

but it would have required more than a prophetic vision to have anticipated them in 1155. In 1155 Ireland was not in a state of turmoil or verging towards barbarism; on the contrary, it was rapidly progressing and renewing its claims to religious and moral pre-eminence. I will add, that Pope Adrian, who had studied under Irish masters, knew well this flourishing condition of our country. In 1172, however, a sad change had come over our island. Four years of continual warfare, and the ravages of the Anglo-Norman filibusterers, since their first landing in 1168, had well nigh reduced Ireland to a state of barbarism, and the authentic letters of Alexander III., in 1172 faithfully describe its most deplorable condition. Moreover, an expedition of Henry to Ireland, which would not be an invasion, and yet would merit the homage of the Irish princes; was simply an impossibility in 1155. But, owing to the special circumstances of the kingdom such in reality was the expedition of Henry in 1172. He set out for Ireland, not avowedly to invade and conquer it, but to curb the insolence and to punish the deeds of pillage of his own Norman freebooters. Hence during his stay in Ireland he fought no battle and made conquest: his first measures of severity were directed against some of the most lawless of the early Norman adventurers, and this more than anything else reconciled the native princes to his military display. In return he received from a majority of the Irish chieftains the empty title of *Ardrigh*, or "Head Sovereign," which did not suppose any conquest on his part, and did not involve any surrender of their own hereditary rights. Such a state of things could not have been imagined in 1155; and yet it is one which is implied in the spurious Bull of the much maligned Pontiff, Adrian the Fourth.

THE VOYAGE OF ST. BRENDAN.

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IN one of their hours of relaxation, their host gave them an account of what had led to his solitary life in that remote and desolate island.

He had been an inmate of the monastery of Inis-na-Gloire; and, like the monk whose miserable fate was still so painfully remembered, he had fallen into sins of a deadly nature. Under the influence of remorse and despair he at last ran to the shore, intending to throw himself into the unpitied waves; but before he came to the edge, his will had yielded to the motion of grace, and despair had given way to contrition. A boat was leaving the little harbour, and he felt inspired to enter it, and commit his after proceedings to Providence. After some days a terrible storm came, and swept the little vessel out of its coasting course into the wide wild deep. In a sudden lurch of the boat his hold on the bulwarks gave way, and he was flung out into the merciless water. He felt that his last hour was come. All the wilfully vicious thoughts that ever had caused him to sin,—all the sinful acts that he had ever committed,—became present to his inward sight at that moment to drive him to despair; but he invoked Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, and made an act of contrition and of charity. He then seemed as if falling into a delightful slumber; and when his consciousness returned, he found himself lying on the rocks that skirt the landing-place of that isle. After a good deal of exploring, he saw no sign of any kind of food, nor of fire to cook it; and he was about lying down to await death when an otter came up, holding with his sharp teeth a fish, which he dropped at his feet. But how could he kindle a fire? The otter ran before him to the edge of an upright rock, and scratching at its base exposed to view a couple of hard bright flintstones. Collecting some dry sticks and moss and withered leaves, he lighted a fire by means of his flints, and made a feast on the otter's present. He afterwards discovered the cavern, and, under the promptings of necessity, found means of catching fish and some wild-fowl. He had now lived a lonely life