

tory of the Indian Tribes, remarks of the ancient mining excavations of this region: "The great antiquity of these works is unequivocally proven by the size of the timber now standing in the trenches. There must have been one generation of trees before the present since the mine was abandoned. How long they were wrought can only be conjectured by the slowness with which the miners must have advanced in such great excavations with the use of such rude instruments. The decayed trunks of full grown trees lie in the trenches. I saw a pine over three feet in diameter, that grew in a sink-hole on one of the veins, which had died and fallen down many years since." Above a mass of copper, detached and marked by the rude tools of the ancient miners, there was also noted a hemlock tree, the roots of which spread entirely over it, and a section of the trunk exposed two hundred and ninety annual rings of growth. An uncertain, yet considerable interval must be assumed to have intervened between the abandonment of those ancient works and their once more becoming a part of the wild forest wastes; and when this interval is added to our calculations, we are at once thrown beyond the era of Columbus in our search for a period to which to assign these singular relics of a lost civilization.

When, and by whom, then, were these works carried on? In the early part of the seventeenth century, when the wild regions around Lake Superior were first partially explored by Europeans, the Jesuit missionaries of Canada and others, they appear to have pertained to the Algonquin tribes. But the climate and soil of this region seem alike conclusive as to the improbability of the permanent settlement of any civilized race along the shores of Lake Superior. The soil is affirmed to be, for the most part, little adapted to agriculture, and the length and severity of the winter leave the modern miner entirely dependent on the accumulated stores laid up during the summer. This, therefore, may seem to justify the conclusion that the mining operations have been carried on intermittently by migratory workers, just as the modern Indians are known to explore the detritus and out-cropping veins at the present day, for the readily attainable fragments of the *miskopewabik*, or red iron, as they call it. But, although the native copper has probably never been altogether unknown to the Indian tribes of the continent, lying south and west of the great lakes, yet many evidences tend to prove an essential diversity of character and operations between the ancient and modern native metallurgists. The very name of *red iron* is clearly post-Columbian, and proves the disseverance of the links which should connect the ancient