

Fabrication of Ancient Copper Implements

By Lyman C. Draper

The paper in Vol. VII of our Society's *Collections*, by Prof. Butler, on "Prehistoric Wisconsin," describing the collection of ancient copper implements in the cabinet of our Society—the principal portion of which, was on exhibition at the Centennial celebration at Philadelphia in 1876—has elicited not a little discussion among our archaeologists as to the mode of their fabrication. Dr. Butler contended that *some* of them, at least, gave evidence of having been cast in moulds. This view has been stoutly contested by others. All the light we can get on this interesting subject, *pro* and *con*, is desirable.

Prof. Thomas Egleston read, in March, 1879, a paper on "Prehistoric Copper Mining at Lake Superior," before the Academy of Sciences of New York. And in the *Proceedings* of the American Antiquarian Society at its semi-annual meeting, April 30, 1879, was read a valuable paper on "Mexican Copper Tools," by Philipp I. I. Valentini, Ph. D., translated from the German by Stephen Salisbury, Jr.

These papers throw much light upon this discussion. Both of these distant people, the primitive Mexicans and the Indians of Lake Superior, were unacquainted with iron—the Mexican natives having been ignorant of it until the arrival of the Spaniards in their country; both were trained in the arts and practice of war, yet neither had shaped their copper into warlike implements, the metal being appropriated solely to the uses of peace—in Mexico, apparently, because of its comparative scarcity. "Whilst the Northern red man," says Valentini, "attained to his highest achievement in the production of the axe, the native of Central America could boast of important additions to his stock of tools. He possessed copper implements for tilling the fields, and knew the uses of the chisel. Besides, when he wished to