

The extinction of Brendan's Life

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Life of Brendan of Clonfert

Translated by

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(156) When they reached Aran(more), they received a great welcome there, such as Christ and His Apostles might receive. And they related their story and adventures to the people of Aran, from first to last. When Enda and Pupa and their companions heard the story, they wept greatly from the excess of the joy which possessed them. And the people tried to detain Brendan, and agreed to give him a recompense if he would only stay with them. Brendan said to them : ' Not here shall be my resurrection,' said he ; and he declined to remain there. They were the space of a month there after their labour in rowing.

xlvi (157) At the end of this time and season Brendan and his company left in Aran the boat and its anchor, and themselves proceeded to Ireland, and took harbour at Inis da Droma in the sea of Limerick. They remained there, and were four days and four nights without refection of food or drink. And four of the holy band died there through the length of the fast which befell them,, and they were buried there with honour and great reverence.

xlix. (158) A while after this, Brendan sent his disciples to the River Fergus in Deise Muman to ask for some fish from the fishermen of that river. The fisherman, however, refused Brendan's followers. Brendan in turn refused to allow the river to have any fish in it thence-forth for ever. Fifty streams in Erin did Brendan curse owing to the refusal of the fishermen of these streams to give him fish. Fifty other streams in Erin did Brendan bless, because their fishermen obeyed him ; as (one) said ;

' Fifty streams at great request
Brendan blessed with fairness ;
Fifty streams right honourable
He deprived of the fish of their pools.'

l. (159) One day Brendan and his monks were traversing the lands of Cliach. They went to another port [1] to ask for fish. But the fishermen welcomed Brendan. Brendan then blessed the stream, though it had been barren previously ; and it was thenceforth full of every kind of good.

li. (160) Brendan afterwards reached Inber Ais in the land of Cliach, and was there the night. The inhabitants of the place said to him : ' There is,' said they, ' a great affliction in this place, viz. an immense quantity (*lit.* a flood) of fleas, numerous as the sand of the sea.' Then he said : ' O Lord,' said he, ' let this people by Thy mercy be freed from this plague in Thy name.' From that night forth there was not a single flea in the land.

At Bri Oiss in the land of Cliach, fifty castles were laid waste by the word of Brendan ; as (one) said :

' Fifty fortified castles

Brendan with whiteness destroyed ;
Through the pride of their valorous kings
They will be for ever without pleasure,'

lii (161) On one occasion Brendan left his boat on the shore of Inis da Droma with a psalm-singer of his company to guard it, who recited his psalms in the boat by himself. There came, however, a great tempest on the sea which tore the boat from her moorings. The brother of the psalm-singer said to Brendan : ' My brother has assuredly been drowned in the boat, and the boat dashed to pieces, and his drowned body will not be found.' Then said Brendan to him in great wrath : ' If thou art minded to have more pity on him than I, go in his place, and perform his duty.' When he went after his brother, he was drowned in the sea at once. And the young brother was in the midst of the waves (which stood) like walls on each side of him, as with Moses son of Amram as he went with his people through the Red Sea.

liii *The Story of Dobarchú.*

(162) Brendan proceeded after this till he came to Dubh Daire in Thomond, and took shelter and residence there for a long time, serving the Lord, and interceding with the Creator, and setting up a guest house there in honour of his Lord. Now his neighbour in this tribe was a man named Dobarchú (water-dog, otter), from whom are descended the Úi Dobarchon who still exist in Thomond. Now Dobarchú had a grass meadow close to Loch Lir. Brendan's oxen entered the meadow, and Dobarchú killed them. It was told Brendan that the oxen had been killed. ' If it be God's will,' said Brendan, ' let Dobarchú be turned into an otter.' [2]

(163) At the end of a year Dobarchú, with his wife, named Creda, went to visit the afore-said meadow. At that moment a salmon [3] leapt in the lake in front of them. Dobarchú began to angle, and caught a trout, and made a fire of bracken, and roasted the trout, and ate it off the spit. He then went to the lake to get a drink of water, and fell into the lake ; and was turned into an otter (swimming) up and down the lake through the word of Brendan. Now Dobarchú's son, named Cúcúan, and Creda went to visit the same meadow. A salmon like the other [4] leapt in the lake in front of them. Cúcúan went to angle for it. The otter, however, came to prevent him from doing this, and told him not to take fish from the lake, not to make a fire of bracken, and on no account to eat salmon off the spit

(164) And he told him his story completely, and said :

'Ah Cúcúan,
Thy father vanished not long ago ;
He (roams) through the lake turned into an animal,
Come not to take his fish from him.

Ah, Cúcúan,
Make not a fire of red bracken ; [5]
Eat not, though great be thy hunger, (*lit.* mouth)
Fish from the spit till it be cold.

Cold is my bed on the bare stone.
And my back ever on the gravel ;
I suck the water of Loch Lir ;
I shall never come to my house till doom.

The fish that I ate quickly burned me ;
It is that which turned me senseless ;

Ill was my errand, and my journey wretched,
Depart (thou) and Creda, O Cúcúan,

Though it befall at cooking-pit or on expedition.
Eat not thy trout till it be cold ;
Though scarcity of firewood come to thee.
Burn not the bracken, O Cúcúan.

Dobarchú is my own name;
I am long bereft of sense ;
The two names are almost alike.
Come not under my appellation, O Cúcúan.

My seed will be called Ui Dobarchon,
This will be their true name till the lasting doom ;
Whenever they are called,
This will be their name ; O Cúcúan.

Every time my shadow shall be seen
From now till the lasting doom.
Thy loss will be plain,
If small thy possession, O Cúcúan.

O Cúcúan.’

Dobarchú then remained thus (wandering) up and down the lake till he died, owing to Brendan’s curse, &c.

liv. (165) After some time Brendan considered in his mind, and the fear of the Lord came strongly upon him in regard to the drowning of the brother occasioned by Brendan’s own wrath, who went to look for the psalm-singer in the boat in Inis da Droma. Brendan went to the saints of Erin to ask their judgement on him in this matter, and searched with them all the divine scriptures. And he went to the place where his foster-mother Ita was, and told her of the drowning of the brother. Ita bade him cross the sea : ‘ A foreign land is seeking thee,’ said she, ‘ that thou mayest rule and instruct the souls of men there ; and now depart,’ said she.

lv. Here Brendan sets out for the land of Britain owing to the drowning of the brother.

(166) After this Brendan went to the land of Britain by his foster-mother’s command, to the place where Gildas the Briton was, and thirteen men with him, as Mocua mac Dolcán said in the verse :

‘ Brendan turned right-hand-wise
With thirteen men, a long journey,
Difficult was his expedition ;
And he baptized all the men of Alba.’

When he reached the land of Britain after labour of great rowing, and after traversing rough strange barbarous lands of the Britons, Gildas the Briton bade his people prepare a great feast : ‘ There will come to us here immediately,’ said he, ‘ a holy and laborious people, the head of faith and devotion, Paul the Apostle renewed in human form, the father sore travailed by sea and land, Broenfind son of Findlug.’

(167) It was winter time when Brendan reached the land of Britain, having been three years on the way. Gildas ordered seven iron bolts to be put on to the doors of the monastery to test the sanctity and faith of the strangers. Then Brendan went to Gildas' monastery to speak with Gildas himself. And the night they came to the monastery snow fell heavily, and covered the whole earth, reaching to men's girdles. But it did not come within a long distance of them (Brendan and his companions) on any side.

(168) Then said the porter to them from the wall of the monastery : 'Come,' said he, ' and let your own good deeds open (the door) before you.' Then said Brendan to his attendant, Talmach : ' Go,' said he, ' and open the door before us.' Talmach reached out his hand to the door, and the seven bolts all broke forthwith at the same moment He alone opened the monastery before them, as to which there seemed no risk that he alone could open it with seven iron bolts on it. And the bolts were never found again.

(169) They came afterwards to the church, and there were three bolts of refined iron on it. Brendan then stretched out his hand to the two valves (of the door), and said : ' Open to us, O Church, thou Mother of Christ.' Then the three bolts burst, and were never seen again. Then said the minister of the church to Brendan by command of Gildas : ' Say Mass, Brendan,' said he. Now the altar was prepared, with the vessels on it, and a book (missal) on it written in Greek letters. [6] Brendan opened the book and said : ' Open and reveal to me Thy letters, O God Almighty.' Brendan then forthwith read the Greek book aloud.

(170) Then Gildas and his family went to (receive the) Body of Christ at the hand of Brendan. Then Gildas saw a human form on the paten, and human blood in the chalice. Great fear seized Gildas, because he had so many times tempted Brendan : ' What shall I do, O Brendan ?' said he. ' Vengeance is ready to fall on me, because I have reproached thee.' Then Brendan said : ' I will protect thee from that vengeance, for though thou didst try the strangers, it is now the time of remission, that is, of going to (receive) the Body of Christ.' Then Brendan blessed the altar once more, and it was the Body of Christ (the Host) that was on the paten, and the blood [7] which was in the chalice became wine. When the people of Gildas had communicated at the hand of Brendan, Brendan and his company remained there three days and three nights.

(171) And he told his errand to Gildas. But Gildas said : ' I will not give sentence on thee,' said he ; ' however, there is a dangerous valley in the desert of this monastery, in which are two lions, male and female ; and they lay waste the country in which they are. Go to them in the name of the Lord.' and expel them from this region. And therein let the Lord give sentence on thee.' Brendan at once set out joyfully, and his disciple Talmach accompanied him.

(172) At that time the lioness was taking her midday sleep. Brendan said to Talmach : ' Rouse the lioness at once.' He went to her in the valley, and smote her with his hand. She arose at once, and uttered a loud roar, so that all the tribes and districts in the neighbourhood were terrified. Then at this roar the male lion came rushing fiercely. Brendan then said to both of them : ' Go,' said he, ' and bring with you all the lions that are in this valley, and guard the cattle of this country henceforth for ever.' When the lions heard the voice of Brendan they went like obedient monks, and brought their whelps with them.

(173) Great then was the miracle that was done there, that fierce, ravenous, mangling, mighty lions should be made tame like domestic dogs and should be tending the cattle of the country like herdsmen's mastiffs. When, however, every one thought that the lions must have killed Brendan and Talmach, then they saw them coming towards them safe and sound, and the lions following them, like young calves following their mothers. But when they saw the

lions following Brendan, great fear seized them all, and they mount their horses at once, and flee to the woods and forests of the country. They return again after a great fright without any resistance on the part of the lions.

(174) Great fear possessed Gildas, and he offered himself to Brendan as his own monk for ever. Then said Gildas to him : ‘ It is God,’ said he, ‘ who shall give sentence on thee, for thou art a worthy son of God. However, I will give counsel to thee ; remain in this land, and the service of these tribes shall be thine for ever, and authority over the land and country shall be thine ; as (one) said :

‘ The tribe shall pass to thee without trouble,
As it stands with (all) its profits.
Men, children, women, without wrong.
Till doom they shall obey thee.”

Then said Brendan : ‘ I bear witness before the King of the stars that the things of thb world are no more to me than sand of the sea or leaves of the wood ; as (one) said :

‘ I bear witness herein,
O Gildas, by the Ring of the stars ;
Not more to me is this lean world
Than the water of the rivers.’

So then after baptizing, and after blessing the monastery of Gildas and the neighbouring tribes, he left his benediction with them, and then departed. The people and the tribes wept greatly after him, for they loved him as if he had been their father.

lvi. (175) He came back again to Britain, and built a church there in the Isle of Ailec. One day Brendan was on a lofty crag in this island when he saw two sea monsters coming from the depth of the sea, and fighting desperately together, each of them trying to drown the other. Then one of the monsters tried to fly, and the other pursued it. And the flying monster said with a human voice : ‘ I beseech thee in the name of St Brigit to let me be.’ The (other) monster at once left it, and went into the depth of the sea.

(176) Brendan marvelled greatly at this, and came to his company, and said to them : ‘ Depart quickly,’ said he, ‘ for Ireland, that we may have speech with St Brigit.’ It was then then he composed the celebrated hymn : ‘ Brigit, a woman ever good,’ &c. When he reached the place where Brigit was, he told her of. the conversation of the two monsters, and asked her : ‘ What good,’ said he, ‘ dost thou do for God more than I, when the monsters entreat thee, though absent, and me, though present, they left uninvoked.’ Brigit said to Brendan : ‘ Make thy confession.’ ‘ I declare,’ said he, ‘ that I never crossed seven furrows without (turning) my mind to God. Make thy confession,’ said Brendan. ‘ I confess,’ said Brigit, ‘ that since I (first) fixed my mind on God, I have never taken it off, and never will, till doom. Thou, however,’ said she, ‘ art so constantly incurring great danger by sea and land, that thou must needs give thy attention to it, and it is not because thou forgettest God that thy mind is fixed on Him (only) at every third furrow.

(177) About which things this poem (was made) :

‘ Seven years to melodious Brendan
Without visiting tribe or church,
On the back of the great beast with renown
In the sea ’twas wonder, enough.

The melodious strong great beast
Besought the monster to let it go ;
The monster said : “ Whoever it be.
Not for him shalt thou escape”.

It began to entreat Brigit,
Fearing to be destroyed ;
Victorious Brigit helped it ;
After that it was not frightened.

“ I am weary," said Brendan without deceit,
“ I will go to where the nun is,
Till I learn whence it comes
That she is entreated more than I.”

The cleric entered in,
Though he was eager, he was not ashamed;
He knelt to the blameless nun ;
The nun knelt to him.’

lvii. (178) Brendan afterwards went into the land of the Britons again, and built a monastery named Bleit in the district of Letha. Brendan then did many mighty works and miracles in this monastery, but they cannot be enumerated here. One night Brendan saw a vision in this place, and his grief was great because of it ; but he told but little of it, except that a great heresy in regard to the faith would arise among the Britons before the Judgement. And he was afraid to dwell among them because of this.

lviii. (179) So when Brendan quitted the land of the Britons, he returned to Ireland, and Bishop Maenu with him. Then came Mocaemóc, whose former name was Senan, to Brendan, and left his father, and followed Brendan to study under him.

lix. (180) Brendan went afterwards to the region of Connaught, to Inis meic Úa Cuinn in Loch Oirbsen. In it there were often two chariot horses of the king of Connaught being tended. When Brendan had taken up his abode in Loch Oirbsen, and done miracles there, the son of the king of Echtge gave it to him ; and promised that neither foe nor friend should do hurt or damage to him as long as he remained there.

lx. (181) Another day Brendan was on a plain near this island, [8] when a poor man met him, and saluted (*lit*, blessed) him, and said : ‘ O holy father,’ said he, ‘ have pity on me, and help me out of the servitude which I suffer at the hands of the king, for he has ruined us and my children.’ Brendan, the patron of suffering, had sympathy, being seized with compassion for the poor man, and drawing full confidence from the Father of mercy ; and he planted the staff which he had in his hand in the sod that was nearest to him in the name of God, and found a pound of refined gold in it.

(182) And he said to the poor man : ‘ Take this to the king, and it will free thee from the servitude to him in which thou art ; and do not tell him who gave it.’ The poor man took the gold, and carried it to the king, and told him how he got it And the king said, when he heard how the gold had been got : ‘ This gold is Christ’s,’ said he, ‘ not to me does it belong, but to God’s own servants. And I grant freedom to thee and to thy children in honour of God and Brendan.’

lxi. (183) On one occasion after this Brendan said to his brethren : ‘ We must go into Úi Maine, for the service and preservation of that land is one of our obligations, for it is there that our resurrection will be ; and I heard an angel fighting in my name on its behalf. So in the name of Him who bought us, let us help it now.’ They proceeded till they reached Clonfert. At that very time and hour a battle was being fought about Columcille between Diarmait mac Cerbaill and the chiefs of the north of Ireland, to wit the race of Conall mac Neill and that of Eogan mac Neill. This was the battle of Cuil Dreimne, and in the end Diarmait was defeated.

(184) So when Brendan reached this place, Clonfert, he built a monastery there, and elected that his resurrection should be there, and said : ‘ *Hic requies mea*’ &c. And to this monastery came Mocaemóc, previously called Senan, to Brendan, leaving his father and mother, to study under him. And while in that monastery with Brendan he died. Brendan was greatly grieved and distressed at the death of his fosterling, and went to intercede with the Creator for his restoration to life ; and finally he obtained from the Lord of the elements the restitution of his soul. (As one said) :

‘ Since its occupation by the son of Úi Alta,
Brendan, with all his penances,
Not the worse up to now
From that time is Clonfert.’

lxii. *Here is the freeing of Aed Guaire from Diarmait mac Cerbaill by Brendan ; and the (proper) place where it comes is before the Story of Judas.* [9]

(185) Now (this took place) after the outraging of Ruadan of Lothra by Diarmait mac Cerbaill in the matter of Aed Guaire. This last killed a standard-bearer of Diarmait’s named Aed Baclam, because he had broken down a palisade of red yew which was round his (Aed Guaire’s) house, in order to carry the king’s spear within, borne cross-wise. And not content with that, he proceeded to break down the house itself. And when he had been slain in revenge for this misdeed, and Ruadan had been outraged in the matter of the prisoner (i.e. Aed Guaire who had taken refuge with Ruadan, and been forcibly seized by Diarmait), the chief saints of Erin came together to Diarmait, viz. Columcille, and Ciaran of Clonmacnois, and Molaise, and Dabeog, and Finnian, and Ruadan of Lothra, and the (other) chief saints of Ireland. And they and Diarmait were a whole year together fasting against each other, and whatever miracle they jointly worked on him, God worked the like for him on them.

(186) And when they had spent a year on this wise, the saints offered to pay a ransom to Diannait on behalf of the prisoner. Diarmait said, thinking that they would never get it to give him, that he would accept from them fifty blue-eyed horses. And as Brendan was traversing the ocean, an angel of God revealed to him that the saints of Erin were in this sore strait with Diarmait, in regard to a thing which it was impossible to obtain, though they searched the whole world over, unless it were obtained through the grace of God. And when Brendan understood this, he came back to Ireland, and landed at Ess Dara in the region of Connaught ; and he took fifty ocean seals, and made fifty excellent horses of them, and took them with him to Tara, where the saints of Erin, including Ruadan, were. And the saints welcomed Brendan exceedingly as he came to join them.

(187) He told them that he had brought these horses with him to deliver them to Diarmait, as we said before. And when the saints heard this, they sent word to Diarmait to come and accept the ransome from them. And when Diarmait came where the saints were, the horses were brought to him, and horsemen were set upon them. And the seals would not brook whip or spur from the followers of Diarmait, and they carried the king’s men against their will into

the Boyne, where they (the horses) were turned into seals in sight of the men of Erin, and some of Diarmait's men were drowned, and the others only got to land with great difficulty.

(188) And Diarmait's wrath was all the greater, and he said that he would insist on an end being paid for the deceit which had been practised on him, and for the destruction of his followers. And that night was a night when the saints (usually) took food. And Brendan enjoined the saints to practise a trick on the king of Erin ; viz. that when their portion was brought to them, each morsel that they cut they should drop, as they were in the act of carrying it to their mouths, between the collar of their scapulars and their bare breasts, and should pretend to be chewing with their mouths ; and each drink that was brought to them, that they should pour in like manner between their scapulars and their bodies, in order that Diarmait's attendants might think that the saints were eating, and might prevail on him to take food.

(189) And the saints did as Brendan said to them, so that Diarmait took food, and so the virus of the fasting went against Diarmait. And when the king went to sleep, the queen, Mumain daughter of Conra, son of Dui of the Eoganacht of Cashel, wife of the king of Ireland, saw a wonderful vision. It seemed to her that a noble tree was growing over Tara of the Kings, and its branches and top stretched over the whole of Ireland ; and then she saw the birds of Ireland roosting on the tree. And it seemed to her that twelve Wrights with twelve axes came to cut down the tree, and every chip they cut from it would fly back again to the tree. And then she thought she saw another wright coming from the western ocean, and the first blow which he gave the tree cut off its top.

(190) And she leapt out of bed with the horror of the dream, so that the king asked her what ill she had seen ; and the queen told him the vision. ' Alas !' said the king ; ' I am that tree,' said he, ' and the birds roosting in it are the chiefs of Ireland, who have submitted to me these twenty years, and the twelve wrights whom thou sawest coming to cut the tree are the twelve chief saints of Erin who have been fasting against me for the space of a year, and I fasting against them in like manner ; and their fasting was not more highly regarded in God's eyes than mine. And the last wright that thou sawest, who cut off the tree's top with one blow, is Brendan, son of Findlug, who came from the western ocean, and induced the saints to work a trick on me, so that I took food while the clerks remained fasting. And Brendan is my slayer. And let the saints be brought to me that I may make peace with them.'

(191) The saints came to meet the king ; and he made peace with them, and restored their prisoner to them. And Ruadan contended with Diarmait, and cursed him, and prayed to God that no king might ever sit again in Tara, and he cursed Tara afterwards ; and he prayed further that burning, drowning, and slaying might be the death of Diarmait. And Diarmait prayed God to curse Ruadan so that he might lose a foot, a hand, and an eye. And this prayer of Diarmait was fulfilled. And through this came about the death of Diarmait afterwards.

lxiii. (192) One day Brendan and his company were in a fair and noble land. His company said to him : ' There is no one in the world,' said they, ' who would forsake this land for the love of God.' Brendan said : ' There is,' said he ; ' for there was a man (living) in Corcomroe west of Carn. And he had two excellent wives. And he was very charitable in gifts, and tithes, and alms to the Lord. His two wives said to him one day : " How long," said they, " shall we be with thee on this wise ?" " Until dissension arise between you," said he, " for by disunion God is repelled, and demons invited."

(193) Some time after this dissension arose between the women. Then without their knowing he went on pilgrimage across the sea ; and found a boat ready at Ath Laigen. He went in it over the deep sea, and found a holy island, and settled in it forthwith ; and the boat went back of itself to the place from which it had been taken. And he remained there alone in the

island. And it was he himself who told this story to us long after. And his body was all clothed with pure white feathers, like a dove or sea-mew. So then,' said Brendan, ' whoever will leave his land and country, as that man did, shall be blessed, perfect, and righteous like him.'

lxiv. (194) One day Brendan was walking in the desert of Gaul. There came a tremendous and intolerable wind against them. Then said one of his company to Brendan : ' These trees will fall upon us and kill us.' Then said Brendan : ' Dear brothers,' said he, ' listen to me awhile. Once on a time we were on the sea at night. The people were all asleep, saving myself alone. Then I saw an island in the midst of the sea, and thus was that island : it had seven unmortared (*lit.* cold) feet supporting it, and large vessels under sail could go under it between the feet. And there were all kinds of voices and sounds in it. And there were three vessels moored under it that very night. Now He,' said Brendan, ' who is able to support that seven-footed island on the surface of the sea with all the winds smiting it from every quarter. He is able to deliver us from the danger of these trees which are threatening us from above ; and He is the King of Heaven and earth.'

lxv. Rescue of Colman the Monk from the Demons, by the grace of St. Brendan's prayer.

(195) One day two of Brendan's company were conversing, and he was listening to them : and this is what they were saying : ' Can the soul of a sinner,' said they, ' be rescued from hell by the prayers and alms deeds of their surviving friends ?' Then said Brendan to them : ' Listen to me,' said he : ' One day we were sleeping on the sea, one lay brother alone being awake. He saw a cloud black, dark, menacing, hideous, and dreadful, coming towards us from the horizon of the ocean. The whilom laic came to me at once,' said Brendan, ' and spoke thus : " Great fear has seized me," said he ; and he continued : " Arise quickly (and look) at this great cloud that is coming towards us. And dost thou hear the appalling voice in it ?"'

(196) ' When I had arisen, I saw the hideous cloud with the form of a man in it, black and dark like an extinct cinder, or a cormorant. And this wretched form was continually howling and weeping for the extremity of his torment ; and then he said to me : " I entreat thee," said he, " by Jesus Christ, the Son of the King of Heaven and earth, to pray the Lord for me for these three days, for there is no one more tormented than I, owing to the greatness of my sins." And with this utterance he darted from us. Then we all arose forthwith, and besought the Lord for him. He came back after three days, and his body was bluish black, and his lamentation less, and he said once more that we should beseech the Lord for him another three days ; and with that utterance he departed.

(197) ' At the end of a week he returned, with a white cloud about him, and his body all radiant like the summer sun. And this white cloud had seven different kinds of glorious music sounding in the midst of it, and they were sweeter than all the many melodies of the world. Then he gave thanks to God, and said : " Now," said he, " the Saviour of the human race is calling me to His own kingdom." Then I said,' continued Brendan, ' " Who art thou, and what is thy name ?" " I am Colman," said he, " the worst monk of all monks." Then leaving his blessing with the brethren he thereupon went to heaven with attendance of angels.

(198) ' Then,' said Brendan, ' my monks besought me to make a prayer for them, for they saw the profit of it to yonder monk. But they did not get me to do this, till at a later time Michael the archangel came to me, and said to me : " God has heard thine intercession," said he, " search and peruse the divine scriptures, and make a collected prayer out of them, which may preserve and protect the men of the world from hell and its many pains.'"

(199) Brendan then while in his boat made the celebrated prayer, and Michael the arch-angel blessed the prayer of Brendan, and said that it should be recited twelve times in a day for the soul of every sinner, and twelve genuflexions after each recitation, and a *Pater noster* on the completion of each course. And there is no sin so great, whether of living or dead, but shall receive remission, if only this be done for him. And it was fitting that Michael the arch-angel should bid him make this prayer, rather than any other angel, for Michael was Brendan's angel. 'So it is clear from this,' said Brendan, 'that it does profit the dead for their surviving friends to sing their requiem.'

lxvi. (200) So then after Brendan had gone over the land of Gaul, and had wrought great miracles and mighty works in the eastern parts [i.e. Britain], he went on to Ireland, and came after travail by sea and on the continent to Clonfert of Brendan, and resided there for a long time afterwards.

lxvii. (201) One time Brendan son of Finding was at Clonfert on Easter Day in the seventh year before his death. The canonical hours had been celebrated by them in the church, the sermon preached, and Mass said. When midday came, the monks went to the refectory; and Brendan was left alone in the church. They began the order of the refectory. [10] There was a young clerk with them, and he had a little harp in his hand. He began to play to them, and they blessed him for it. 'I should be wondrous pleased now,' said the young clerk, 'if Brendan would admit me into the church, that I might play three strains to him.' 'He will not admit thee,' said the monks; [11] 'for seven years past Brendan has never smiled, and has never listened to any music in the world; but two balls of wax tied together with a thread are always on the book in front of him. And whenever he hears any music, he puts the balls into his ears.' 'I will go,' said the young clerk, 'to play the harp to him.'

(202) So the young clerk went away, with his harp ready tuned in his hand. 'Open,' said the young clerk. 'Who is there?' said Brendan. 'A young clerk to play the harp to thee,' said he. 'Play outside,' said Brendan. 'If thou dost not mind, I should be glad if thou wouldst admit me into the church to thee.' 'Very well,' said he, 'open the door.' The young clerk set his harp on the floor between his feet. [12] Brendan puts the two balls of wax into his two ears. 'I don't like,' said the young clerk, 'to play to thee on that wise, unless thou take the wax out.' 'I will do so,' said he; and he put (the balls) on the book before him. Then he played three strains to him. 'A blessing on thee, young clerk,' said Brendan, 'and the music of heaven to thee hereafter.'

(203) Then he puts the balls into his ears, for he did not care to listen to any music of this world. 'Why dost thou not listen to music?' said the young clerk. 'Is it because thou deemest it bad?' 'Nay, young clerk,' said he, 'not that. But seven years ago this very day I was in this church after Mass and sermon here; all the young clerks had gone to the refectory, and I was left here alone. A great yearning for my Lord seized me after my communion. While in that state fear and trembling took me, and I saw a bird on the window, which settled on the altar. I could not look upon it for the sun-bright beams that were around it. "Give us thy blessing, O cleric," said he. "May God bless thee," said I; "and who is it?" said I. "Michael the angel," said he, "come to converse with thee." "I thank God indeed," said I, "and why art thou come?" "To sain thee, and to play to thee, for thy Lord." "Thou art welcome to me," said I. He drew his beak across the wattle of his wing. And I listened till the same hour on the following day, and then he bade me farewell.'

(304) Here Brendan drew his book-mark across the neck (of the harp). 'Does that seem sweet to thee, young clerk? I declare before God,' said Brendan, 'not sweeter to me is any music in the world, compared with that music, than (the noise made by) this book-mark. And

take my blessing, and heaven be thine in return for playing to me.' So that this (place) was Brendan's Hermitage in Clonfert.

lxviii. (205) On one occasion the Munstermen went to ravage Connaught. Brendan went to stop them, and to ask a truce of them ; but it was refused him, and they boasted that they would carry out the expedition. Then God caused them to go round and round in the same place, and each one would come back to the same point again, and they remained thus for a long time through the power of the Lord and the prayer of St Brendan. And thus Connaught was delivered. And as Brendan departed thence there chanced to meet him a saintly boy, dumb from his birth. When Brendan blessed him, he spoke at once.

lxix. (206) Brendan after this went to visit his sister Brig at the fort of Aed son of Eochaid, which is now called Enach Duin. So then, after traversing sea and land, after raising dead men, healing lepers, blind, deaf, lame, and all kinds of sick folk, after founding many cells, and monasteries, and holy churches, after appointing abbots and masters, after blessing cataracts and estuaries, after consecrating districts and tribes, after putting down crimes and sins, after great perils by sea and land, after expelling demons and vices, after pre-eminence in pilgrimage and (ascetic) devotion, after performance of mighty works and miracles too numerous to mention, St Brendan drew near to the day of his death,'

(207) Then said Brendan to the brethren after Mass on the Sunday, and after receiving the body of Christ and His blood : ' God,' said he, ' is calling me to the eternal kingdom ; and my body must be taken to Clonfert, for there will be attendance of angels there, and there will be my resurrection. Make a small chariot, and let a single one of you go with it to convey my body, lest, if it were a large waggon with a numerous attendance, the tribes should notice it, and dispute for my body. And a young man with only one eye, the left, to speak precisely, will meet the bearer of my body, viz. Cuirrine son of Setna. And he will say to the brother who has the corpse : " Is that the body of the Saint that thou hast ?" he will say in a gruff voice ; " among us shall his resurrection be ; give up the body." Then,' said Brendan, ' let the brother offer Cuirrine a mass of gold (which he will take) from the ground, to let him go. The man will say that he will not let him go for that. " Thou shalt have the kingship," shall the brother say to him, " thyself and thy seed after thee. Let me go. And this is a sign to thee ; I was talking to him (i. e. Brendan) to-day how thou wouldst get the kingship." " No," he will say. Then, shall the brother say : " Thou shalt have heaven and earth." And he will let him go,' said Brendan, ' after this for the sake of these three things, the gold, the kingship, and heaven. Then the brother will bless him, and he will depart altogether.'

(208) When he had finished saying all this, he blessed the brethren and his sister Brig, and when he reached the threshold of the church, he said : ' *In manus tuas, Domine,*' etc. Then he sent forth his spirit, having completed ninety-three years ; as the prophet said :

' The age of Brendan without crime,
Who was sage, and prophet, and poet ;
Ninety-three years exactly
He spent amid great peril.'

It was five hundred and eighty-one years from the Incarnation of Christ, the Son of God, to the death of Brendan ; as (one) said :

' From the birth of the Son of Mary we are sure
To the extinction of Brendan's life
Was a year and a glorious eighty,
In addition to five hundred complete.'

And his feast is kept on the sixteenth day of the month of January (read : May) to speak precisely.

lxx. (209) The body of Brendan was placed on the chariot on the morrow, as Brendan had said, and a single brother went with it. Cuirrine mac Setna met him, and said to him as St Brendan had foretold. The body of Brendan was then brought to Clonfert and buried there with great honour and reverence, with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, in honour of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost

I entreat the mercy of Almighty God through the intercession of St. Brendan, that we may all reach the Unity of the Holy Trinity ; may we win it, may we dwell in it for ever and ever. Amen.

The End

(COLOPHON)

(210) In the convent of the brethren on the Drowse I re-wrote this life of Brendan from the paper copy which I previously made from the book which Siograid Úa Maelconaire (Seery O'Mulconry) wrote for Rose daughter of Aed Duv, son of Aed Roe O'Donnell, wife of Niall the younger, son of Art, son of Conn O'Neill in the place of Sen-Caislen beside Sliab Truim. The age of Christ, as the writer shows, was then 1536. And the age of Christ now is March 27, 1699. I am the poor friar, Michael O'Clery.

[1] *or* to Port Eile.

[2] let Him make a (real) water-dog (Dobar-chii) of him Lism.

[3] a trout

[4] another trout Lism.

[5] Let not thy fire be of thorn, let not thy spit be of red bracken Lism.

[6] The text is corrupt here ; I have translated in accordance with the correction suggested in the textual notes.

[7] MS. the water (wrongly).

[8] *alias* Magh Ai (interlined).

[9] i.e. c. xxxv, *Supra* p. 64.

[10] The monks begin to be right merry in their refectory Rl.

[11] MS. said the young clerk (wrongly).

[12] hands Rl.

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