

## FIRST DISCOVERY OF ABOORIGINAL DIALECTS DIFFERING.

It was while Captain Broughton was surveying Port Stephens that he was surprised to discover the four runaway convicts, Tarwood, Lee, Connaway, and Watson. After listening to their dismal story concerning their five years' sojourn with the blacks, he prevailed upon them to give themselves up to justice, promising to exert his utmost endeavours to

save their lives, which were forfeited under the penal laws of the colony. Although the miserable men willingly surrendered themselves, they became deeply affected at their final parting with their native wives and half-caste children, as well as those sable companions who had cherished them so many years. It is said they expressed a hope of visiting the place again, and would reach it either by sea or by land, as they were well acquainted with the coast and inland districts. Immediately on the arrival of the Providence in Port Jackson, the four convicts were handed over to the authorities, but upon the earnest supplication of the captain to Lieutenant-Governor Colonel Paterson, who was then in command, the men were soon liberated. It is almost unnecessary to state that the men soon became objects of the greatest interest, and were supplied with an abundance of creature comforts by their sympathisers. But we are told by Captain Collins that "having lived like the savages among whom they dwelt, their change of food soon disagreed with them, and they were all taken ill, appearing to be principally affected with abdominal swellings." Considering that these early reminiscences are themes of interest to the mind of the philosopher and philanthropist, the writer cannot resist the temptation of recording the following remarkable account of the difference of the dialects of the natives of the Newcastle district with those of Port Jackson, although there may be a similarity in some of the expressions. In his diary, Captain Collins writes: "It appeared from these four men that the language to the northward differed wholly from any that we knew. Among the natives who lived with us there were none who understood all that they (the four convicts speaking aboriginal dialect) said, and of those who occasionally came in, one only could converse with them. He was a very fine lad of the name of Wargan. His mother had been born and bred beyond the mountains; but one luckless day, paying a

visit with some of her tribe to the banks of the Deerabbin (for so the Hawkesbury was named), she was forcibly prevented returning, and being obliged to submit to the embraces of an amorous and powerful Bediagal, the fruit of her visit was this boy. Speaking herself more dialects than one, she taught her son all she knew, and he being of quick parts and a roving disposition, caught all the different dialects from Rotany Bay to Port Stephens."

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