

### THE TALLEST TREES IN THE WORLD.

It is usually considered that this epithet belongs, *par excellence*, to the famous "Big Trees" in California, variously known by the names of Wellingtonia or Sequoia. These are, however, far surpassed in height, and probably also in the total amount of timber in a single tree, by the real giants of the vegetable kingdom, the noble gum trees of the genus *Eucalyptus*, which grow in the Victorian State Forest, on the slopes of the mountains dividing Gipps Land from the rest of Victoria, and also in the mountain ranges north of Cape Otway, the first land which is usually "made" by any vessel bound from England for Melbourne direct. As will presently be shown there are only four of the Californian trees known to be above 300 feet high, the tallest being 325 feet, and only about sixty have been measured that exceed 200 feet in height.

In the large tracts near the sources of the Watts River, however (a northern branch of Yarra-Yarra; at the mouth of which Melbourne is built), all the trees average from 250 to 300 feet in height, mostly straight as an arrow, and with very few branches. Many fallen trees measure 350 feet in length, and one huge specimen was discovered lately which was found, by actual measurement with a tape, to be 435 feet long from its roots to where the trunk had been broken off by the fall; and at that point it was 3 feet in diameter, so that the entire tree could not have been less than 500 feet in total height. It was 18 feet in diameter at 5 feet from the ground, and was a *Eucalyptus* of either of the species *E. oblique* or *E. amygdalina*. It should be noted that these gigantic trees do not, like their California prototypes, grow in small and isolated groves, towering above smaller specimens of

the same or of closely allied kinds, but that, both in the Dandenong and Otway ranges, nearly every tree in the forest over a large area, is on this enormous scale.—*World of Wonders*.

### THE YUCCA IN CALIFORNIA.

The Yucca or Spanish Bayonet, from which we have named our camp, is one of the most imposing flowers in the world. The plant itself is a bunch of bayonet-like leaves, stiff and sharp enough to inflict a painful wound, and 12 inches or 18 inches in length, growing close to the ground. Out of this cluster the single flower-stalk rises to a height of about 15 feet. The flowers are cream-white, about 2½ inches in diameter, pendulous on delicate stems in horizontal racemes which spring from the stalk in lengths so regularly graduated that the mass of blossoms present the appearance of a gigantic white oval, about 6 feet long and 2 feet wide in the middle, tapering gracefully above and below. The specimen erected in our Plaza when we named the camp has seventy racemes, each containing from ten to thirty flowers. This gives about 1400 or 1500 blossoms for each stalk, and they shed a heavy lily-like perfume, whose strength is commensurate with their grand proportions. These stately plants seem to be climbing precipitous mountains, and standing like sentries on the crest of the ridge. I am afraid it will seem prosaic if I add that the Yucca is good to eat. Mr. Albert Durer brought in the top of a young one which had not yet burst into flower. It looked like a stalk of Asparagus, four feet long and as thick as a man's wrist. The tender top, cut in pieces and stewed with cream sauce, made a pleasant addition to our dinner. It tasted something like Salsafy and something like Artichoke, and a good deal like Yucca. I believe that it is a