

## 1670: DABLON'S ACCOUNT OF COPPER MINES AT LAKE SUPERIOR.

[From the Jesuit *Relation* of 1669-70.]

Hitherto it had been thought that these Mines were found only in one or two Islands; but, since we have made more exact inquiries on the subject, we have learned from the Savages some secrets which they did not wish to reveal. It has been necessary to use artifice to elicit this information, and to distinguish the true from the false.

Still we do not vouch for the truth of all that we are about to relate, upon their simple deposition, until we are able to speak with more assurance after having gone in person to the places referred to; and this we hope to do this Summer, at the same time when we go in search of lost and wandering sheep all through the region of that great Lake.

Upon entering it by its mouth, where it empties into the Sault, the first place met where Copper is found in abundance, is an Island, distant forty or fifty leagues and situated toward the North, opposite a spot called Missipicouatong [Michipicoten].

The Savages say that it is a floating Island, which is sometimes far off, sometimes near, according to the winds that push it and drive it in all directions. They add, that a long time ago four Savages came thither by chance, having lost their way in the fog by which that Island is almost always surrounded.

It was in the times before they had yet had any commerce with the French, and when they did not use kettles or hatchets. These men, then, wishing to prepare themselves something to eat, adopted their usual method: taking some stones that they found at the water's edge, they heated them red-hot, and threw them into a bark dish filled with water, to make it boil, and by this device to cook their meat. While selecting these stones, they found that they were almost all pieces of Copper; accordingly they made use of some of them, and, after taking their repast, resolved to embark as soon as possible, fearing the Lynxes and the Hares, which are as large as Dogs in that region, and were coming to eat up their provisions and even their Canoe.