

dwelling, &c., are wanting, and the small number of chaseable animals, indeed, offered but little inducement to a protracted sojourn. The question, at what time the natives ceased to resort to the mines, has been answered in various ways. Mr. Whittlesey is of opinion that from five to six hundred years may have elapsed since that time, basing his argument on the growth of trees that have sprung up in the rubbish thrown out from the mines; Mr. Lapham, on the other hand, believes in a continuance of the aboriginal mining operations to more recent periods, and thinks they were carried on by the progenitors of the Indians still inhabiting the neighboring parts, although they possess no traditions relative to such labors. Probably as early as the first half of the seventeenth century the French of Canada entertained with those tribes a trade that provided the latter with iron tools, and the ornaments and trinkets so much coveted by the red race. Thus, the inducements to obtain copper ceased, and the practice of procuring it being once discontinued, a few centuries may have sufficed to efface the tradition from the memory of the succeeding generations. Yet, like many other points of North American archæology, this matter is still involved in obscurity, and it would be hazardous, at present, to pronounce any decided opinion on the subject.\*

The occurrence of native copper in the United States is not confined to the shore of Lake Superior. As I am informed by Professor James D. Dana, it is also met, in pieces of several pounds' weight, in the valley of the Connecticut river, and likewise, in smaller pieces, in the State of New Jersey, probably originating in both cases from the red sandstone formation. Near New Haven, Connecticut, a mass was found weighing ninety pounds. Such copper finds may have furnished a small part of the metal worked by the aboriginal inhabitants; its real source, however, must be sought, in all probability, in the mining district of Lake Superior. It is a remarkable circumstance that the native copper there occurring sometimes incloses small masses of native silver, a juxtaposition which, as I believe, is not to be observed at any other place in the United States; and just such pieces in which the two natural metals are combined have been taken from a few of the tumuli of Ohio.

Though copper articles of Indian origin are comparatively scarce in

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\* The Indians certainly are a forgetful race. The traveler Stephens, who has examined and described the grand ruins of ancient buildings in Yucatan and the neighboring states, maintains—and I believe on good grounds—that these erections, at least in part, are the work of the same Indian populations with whom the conquistadores (Hernandez de Córdova, Grijalva, Cortés) were brought into contact during the sixteenth century. The present descendants of the builders of those magnificent works have preserved no recollections of their more advanced ancestors. Whenever Stephens asked them concerning the origin of the buildings, their answer was, they had been erected by the *antiguos*; but they could not explain their destination; they were unacquainted with the meaning of the statues and fresco paintings, and manifested in general a total ignorance of all that related to their former history.