

man was among them. When the company drew near, they saw a man riding under the banner." To this man their case was referred. He commanded them to be brought to him, and addressed them in the Norse tongue. When he discovered they were Icelanders, he declared he was from Bogafjord, and made many inquiries concerning certain people. He refused to disclose his name, and, although the summer was nearly gone, he advised them to leave, and looked to the fitting out of their ship. Gudleif, with his companions, put to sea, and the same autumn reached Ireland, and passed the winter in Dublin.

According to the Landnamabok, Are Marson, about 928, was driven by a storm to White-man's land, which some call Ireland the Great, which lies in the western ocean, opposite Vinland, six days' sail west of Ireland. Here he was baptized, not allowed to leave, and was held in great honor.

In presenting these tales the reciters do not get rid of their conceptions of European customs. In the fabulous land, men continue to ride on horseback and follow banners. Even the Christian religion early reaches out its arm there; but what saint propagated the new doctrine deponeth saith not.

The idea of superstition must not be lost sight of in this discussion. It had a bearing on these narratives, as has already been intimated. In saga time it is impossible to draw a line between superstition and religion. Their superstitions were rude in shape and vigorous in imagery. The composers of the sagas, although supposed to be Christians, were swayed by the superstitions of their age. As an illustration of this fact, the following may be given from the saga of Thorfinn Karlsefne: There was a witch named Thorborg, who was called upon during a time of evil in Greenland. She was accorded the seat of honor, wore a blue cloak, laced in front and covered with precious stones. On her head was a black lambskin, trimmed with white cat's fur, while in her hand was a staff, the top of which was brass inlaid with precious stones. Around her waist was a belt, from which hung a bag containing materials for fire, and the articles used in sorcery. After making the witches' broth, some other woman must sing the witches' chant. The women of the house were placed around the caldron, and Gudrid sang so sweetly that the spirits revealed that as the winter passed away so would the bad times and the pestilence should decline. These superstitions gave a coloring to what was written; and the sagas bearing on the Norse discovery should be read in their entirety, and not solely that part relating directly on the subject.