FIRST DISCOVERY OF ABORIGINAL 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. Al-
though the miserable men willingly
surrendered themselves, they became
deply affected at their final parting
with their native wives and half-caste
children, as well as those sable com-
panions 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 au-
thorities, but upon the earnest sup-
plication of the captain to Lieutenant-
Governor Colonel Paterson, who was
then in command, the men were
soon liberated. It is almost unneces-
sary 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 princi-
ally affected with abdominal swell-
ing.” Considering that these early
reminiscences are themes of interest to
the mind of the philosopher and philan-
thropist, 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 expres-
sions. 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 under-
stood 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
Wurgen. 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 Hawkesbury (for so the Hawkesbury was named), she was forcibly prevented returning, and being obliged to submit to the embraces of an amorous and powerful Bediagaly, 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 Port Stephens.”