

ETHNOLOGICAL NOTES.

No. 1.

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(Plates xix-xxxi and one Map.)

INTRODUCTION.

The Australian Museum ethnological collections have been enriched of late years by the addition of a number of rare and interesting specimens of Australian and South Sea native handiwork. It was considered, therefore, that an illustrated description of some of the more striking pieces would form a slight contribution to the study of the material culture of these peoples.

Many of these acquisitions, particularly from the South Seas, were discovered during stocktaking, incidental to a change of ownership of a long established curio store in this city. The opportunity has been taken also to embody in these contributions, a description of other specimens, which seem to have a special interest, or are hitherto undescribed. "Ethnological Notes No. 1" will be devoted to Australian acquisitions, especially certain flaked stone implements which have been recently discovered in the Newcastle, Port Stephens, and Lake Macquarie districts.¹

In introducing the subject of aboriginal stone implements, particularly the flaked varieties, one does so with a certain amount of caution. On the one hand the form of many has been well established; and on the other, in our present state of knowledge, it is not wise to dogmatize regarding their uses. The trained eye can readily recognize artifacts and give them tentative names, but care should be exercised when comparing aboriginal stone handiwork with old world forms. These comparisons should have no application beyond serving as a convenience; parallelism or cultural analogy should not be suggested or even implied. Moreover, the uniform behaviour of siliceous material, under percussion and pressure, gives character to flakework wherever found.

PRIMITIVE FLAKED CELTS.

(Plate xix.)

For miles along the bank of the south channel of the Hunter River west of the Broken Hill Proprietary's works, the shore is largely composed of midden material. To break down and

¹First noticed by the late D. F. Cooksey, of Mayfield, who introduced the writer to the Newcastle collecting grounds and contiguous coastal "workshops."