

The Second Voyage of Brendan

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Life of Brendan of Clonfert

Translated by

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xxxii. *Here followeth the Second Voyage.*

(93) Then Brendan and his company went back again over the surface of the sea and great ocean. They had not been long on this voyage when a sudden sickness seized their smith, and he was at the point of death. Brendan said to him : ‘ Why dost thou [1] wonder ?’ said he. ‘ Depart to the heavenly kingdom as thou hast ever sought for thyself up to this time ; or if thou desirest to remain longer in the world, I will pray to God for thee, and He will be thy health.’ The smith said : ‘ I hear the voice of the Lord calling me.’

(94) When he had received the body of Christ, and His flesh and blood, he went to heaven. There was then a great questioning among the brethren where they could effect the burial of the corpse, for there was no strand or land near them ; Then Brendan bade them bury him in the waves of the sea : ‘ For He who made heaven and earth and the other elements has power over the waves of the sea to fix the corpse immovably in them. So then the smith was buried among the waves of the sea without drifting to land, and without rising to the surface of the brine, without moving in any direction, as if he were in the ground ; as one said :

‘ They bury him, though it was wondrous,
The smith in the ocean ;
Amid the waves of the wild sea,
Without sinking under the roar of the billows.’

xxxiii. *Here is the Story of the Isle of Dwarfs.*

(95) After leaving this place they saw a little insignificant country near them. And as they were landing there, the harbour was filled with demons in the shapes of dwarfs and leprechauns opposing them, whose faces were black as coal. Then said Brendan : ‘ Let go the anchor, for no one can enter this land but one who shall wage human war against demons, and shed blood over them.’ They remained there till the end of seven days and seven nights, and they could not draw up their anchor, and they left it there, stuck between the rocks, and then quitted the harbour.

(96) So they were in sore straits for want of their anchor, and for the loss of the smith who could have made one for them. Then said Brendan to a priest of his company : ‘ Do thou,’ said he, ‘ the work of the smith for us to the end of a month.’ So Brendan blessed the hands of the priest, for he had never previously learnt smith’s craft. Then, however, the priest made an admirable anchor, and there was never found either before or since anything to compare with it for excellence of workmanship.

xxxiv. *Here is the Story of the Brother who was snatched away from Brendan.*

(97) Another day as Brendan was voyaging on the ocean he saw a great hellish mountain which appeared full of clouds and smoke about its summit. And the wind carried them with irresistible force to the shore of the island whereon the mountain was, so that the boat was close to land. And the brink of the island was of an appalling height, so that they could scarcely see (the top of) it, and it appeared full of firebrands and red sparks, and was as steep as a wall.

(98) And one of the three brethren who had followed Brendan from the monastery, left the boat, and went to the edge of the brink ; and he had not been long there when he shrieked a loud and piteous shriek, and said : ‘ Alas, my father, for I am being carried away from you, and I have no power of returning to you.’ And when the brethren saw this, great terror seized them, and they put out from land, and uttered a cry unto the heavenly Lord, saying : ‘ *Miserere,*’ etc, that is, ‘ O Lord, have mercy upon us, have mercy upon us.’

(99) Brendan however looked upon him, and saw a multitude of demons round him, and he burning in their midst And he said : ‘ Alas, poor hapless one, for the end which thou hast brought on thyself, and on thy life,’ &c. And after this the wind swept them away, and they drove towards the south. And they looked back on the island, and saw it all on fire, belching out its flame into the air, and swallowing it again, so that the mountain seemed all one ball of fire.

xxxv. *The Story of Judas followeth, and before it should come the Story of the Release of Aed Guaire.*[2]

(100) One day Brendan was voyaging on the sea, after quitting the island into which the brother had been snatched away from him. He saw at a distance from him an appearance on the ocean, and when they drew near to it some of the brethren said that they thought it was a man on a rock ; others said no, that it was a bird. Brendan said : ‘ Cease your disputing, and bring the boat near to it, so that we may know what it is.’ When they came near, they saw the form of a man sitting on a stone, and the likeness of a cloak or other garment suspended on two iron forks before him, and he was being tormented among the waves, the cloak smiting him under the eyes, and he being one time dragged off the rock, and another time being tossed on to it again.

(101) Brendan asked him : ‘ Why are these torments inflicted on thee ? and who art thou ?’ He said again : ‘ I am that evil chapman, Judas, who delivered the Lord Jesus Christ into the hands of the Jews. But it is not this place which is my requital, but by the mercy of the Lord, and in honour of the Resurrection I have this ease ; and no other relief than this have I till the day of doom. And to me this state is like being in Paradise in comparison with my state at other times, and compared with what will be inflicted on me this night on the fiery mountain which ye saw, where is Leviathan with his companions, and where the brother was snatched from you.

(102) ‘ There they assail me, and I am smelted like lead in an earthen pot, and I was with them when the brother came to them, and they laughed aloud for joy at seeing him. And thus they do whenever any hapless soul comes to them. And that ye may know the mercy of God, I may tell you now that I have great ease every Sunday, that is from vespers on Saturday to vespers on the eve of Monday (i.e. Sunday vespers), and from Christmas to Epiphany, and from Easter to Pentecost, and on all feasts of Mary. And every other day thenceforth I am

racked and tormented with Pilate and Caiaphas and Annas in hell ; and I entreat you pray on my behalf that I may be left as I am till tomorrow's sunrise.'

(103) Brendan said : ' Thou shalt not be carried hence till morning.' And Brendan asked him again : ' What is this garment which smites thee under the eyes ?' ' It is a garment which I gave to a poor man out of the portion of my Lord when I was His chamberlain, but as it was not mine to give, it turns to my loss now, and not to my ease. And this stone on which ye see me sitting, is a stone which I laid down on the public road when I was in the secular life, before I became a disciple of the Lord.'

(104) When the hour of vespers came, they saw a huge host of demons coming towards them, who said : ' Leave this now, O man of God, and know that we cannot go to our comrade as long as thou art near him ; and we cannot look on the face of our lord till we bring his special friend to him. And give us our own morsel to-night, and do not rob us of it any longer.' Brendan said : ' It is not I that keep him this night. But our Lord Jesus Christ has permitted him to remain this night as he is.' The senior demon said : ' Why dost thou invoke the name of the Lord on behalf of yonder man, when it was he who delivered up the Lord to Cross and Passion ?'

(105) Brendan said : ' I command you on the part of Christ not to inflict any pain or torment on him to-night.' With that the demons departed from him ; and when the day came, and Brendan was just departing, the doors of hell were opened, and countless hosts of demons issued forth and spoke with loud hideous voices, and said : ' O servant of God, accursed be thy journey to us, because our lord treated us with contumely because we have not yet exhibited to him his special servitor.' Brendan said : ' Your curse shall be turned into a blessing for me ; for whoever ye curse shall be blessed, and whoever ye bless shall be accursed.'

(106) The demons said : ' We will torment him doubly during this week, because thou didst help him last night.' Brendan said : ' Ye have no power over him, nor your lord, but Almighty God only. And I command you and your lord on God's part not to inflict any pain on him now, but such as ye inflicted before.' The demon who was in authority over them said : ' Art thou the Lord of all ?' ' I am,' said Brendan, ' the servant of the Almighty Lord, and that which I command on His part shall be done according to my will.' And after these words had been spoken, they raised him (Judas) high into the air with loud laughter. But nevertheless they were bound to fulfil the commands of Brendan.

xxxvi. *Here is the Story of the Island of Paul the Hermit.*

(107) One day when Brendan and his company were traversing the abyss, they saw an island in the distance. And when the brethren perceived it they steered their boat joyfully towards it. And Brendan said to them : ' Do not exert yourselves immoderately, for it is seven years since we left our own land to this present Easter ; and ye shall now shortly see a hermit in this island named Paul, who has not touched corporeal food or drink for threescore years, and for a score of years he received sustenance from a certain animal.'

(108) When they came near the shore, they could not enter the island because of its steepness, for its banks were high and impracticable, and the island itself small and round all about, and there was no soil on the summit, but bare stony rock ; and its height and breadth were equal. And after skirting the island they found an entry in the bank so narrow that there was scarcely room in it for the prow of the boat ; and it was still more difficult to ascend into

the island. And Brendan said to the brethren ; ‘ Wait here, till I come to you, for ye may not enter this island without the permission of God’s special servant who is in it.’

(109) And when Brendan came to the summit of the island, he saw two caves fronting one another, and he saw small fountains dropping from the rock on the face of the caves. And when Brendan came in front of the caves, he saw an aged man coming to him out of one of them, who said : ‘ *Ecce quam bonum,*’ etc., that is, It is clear that it is good for brethren to come together. And having said this he bade Brendan call the brethren from the boat

(110) When Brendan had done so, the servant of God kissed them all, and greeted them by their own names. And the brethren wondered greatly at the garb of the man, for he had no clothing except the hair of his head and his beard, and the hair of the rest of his body. And this hair was such that no snow was whiter than it owing to the great age of the holy man. But Brendan said, weeping and sobbing ; ‘ Alas for me, sinner that I am, to wear a monk’s habit, and many monks with me in the same habit, while a man of angelic condition, though still in the body, sits naked, and untormented with vices of the flesh.’

(112) Paul, the servant of God, said to Brendan : ‘ O honoured father, innumerable are the miracles which have been revealed to thee, which never were revealed to any holy father before thee. And thou sayest in thine heart ; that thou art not worthy to wear the habit of a monk ! I say unto thee, father, that thou art more than any monk who is nourished and maintained by the labour of his own hands. God hath fed and clothed thee and the monks for seven years out of His own secret treasure.’

(113) Brendan asked Paul how he came to that island and place, and where he dwelt previously, and how long he had endured that life. Paul answered him, and said : ‘ My father, I was nourished in the monastery of Patrick for the space of fifty years, having charge of the cemetery of the brethren. And (one day) I asked my dean to point out to me the burial place of one whom I had to bury. And when he had pointed it out to me, an unknown aged man came to me, and said to me : “ Do not dig in that place, brother, for that is the grave of an-other man. I said to him : “ Who art thou. Father ?” (He answered) : “ How is it thou dost not recognize me, when I am thy abbot?” I said to him : “ Nay, but Patrick is my abbot.” “ I am he,” said he, "" and yesterday I departed from this world. And this is my place of burial.”

(113) ‘ And after saying this, he then pointed out to me another place, and said : “ Bury thy brother there, and tell no one else what I have said to thee. And tomorrow go to the sea, and there thou shalt find a boat which will bear thee to the place where thou wilt remain till the day of thy death.” When morning came on the morrow I set out for the sea according to the father’s command, and found there as was promised me. And entering into the boat I made a voyage of three days and three nights, and then I ceased (rowing), and let the boat go as the wind might carry it to land And on the seventh day afterwards I found this rock, and the boat came to land on it. And after I had left the boat it returned swiftly to its own land, and I remained here from that day to this.

(114) ‘ And the first day that I came here there came to me an animal, called otter, and brought me a fish, and a hearth-flint (?) to make a fire withal, (carrying them) between its front feet when it walked on its hind feet ; and when it had laid these down before me, it returned to its own place. And when it had returned, I struck fire and kindled it with the flint (?) which had been left with me, and I dressed the fish, and ate of it as much as sufficed me. And the same messenger would come to me every third day with this refectation. And I remained thus to the end of thirty years without lack of food or drink. And a stream of water would

drop from the rock for me every Sunday, in which I would wash my hands, and drink a draught to quench my thirst.

(115) ‘ And afterwards I found these two caves, and the fountains, and these sustain me without substance of other food for the space of three score years, and I have been ninety years in the island, thirty years supported by fish, and sixty years supported by the fountain, and I was fifty years in my own land. And this is the sum of my years, one hundred and forty to this day ; and I am still awaiting in this human body the day of my account.’

(116) After this the holy elder said : ‘ Get ready, Brendan, to depart, and take some of the water of the fountain with you in your vessels ; for the road before you is long, a journey of forty days to Easter Eve. And ye shall keep this Easter as ye have done in the other seven years, and afterwards ye shall reach the land which is more exceeding holy than any land, and ye shall remain there to the end of yet another forty days. And after that, God will bring you safe to your native land.

xxxvii. (117) After this conversation Brendan bade farewell to the man of God, and they receive his blessing, and departed in peace ; and steered their ship towards the south, and thus they were during Lent. And the boat was carried hither and thither on the face of the ocean, and they had no food with them except the water which they had brought from the island of the man of God. And they were cheerful and free from thirst and hunger for the space of three days (i.e. partaking of the water only once in three days), till they reached the island of the procurator on the following Easter Eve.

(118) And when the procurator saw them, he came to the port to meet them with joy and great gladness ; and he took the hand of each of them as they disembarked. And when they had finished the office of Saturday, the procurator brought them their supper ; and when night came upon them they embarked again, and the procurator with them. And they found the great beast in its accustomed place, and they sang the praises of God that night, and said their Masses in the morning.

(119) And when they had finished their Masses, the huge animal proceeded on its own business, and they all standing on its back. When the brethren perceived this, they all cried aloud, and said : ‘ *Exaudi nos*’ etc., that is, Listen to us, O God, our mighty Saviour. But Brendan was exhorting them not to fear ; and the whale went straight forward, till it reached the strand of the island called *the Isle of Birds* ; and deposited them all there without loss of any of them. And they remained in that spot till the octave of Pentecost

(120) And when the feast of Pentecost was past, the procurator said to Brendan : ‘ Embark in your boat now, and fill your bottles from the fount, and I will be with you and guide you, for ye cannot find the land ye are seeking, unless I am with you.’

xxxviii. *Here is the Story of the Column, and the finding of the Mass Chalice.*

(121) One day when Brendan had said Mass in his boat, he and his company saw a great column at a distance from them in the ocean. It seemed to them to be close to them ; however it was (really) a journey of three days to it. As they approached it, it seemed to them twice as high, so that its top was near the firmament, and to be all of the colour of crystal from top to bottom, and there was the likeness of an enclosure round it on all sides of the colour of silver or glass. And such was its tenuity, that everything could be seen through it, whether from within or from without, and it was harder than glass, and it was full of great doors, so that a

boat or small vessel could pass through any door of them. And Brendan told his company to lower the mast and sail, and to ship their oars, and steer the boat in through one of the doors. And they did so.

(122) And there was as it were a mile of sea from the enclosure on every side to the column. They went to the foot of it, and were a whole day skirting a quarter of it And when they had been round the whole of it, on the fourth day they found a Mass chalice on a bench in the side of the column. Brendan took this gift to him as a sign, and bade the monks praise the Creator, because he had caused them not to miss food or drink, for the great delight which they found in the column. And on the fifth day they went out by the same door, and hoisted their sails to the masts, and proceeded on their way.

xxxix. *Story of the Isle of the Demon Smithy.*

(123) Another day as Brendan was traversing the ocean, he saw an island near him, hideous, dark, mountainous, and rocky, with a rugged summit, without trees or herbs, but full of houses like forges. When the holy father Brendan saw this, he said to the brethren at that time : ‘ Dear brothers,’ said he, ‘ I am much afeared of this island for you, and it is not my will to go there if we could avoid it ; but the wind is driving us straight to it.’

(124) And they were not more than a small stone’s throw from it, when they heard the thunderous working of the bellows being blown, and the clang of the hammers as they smote the anvils. Great fear seized them, and the holy father raised his hand, and made the sign of the holy cross towards the four quarters of the heaven round about, and said : ‘ Lord Jesus Christ, deliver us from the folk of this island.’ After this they saw a couple, hideously black like the colour of a smith’s coal, coming out of the forges, as if they were going to do some work or other.

(125) And when they saw God’s people, they turned back again into the forges, and brought out two charges of molten iron, red hot, which they held with tongs in their hands, and rushing eagerly to the shore, they cast them at the boat And this did no harm to them, for such was not God’s will, for they passed over their heads some distance beyond the boat. After this God sent a following wind to Brendan’s company from the side of the island. And out of the same forges there issued an innumerable, hideous and diabolic band, carrying fiery charges in tongs to cast at them. And where these charges struck the sea it boiled up high above them, like a cauldron or pot over a huge fire.

(126) And as they could not do them any harm, they returned to the forges, and set them all in a red blaze, and began hurling the red-hot charges at one another. And the cries and shrieks which they uttered were heard after they were out of sight Thus God delivered His people from the devil’s folk, for it is clear that these all belonged to the company of hell. And Brendan bade his company to be of good cheer, and steadfast faith, and to give thanks to God and to His angels. And they did as the holy father, Brendan, bade them.

xl. *Contest of the two Sea Monsters for Brendan and his Company.*

(127) One day as Brendan and his company were traversing the ocean, they saw a huge and terrible fish coming towards them, throwing up the waves on either side of him in his hurry (to get) to the boat to swallow them up. When the brethren saw this, they cried aloud to the heavenly Lord, and said : ‘ O Lord, who madest man and the elements, deliver us.’ And they began crying to Brendan in like wise. Brendan said : ‘ O Lord Who madest man and the

elements, deliver us, and deliver Thine own people from yonder terrible monster.' And he said further : ' Brothers, be not afraid ; and small is your confidence (*lit.* conscience), for He who delivered us from every danger, and He who has protected us continually, He will de-liver us from the maw of yonder monster.'

(128) And the monster came in front of the boat, and reared itself on high above their heads. When Brendan saw this, he went into the prow of the boat, and lifted up his hands to heaven, and said these words : ' *Domine, libera nos,*' etc. ; that is, O Lord, save Thy people, as Thou savedst David from the hands of Goliath, and Jonah from the belly of the whale.' And when he had finished this prayer, they saw another like monster coming from the west quarter to meet the first monster. And when it came up to it, it emitted a fiery ball from its gullet. And it waged war against the first monster.

(129) When Brendan saw this, he said to the brethren : ' Do you see, dear monks, the marvels of the Lord, and the obedience which the creature renders to the Creator ?' And when he had said this to them, they saw the monster which had pursued Brendan rising in three pieces to the surface of the sea ; and the monster that had done these deeds returned to the palace whence it had come with triumphant victory.

xli. Here is told how the great beast was found as meat by Brendan and his company

(130) Another day as Brendan and his company were traversing the dreadful deep, they saw an island of extraordinary beauty, full of roots and fragrant herbs, and when they landed, they saw on the strand before them the hinder part of the great beast And Brendan said : ' Dear brothers,' said he, ' here is the one whose endeavour it was to kill and devour you ; and now do ye devour him, and eat your fill of his flesh. And ye will be long on this island ; so draw your boat to land, and find a suitable place for it.' And when they had done so, Brendan said to them : ' Bring as much of the great beast as will serve you for a month, for the remainder of it will be devoured by the monsters of the ocean this very night.'

(131) The brethren brought the flesh as Brendan bade them ; and they in their turn said to Brendan : ' O Lord and holy father, how shall we be able to get water in this island ?' Brendan said : ' It is no easier to God to give you food than water. So then,' said Brendan, ' go in to the middle of the island, and there ye shall find a fountain fair of hue, and a multitude of all kinds of herbs round about it, and bring thence an ample sufficiency for you both of herbs and water.' The brethren went, and found the fountain, as Brendan had told them.

(132) And Brendan and his brethren were three months on the island, for there was a great storm on the ocean, and a violent wind. The brethren did as Brendan had told them, and went to the flesh on the shore, and found that it had all been devoured by the ocean monsters. And they themselves went where Brendan was, and told the story to him, how that there was not a morsel of the flesh remaining, and that the saying of the holy father to them had been fulfilled. ' I know,' (said he,) ' that ye went to see the truth of what I said to you ; and I will tell you something more : We shall go together to the shore to-morrow, and find there part of a huge fish.' And this was fulfilled as Brendan said.

(133) They took with them as much as they could of the fish ; and Brendan said : ' Store up the fish, and salt it, for ye shall have a strong wind and fair weather after ye have left this island.' Brendan commanded his company to load the boat with roots, and herbs, and fish, and bade them again bring water with them, for he himself, from the time that he took the yoke of the priesthood upon him, never tasted anything in which was breath or life. And when they had loaded the boat, they put out to sea, and sailed due north.

xlii. *Story of the Island of the Three Peoples, where Brendan left a brother of his company.*

(134) One day when Brendan and his congregation were travelling over the vast ocean, they saw an island at a distance from them. And Brendan said to them : ‘ Do ye see the island yonder which I see ? ’ ‘ We do, ’ said they. ‘ There are three peoples there, ’ said Brendan, ‘ one of boys, one of young men, and one of old men. And one of our brethren will go there for his pilgrimage. ’ And they asked, which of them ; and he would not tell them. And as he saw them sorrowful, he told them that the one who was to go there was one of the three brothers who had come with them from the monastery.

(135) And they went on towards the island, till they reached the shore. And the island proved to be a plain level surface, covered with pure white colour. And there were three peoples therein, and there was the space a man could cast a stone between them. And they went through the island backwards and forwards, reciting prayers ; and this is what they repeated: ‘ *Ibunt sancti,* ’ etc., that is, The saints shall go from virtue to virtue.

(136) And when they had finished that prayer, two of the boys’ company came to them, and brought two baskets of purple ‘ scalts ’, and gave them to Brendan in the boat, and said to him : ‘ Taste some of the fruit of *the Isle of the Strong Men*, and give us our own brother, and go on your way with peace. ’ Then Brendan called the brother to him, and said to him : ‘ Kiss the brethren, and go with yonder company who seek thee. And I tell thee, brother, that it was in a happy hour that thy mother conceived thee, now that thou hast attained to join yon congregation. ’

(137) And when he had kissed the brethren and Brendan, Brendan said to him : ‘ Son, remember the benefits which God has given thee in this life, and pray for us. ’ And when he had left his blessing with Brendan, he went with the two young men aforesaid to those holy schools. And when the holy men saw him coming, they sang this verse : ‘ *Ecce quam bonum.* ’ etc., that is. It is good and joyful that brethren should meet together. And they sang the hymn ‘ *Te Deum laudamus* ’ etc., with great joy, and they all kissed him.

(138) And Brendan and his company departed afterwards. And when the hour of refection arrived, Brendan commanded some of the scalts to be brought to him ; and they gave him one scalt, and he said to them : ‘ I do not remember ever to have read of or seen so large a scalt. ’ And it was perfectly spherical and round, like a ball. And he cut it into twelve portions, and expressed an ounce of juice from it on to the hand of each brother of them. And for the space of twelve days he satisfied the brethren on this wise, and the taste of honey was in the mouth of each of them.

(139) And when they had fasted three days, as Brendan commanded them, they saw a radiant bird approaching them, and it alighted on the prow of the boat And it had in its beak a branch of rare beauty of a kind of tree which they did not know, and large berries of beautiful fruit at the top of it, and the bird laid it down in front of Brendan, and then returned by the same way. And Brendan called the brethren to him, and said to them : ‘ Partake of the food which God has sent you ’ ; and the berries were like crab-apples for size. And Brendan divided this fruit among the brethren ; and there was in it what satisfied them for twelve days. And Brendan told them to fast as before for three days and three nights ; and as Brendan advised they performed this fast

xliii Story of the Isle or the Fruitful Trees.

(140) Another day when Brendan and his crew were traversing the sea, they saw an island in the distance which proved to be full of lofty trees. And the trees were all of one sort, laden with fruit of one colour and one shape. And no single tree of them all was barren or unfruitful. And when they landed, the holy man Brendan went round the island. And the mere smell of the island satisfied (their hunger), to say nothing of any other delight.

(141) And Brendan found pellucid fountains there with many roots and herbs (growing) in them. And he returned to his company, taking some of the fruits with him to the brethren, and said : ‘ Carry some of this fruit with you when ye depart, and satisfy your bodies with the fruit that God has given you.’ And they did so ; and they remained in the island forty days and forty nights after that, and then departed in their boat, taking some of the fruit with them.

xliv. Story of the Griffin with the Great Claws.

(142) One day as Brendan and the brethren were traversing a bay, they saw a terrible bird above their heads, a griffin with great claws, and it was fully as big as a mule or an ox. And when the brethren saw it they were seized with great fear and horror, and they said : ‘O father, help us speedily, for it is to devour us that yon terrible monster has come.’ Brendan said : ‘ Fear not, for He who has delivered you from every doubtful pass hitherto, will deliver us from this danger.’ And as the griffin was stretching out its claw towards the brethren, the bird which had brought the branch to them came towards them, and fought with it, and over-came it. And when it had overcome it, it tore its eyes out of it, and its body fell into the sea before the brethren. And when they saw this they praised God greatly. And the aforesaid bird returned to the Isle of Ailbe afterwards.

xlv. Story of the Marine Monsters.

(143) Another day when Brendan was celebrating the feast of Peter in his boat, they saw the sea all round them so pellucid, bright, and clear, that they saw all the fish and monsters of the ocean like so many herds of cattle on wide level plains, forming as it were walls round about the boat. And when the brethren perceived them, they prayed Brendan to say Mass in a low voice, that the monsters might not hear the sound which he made. But Brendan answered them, and was laughing at them for the greatness of the wonder which he felt that they should be afraid, when God had so often delivered them from greater danger.

(144) And Brendan said to them : ‘ Why do ye fear, my brothers ? seeing that our God and Lord, Jesus Christ Himself, who can tame all living things, will tame these monsters for us.’ And having spoken thus, he said Mass louder than he had ever done before. But the brethren’s attention was fixed on the monsters all the time. And when the monsters heard the voice of the holy man, they fled away from the boat, so that not a trace of them was seen thenceforth. And scarcely could Brendan’s company traverse the sunny bright translucent sea in the space of seven days after, even with the boat under full sail.

xlvi. Here is the Story of the Isle of the Twelve Irishmen and of the Sea Cat.

(145) After this they rowed for a while over the ocean in a westerly direction, and found a pleasant little island with a number of fishermen in it. As they were going round it they saw in it a little stone church, in which was an aged man, pale and sorrowful, engaged in prayer. And he had neither flesh nor blood, but merely a thin miserable skin over his hard and yellow bones. Then that elder said : ‘ Flee, Brendan, with all speed,’ said he. ‘ For there is here now a seacat as big as a young ox or a three-year-old horse, which has thriven on the fish of the sea and of this island ; beware of it now.’

(146) They betake them to their boat, and row over the ocean with all their might. As they were thus, they saw the monstrous sea-cat swimming after them ; each of its two eyes was as big as a cauldron, it had tusks like a boar, sharp-pointed bristles, the maw of a leopard, the strength of a lion, and the rage of a mad dog. Then each of them began to pray to God by reason of the great fear which seized them. Then said Brendan : ‘ O God Almighty,’ said he, ‘ keep off Thy monsters from us, that they may not reach us.’

(147) Then a great sea whale rose up between them and the cat-monster, and each of them set to work to try and drown the other in the depths of the sea, and neither of them ever appeared again. Then Brendan and his company gave thanks to God, and turned back again to the place where the elder was. And the elder wept for the greatness of the joy which possessed him, and said : ‘ I am of the men of Erin,’ said he, ‘ and twelve of us were there when we came on our pilgrimage, and we brought that bestial sea-cat with us, and we were very fond of it ; and it grew afterwards enormously, but it never hurt any of us. And now of our original company eleven have died, and I am left alone, waiting for thee to give me the body and blood of Christ, that therewith I may go to heaven.’

(148) He revealed to them afterwards the little country which they were seeking, that is *the Land of Promise*. And after receiving the body and blood of Christ, the elder went to heaven. He was buried there beside his brethren with great reverence, and with psalms and hymns, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost

xlvi. *Here is the finding of the Land of Promise by Brendan.*

(149) One day when Brendan and his company were traversing and searching the sea, they happened upon the little country which they had been seeking for seven years, to wit, *the Land of Promise* ; as it says in the proverb : ‘ He that seeketh, findeth.’ When they came near to this land, and they were minded to take harbour there, they heard the voice of a certain elder speaking to them and saying : ‘ O much travailed men, O holy pilgrims, O ye who look for the heavenly rewards, O ever-toilsome life in labouring and waiting for this country, stay a little from your labour now.’

(150) When they had remained a little while at rest, the elder said to them : ‘ Dear brothers in Christ,’ said he, ‘ do ye not perceive this glorious and lovely land, on which never was spilt the blood of man, and in which it is not fitting that any sinner or evil-doer should be buried ? Leave now everything that ye have in your boat, except the few clothes that ye have on, and come up hither.’ When they came to land, each of them kissed the other, and the elder wept greatly for his exceeding joy. ‘ Search and see,’ said he, ‘ the borders and regions of Paradise, where will be found health without sickness, pleasure without contention, union without quarrel, dominion without interruption, attendance of angels, feasting without dim-inution, meadows sweet in scent as fair blessed flowers. Happy indeed is he whom Brendan son of Finding shall summon thither to join him,’ said the same elder, ‘ to inhabit for ever and ever the island in which we are.’

(151) But when they saw Paradise amid the waves of the sea, they marvelled and were astonished at the wonders of God, and His power when they saw these wonders. Now the elder was on this wise, without any human clothing at all, but his body was covered with a white down like a dove or sea-mew, and his speech was almost like that of an angel. They celebrated tierce after ringing the bell, with giving of thanks to God, and with their minds fixed on God. But they did not dare to ask any question.

(152) Then said the elder : ‘ Let each of you pray privately without speech of any to other of you, for this land is holy and angelic, and moreover sin commonly attaches to speech, for

often in old-world fables is there either sorrow or idle joy.’ ‘ We agree in sooth,’ said the folk. When they had remained thus for a while, the elder came to them and said : ‘ Let us celebrate the midday office (sext),’ said he ; and when they had finished celebrating the midday office, Brendan asked that elder : ‘ Is it (God’s) will for me,’ said he, ‘ that I should remain here till the day of doom ?’

(153) But the elder answered him on this wise : ‘ He who shall seek his own will opposes the will of God. And it is sixty years,’ said he, ‘ since I came hither, and the food of angels has fed me all that time. And my body was wellnigh wasted away with old age. But it was not here that I grew old, but I continue at the age at which I was when I came here. And Christ bade me remain here to wait for thee (another) thirty years in addition to that (first) thirty. And now it is time for me to go to heaven, for thou hast come to me. And when ye have celebrated none, depart to your own land, and instruct the men of Erin, for crimes and sins shall be corrected by thee. And Christ said to me at this hour of none that thou shouldest come to this land with thy family, thy monks and nuns, together with the saints of Erin, seven years before the judgement, and with that marvellous anchor which the priest made for thee.’

(154) When they had celebrated none, the bird which was wont to minister their refecton to them previously, came bringing a half loaf of wheaten bread and a morsel of fish for each of them. When they had taken their refecton, they gave thanks to God. And when the elder had taken the body of Christ, His flesh and blood, he sent his spirit to heaven, and they buried his body then with great honour and marvellous respect

After this mutual converse Brendan and his monks proceeded to their boat. And they departed over the great-waved sea, and nothing unusual is narrated of their journeyings till they came to eastern Aran (Aranmore), having been two years on this voyage, and five on the former voyage, so that they were seven years altogether on the two voyages seeking the Land of Promise ; as a certain learned man (i e. poet) said :

‘ Seven years in all were they
On the voyage—fair was the band—
Seeking the land of promise
With its flocks, a strong subtle turn.

And they found it at last
In the high meads of the ocean,
An island rich, everlasting, undivided.
Abounding in salmon, fair and beauteous.’

[1] MS. to them : Why do ye, &c.

[2] i.e. ch. lxii, *infra*, p. 85.

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