whole face of the island became gentle, but these desperate men could not be tamed. The wild animals, and particularly the stags and hinds, are so abundant, owing to the little molestation they receive, that in our time, in the northern

76. [[*Pharsalia* ("Civil War"), I: 458 - 462: "Doubtles these northren men Whom death the greatest of all feares affright not, Are blest by such sweet error, this makes them Run on the swords point and desire to die, And shame to spare life which being lost is wonne." (Marlowe).]]

parts of the island towards the Peak⁷⁷, when pursued by the hounds and hunters, they contributed, by their numbers, to their own destruction."

77. The Peak, i.e. Derbyshire.

Chapter 9

Of their sober supper and frugality

NOT ADDICTED TO GLUTTONY OR drunkenness, this people who incur no expense in food or dress, and whose minds are always bent upon the defence of their country⁷⁸, and on the means of plunder, are wholly employed in the care of their horses and furniture. Accustomed to fast from morning till evening, and trusting to the care of Providence, they dedicate the whole day to business, and in the evening partake of a moderate meal; and even if they have none, or only a very scanty one, they patiently wait till the next evening; and, neither deterred by cold nor hunger, they employ the dark and stormy nights in watching the hostile motions of their enemies.

78. [[Notoriously, however, the minds of the Welsh warlords and princes, virtually from the time of the departure of the Legions, was always bent on vanquishing their neighbours. This was the complaint of Gildas.]]

Chapter 10

Of their hospitality and liberality

NO one of this nation ever begs, for the houses of all are common to all; and they consider liberality and hospitality amongst the first virtues. So much does hospitality here rejoice in communication, that it is neither offered nor requested by travellers, who, on entering any house, only deliver up their arms. When water is offered to them, if they suffer their feet to be washed, they are received as guests; for the offer of water to wash the feet is with this nation an hospitable invitation. But if they refuse the proffered service, they only wish for morning refreshment, not lodging. The young men move about in troops and families under the direction of a chosen leader. Attached only to arms and ease, and ever ready to stand forth in defence of their country, they have free admittance into every house as if it were their own.

Those who arrive in the morning are entertained till evening with the conversation of young women, and the music of the harp; for each house has its young women and harps allotted to this purpose. Two circumstances here deserve notice: that as no nation labours more under the vice of jealousy than the Irish, so none is more free from it than the Welsh: and in each family the art of playing on the harp is held preferable to any other learning. In the evening, when no more guests are expected, the meal is prepared according to the number and dignity of the persons assembled, and according to the wealth of the family who entertains. The kitchen does not supply many dishes, nor high-seasoned incitements to eating. The house is not furnished with tables, cloths, or napkins. They study nature more than splendour, for which reason, the guests being seated in threes, instead of couples as elsewhere⁷⁹, they place the dishes before them all at once upon rushes and fresh grass, in large platters or trenchers. They also make use of a thin and broad cake of bread, baked every day, such as in old writings was called *lagana*; and they sometimes add chopped meat, with broth. Such a repast was formerly used by the noble youth, from whom this nation boasts its

descent, and whose manners it still partly imitates, according to the word of the poet:

"Heu! mensas consumimus, inquit Iulus."

[[Bravo! We devour the tables, saith Iulus.]]

While the family is engaged in waiting on the guests, the host and hostess stand up, paying unremitting attention to everything, and take no food till all the company are satisfied; that in case of any deficiency, it may fall upon them. A bed made of rushes, and covered with a coarse kind of cloth manufactured in the country, called *brychan*⁸⁰, is then placed along the side of the room, and they all in common lie down to sleep; nor is their dress at night different from that by day, for at all seasons they defend themselves from the cold only by a thin cloak and tunic. The fire continues to burn by night as well as by day, at their feet, and they receive much comfort from the natural heat of the persons lying near them; but when the under side begins to be tired with the hardness of the bed, or the upper one to suffer from cold, they immediately leap up, and go to the fire, which soon relieves them from both inconveniences; and then returning to their couch, they expose alternately their sides to the cold, and to the hardness of the bed.

79.[Sir R. C. Hoare has altogether misunderstood the original here. It was the custom in the middle ages to place the guests at table in pairs, and each two persons ate out of one plate. Each couple was a mess [["each of the groups, usu. of four people, into which the guests at a banquet were commonly divided" - NSOED]]. At a later period, among the great the mess consisted of four persons; but it appears that in Wales, at this time, it was formed of three guests.]

80.Brychan, in Lhuyd's *Archaiology* and *Cornish Grammar*, is spelt Bryccan, and interpreted as *blanket*. [[In the *Geiriadur Prifysgol Cymru*, the entry *brychan*² is interpreted as "blanket, brindled covering; plaid".]]

Chapter 11

Concerning their cutting of their hair, their care of their teeth, and shaving of their beard

THE men and women cut their hair close round to the ears and eyes. The women, after the manner of the Parthians, cover their heads with a large white veil, folded together in the form of a crown.

Both sexes exceed any other nation in attention to their teeth, which they render like ivory, by constantly rubbing them with green hazel and wiping with a woollen cloth. For their better preservation, they abstain from hot meats, and eat only such as are cold, warm, or temperate. The men shave all their beard except the moustaches (*gernoboda*⁸¹). This custom is not recent, but was observed in ancient and remote ages, as we find in the works of Julius Caesar, who says⁸², "The Britons shave every part of their body except their head and upper lip;" and to render themselves more active, and avoid the fate of Absalom in their excursions through the woods⁸³, they are accustomed to cut even the hair from their heads; so that this nation more than any other shaves off all pilosity. Julius also adds, that the Britons, previous to an engagement, anointed their faces with a nitrous ointment, which gave them so ghastly and shining an appearance, that the enemy could scarcely bear to look at them, particularly if the rays of the sun were reflected on them.

81.[[Presumably related to *cern*, "cheek-bone, side of the head", and *cernflew*, "side-whiskers".]]

82."Omnes vero se Britanni vitro inficiunt, quod caeruleum efficit colorem, atque hoc horridore sunt in pugna adspectu; capilloque sunt promisso, atque omni parte corporis rasa, praeter caput et labrum superius." Caesar *de Bello Gallico*, cap. 13, 14.

83.[[Absalom. The rebellious son of King David of Israel, fleeing the scene of his final disastrous battle, was caught by his hair in the boughs of an oak tree, and slain by David's general, Joab.]]

Chapter 12

Of their quickness and sharpness of understanding

THESE people being of a sharp and acute intellect, and gifted with a rich and powerful understanding, excel in whatever studies they pursue, and are more quick and cunning than the other inhabitants of a western clime.

Their musical instruments charm and delight the ear with their sweetness, are borne along by such celerity and delicacy of modulation, producing such a consonance from the rapidity of seemingly discordant touches, that I shall briefly repeat what is set forth in our Irish Topography on the subject of the musical instruments of the three nations. It is astonishing that in so complex and rapid a movement of the fingers, the musical proportions can be preserved, and that throughout the difficult modulations on their various instruments, the harmony is completed with such a sweet velocity, so unequal an equality, so discordant a concord, as if the chords sounded together fourths or fifths. They always begin from B flat, and return to the same, that the whole may be completed under the sweetness of a pleasing sound. They enter into a movement, and conclude it in so delicate a manner, and play the little notes so sportively under the blunter sounds of the base strings, enlivening with wanton levity, or communicating a deeper internal sensation of pleasure, so that the perfection of their art appears in the concealment of it:

"Si lateat, prosit;
——ferat ars deprensa pudorem."

"Art profits when concealed,
Disgraces when revealed."

From this cause, those very strains which afford deep and unspeakable mental delight to those who have skilfully penetrated into the mysteries of the art, fatigue rather than gratify the ears of others, who seeing, do not perceive, and hearing, do not understand; and by whom the finest

music is esteemed no better than a confused and disorderly noise, and will be heard with unwillingness and disgust.

They make use of three instruments, the harp, the pipe, and the crwth or crowd (*chorus*)⁸⁴.

They omit no part of natural rhetoric in the management of civil actions, in quickness of invention, disposition, refutation, and confirmation. In their rhymed songs and set speeches they are so subtle and ingenious, that they produce, in their native tongue, ornaments of wonderful and exquisite invention both in the words and sentences. Hence arise those poets whom they call Bards, of whom you will find many in this nation, endowed with the above faculty, according to the poet's observation:

"Plurima concreti fuderunt carmina Bardi."⁸⁵

But they make use of alliteration (*anominatione*) in preference to all other ornaments of rhetoric, and that particular kind which joins by consonancy the first letters or syllables of words⁸⁶. So much do the English and Welsh nations employ this ornament of words in all exquisite composition⁸⁷, that no sentence is esteemed to be elegantly spoken, no oration to

84. [[Crwth: "An old Celtic musical instrument with three, or later six, strings which was held against the chest and played by bowing and plucking" - NSOED. "Chorus" is not related.]] This instrument is generally supposed to have been the origin of the violin, which was not commonly known in England till the reign of Charles I. Before this time the crwth was not probably confined to the Principality, from the name of Crowdero in [[Samuel Butler's]] Hudibras; as also from a fiddler being still called a crowder in some parts of England, though he now plays on a violin instead of a crwth.

85. [[Lucan, Pharsalia I: 396: "Plurima securi fudistis carmina, Bardi": "Pour forth in safety more abundant song. Ye Druids".]]

86. [[Gerald is describing an early form of cynghanedd, "a system of consonance or alliteration in a line of Welsh poetry in strict metre and internal rhyming" (Geiriadur Prifysgol Cymru). Cynghanedd also features end-rhyme. Graves provides a simple - and confessedly defective - example in English in The White Goddess: "Billet spied, bolt sped / Across field. Crows fled / Aloft, wounded-left one dead".]]

87. [[Old English poetry (and "Germanic" poetry in general) used a system of strict assonance (initial-consonant "rhyme"), though by Gerald's time the system was largely overtaken by end-rhyme structures not native to English verse, but adopted from French fashion. An example of a late survival is Piers Plowman ("Peter the Ploughman", late 14th Century): "A fair field full of folk / I found there between, "Of all manner of men / the mean and the rich, "Working and wandering / as the world asketh."]]

be otherwise than uncouth and unrefined, unless it be fully polished with the file of this figure. Thus in the British tongue:

"Digawn Duw da i unic."

"Wrth bob crybwyll rhaid pwyll parawd."⁸⁸

And in English,

"God is together gammen and wisdom."⁸⁹

The same ornament of speech is also frequent in the Latin language. Virgil says,

"Tales casus Cassandra canebat."⁹⁰

And again, in his address to Augustus,

"Dum dubitet natura marem, faceretve puellam,
Natus es, o pulcher, pene puella, puer."

This ornament occurs not in any language we know so frequently as in the two first; it is, indeed, surprising that the French, in other respects so ornamented, should be entirely ignorant of this verbal elegance so much adopted in other languages. Nor can I believe that the English and Welsh, so different and adverse to each other, could designedly have agreed in the usage of this figure; but I should rather suppose that it had grown habitual to both by long custom, as it pleases the ear by a transition from similar to similar sounds. Cicero, in his book "On Elocution", observes of such who know the practice, not the art, "Other persons when they read good orations or poems, approve of the orators or poets, not understanding the reason why, being affected, they approve; because

88. These Welsh lines quoted by Giraldus are selected from two different stanzas of moral verses, called Eglynion y Clywed [["Aural Stanzas"]], the composition of some anonymous bard; or probably the work of several: "A glyweisti a gant Dywyneg, Milwr doeth detholedig; Digawn Duw da i unig?" "Hast thou heard what was sung by Dywynic? A wise and chosen warrior; God will effect solace to the orphan." "A glyweisti a gant Anarawd? Milwr doniawg did lawd; Rhaid wrth anmhwyl pwyll parawd." "Hast thou heard what was sung by Anarawd? A warrior endowed with many gifts; With want of sense ready wit is necessary."

89. [[i.e., gammon: "nonsense". Compare St Paul, I Corinthians 1:23.]]

90. [[Æneid, III:147: "sola mihi talis casus Cassandra canebat"; "To my ears alone /this dark vicissitude Cassandra sang" (Williams).]]

they cannot know in what place, of what nature, nor how that effect is caused which so highly delights them."

Chapter 13

Of their symphonies and songs

IN their musical concerts they do not sing in unison like the inhabitants of other countries, but in many different parts; so that in a company of singers, which one very frequently meets with in Wales, you will hear as many different parts and voices as there are performers, who all at length unite, with organic melody, in one consonance and the soft sweetness of B flat. In the northern district of Britain, beyond the Humber, and on the borders of Yorkshire, the inhabitants make use of the same kind of symphonious harmony, but with less variety; singing only in two parts, one murmuring in the base, the other warbling in the acute or treble. Neither of the two nations has acquired this peculiarity by art, but by long habit, which has rendered it natural and familiar; and the practice is now so firmly rooted in them, that it is unusual to hear a simple and single melody well sung; and, what is still more wonderful, the children, even from their infancy, sing in the same manner. As the English in general do not adopt this mode of singing, but only those of the northern countries, I believe that it was from the Danes and Norwegians, by whom these parts of the island were more frequently invaded, and held longer under their dominion, that the natives contracted their mode of singing as well as speaking⁹¹.

91. [[Singing in multiple harmonious parts seems to have been a peculiarly European tradition, and its origins are unknown and somewhat mysterious; but Giraldus appears to have given us the earliest unequivocal description of the practice. It appears that in the Scandinavian-influenced parts of Britain there existed a singing style called *gymel*, basically harmony in parallel thirds. A twelfth-century manuscript found in Uppsala, Sweden, gives a hymn to St. Magnus, *Nobilis, humilis*, in the Lydian mode and harmonised in parallel thirds. Since St. Magnus is the patron saint of Orkney (which was Norse at that period), it is generally assumed to have come from there. This would tend to confirm Giraldus' statement regarding the Norse origins of northern British vocal harmony. It is not clear, however, that Welsh multi-part singing also derived from the Norse two-part harmony.]]

Their wit and pleasantry

THE heads of different families, in order to excite the laughter of their guests, and gain credit by their sayings, make use of great facetiousness in their conversation; at one time uttering their jokes in a light, easy manner, at another time, under the disguise of equivocation, passing the severest censures. For the sake of explanation I shall here subjoin a few examples. Tegeingl is the name of a province in North Wales⁹², over which David, son of Owen, had dominion, and which had once been in the possession of his brother⁹³. The same word⁹⁴ also was the name of a certain woman with whom, it was said, each brother had an intrigue, from which circumstance arose this term of reproach, "To have Tegeingl, after Tegeingl had been in possession of his brother."

At another time, when Rhys, son of Gruffydd, prince of South Wales⁹⁵, accompanied by a multitude of his people, devoutly entered the church of St. David's, previous to an intended journey, the oblations having been made, and mass solemnised, a young man came to him in the church, and publicly declared himself to be his son, threw himself at his feet, and with tears humbly requested that the truth of this assertion might be ascertained by the trial of the burning iron. Intelligence of this circumstance being conveyed to his family and his two sons, who had

92. [["Tegeingl" (English "Englefield") was a north-eastern *cantref* (located roughly where modern-day Flintshire lies), named for the Iron Age and Roman-period tribe of the Deceangli.]]

93. [[Dafydd ap Owain Gwynedd succeeded his father as Prince of Gwynedd from 1170 to 1194, the period during which Gerald toured Wales with Archbishop Baldwin. Having previously deposed his brother Rhodri ap Owain Gwynedd, Dafydd in turn was defeated by and yielded sovereignty to his nephew Llewelyn ap Iorworth.]]

94. [[I.e., Tegeingl]]

95. [[Rhys ap Gruffydd (1132 - 28 April 1197), prince (*Wledig*) of the kingdom of Deheubarth in south Wales, was another of Gerald's contemporaries, and the dominant power in Wales after the death of Owain Gwynedd in 1170. He is known to have styled himself, "Prince of Wales".]]

just gone out of the church, a youth who was present made this remark: "This is not wonderful; some have brought gold, and others silver, as offerings; but this man, who had neither, brought what he had, namely, iron;" thus taunting him with his poverty. On mentioning a certain house that was strongly built and almost impregnable, one of the company said, "This house indeed is strong, for if it should contain food it could never be got at," thus alluding both to the food and to the house. In like manner, a person, wishing to hint at the avaricious disposition of the mistress of a house, said, "I only find fault with our hostess for putting too little butter to her salt," whereas the accessory should be put to the principal; thus, by a subtle transposition of the words, converting the accessory into the principal, by making it appear to abound in quantity. Many similar sayings of great men and philosophers are recorded in the *Saturnalia* of Macrobius⁹⁶. When Cicero saw his son-in-law, Lentulus, a man of small stature, with a long sword by his side: "Who," says he, "has girded my son-in-law to that sword?" thus changing the accessory into the principal. The same person, on seeing the half-length portrait of his brother Quintus Cicero, drawn with very large features and an immense shield, exclaimed, "Half of my brother is greater than the whole!" When the sister of Faustus had an intrigue with a fuller⁹⁷, "Is it strange," says he, "that my sister has a spot⁹⁸, when she is connected with a fuller?" When Antiochus showed Hannibal his army⁹⁹, and the great warlike preparations he had made against the Romans, and asked him, "Thinkest thou, O Hannibal, that these are sufficient for the Romans?" Hannibal, ridiculing the unmilitary appearance of the soldiers, wittily and severely replied, "I certainly think them sufficient for the Romans, however greedy;" Antiochus asking his opinion about the military preparations, and Hannibal alluding to them as becoming a prey to the Romans.

96. [[Not much is known for certain of Macrobius beyond the fact that he wrote in Latin and lived in the last quarter of the fourth century and first quarter of the last. The works attributed to him show sympathy with Roman pagan religion, but he may himself have been a Christian. The *Saturnalia* (c. 395), a Platonic dialogue discussing aspects of liberal education appropriate for youth, is the most important of his extant writings.]]

97. [["Fuller", a person whose trade was to clean or thicken cloth by treading or beating it.]]

98. [["stain"]]

99. [[Antiochus III, "The Great", King of Syria 222-187 BCE, and the Carthaginian general Hannibal Barca (248-182 BCE) shared an enmity with the Roman Republic. During a period of exile from Carthage, Hannibal served as a military advisor at Antiochus' court.]]

Chapter 15

Their boldness and confidence in speaking

NATURE hath given not only to the highest, but also to the inferior, classes of the people of this nation, a boldness and confidence in speaking and answering, even in the presence of their princes and chieftains. The Romans and Franks had the same faculty; but neither the English, nor the Saxons and Germans, from whom they are descended, had it. It is in vain urged, that this defect may arise from the state of servitude which the English endured; for the Saxons and Germans, who enjoy their liberty, have the same failing, and derive this natural coldness of disposition from the frozen region they inhabit; the English also, although placed in a distant climate, still retain the exterior fairness of complexion and inward coldness of disposition, as inseparable from their original and natural character. The Britons, on the contrary, transplanted from the hot and parched regions of Dardania¹⁰⁰ into these more temperate districts, as

"Coelum non animum mutant qui trans mare currunt."¹⁰¹

still retain their brown complexion and that natural warmth of temper from which their confidence is derived. For three nations, remnants of the Greeks after the destruction of Troy, fled from Asia into different parts of Europe, the Romans under Æneas, the Franks under Antenor, and the Britons under Brutus¹⁰²; and from thence arose that courage, that nobleness of mind, that ancient dignity, that acuteness of understanding,

100. [[The north-western region of Asia Minor, bordering the Dardanelles, where tradition located the city of Troy. The tradition has been confirmed by archaeology, but the much later tradition, that the British people had their origins among the refugees fleeing the fall of Troy, have not. Genetic research indicates that they are principally descended from the Palaeolithic European population who entered Britain perhaps 500,000 years ago. "Celtic" culture appears to have entered Britain around 500 B.C.E., roughly seven centuries after the Trojan War.]]

101. [[Horace, Ep. 1:11: "Who crosseth the sea changeth the heavens, not his soul."]]

and confidence of speech, for which these three nations are so highly distinguished. But the Britons, from having been detained longer in Greece than the other two nations, after the destruction of their country, and having migrated at a later period into the western parts of Europe, retained in a greater degree the primitive words and phrases of their native language¹⁰³. You will find amongst them the names Oenus, Resus, Æneas, Hector, Achilles, Heliodorus, Theodorus, Ajax, Evander, Uliex, Anianus, Elisa, Guendolena, and many others, bearing marks of their antiquity. It is also to be observed, that almost all words in the British language correspond either with the Greek or Latin, as [[Greek: hudoz]], water, is called in British, dwr; [[Greek: hals]], salt, in British, halen; [[Greek: onoma]], eno, a name; [[Greek: penta]], pump, five; [[Greek: deka]], deg, ten. The Latins also use the words fraenum [[bridle]], tripos [[tripod]], gladius [[short sword]], lorica [[coat of mail]]; the Britons, froyn (ffrwyn), trepet (tribedd), cleddyf, and lluric (llurig) [[The Welsh words in the preceding list all derive from the Roman occupation period.]]; unicus is made unic (unig); canis, can (cwn); and belua [[bestial]], beleu [[wild beast, wolf]] ¹⁰⁴.

102. [[The legends underlying these claims date from widely-separated periods. None is supported by any historical, archaeological, linguistic, or historical evidence; and in particular - despite Gerald's demonstration that Welsh and Greek are related languages - it is clear that the languages concerned diverged from a common origin long before the time of the Trojan War. The everyday language of Troy is far from certain, but seems to have been West Asian in type, certainly not ancestral to Latin, Welsh, or "Frankish" (a German tongue).]]

103. [[Brutus, the legendary originator of the British people, was supposedly a grandson or great-grandson of Aeneas (who supposedly fled the destruction of Troy to settle Rome), and a Roman consul. Thus, the ancestors of the British would have spent no more time in Asia than the ancestors of the Romans, and would have spoken Latin, not Greek or "Trojan". However, the legend of Brutus' settling in Britain dates no earlier than the ninth century A.D., being first found in Nennius' *Historia Britonum*.]]

104. [[The Welsh words in this second list share common ancestry with the Latin words, but do not derive from them.]]

Chapter 16

CHAPTER XVI: Concerning the soothsayers of this nation, and persons as it were possessed

THERE are certain persons in Cambria, whom you will find nowhere else, called Awenddyon¹⁰⁵, or people inspired; when consulted upon any doubtful event, they roar out violently, are rendered beside themselves, and become, as it were, possessed by a spirit. They do not deliver the answer to what is required in a connected manner; but the person who skillfully observes them, will find, after many preambles, and many nugatory and incoherent, though ornamented speeches, the desired explanation conveyed in some turn of a word: they are then roused from their ecstasy, as from a deep sleep, and, as it were, by violence compelled to return to their proper senses. After having answered the questions, they do not recover till violently shaken by other people; nor can they remember the replies they have given. If consulted a second or third time upon the same point, they will make use of expressions totally different; perhaps they speak by the means of fanatic and ignorant spirits. These gifts are usually conferred upon them in dreams: some seem to have sweet milk or honey poured on their lips; others fancy that a written schedule is applied to their mouths and on awaking they publicly declare that they have received this gift. Such is the saying of Esdras, "The Lord said unto me, open thy mouth, and I opened my mouth, and behold a cup full of water, whose colour was like fire; and when I had drank it, my heart brought forth understanding, and wisdom entered into my breast."¹⁰⁶ They invoke, during their prophecies, the true and living God, and the Holy Trinity, and pray that they may not by their sins be prevented from finding the truth. These prophets are only found among the

105. Awenydhion, in a literal sense, means persons inspired by the Muse, and is derived from Awen and Awenydd, a poetical rapture, or the gift of poetry. It was the appellation of the disciples, or candidates for the Bardic Order; but the most general acceptance of the word was: Poets, or Bards. [[*Awenyddion*, plural of *awenydd*; inspired poet, bard (*awen*, poetic gift, inspiration).]]

Britons descended from the Trojans. For Calchas and Cassandra, endowed with the spirit of prophecy, openly foretold, during the siege of Troy, the destruction of that fine city¹⁰⁷; on which account the high priest, Helenus, influenced by the prophetic books of Calchas, and of others who had long before predicted the ruin of their country, in the first year went over to the Greeks with the sons of Priam (to whom he was high priest), and was afterwards rewarded in Greece¹⁰⁸. Cassandra, daughter of king Priam, every day foretold the overthrow of the city; but the pride and presumption of the Trojans prevented them from believing her word. Even on the very night that the city was betrayed, she clearly described the treachery and the method of it:

"tales casus Cassandra canebat",¹⁰⁹

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106. [["Esdras" is the Greek version of the Hebrew name, "Ezra". Ezra was a prophetic personality who, in the mid-fifth century B.C.E, led about 5,000 Jews from their state of captivity in Babylon, back to the ruined city of Jerusalem, which they rebuilt under his direction. In Protestant and Jewish Bibles, this story is retold in the "books" of *Ezra* and *Nehemiah*. However, the passage Gerald quotes does not come from either of these. Other books were subsequently written in Ezra's name, and though these are not accepted as "official" parts of the Protestant and Jewish Bibles, some of them form part of the Latin and Greek Bibles (the Vulgate and Septuagint respectively). Two of these may appear in the "Apocrypha" sections of English Bibles, under the names "I Esdras" and "II Esdras" ("First" and "Second" Books of Esdras). In the Vulgate, though, these titles are given to the books of *Ezra* and *Nehemiah* respectively, and the apocryphal books are called "III Esdras" and "IV Esdras" ("Third" and "Fourth" Books of Esdras). Meanwhile, Greek Bibles include *Ezra* and *Nehemiah* as a single book, "I Esdras", and the first of the two apocryphal books (only) as "II Esdras". Gerald's quotation is from chapter 14, verses 39-40 of English "II Esdras", which is the same as Latin "IV Esdras", and does not appear in the Septuagint at all.]]
107. [[The mention of Calchas is strictly superfluous to Gerald's point. In Greek legend, he was a Greek soothsayer, not Trojan, whereas Cassandra was indeed Trojan, the daughter of King Priam. In mediaeval versions of the legend of Troy, however, Calchas is portrayed as a defector from the Trojan side.]]
108. [[The Greek myths recount this rather differently. Helenus was brother to both Paris, whose seizure of the Grecian queen, Helen, precipitated the Trojan War, and Cassandra, the prophetess whose predictions were doomed always to be dismissed by her countrymen. Helenus, having been taught prophecy by his sister, was met with credence where she (as Gerald notes below) found only disbelief; but the occasion of his fleeing Troy (according to Apollodorus) was his failure to win Helen for himself after Paris' death, she being awarded instead to Paris' other brother, Deiphobus. Helenus was captured by the Greeks while in self-imposed exile, and they coerced him into revealing, prophetically, the conditions under which the Greek armies might prevail over Troy.]]

as in the same manner, during the existence of the kingdom of the Britons, both Merlin Caledonius and Ambrosius¹¹⁰ are said to have foretold the destruction of their nation, as well as the coming of the Saxons, and afterwards that of the Normans; and I think a circumstance related by Aulus Gellius¹¹¹ worth inserting in this place. On the day that Caius Caesar and Cneius Pompey, during the civil war, fought a pitched battle in Thessalia¹¹², a memorable event occurred in that part of Italy situated beyond the river Po. A priest named Cornelius, honourable from his rank, venerable for his religion, and holy in his manners, in an inspired moment proclaimed, "Caesar has conquered," and named the day, the events, the mutual attack, and the conflicts of the two armies. Whether such things are exhibited by the spirit, let the reader more particularly inquire; I do not assert they are the acts of a Pythonic or a diabolic spirit¹¹³; for as foreknowledge is the property of God alone, so is it in his power to confer knowledge of future events. There are differences of gifts, says the Apostle¹¹⁴, but one and the same spirit; whence Peter, in his second Epistle, writes, "For the prophecy came not in the old time by the will of man, but men spake as if they were inspired by the Holy

109. [[*talis casus Cassandra canebat*, "This dark vicissitude Cassandra sang" (Williams).

Gerald has already quoted this passage from Vergil's *Æneid* as an example of Latin use of alliteration.]]

110. [[Merlin is well known as the magician attached to the court of King Arthur. As such he was created by Geoffrey of Monmouth from various types of raw material, notably *Myrddin Wyllt* ("Merlin the Wild", also called "Merlin Calidonensis") and the pseudo-historical post-Roman war leader Ambrosius Aurelianus. The earliest Welsh poems concerning Myrddin Wyllt (who may have been a historical character, a failed bard) date him long after Arthur's time, and present him as a madman living a miserable existence in the Caledonian Forest in what is now southern Scotland. Geoffrey conflated the two figures as "Merlin Ambrosius" (*Myrddin Emrys*); Gerald has separated them once more, but not returned to them their original personas.]]

111. [[Second-century A.D. Latin author of *Noctes Atticae* ("Nights in Attica"), a collection of essays and memoirs on various topics considered a major resource for research on Roman history and culture.]]

112. [[This was the Battle of Pharsalus, 9 August 48 B.C.E., in which Caesar won a decisive victory.]]

113. [[Python was a serpentine earth-spirit resident at Delphi on Mount Parnassus, whose role was to guard the "navel of the world". The serpent was overthrown by Apollo, who established his own temple there, in which a sequence of prophetesses, each known as "Pythia" or "the Pythoness", delivered oracles inspired by fumes supposedly rising from the decaying corpse of Python. As a serpent, Python was associated in Christian tradition with the serpent of Genesis 2, interpreted as being "the Devil". Hence, a Pythonic spirit was a diabolic spirit.]]

114. [[i.e., St Paul, in his first epistle to the Corinthians, chapter 12, verse 4.]]

Ghost:"¹¹⁵ to the same effect did the Chaldeans answer king Nebuchadonazar on the interpretation of his dream, which he wished to extort from them. "There is not," say they, "a man upon earth who can, O king, satisfactorily answer your question; let no king therefore, however great or potent, make a similar request to any magician, astrologer, or Chaldean; for it is a rare thing that the king requireth, and there is none other that can shew it before the king, except the Gods, whose dwelling is not with flesh."¹¹⁶ On this passage Jerome remarks, "The diviners and all the learned of this world confess, that the prescience of future events belongs to God alone; the prophets therefore, who foretold things to come, spake by the spirit of God."¹¹⁷ Hence some persons object, that, if they were under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, they would sometimes premise, "Thus saith the Lord God," or make use of some expression in the prophetic style; and as such a mode of prophesying is not taken notice of by Merlin, and no mention is made of his sanctity, devotion, or faith, many think that he spake by a Pythonic spirit. To which I answer, that the spirit of prophecy was given not only to the holy, but sometimes to unbelievers and Gentiles, to Baal, to the sibyls, and even to bad people, as to Caiaphas and Bela¹¹⁸. On which occasion Origen¹¹⁹ says: "Do not wonder, if he whom ye have mentioned declares that the Scribes and Pharisees and doctors amongst the Jews prophesied concerning Christ; for Caiaphas said: "It is expedient for us that one man die for the people:" but asserts at the ¹²⁰same time, that because he was high priest for that year, he prophesied . Let no man therefore be lifted up, if he

115.[[II Peter chapter 1, verse 21.]]

116.[[Daniel chapter 2, verses 10-11.]]

117.[[Closing quote-marks omitted by Hoare, Williams, or an editor.]]

118.[[The Sibyls were pagan Roman prophetesses, but Christian legend recounts that their books prophesied the birth and ascendancy of Christ. For "Caiaphas", see Gerald's next sentence. "Bela son of Beor" appears transiently in the Bible at Genesis chapter 36, verse 32, as a king of Edom. In some Bible manuscripts, and clearly in Gerald's mind, he is confused with "Balaam son of Beor", a pagan who nonetheless delivered correct prophecies under the inspiration of the Israelite God (Numbers, chapters 22-23).]]

119.[[Origen of Alexandria (c.185 - c.254 A.D.) was one of the most brilliant fathers of the Christian church, and the most prolific Christian writer of his time.]]

120.[[The Biblical quotation is from John chapter 11, verse 50, concerning which St John Chrysostom (c. 347-407) and others commented similarly. It was out of this tradition that Wesley similarly wrote, "So God overruled his [Caiaphas'] tongue, for he spake not of himself, by his own spirit only, but by the spirit of prophecy. And thus he gave unawares as clear a testimony to the priestly, as Pilate did to the kingly office of Christ."]]

prophecies, if he merits prescience; for prophecies shall fail, tongues shall cease, knowledge shall vanish away; and now abideth, faith, hope, and charity: these three; but the greatest of these is Charity, which never faileth¹²¹. But these bad men not only prophesied, but sometimes performed great miracles, which others could not accomplish. John the Baptist, who was so great a personage, performed no miracle, as John the Evangelist testifies: "And many came to Jesus and said, Because John wrought no signs," etc¹²². Nor do we hear that the mother of God performed any miracle; we read in the Acts of the Apostles, that the sons of Sheva cast out devils in the name of Jesus, whom Paul preached¹²³; and in Matthew and Luke we may find these words: "Many shall say unto me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? and then I will profess unto them, I never knew you."¹²⁴ And in another place, John says: "Master, we saw a certain man casting out devils in thy name, and forbade him, because he followeth not with us." But Jesus said: "Forbid him not; no man can do a miracle in my name, and speak evil of me; for whoever is not against me, is for me."¹²⁵

Alexander of Macedon, a gentile, traversed the Caspian mountains, and miraculously confined ten tribes within their promontories, where they still remain, and will continue until the coming of Elias and Enoch¹²⁶. We read, indeed, the prophecies of Merlin, but hear nothing either of his sanctity or his miracles. Some say, that the prophets, when they prophesied, did not become frantic, as it is affirmed of Merlin Silvestris¹²⁷, and others possessed, whom we have before mentioned. Some prophesied by dreams, visions, and enigmatical sayings, as Ezechiel and

121.[["Prophecies shall fail ... greatest of these is Charity" - St Paul, I Corinthians chapter 13, verses 8 and 13.]]

122.[[John chapter 10, verse 41. John the Baptist did no miracles, but delivered prophetic utterances under the inspiration of God (e.g., John chapter 1, verses 29 - 33). The passage quoted by Gerald ends, "everything that John said about [Jesus] was true".]]

123.[[The story is in the Acts of the Apostles, chapter 19, verses 13 - 16, but with an outcome different from the success that Gerald implies: "Some of the itinerant Jews, exorcists, took on themselves to invoke over those who had the evil spirits the name of the Lord Jesus, saying, 'We adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preaches.' There were seven sons of one Sceva, a Jewish chief priest, who did this. The evil spirit answered, 'Jesus I know, and Paul I know, but who are you?' The man in whom the evil spirit was leaped on them, and overpowered them, and prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded."]]

124.[[Matthew chapter 7, verses 22 - 23; the parallel passage in Luke omits these words.]]

125.[[Luke chapter 9, verse 49. The "John" is John the Apostle, son of Zebedee.]]

Daniel; others by acts and words, as Noah, in the construction of the ark, alluded to the church; Abraham, in the slaying of his son, to the passion of Christ; and Moses by his speech, when he said, "A prophet shall the Lord God raise up to you of your brethren; hear him;"¹²⁸ meaning Christ. Others have prophesied in a more excellent way by the internal revelation and inspiration of the Holy Spirit, as David did when persecuted by Saul: "When Saul heard that David had fled to Naioth (which is a hill in Ramah, and the seat of the prophets), he sent messengers to take him; and when they saw the company of the prophets prophesying, and Samuel standing at their head, the Spirit of God came upon the messengers of Saul, and they also prophesied; and he sent messengers a second and again a third time, and they also prophesied. And Saul enraged went thither also; and the Spirit of God was upon him also, and he went on, and prophesied until he came to Naioth, and he stripped off his royal vestments, and prophesied with the rest for all that day and all that night; whilst David and Samuel secretly observed what passed."¹²⁹ Nor is it wonderful that those persons who suddenly receive the Spirit of God, and so signal a mark of grace, should for a time seem alienated from their earthly state of mind.

126. [["The Gates of Alexander (Caspian Gates) were a legendary barrier supposedly built by Alexander the Great in the Caucasus to keep the uncivilized barbarians of the north (typically associated with Gog and Magog) from invading the land to the south. The gates were a popular subject in medieval travel literature, starting with the Alexander Romance in a version from perhaps the 6th century AD" (Wikipedia).]]

127. [["Merlin of the (Caledonian) Forest", i.e., *Merlin Calidonensis*.]]

128. [[Acts of the Apostles, chapter 7, verse 37.]]

129. [[I Samuel chapter 19, verses 19 – 24.]]

Their love of high birth and ancient genealogy

THE Welsh esteem noble birth and generous descent above all things¹³⁰, and are, therefore, more desirous of marrying into noble than rich families. Even the common people retain their genealogy, and can not only readily recount the names of their grandfathers and great-grandfathers, but even refer back to the sixth or seventh generation, or beyond them, in this manner: Rhys, son of Gruffydd, son of Rhys, son of Tewdwr, son of Eineon, son of Owen, son of Howel, son of Cadell, son of Roderic Mawr, and so on¹³¹.

Being particularly attached to family descent, they revenge with vehemence the injuries which may tend to the disgrace of their blood; and being naturally of a vindictive and passionate disposition, they are ever ready to avenge not only recent but ancient affronts; they neither inhabit towns, villages, nor castles, but lead a solitary life in the woods, on the borders of which they do not erect sumptuous palaces, nor lofty stone buildings, but content themselves with small huts made of the boughs of trees twisted together, constructed with little labour and expense, and sufficient to endure throughout the year. They have neither orchards nor gardens, but gladly eat the fruit of both when given to them. The greater

130. "Genealogies were preserved as a principle of necessity under the ancient British constitution. A man's pedigree was in reality his title deed, by which he claimed his birthright in the country. Every one was obliged to show his descent through nine generations, in order to be acknowledged a free native, and by this right he claimed his portion of land in the community. He was affected with respect to legal process in his collateral affinities through nine degrees. For instance, every murder committed had a fine levied on the relations of the murderer, divided into nine degrees; his brother paying the greatest, and the ninth in affinity the least. This fine was distributed in the same way among the relatives of the victim. A person past the ninth descent formed a new family. Every family was represented by its elder; and these elders from every family were delegates to the national council." Owen.

131. [[This is the genealogy of Rhys ap Gruffydd (1132 - 28 April 1197), ruler of the kingdom of Deheubarth in south Wales at the time Gerald was writing.]]

part of their land is laid down to pasturage; little is cultivated, a very small quantity is ornamented with flowers, and a still smaller is sown. They seldom yoke less than four oxen to their ploughs; the driver walks before, but backwards, and when he falls down, is frequently exposed to danger from the refractory oxen. Instead of small sickles in mowing, they make use of a moderate-sized piece of iron formed like a knife, with two pieces of wood fixed loosely and flexibly to the head, which they think a more expeditious instrument; but since

Segnius irritant animos demissa per aures,
Quam quae sunt oculis subjecta fidelibus,¹³²

their mode of using it will be better known by inspection than by any description. The boats¹³³ which they employ in fishing or in crossing the rivers are made of twigs, not oblong nor pointed, but almost round, or rather triangular, covered both within and without with raw hides¹³⁴. When a salmon thrown into one of these boats strikes it hard with his tail, he often oversets it, and endangers both the vessel and its navigator. The fishermen, according to the custom of the country, in going to and from the rivers, carry these boats on their shoulders; on which occasion that famous dealer in fables, Bleddercus, who lived a little before our time, thus mysteriously said: "There is amongst us a people who, when

132. [[Horace, *Ars Poetica*: "What we hear, / With weaker passion will affect the heart, / Than when the faithful eye beholds the part" (tr. Francis).]]

133. The *naviculi* mentioned by Giraldus bear the modern name of coracles, and are much used on the Welsh rivers for the taking of salmon. Their name is derived probably from the Celtic word *corawg*, which signifies a ship [[*corwag*, *corwgl*, *cwrwgl*; (Old) Irish *curach*]]. They are mentioned by the ancient writers. [[The first written reference to a skin-covered craft is provided by Julius Caesar, recounting his military campaign in Spain in 49 B.C. At a time when his communications had been cut by floods and destruction of bridges, "Caesar orders his men to make boats of the kind his experience in Britain the years before had taught him. The keel and ribs were made first, out of light wood; then the rest of the body of the craft was made of wickerwork and covered with skins" (*Commentarii de Bello Civili*, Book 1, chapter 54, tr. Casson). From the reference to the presence of a keel (*carina*), it is argued that this may be a description of a sea-going *curach*, rather than a riverine coracle. More than a hundred years later, Pliny (the Elder, A.D. 23 - 25 August, 79) wrote that, "Even today, on the seas around Britain, there are boats woven [from willow wands] sewn round with leather" (*Naturalis Historia*, book 7, chapter 206).]]

134. [[Modern Welsh coracles - found only in tourist districts - are oval, made of split and interwoven willow twigs, and covered with tarred or bitumastic-painted calico or canvas, or with fibreglass.]]

they go out in search of prey, carry their horses on their backs to the place of plunder; in order to catch their prey, they leap upon their horses, and when it is taken, carry their horses home again upon their shoulders."

Chapter 18

Of the antiquity of their faith, their love of Christianity and devotion

IN ancient times, and about two hundred years before the overthrow of Britain¹³⁵, the Welsh were instructed and confirmed in the faith by Faganus and Damianus, sent into the island at the request of king Lucius by pope Eleutherius¹³⁶, and from that period when Germanus of Auxerre, and Lupus of Troyes, came over on account of the corruption which had crept into the island by the invasion of the Saxons, but particularly with a view of expelling the Pelagian heresy, nothing heretical or contrary to the true faith was to be found amongst the natives¹³⁷. But it is said that some parts of the ardent doctrines are still retained. They give the first piece broken off from every loaf of bread to the poor; they sit down to dinner by three to a dish, in honour of the Trinity. With extended arms and bowing head, they ask a blessing of every monk or priest, or of every person wearing a religious habit. But they desire, above all other nations, the episcopal ordination and unction, by which the grace

135. [[I.e., the Saxon invasions following the departure of the Roman legions, which was completed by 410.]]

136. [[The alleged saints are also variously known as Fugatus, Phaganus, Fagan, or Hager; and Diruvianus, Deruvian, or Dyfan. Their feast day is May 26, but there is no historical documentation of their existence. The remarkable story of King Lucius' letter to Eleutherius (or Eleuterus), pope from about 174 to 189, is found in the *Liber Pontificalium*, a series of papal biographies beginning with St. Peter and continued down to the fifteenth century. According to the *Catholic Encyclopaedia*, entries prior to that for Anastasius II (496 - 498 A.D.) "are full of errors and historically untenable". While there are various other legends, the origins of British Christianity are unknown.]]

137. [[Germanus, Bishop of Auxerre in Gaul (lived c. 378-31 July 448), and Lupus, Bishop of Troyes (ca. 383 - ca. 478), visited Britain in 429 to combat the growth of the Pelagian heresy, which was of Celtic British origin, and not Saxon. Having defeated the British Pelagians in debate, Germanus led the Britons to a victory against a Pictish and Saxon army, at a mountainous site near a river, of which Mold in North Wales is the traditional location.]]

of the spirit is given. They give a tenth of all their property, animals, cattle, and sheep, either when they marry, or go on a pilgrimage, or, by the counsel of the church, are persuaded to amend their lives. This partition of their effects they call the great tithe, two parts of which they give to the church where they were baptised, and the third to the bishop of the diocese. But of all pilgrimages they prefer that to Rome, where they pay the most fervent adoration to the apostolic see. We observe that they show a greater respect than other nations to churches and ecclesiastical persons, to the relics of saints, bells, holy books, and the cross, which they devoutly revere; and hence their churches enjoy more than common tranquillity. For peace is not only preserved towards all animals feeding in churchyards, but at a great distance beyond them, where certain boundaries and ditches have been appointed by the bishops, in order to maintain the security of the sanctuary. But the principal churches to which antiquity has annexed the greater reverence extend their protection to the herds as far as they can go to feed in the morning and return at night. If, therefore, any person has incurred the enmity of his prince, on applying to the church for protection, he and his family will continue to live unmolested; but many persons abuse this indemnity, far exceeding the indulgence of the canon, which in such cases grants only personal safety; and from the places of refuge even make hostile irruptions, and more severely harass the country than the prince himself. Hermits and anchorites more strictly abstinent and more spiritual can nowhere be found; for this nation is earnest in all its pursuits, and neither worse men than the bad, nor better than the good, can be met with.

Happy and fortunate indeed would this nation be, nay, completely blessed, if it had good prelates and pastors, and but one prince, and that prince a good one.

Part 2
BOOK II

PREFACE

HAVING in the former book clearly set forth the character, manners, and customs of the British nation, and having collected and explained everything which could redound to its credit or glory; an attention to order now requires that, in this second part, we should employ our pen in pointing out those particulars in which it seems to transgress the line of virtue and commendation; having first obtained leave to speak the truth, without which history not only loses its authority, but becomes undeserving of its very name. For the painter who professes to imitate nature, loses his reputation, if, by indulging his fancy, he represents only those parts of the subject which best suit him.

Since, therefore, no man is born without faults, and he is esteemed the best whose errors are the least, let the wise man consider everything human as connected with himself; for in worldly affairs there is no perfect happiness under heaven. Evil borders upon good, and vices are confounded with virtues; as the report of good qualities is delightful to a well-disposed mind, so the relation of the contrary should not be offensive. The natural disposition of this nation might have been corrupted and perverted by long exile and poverty; for as poverty extinguisheth many faults, so it often generates failings that are contrary to virtue.

Chapter 1

Of the inconstancy and instability of this nation, and their want of reverence for good faith and oaths

THESE people are no less light in mind than in body, and are by no means to be relied upon. They are easily urged to undertake any action, and are as easily checked from prosecuting it - a people quick in action, but more stubborn in a bad than in a good cause, and constant only in acts of inconstancy. They pay no respect to oaths, faith, or truth; and so lightly do they esteem the covenant of faith, held so inviolable by other nations, that it is usual to sacrifice their faith for nothing, by holding forth the right hand, not only in serious and important concerns, but even on every trifling occasion, and for the confirmation of almost every common assertion. They never scruple at taking a false oath for the sake of any temporary emolument or advantage; so that in civil and ecclesiastical causes, each party, being ready to swear whatever seems expedient to its purpose, endeavours both to prove and defend, although the venerable laws, by which oaths are deemed sacred, and truth is honoured and respected, by favouring the accused and throwing an odium upon the accuser, impose the burden of bringing proofs upon the latter¹³⁸. But to a people so cunning and crafty, this yoke is pleasant, and this burden is light.

138. [[The "venerable laws" by which Wales was governed up to the 16th century (when Parliament stipulated that only English law must be used in Wales - though English *criminal* law had been imposed since the late 13th Century) were those attributed to Hywel ap Cadell, who lived from about 880 to 950 A.D., and who succeeded in temporarily unifying almost the whole of Wales under a single government. The earliest surviving manuscripts of the *Cyfraith Hywel*, "Hywel's Law," date from the early 13th Century, and - since the laws were continually updated at need - are not a wholly reliable guide to Welsh law in Gerald's time or earlier. However, the very existence of a written code ensured a degree of conservatism in maintaining it, and elements of the *Cyfraith Hywel* are very comparable to the old 7th-Century laws of Ireland. "Hywel's Law," whoever truly originated it (there is no contemporary record), was generally regarded as good and just, whence Hywel's appellation, "the Good" ("Hywel Dda"), and was a unifying force throughout mediaeval and early modern Wales. Hywel himself is regarded as having been the most enlightened of Welsh monarchs, and his laws emphasised compassion for the guilty, the need for proof, and the rights of women - unknown in other legal codes of the time.]]

Chapter 2

Their living by plunder, and disregard of the bonds of peace and friendship

¹³⁹THIS nation conceives it right to commit acts of plunder, theft, and robbery, not only against foreigners and hostile nations, but even against their own countrymen. When an opportunity of attacking the enemy with advantage occurs, they respect not the leagues of peace and friendship, preferring base lucre to the solemn obligations of oaths and good faith; to which circumstance Gildas alludes in his book concerning the overthrow of the Britons¹⁴⁰, actuated by the love of truth, and according to the rules of history, not suppressing the vices of his countrymen. "They are neither brave in war, nor faithful in peace." But when Julius Caesar, great as the world itself,

"Territa quaesitis ostendit terga Britannis,"¹⁴¹

139. [[The story is told in the *Vita Gildae auctore Caradoco Lancarbanensi*, Caradog of Llancarfan's *Life of Gildas*, which was written around 1135 A.D. There is no reason to think it historical.]]

140. [[St Gildas, known (from the date of his birth coinciding with that of the Battle of Mount Badon) as *Gildas Badonicus*, lived either through the last half of the fifth century, or the first half of the sixth. His name (Gildas) is otherwise almost completely unknown in ancient and Dark Age writings, and may have been a pseudonym; this would be understandable, given the venom he expressed in his writings against the leaders of contemporary British society. Whatever its origins, his name is preserved through his supposed authorship (according to Bede) of an extended sermon "On the Ruin and Conquest of Britain" (*De Excidio et Conquestu Britanniae*). This is a fierce denunciation of his contemporary "tyrannical" rulers and "undutiful" churchmen, prefaced by a short history of how this awful state of Britain came about. *De Excidio*, a prime source for what passes for "Dark Age" (sub-Roman) British history, is traditionally dated to around 550 A.D., though there are indications that it was actually written some 30 to 35 years earlier.]]

141. [["sought the Britons in dread terror;" Lucan, *Belli Civilis*, II: 572; quoted similarly in Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia Regum Britanniae*, chapter 9.]]

were they not brave under their leader Cassivellaunus¹⁴²? And when Belinus and Brennus added the Roman empire to their conquests¹⁴³? What were they in the time of Constantine, son of our Helen¹⁴⁴? What, in the reign of Aurelius Ambrosius, whom even Eutropius commends¹⁴⁵? What were they in the time of our famous prince Arthur? I will not say fabulous. On the contrary, they, who were almost subdued by the Scots and Picts, often harassed with success the auxiliary Roman legions, and exclaimed, as we learn from Gildas, "The barbarians drove us to the sea, the sea drove us again back to the barbarians; on one side we were subdued, on the other drowned, and here we were put to death. Were they

142. [[Cassivellaunus, the first named individual in British history, was the British war leader who opposed Caesar in his second British campaign in 54 B.C. His harrying tactics failed to prevent Caesar's advance from his landing-point in Kent to the Thames, which the Romans managed to cross into Cassivellaunus' own territory. Betrayed by rival tribes, and besieged by the Roman troops, and with his territories devastated, Cassivellaunus surrendered and was made subject to his rival, Mandubricius, before Caesar returned to Gaul to deal with unrest there. Caesar recounted his campaign against Cassivellaunus in *Commentarii de Bello Gallico*, book 5, chapters 8 - 23. Cassivellaunus also appears in early Welsh literature as Caswallawn, son of Beli Mawr.]]

143. [[According to Geoffrey's *Historia*, Brennius and Belinus were brothers, sons of Dunwallo Molmutius, the legendary lawgiver of Britain. Together they invaded and subjugated Gaul, then separated from one another, with Belinus taking Germany and Brennius Rome. At this point, Geoffrey appears to confuse British Brennius with Brennus of the Senones, a Gaulish tribe who invaded the Balkans and defeated the Greeks at Thermopylae in the late 3rd Century B.C., which accounts for Gerald's form of the name. The names "Belinus" and "Brennus", in various forms, were borne by several historically-documented Celtic leaders, as well as by the British pagan deities Beli and Brân.]]

144. [[Helen, mother of Constantine I, who made Christianity the official religion of the Roman Empire, was reputed in the Middle Ages to have been a British queen. It is more likely, for historical reasons, that she was a barmaid, or even prostitute, from Bythina, i.e., north-west Asia Minor. She married a Roman soldier, Constantius, formally or otherwise, around 270 A.D., and their son Constantine was born a year or so later in Naissus (modern Nish, in Serbia). In 289, Constantius divorced her and married the Emperor Maximian's daughter, Theodora. Adopted by Maximian, Constantius became ruler of the Western half of the empire in 305. Britain had been in revolt, and in 306 Constantius campaigned to consolidate the reinstatement of Roman rule by repelling a Pictish campaign; but he fell ill and died at York. Constantine, who had been campaigning with his father, was proclaimed emperor ("Augustus") by his father's troops. In Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia* (1136), Constantius was assisted in suppressing the British rebellion by King Coel of Colchester, whose daughter Helen he married, becoming King of Britain and fathering Constantine without returning to Rome.]]

not," says he, "at that time brave and praiseworthy?" When attacked and conquered by the Saxons, who originally had been called in as stipendiaries to their assistance, were they not brave¹⁴⁶? But the strongest argument made use of by those who accuse this nation of cowardice, is, that Gildas, a holy man, and a Briton by birth, has handed down to posterity nothing remarkable concerning them, in any of his historical works. We promise, however, a solution of the contrary in our British Topography, if God grants us a continuance of life¹⁴⁷.

As a further proof, it may be necessary to add, that from the time when that illustrious prince of the Britons, mentioned at the beginning of this book¹⁴⁸, totally exhausted the strength of the country, by transporting the whole armed force beyond the seas; that island, which had before been so highly illustrious for its incomparable valour, remained for many subsequent years destitute of men and arms, and exposed to the predatory attacks of pirates and robbers. So distinguished, indeed, were the natives of this island for their bravery, that, by their prowess, that king subdued almost all Cisalpine Gaul, and dared even to make an attack on the Roman empire.

In process of time, the Britons, recovering their long-lost population and knowledge of the use of arms, re-acquired their high and ancient character. Let the different aeras be therefore marked, and the historical accounts will accord. With regard to Gildas, who inveighs so bitterly against his own nation, the Britons affirm that, highly irritated at the death of his brother, the prince of Albania, whom king Arthur had slain, he wrote these invectives, and upon the same occasion threw into the sea

145. [["In fact, however, Eutropius, ends his history in 364, 200 years before the aera of Ambrose; whose Latin name, moreover, was Ambrosius Aurelianus, not Aurelius Ambrosius, as he was, first, denominated by Geoffrey of Monmouth; so that the bishop of Saint-David's [i.e., Gerald] had swallowed the gross falsehood of the bishop of Saint Asaph" (Ritson, *The life of King Arthur: from ancient historians and authentic documents*). Eutropius, a Roman pagan historian who flourished in the latter half of the fourth century, wrote a *Breviarium historiae Romanae*, which naturally ended before his own death. Ambrosius Aurelianus was reputed (in Geoffrey's *Historia*) to be the second son of the Emperor Constantine. Historians generally accept that he was a Romano-British war leader who, according to Gildas, won a significant battle against the Germanic invaders in the mid- or late fifth century.]]

146. [[In Gildas' *Excidio*, chapter 23, Germanic (Saxon) warriors first enter Britain in the early or mid 400s as mercenaries invited by the British Overlord, Vortigern, to counter the threat of the Picts from the north. Saxons and Britons subsequently fall into combat over the matter of pay.]]

147. [[Sadly, so far as is known, Gerald never wrote this work.]]

148. [[I.e., the Roman general Maximus.]]

many excellent books, in which he had described the actions of Arthur, and the celebrated deeds of his countrymen; from which cause it arises, that no authentic account of so great a prince is any where to be found.

Chapter 3

Of their deficiency in battle, and base and dishonourable flight

IN war this nation is very severe in the first attack, terrible by their clamour and looks, filling the air with horrid shouts and the deep-toned clangour of very long trumpets; swift and rapid in their advances and frequent throwing of darts. Bold in the first onset, they cannot bear a repulse, being easily thrown into confusion as soon as they turn their backs; and they trust to flight for safety, without attempting to rally, which the poet thought reprehensible in martial conflicts:

"Ignavum scelus est tantum fuga;"¹⁴⁹

and elsewhere -

"In vitium culpae ducit fuga, si caret arte."¹⁵⁰

The character given to the Teutones in the Roman History, may be applied to this people. "In their first attack they are more than men, in the second, less than women." Their courage manifests itself chiefly in the retreat, when they frequently return, and, like the Parthians, shoot their arrows behind them¹⁵¹; and, as after success and victory in battle, even cowards boast of their courage, so, after a reverse of fortune, even the

149.[[Lucan, *Bellum civile* ("Pharsalia"), 9.283: "'Tis a dastard crime, flight without slaughter" (tr. Ridley).]]

150.[["In vitium ducit culpae fuga ... ;" Flaccus, *De Arte Poetica*, 1.31: "The avoiding of an error leads to a fault, if it lack skill" (tr. Smart).]]

151.[[Parthia was the district of what is now north-eastern Iran. As a military tactic, mounted Parthian archers would feign a retreat, then, as the enemy pursued them, turn in the saddle and shoot backwards - the "Parthian shot" (mutated in modern times into a "parting shot"). At the battle of Carrhae (53 B.C.), the Parthian shot was the chief means by which the Roman general, Crassus, was defeated (Plutarch, *Bioi Parallèlloi: Crassus*).]]

bravest men are not allowed their due claims of merit. Their mode of fighting consists in chasing the enemy or in retreating. This light-armed people, relying more on their activity than on their strength, cannot struggle for the field of battle, enter into close engagement, or endure long and severe actions, such as the poet describes:

"Jam clypeo clypeus, umbone repellitur umbo,
Ense minax ensis, pede pes, et cuspide cuspis."¹⁵²

Though defeated and put to flight on one day, they are ready to resume the combat on the next, neither dejected by their loss, nor by their dishonour; and although, perhaps, they do not display great fortitude in open engagements and regular conflicts, yet they harass the enemy by ambuscades and nightly sallies. Hence, neither oppressed by hunger or cold, nor fatigued by martial labours, nor despondent in adversity, but ready, after a defeat, to return immediately to action, and again endure the dangers of war; they are as easy to overcome in a single battle, as difficult to subdue in a protracted war. The poet Claudian thus speaks of a people similar in disposition:-

"Dum pereunt, meminere mali; si corda parumper
respirare sinas, nullo tot funera sensu
praetereunt, tantique levis iactura cruoris."¹⁵³

152. [["iam clipeus clipeis, umbone repellitur umbo ... ;" Statius, *Thebaid*, 8.398: "Then shield thrusts against shield, boss upon boss, / threatening sword on sword, foot against foot and lance on lance" (tr. Mozley); famously parodied by Pope in *The Rape of the Lock*, 101 - 102: "Where wigs with wigs, with sword-knots sword-knots strive, / Beaux banish beaux, and coaches coaches drive."]]

153. [[Claudian, *Invectiva in Eutropium*, 2.20.116 - 118; : "But they only remember evil while they suffer it; give them a moment's respite and all their slaughter fades from their minds unfelt; little they reckon of bloodshed that is past."]]

Chapter 4

Their ambitious seizure of lands, and dissensions among brothers

THIS nation is, above all others, addicted to the digging up of boundary ditches, removing the limits, transgressing landmarks, and extending their territory by every possible means. So great is their disposition towards this common violence, that they scruple not to claim as their hereditary right, those lands which are held under lease, or at will, on condition of planting, or by any other title, even although indemnity had been publicly secured on oath to the tenant by the lord proprietor of the soil. Hence arise suits and contentions, murders and conflagrations, and frequent fratricides, increased, perhaps, by the ancient national custom of brothers dividing their property amongst each other¹⁵⁴. Another heavy grievance also prevails; the princes entrust the education of their children to the care of the principal men of their country, each of whom, after the death of his father, endeavours, by every possible means, to

154. [[Similar customs regarding the division of inheritance obtained amongst the Nordic and Germanic peoples (including the Jutes who settled Kent, among whom it was known as “gavelkind”), and were among the causes of the Viking raids of the eighth, ninth, and tenth centuries. Under Welsh law, land was not held by individuals but by the *cenedd* (or *cenedd*, the tribe or clan. The *priodwyr* (“ownership men” – but in modern Welsh, “husbands”, as *priodferched* means “brides”), the older generation of the *cenedd*, held the land in trust for the community, and were not allowed in law to sell it or otherwise remove it from the ownership of their kin. *Control* of the land was a different matter, and often went to the strongest arm, with social rank being a large factor in deciding who that might be. Inheritance in such cases was either by “partible inheritance” (*cyfran*), under which land was shared equally amongst the sons (i.e., gavelkind); or, if there were no sons, by a complex set of inheritance laws. These laws were greatly inconvenient to certain Welsh gentry, whom they prevented from acquiring land for their own profit, and who consequently were eager advocates of union with England and of adoption of English land ownership laws. Nonetheless, despite some tinkering by Edward I, the Welsh laws remained essentially intact until as late as the mid-sixteenth century, when they were swept away by the Acts of Union.]]

exalt his own charge above his neighbours. From which cause great disturbances have frequently arisen amongst brothers, and terminated in the most cruel and unjust murders; and on which account friendships are found to be more sincere between foster-brothers, than between those who are connected by the natural ties of brotherhood. It is also remarkable, that brothers shew more affection to one another when dead, than when living; for they persecute the living even unto death, but revenge the deceased with all their power.

Chapter 5

Their great exaction, and want of moderation

WHERE they find plenty, and can exercise their power, they levy the most unjust exactions. Immoderate in their love of food and intoxicating drink, they say with the Apostle, "We are instructed both to abound, and to suffer need;" but do not add with him, "becoming all things to all men, that I might by all means save some."¹⁵⁵ As in times of scarcity their abstinence and parsimony are too severe, so, when seated at another man's table, after a long fasting, (like wolves and eagles, who, like them, live by plunder, and are rarely satisfied,) their appetite is immoderate. They are therefore penurious in times of scarcity, and extravagant in times of plenty; but no man, as in England, mortgages his property for the gluttonous gratification of his own appetite. They wish, however, that all people would join with them in their bad habits and expenses; as the commission of crimes reduces to a level all those who are concerned in the perpetration of them.

155.[[Gerald has conflated passages from two of St Paul's epistles: "... every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need... ." (Philippians chapter 4, verse 12); and, "I have become all things to all people so that by all possible means I might save some of them" (1 Corinthians chapter 9, verse 22).]]

Chapter 6

Concerning the crime of incest, and the abuse of churches by succession and participation

THE crime of incest hath so much prevailed, not only among the higher, but among the lower orders of this people, that, not having the fear of God before their eyes, they are not ashamed of intermarrying with their relations, even in the third degree of consanguinity¹⁵⁶. They generally abuse these dispensations with a view of appeasing those enmities which so often subsist between them, because "their feet are swift to shed blood,"¹⁵⁷ and from their love of high descent, which they so ardently

156. [[The *Britannica Concise Encyclopedia* defines "incest" as, "Sexual relations between persons who, because of the nature of their kinship ties, are prohibited by law or custom from intermarrying." Although almost all societies have developed taboos against incest, the exact definition of the "kinship ties" that would result in an incestuous relationship has differed both with place and with time. For the generality of the Catholic church in Gerald's time, the "forbidden degrees of kinship" were defined by the Old Testament, specifically by the regulations in the book of Leviticus. Leviticus explicitly condemns sexual relations between a man and his mother (18:7), stepmother (18:8), sister (18:9), granddaughter (18:10), aunt (18:12-14), daughter-in-law (18:15), sister-in-law (18:16), stepdaughter and step-granddaughter (18:17), and wife's sister during the wife's lifetime (18:18). Notably, the list does not include daughters, a deficiency which has been generally filled by interpolating them as "obviously intended" members of the list. More to the present point, the list also omits cousins, whether of the first degree (sharing a grandparent), second degree (sharing a great-grandparent, i.e., "second cousins"), or third degree (sharing a great-great-grandparent, i.e., "third cousins"). However, the list opens by condemning sexual intercourse with *any* "close relative"; and different interpretations have been placed on this at different times. Although Gerald was scandalised at the thought of marriage between third cousins, there was no scandal in nineteenth-century England when Queen Victoria married her first cousin, Albert, though by later twentieth-century law, such a marriage would be incestuous and illegal. Incest within "forbidden" degrees of relationship did occur in mediaeval Wales, as in other Christian societies, and was generally regarded with aversion, as also in other Christian societies. It was in the wider interpretation of "close relative" that Welsh custom, and law, differed from English custom and law.]]

affect and covet, they unite themselves to their own people, refusing to intermarry with strangers, and arrogantly presuming on their own superiority of blood and family. They do not engage in marriage, until they have tried, by previous cohabitation, the disposition, and particularly the fecundity, of the person with whom they are engaged¹⁵⁸. An ancient custom also prevails of hiring girls from their parents at a certain price, and a stipulated penalty, in case of relinquishing their connection.

Their churches have almost as many parsons and sharers as there are principal men in the parish. The sons, after the decease of their fathers, succeed to the ecclesiastical benefices, not by election, but by hereditary right possessing and polluting the sanctuary of God. And if a prelate should by chance presume to appoint or institute any other person, the people would certainly revenge the injury upon the institutor and the instituted. With respect to these two excesses of incest and succession, which took root formerly in Armorica¹⁵⁹, and are not yet eradicated, Ildebert, bishop of Le Mans¹⁶⁰, in one of his epistles, says, "that he was present with a British priest at a council summoned with a view of putting an end to the enormities of this nation:" hence it appears that these vices have for a long time prevailed both in Britany and Britain. The words of the Psalmist may not inaptly be applied to them; "They are corrupt and become abominable in their doings, there is none that doeth

157. [[St Paul, Romans chapter 3, verse 15]]

158. [[Welsh law regarded marriage as primarily a contract, rather than a sacrament, and, "According to the tractate known as *Cyfraith y Gwragedd* (The Welsh Law of Women), sexual intercourse rather than a religious ceremony marked this important *rite de passage*. The situation was the same in England where a ceremony could act as proof of the couple's commitment to their sexual union. As Dafydd Jenkins (1980:86) states: 'It must be remembered that neither ecclesiastical nor secular law in medieval England regarded a religious ceremony as essential to the validity of a marriage: the commitment of the parties to each other was what created the union, and a religious ceremony was of [only] legal importance as providing notorious evidence of a commitment which might otherwise be very difficult to prove'" (*Cyfraith y Gwragedd/The Welsh Law of Women*, Department of Welsh, University of Wales, Lampeter). Since marriage was a civil contract, not a religious sacrament, divorce was perfectly possible, with the ex-wife entitled to a payment from her ex-husband, amounting to half his possessions if the marriage had endured seven years or more. An act of sexual intercourse resulting in pregnancy automatically meant that the couple were married, so illegitimacy was an unknown concept. As late as the nineteenth century, these "relaxed" attitudes to sexual relationships were still scandalising the English.]]

159. [[I.e., Brittany]]

160. [[Ildebert of Lavardin, bishop of Le Mans and archbishop of Tours, died in 1133. His particular claim to fame is that he was the first to use the term "purgatory" in writing (sermon LXXXV, "Jerusalem quae aedificatur".]]

good, no, not one: they are all gone out of the way, they are altogether become abominable," etc.¹⁶¹

161. [[Conflating Psalm 14, verse 3, and Paul's epistle to the Romans, chapter 3, verse 12.]]

Of their sins, and the consequent loss of Britain and of Troy

MOREOVER, through their sins, and particularly that detestable and wicked vice of Sodom, as well as by divine vengeance, they lost Britain as they formerly lost Troy¹⁶². For we read in the Roman history, that the emperor Constantine having resigned the city and the Western empire to the blessed Sylvester and his successors, with an intention of rebuilding Troy, and there establishing the chief seat of the Eastern Empire, heard a voice, saying, "Dost thou go to rebuild Sodom?"¹⁶³ upon which, he altered his intention, turned his ships and standards towards Byzantium, and there fixing his seat of empire, gave his own propitious name to the city¹⁶⁴. The British history informs us, that Mailgon, king of the Britons¹⁶⁵, and many others, were addicted to this vice; that enormity, however, had entirely ceased for so long a time, that the recollection of it was nearly worn out. But since that, as if the time of repentance was almost expired, and because the nation, by its warlike successes and acquisition of territory, has in our times unusually increased in population and strength, they boast in their turn, and most confidently and unanimously affirm, that in a short time their countrymen shall return to the island, and, according to the prophecies of Merlin, the nation, and even the name, of foreigners, shall be extinguished in the island, and the

162. [[The story of the "Trojan" origins of Britain first appears in the *Historia Brit[t]onum*, a compilation of "history" and "geography" attributed to a Welsh monk named Nennius who lived in the eighth and ninth centuries. The *Historia* recounts how "The island of Britain derives its name from Brutus, a Roman consul". Brutus was supposedly the grandson or great-grandson of Aeneas, who had escaped the fall of Troy and settled in Italy; Aeneas' son, Ascanius, founded Alba Longa, the precursor of Rome. The fall of Troy may be attributed (in legend) to the wrath of the gods, but this does not seem to have involved Sodomy on the part of the Trojans; Gerald and his contemporaries inferred divine wrath on the basis of the hints of homosexual love among both the Greeks and the Trojans in the *Iliad* and other ancient poetry concerning the Trojan War and its aftermath.]]

Britons shall exult again in their ancient name and privileges. But to me it appears far otherwise; for since

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163. [[In the biblical book of Genesis, Sodom is one of the "Cities of the Plain" (Genesis chapter 13, verse 12) situated close to the Dead Sea, which excited the wrath of God and were destroyed by fire falling from heaven (Genesis chapter 19, verses 24 - 25). Before sending the fire, however, God first sent two (or three) angels to assess the situation; but the men of Sodom wished to (in the phraseology of the King James version) "know" them. The angels protected themselves by blinding the Sodomites, and the subsequent destruction of Sodom and its fellow cities is generally interpreted as punishment for this sin of (would-be) male homosexual rape. However, we find in chapter 18 of Genesis that God had already heard an outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah (presumably from the people round about), that "their sin is very grievous" (verse 20), and that His purpose in sending the angels was to see whether the claims of the Sodomites' sins were true; but we are not told, in Genesis 18, what those sins were. It was the prophet Ezekiel who wrote down the charge sheet against the Cities of the Plain: that they "were arrogant, overfed and unconcerned; they did not help the poor and needy. They were haughty and did detestable things" (Ezekiel chapter 16, verses 49 - 50). "Detestable things" might or might not include "sodomy"; but it is the sins of arrogance and selfishness which Ezekiel particularly focuses on.]]
164. [[Constantine I, "The Great" (272 - 337 A.D.), was the first Christian Roman emperor. The early church historian, Salminius Hermias Sozomen (died c. 448 A.D.) records in his *Church History* (Book II, chapter 3) that Constantine "resolved upon founding a city which should be called by his own name, and should be equal in celebrity to Rome. With this intention, he repaired to a plain at the foot of Troy, near the Hellespont, above the tomb of Ajax, where, it is said, the Achaians [Greeks] had their naval stations and tents while besieging Troy; and here he laid the plan of a large and beautiful city, and built the gates on an elevated spot of ground, whence they are still visible from the sea to those sailing by. But when he had advanced thus far, God appeared to him by night, and commanded him to seek another spot. Led by the hand of God, he arrived at Byzantium in Thrace, beyond Chalcedon in Bithynia, and here he was desired to build his city and to render it worthy of the name of Constantine."]]
165. [[This is "Maelgwn Gwynedd" (c. 480 - c. 547 A.D.), who ruled at the time when the Anglo-Saxons were extending control over much of Britain. Maelgwn surrounded himself with an entourage of bards and artisans who wrote glowingly of his achievements; in legend, it was during his reign that the first Eisteddfod was held. At the time of his death from yellow fever, he had established himself as the pre-eminent ruler of the region. This may account for Geoffrey of Monmouth's description of him as "one of the handsomest of men in Britain, a great scourge of tyrants, and a man of great strength, extraordinary munificence, and matchless valour, but addicted very much to the detestable vice of sodomy... He also possessed the whole island, to which, after a cruel war, he added the six provincial islands, viz. Ireland, Iceland, Gothland, the Orkneys, Norway, and Dacia" (from J.A. Giles' translation of Geoffrey's *History of the Kings of Britain*).]]

“Luxuriant animi rebus plerumque secundis,
Nec facile est aequa commoda mente pati;¹⁶⁶”

And because

“Non habet unde suum paupertas pascat amorem, ...
Divitiis alitur luxuriosus amor”¹⁶⁷.

So that their abstinence from that vice, which in their prosperity they could not resist, may be attributed more justly to their poverty and state of exile than to their sense of virtue. For they cannot be said to have repented, when we see them involved in such an abyss of vices, perjury, theft, robbery, rapine, murders, fratricides, adultery, and incest, and become every day more entangled and ensnared in evil-doing; so that the words of the prophet Hosea may be truly applied to them, "There is no truth, nor mercy," etc.

Other matters of which they boast are more properly to be attributed to the diligence and activity of the Norman kings than to their own merits or power. For previous to the coming of the Normans, when the English kings contented themselves with the sovereignty of Britain alone, and employed their whole military force in the subjugation of this people, they almost wholly extirpated them¹⁶⁸; as did king Offa¹⁶⁹, who by a long and extensive dyke separated the British from the English; Ethelfrid¹⁷⁰ also, who demolished the noble city of Legions¹⁷¹, and put to death the monks of the celebrated monastery at Banchor, who had been called in to promote the success of the Britons by their prayers; and lastly Harold, who himself on foot, with an army of light-armed infantry, and conforming to the customary diet of the country, so bravely penetrated through every part of Wales, that he scarcely left a man alive in it; and as a memorial of his signal victories many stones may be found in Wales

166. [[Ovid, *Ars Amatoria* II: "Our souls generally expand in prosperity; and to bear good fortune with equanimity is no easy task."]]

167. [[Ovid, *Remedia Amoris* 749, 746 : "Poverty doth lack wherewithal to feed lust ... Voluptuous love is nurtured by riches"]]

168. [[Despite Gerald's comment, the British populace was not "nearly extirpated" by the English; besides the continuing British kingdoms in what are now Wales and the Scottish lowlands, much of the English conquest consisted of an assimilation of "English" culture by a remanant "Welsh" populace in the conquered territories.]]

169. [[Ruler of the midland kingdom of Mercia from 757 until his death in July 796]]

170. [[Æthelfrith, king of Northumbria, c. 593 until his death c. 616]]

171. By the city of Legions Chester is here meant, not Caerleon.

bearing this inscription:- *HIC VICTOR FUIT HAROLDUS* – “HERE HAROLD CONQUERED.”¹⁷²

To these bloody and recent victories of the English may be attributed the peaceable state of Wales during the reigns of the three first Norman kings; when the nation increased in population, and being taught the use of arms and the management of horses by the English and Normans (with whom they had much intercourse, by following the court, or by being sent as hostages), took advantage of the necessary attention which the three succeeding kings were obliged to pay to their foreign possessions, and once more lifting up their crests, recovered their lands, and spurned the yoke that had formerly been imposed upon them.

172. Of the stones inscribed *hic victor fuit haroldus*, “here Harold conquered,” no original, I believe, remains extant: but at the village of Trelech. in Monmouthshire, there is a modern pedestal bearing the above inscription. See the description and engraving in Coxe's *Monmouthshire*, p. 234.

In what manner this nation is to be overcome

THE PRINCE WHO WOULD WISH TO subdue this nation, and govern it peaceably, must use this method. He must be determined to apply a diligent and constant attention to this purpose for one year at least; for a people who with a collected force will not openly attack the enemy in the field, nor wait to be besieged in castles, is not to be overcome at the first onset, but to be worn out by prudent delay and patience. Let him divide their strength, and by bribes and promises endeavour to stir up one against the other, knowing the spirit of hatred and envy which generally prevails amongst them; and in the autumn let not only the marches, but also the interior part of the country be strongly fortified with castles, provisions, and confidential families. In the meantime the purchase of corn, cloth, and salt, with which they are usually supplied from England, should be strictly interdicted; and well-manned ships placed as a guard on the coast, to prevent their importation of these articles from Ireland or the Severn sea, and to facilitate the supply of his own army. Afterwards, when the severity of winter approaches, when the trees are void of leaves, and the mountains no longer afford pasturage - when they are deprived of any hopes of plunder, and harassed on every side by the repeated attacks of the enemy - let a body of light-armed infantry penetrate into their woody and mountainous retreats, and let these troops be supported and relieved by others; and thus by frequent changes, and replacing the men who are either fatigued or slain in battle, this nation may be ultimately subdued; nor can it be overcome without the above precautions, nor without great danger and loss of men. Though many of the English hired troops may perish in a day of battle, money will procure as many or more on the morrow for the same service; but to the Welsh, who have neither foreign nor stipendiary troops, the loss is for the time irreparable. In these matters, therefore, as an artificer is to be trusted in his trade, so attention is to be paid to the counsel of those who, having been long conversant in similar concerns, are become acquainted with the

manners and customs of their country, and whom it greatly interests, that an enemy, for whom during long and frequent conflicts they have contracted an implacable hatred, should by their assistance be either weakened or destroyed. Happy should I have termed the borders of Wales inhabited by the English, if their kings, in the government of these parts, and in their military operations against the enemy, had rather employed the marchers and barons of the country, than adopted the counsels and policy of the people of Anjou and the Normans. In this, as well as in every other military expedition, either in Ireland or in Wales, the natives of the marches, from the constant state of warfare in which they are engaged, and whose manners are formed from the habits of war, are bold and active, skilful on horseback, quick on foot, not nice as to their diet, and ever prepared when necessity requires to abstain both from corn and wine. By such men were the first hostile attacks made upon Wales as well as Ireland, and by such men alone can their final conquest be accomplished. For the Flemings, Normans, Coterells, and Bragmans, are good and well-disciplined soldiers in their own country; but the Gallic soldiery is known to differ much from the Welsh and Irish. In their country the battle is on level, here on rough ground; there in an open field, here in forests; there they consider their armour as an honour, here as a burden; there soldiers are taken prisoners, here they are beheaded; there they are ransomed, here they are put to death. Where, therefore, the armies engage in a flat country, a heavy and complex armour, made of cloth and iron, both protects and decorates the soldier; but when the engagement is in narrow defiles, in woods or marshes, where the infantry have the advantage over the cavalry, a light armour is preferable. For light arms afford sufficient protection against unarmed men, by whom victory is either lost or won at the first onset; where it is necessary that an active and retreating enemy should be overcome by a certain proportional quantity of moderate armour; whereas with a more complex sort, and with high and curved saddles, it is difficult to dismount, more so to mount, and with the greatest difficulty can such troops march, if required, with the infantry. In order, therefore, that

"Singula quaeque locum teneant sortita decenter"¹⁷³,

173. [[Horace, *Ars Poetica* 92: "Each style [be] allotted to its proper place, [Let each appear with its peculiar grace]" (tr. Colman). Ben Johnson used this line, referring to the suitability of different literary genres to different contexts, as a motto on the title-page of his collected *Works*.]]

we maintain it is necessary to employ heavy-armed and strong troops against men heavily armed, depending entirely upon their natural strength, and accustomed to fight in an open plain; but against light-armed and active troops, who prefer rough ground, men accustomed to such conflicts, and armed in a similar manner, must be employed. But let the cities and fortresses on the Severn, and the whole territory on its western banks towards Wales, occupied by the English, as well as the provinces of Shropshire and Cheshire, which are protected by powerful armies, or by any other special privileges and honourable independence, rejoice in the provident bounty of their prince. There should be a yearly examination of the warlike stores, of the arms, and horses, by good and discreet men deputed for that purpose, and who, not intent on its plunder and ruin, interest themselves in the defence and protection of their country. By these salutary measures, the soldiers, citizens, and the whole mass of the people, being instructed and accustomed to the use of arms, liberty may be opposed by liberty, and pride be checked by pride. For the Welsh, who are neither worn out by laborious burdens, nor molested by the exactions of their lords, are ever prompt to avenge an injury. Hence arise their distinguished bravery in the defence of their country; hence their readiness to take up arms and to rebel. Nothing so much excites, encourages, and invites the hearts of men to probity as the cheerfulness of liberty; nothing so much dejects and dispirits them as the oppression of servitude. This portion of the kingdom, protected by arms and courage, might be of great use to the prince, not only in these or the adjacent parts, but, if necessity required, in more remote regions; and although the public treasury might receive a smaller annual revenue from these provinces, yet the deficiency would be abundantly compensated by the peace of the kingdom and the honour of its sovereign; especially as the heavy and dangerous expenses of one military expedition into Wales usually amount to the whole income among from the revenues of the province.

In what manner Wales, when conquered, should be governed

AS THEREFORE THIS NATION IS TO BE subdued by resolution in the manner proposed, so when subdued, its government must be directed by moderation, according to the following plan. Let the care of it be committed to a man of a firm and determined mind; who during the time of peace, by paying due obedience to the laws, and respect to the government, may render it firm and stable. For like other nations in a barbarous state, this people, although they are strangers to the principles of honour, yet above all things desire to be honoured; and approve and respect in others that truth which they themselves do not profess. Whenever the natural inconstancy of their indisposition shall induce them to revolt, let punishment instantly follow the offence; but when they shall have submitted themselves again to order, and made proper amends for their faults (as it is the custom of bad men to remember wrath after quarrels), let their former transgression be overlooked, and let them enjoy security and respect, as long as they continue faithful. Thus, by mild treatment they will be invited to obedience and the love of peace, and the thought of certain punishment will deter them from rash attempts. We have often observed persons who, confounding these matters, by complaining of faults, depressing for services, flattering in war, plundering in peace, despoiling the weak, paying respect to revolters, by thus rendering all things confused, have at length been confounded themselves. Besides, as circumstances which are foreseen do less mischief, and as that state is happy which thinks of war in the time of peace, let the wise man be upon his guard, and prepared against the approaching inconveniences of war, by the construction of forts, the widening of passes through woods, and the providing of a trusty household. For those who are cherished and sustained during the time of peace, are more ready to come forward in times of danger, and are more confidently to be depended upon; and as a nation unsubdued ever meditates plots under the disguise of

friendship, let not the prince or his governor entrust the protection of his camp or capital to their fidelity. By the examples of many remarkable men, some of whom have been cruelly put to death, and others deprived of their castles and dignities, through their own neglect and want of care, we may see, that the artifices of a crafty and subdued nation are much more to be dreaded than their open warfare; their good-will than their anger, their honey than their gall, their malice than their attack, their treachery than their aggression, and their pretended friendship more than their open enmity. A prudent and provident man therefore should contemplate in the misfortune of others what he ought himself to avoid; correction taught by example is harmless, as Ennodius¹⁷⁴ says: "The ruin of predecessors instructs those who succeed; and a former miscarriage becomes a future caution."¹⁷⁵ If a well-disposed prince should wish these great designs to be accomplished without the effusion of blood, the marches, as we before mentioned, must be put into a state of defence on all sides, and all intercourse by sea and land interdicted; some of the Welsh may be stirred up to deadly feuds, by means of stipends, and by transferring the property of one person to another; and thus worn out with hunger, and a want of the necessaries of life, and harassed by frequent murders and implacable enmities, they will at last be compelled to surrender.

There are three things which ruin this nation, and prevent its enjoying the satisfaction of a fruitful progeny. First, because both the natural and legitimate sons endeavour to divide the paternal inheritance amongst themselves; from which cause, as we have before observed, continual fratricides take place. Secondly, because the education of their sons is committed to the care of the high-born people of the country, who, on the death of their fathers, endeavour by all possible means to exalt their pupil; from whence arise murders, conflagrations, and almost a total destruction of the country. And, thirdly, because from the pride and obstinacy of their disposition, they will not (like other nations) subject themselves to the dominion of one lord and king.

174. In one MS. of Giraldus in the British Museum, this name is written *Ovidius*.

175. [[Magnus Felix Ennodius (A.D. 474 - July 17, 521), Bishop of Pavia, was a Latin rhetorician and poet who is regarded as one of the best representatives of the two-fold tendency (pagan and Christian) of 5th-century literature, and of the Gallo-Roman clergy who upheld the cause of civilization and classical literature against the inroads of barbarism. He wrote numerous works on a diversity of subjects; but this editor has been unable to trace the specific quotation here given.]]

Chapter 10

In what manner this nation may resist and revolt

HAVING HITHERTO SO PARTIALLY and elaborately spoken in favour of the English, and being equally connected by birth with each nation, justice demands that we should argue on both sides; let us therefore, at the close of our work, turn our attention towards the Welsh, and briefly, but effectually, instruct them in the art of resistance. If the Welsh were more commonly accustomed to the Gallic mode of arming, and depended more on steady fighting than on their agility; if their princes were unanimous and inseparable in their defence; or rather, if they had only one prince, and that a good one; this nation situated in so powerful, strong, and inaccessible a country, could hardly ever be completely overcome. If, therefore, they would be inseparable, they would become insuperable, being assisted by these three circumstances; a country well defended by nature, a people both contented and accustomed to live upon little, a community whose nobles as well as privates are instructed in the use of arms; and especially as the English fight for power, the Welsh for liberty; the one to procure gain, the other to avoid loss; the English hirelings for money, the Welsh patriots for their country. The English, I say, fight in order to expel the natural inhabitants from the island, and secure to themselves the possession of the whole; but the Welsh maintain the conflict, that they, who have so long enjoyed the sovereignty of the whole kingdom, may at least find a hiding place in the worst corner of it, amongst woods and marshes; and, banished, as it were, for their offences, may there in a state of poverty, for a limited time, perform penance for the excesses they committed in the days of their prosperity. For the perpetual remembrance of their former greatness, the recollection of their Trojan descent, and the high and continued majesty of the kingdom of Britain, may draw forth many a latent spark of animosity, and encourage the daring spirit of rebellion. Hence during the military expedition which king Henry II. made in our days against South Wales, an old Welshman at Pencadair, who had faithfully adhered to him, being

desired to give his opinion about the royal army, and whether he thought that of the rebels would make resistance, and what would be the final event of this war, replied, "This nation, O king, may now, as in former times, be harassed, and in a great measure weakened and destroyed by your and other powers, and it will often prevail by its laudable exertions; but it can never be totally subdued through the wrath of man, unless the wrath of God shall concur. Nor do I think, that any other nation than this of Wales, or any other language, whatever may hereafter come to pass, shall, in the day of severe examination before the Supreme Judge, answer for this corner of the earth."

1. ENVOI

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Ezra Meeker

Ox-Team Days on the Oregon Trail

The Oregon Trail--what suggestion the name carries of the heroic toil of pioneers! Yet a few years' ago the route of the trail was only vaguely known. Then public interest was awakened by the report that one of the very men who had made the trip to Oregon in the old days was traversing the trail once more, moving with ox team and covered wagon from his home in the state of Washington, and marking the old route as he went. The man with the ox team was Ezra Meeker. He went on to the capital, where Mr. Roosevelt, then President, met him with joy. Then he traversed the long trail once more with team and wagon--back to that Northwest which he had so long made his home. This book gives Mr. Meeker's story of his experiences on the Oregon Trail when it was new, and again when, advanced in years, he retraced the journey of his youth that Americans might ever know where led the footsteps of the pioneers. The publication of this book in its Pioneer Life Series carries forward one of the cherished purposes of World Book Company--to supply as a background to the study of American history interesting and authentic narratives based on the personal experiences of brave men and women who helped to push the frontier of our country across the continent.

Musashi Miyamoto

The Book of Five Rings

Miyamoto Musashi's *Go Rin no Sho* or the book of five rings, is considered a classic treatise on military strategy, much like Sun Tzu's *The Art of War* and Chanakya's *Arthashastra*.

The five "books" refer to the idea that there are different elements of battle, just as there are different physical elements in life, as described by Buddhism, Shinto, and other Eastern religions.

Through the book Musashi defends his thesis: a man who conquers himself is ready to take it on on the world, should need arise.

Rafael Sabatini

The Historical Nights' Entertainment

In approaching "The Historical Nights' Entertainment" I set myself the task of reconstructing, in the fullest possible detail and with all

the colour available from surviving records, a group of more or less famous events. I would select for my purpose those which were in themselves bizarre and resulting from the interplay of human passions, and whilst relating each of these events in the form of a story, I would compel that story scrupulously to follow the actual, recorded facts without owing anything to fiction, and I would draw upon my imagination, if at all, merely as one might employ colour to fill in the outlines which history leaves grey, taking care that my colour should be as true to nature as possible. For dialogue I would depend upon such scraps of actual speech as were chronicled in each case, amplifying it by translating into terms of speech the paraphrases of contemporary chroniclers.

Rafael Sabatini

The Historical Nights Entertainment, Second Series

Alexandre Dumas

The Cenci

Alexandre Dumas

The Borgias

Alexandre Dumas

Ali Pacha

Henry David Thoreau

Walden

Walden (also known as Life in the Woods) by Henry David Thoreau is one of the best-known non-fiction books written by an American. Published in 1854, it details Thoreau's life for two years and two months in second-growth forest around the shores of Walden Pond, not far from his friends and family in Concord, Massachusetts. Walden was written so that the stay appears to be a year, with expressed seasonal divisions. Thoreau called it an experiment in simple living.

Walden is neither a novel nor a true autobiography, but a social critique of the Western World, with each chapter heralding some aspect of humanity that needed to be either renounced or praised. The work is part personal declaration of independence, social experiment, voyage of spiritual discovery, and manual for self reliance. (from Wikipedia)

Giraldus Cambrensis

The Itinerary of Archbishop Baldwin through Wales

A mediaeval Norman-Welsh cleric recounts his adventures travelling through his homeland, recruiting for the Third Crusade.

Hammurabi

The Code of Hammurabi

The Code of Hammurabi (Codex Hammurabi) is a well-preserved ancient law code, created ca. 1790 BC (middle chronology) in ancient Babylon. It was enacted by the sixth Babylonian king, Hammurabi. One nearly complete example of the Code survives today, inscribed on a seven foot, four inch tall basalt stele in the Akkadian language in the cuneiform script. One of the first written codes of law in recorded history. These laws were written on a stone tablet standing over eight feet tall (2.4 meters) that was found in 1901.



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