

writings of the earliest missionaries in this region, we have been informed that the Jesuit fathers learned from the old men of the Chippewa tribe, that when they had gone to Lake Superior (being themselves driven westward) they found the country uninhabited. This migration was probably scarcely more than three centuries ago, as their traditions gave it a recent date.

In these earliest writings, we are not informed of any knowledge of valuable deposits of copper that might have been possessed by the Chippewas; and from the silence on the subject, it seems reasonable to infer that they were unacquainted, if not with the uses of metallic copper, at least with the art of mining, even if they were aware of the existence of copper. However, in later writings of the Jesuits, mention of the existence of copper, as known to them, is made; but they have not left any records that veins or beds of the metal were worked by the Indians.

This brief sketch carries us back to the earliest historic times of Lake Superior, without leaving any records of mining; yet, turning to the rocks themselves these are only so many records imperishably stamped in pre-historic days, to show that we cannot consider the Indo-European of the last half century the first to recognize the mineral value of Lake Superior.

Long before the migration of the Chippewas three centuries ago, there had been a race of men, to us unknown, who had toiled the long weary day and paved the way to the rediscoveries of the last thirty years. These men were not altogether unsophisticated savages, for in the dim past they had made considerable progress in the art of mining copper, the only metal used among the aboriginal traders of North America, and valued more highly than gold among the Indians who had been fortunate enough to obtain it at the time of the rediscovery of America. Of all the many copper mines that have

been discovered and worked in modern times on Lake Superior, there is not one that was unknown to the aboriginal miners three or six centuries ago. The copper is in the metallic state, being found in pieces varying from exceedingly small particles up to masses of the pure metal of several hundred tons' weight. The Copper-Bearing Series of rocks extend from Ontonagon County, through the entire length of Keeweenaw (or Keewaiwonaw) Peninsula, and on Isle Royale. From what has been left us throughout the whole of this region, there is abundant evidence of the visitation of a semi-civilized mining people. These early miners sunk many pits, either in explorations or to follow branches of the metal already discovered. Yet they labored under great difficulties—they had no steel mining tools, no blasting powder, no powerful machinery to raise and transport the rock, no pumps; they had only their hands, the rocks, the trees, and the undomesticated wild animals, to afford them means to dig down deeply into the bowels of the earth. For hammers they used oval-shaped boulders, in size from a pound or two in weight to those weighing fifty pounds or more. Of these there are two descriptions—simple hand hammers, and those used with handles. These latter have a groove, or sometimes even two grooves around them, in order that the handles may be tied tightly with straps of leather, or of bark.

These grooves were made only at a great expenditure of labor, as their tools were of the roughest description, and the stones are either *diorite* or *granite*, being tough and very hard. Among the other remains of their implements, wooden shovels, wooden crowbars, skids (or round pieces of wood used as rollers), fragments of leather and skins, birch-bark vessels (used as buckets to keep their workings dry) and a few copper tools have been found. From