

conquest of Mexico, says that upon entering Tuspan they found that "each Indian had, besides his ornaments of gold, a *copper* axe, which was very highly polished, with handles curiously carved, as if to serve equally for an ornament and for the field of battle. We first thought that these axes were made of an inferior kind of gold; we therefore commenced taking them in exchange, and in the space of ten days had collected *more than six hundred*, with which we were no less rejoiced, as long as we were ignorant of their real value, than the Indians with our glass beads."

When Columbus in his fourth voyage, was visited at the Guanaja islands by a trading canoe of Yucatan, the crew, according to Herrera, had small hatchets made of copper, small bells and plates.

That the copper from which these tools, scattered over such a vast area of country, were manufactured, came from the ancient mines of Superior, does not admit of doubt. Although large and numerous deposits of copper ore are scattered through Arizona, New Mexico, Mexico, and Central and South America, there is no evidence that the aborigines of the country had sufficient metallurgical knowledge or skill to reduce the ores to refined copper. On the other hand, the great Creator, for provision to the wants of that ancient race, had planted on the shores of Lake Superior the only known workable deposits of native copper in the world. The term virgin copper is well used to denote its purity. In the latter day it out-ranks all others in the world.

The occurrence of this native metal in segregations of various weights, enabled the ancient miner to easily follow the deposit, and to readily separate the pieces of metal from the containing rocks. These segregations were peculiarly adapted for the use of the forgers of the tools. The extreme ductility of the metal, due to its purity, was also a provision of great advantage to the ancient artisan. In examining the tools that have been recovered, one is involuntarily amazed at the perfection of workmanship, and at their identity in form with the tools made for like purposes and used at the present day, the prototypes of the implements of our present civilization. The sockets of the spears, chisels, arrow-heads, knives and fleshers are, in nearly all instances, formed as