

and to complete the removal of the pieces of native copper by mauling off the adhering particles of rock with stone hammers. This is attested by the presence, in all of the ancient pits, of large quantities of charcoal, and of numberless hammers, the latter showing marks of long usage. That the miners had not advanced to any knowledge of the artificial elevation of water, is shown by the fact that apparently, in all cases, the pits have only been sunk to a depth where the limit of man-power in bailing out the water, is reached. Between the successive pits are ridges of unremoved rock and soil, rather indicating that they were left as dams to prevent the water from passing from a pit already filled with water into one in process of being wrought.

The pits, the charcoal, the stone hammers, and the implements and tools made of copper, are the only relics left of the race that wrought these mines. Neither a grave, vestige of a habitation, skeleton or bone has been found. Among the Indians inhabiting the region, from the earliest acquaintance of the white man, neither tradition or legend remained of these ancient miners. The Indians themselves had no knowledge of the existence of copper in the veins and belts, so thoroughly had the debris of ages covered them. Their knowledge was confined to the float pieces of copper in the soil.

When considering the extent of country previously stated, over which this mining work extended, the crude and slow process of the labor and the enormous amount of work performed, it becomes evident that the work extended through centuries of time, and was carried on by a vast number of people. The largest aggregation of ancient pits yet discovered, is on what is known as the Mining Belt on Isle Royal. Here, for a distance of one and three-quarters miles, and for an average width of four hundred feet, the successive pits indicate the mining out of the belt (solid rock) to an average depth of no less than twenty feet. Scattered over this ground are battered stone hammers, numberless, but running into the millions.

It is not to be presumed that these ancient people were unacquainted with the advantages of the division of labor. There were undoubtedly miners, bailers of water, and men whose part it