

## 18 COPPER BEARING TRAPS, COPPERMINE RIVER—DOUGLAS.

for centuries explored for native copper, with such implements as the Indians had, the wonder is that any can still be found. The rock specimens, however, show flakes of metal in both the amygdaloid, the conglomerates and the traps, and the rocks themselves are, as shown by Graton, duplicates of those of the Keweenaw Series.

The copper resources of this district are probably large, for from the Islands of Bathurst Inlet to the exposures of these Keweenaw rocks, recognized to the north of the Dismal Lakes, is a distance of about three hundred miles. Stefansson states that the shores of Victoria Land, which is separated from the mouth of the Coppermine River by some thirty-five miles of Coronation Gulf, is the most productive region now frequented by the native copper miners. Copper is still preferred by the Esquimaux and Indians to iron for certain uses. What the actual average copper contents of any large tract may prove to be could only be determined by mining and sampling on a large scale. A preliminary expedition by water, extending over several years, might determine this question, and that of the existence of fuel within economical reach of the ore; for upon favourable conditions in these two respects would depend the possibility of conducting a profitable mining enterprise under the adverse conditions existing within the Arctic Circle. These islands in Bathurst Inlet and the mainland near the mouth of the Coppermine River could be reached by water through Bering Straits, or from the mouth of the Mackenzie River for only a few weeks of the year. On the other hand one has to recollect that for many years the Keweenaw promontory of Michigan was cut off from all communication with the market except during the comparatively few months of open navigation; that supplies of fuel and merchandise were conveyed by water to the mines before navigation closed, and that the copper accumulated on the peninsula until navigation opened the following spring. The open season was of course longer than it would be in the Arctic Ocean, and the climate in the Arctic is more severe than in Michigan, the thermometer dropping occasionally to 40° and 50° below zero. The fall of snow, however, as reported by our explorers on the Dease River, did not exceed at any time two feet; and therefore