AN ABORIGINAL MAGICAL PLATE.

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(Figure 1.)

From Mrs. Daisy M. Bates, of Ooldea, South Australia, the Trustees have lately received an object, locally known as an inma or eenma, which is credited with magical properties. It was thought by the donor, who is persona grata amongst the aboriginals, to be a unique specimen, but this statement is open to modification. It consists of a thin pentagonal plaque of phyllite, a variety of slate, and is incised on both sides. For purposes of description, these faces will be referred to as the obverse and reverse.

Fig. 1.

On the obverse, as a centrepiece, is a human figure, the head encircled by a radiating dance ornament known in parts of Western Australia as wonnung-gi or tahlee, and in each hand a wandi is held. About the middle of the figure is what appears to be a loin fringe, while each thigh bears incised cinctures. In the field may be seen three boomerangs of the kylie type. The figure is contained within a scalloped margin, outside of which parallel, or radiating lines appear, cut right to the outer edge. The design on the reverse is considered phallic. It seems to represent the female pudenda, or possibly a combination of both the male and female organs of generation. The parallel transverse flutings are of a coarser type than those on the obverse. There are traces of ruddle in some of the incisions. The object when received was contained within a padded envelope composed of matted emu feathers loosely bound with fur string, the latter terminated with tufts of woman's hair.