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BOTTLE TREES.

Among the trees which nature appears to have conceived when in one of her most fantastic and capricious moods are the bottle trees of Australia. These were first made known to the scientific world in 1872, by Dr. George Bennett, of Sydney, New South Wales. He writes: "After passing over the fine sheep pastures on the station, we came on a sandy soil, on which eucalyptus and other gigantic myrtles flourished, as well as various kinds of acacias, accompanied by a kind of vegetation showing a poor soil. It was among these that we observed the peculiar trees termed from the singularity of their form, bottle trees, growing at various short distances from one another. To approach each separately, we had to pass through a scrub or thorny brake. On coming within sight of them, their remarkable formation and variety of growth, with their great elevation and bulk, excited our admiration, and amply repaid us for our trouble. The trees were nine, varying in size from thirty-five to sixty feet in height, with huge branches at the summit. The foliage is composed of narrow lance-shaped leaves four to seven inches long. Others on the same tree and stem are digitated (finger shaped). Dr. Bennett goes on to state that one of the trees at seven feet from the base measured thirty-five feet around. The trees grow luxuriantly in sandy soil, and are often tapped by the stock men and others for the glutinous sap which is a refreshing beverage. Many of the bottle trees are supposed to be thousands of years old.—*World of Wonders.*

FOOLISH JOE'S REVENGE.

"What is the excitement?" asked Mrs. Gay, as her two sons, Fred and Will, rushed into the dining-room one day at noon, flushed and breathless, and took their seats at the table. "I heard a great deal of noise in the street a moment ago."

"It was only Foolish Joe," answered Will. "The boys were trying to get his dog away from him."

"What did you want of the dog?" asked Mr. Gay.

"Oh, we didn't really want it. We were only teasing Joe. He thinks so much of that wretched cur that he won't let it out of his sight."

"Poor fellow!" said Mrs. Gay. "It is all he has to love. His mother treats him shamefully, and looks upon him as a burden and a disgrace. She drinks, too, and people say that she beats him very often. He ought not to be teased, and I am sorry my boys took part in such cruel sport."

"We didn't think about its being cruel, mother," said Fred, looking a little ashamed

of himself. "Everybody teases Joe. He ought to be used to it by this time."

"How brave and manly to torment a poor imbecile who can't defend himself!" and Mrs. Gay's tone was severe.

"He may not fight," said Mr. Gay, "but it is always dangerous to rouse the anger of an imbecile. One can never be sure in what way he will revenge his wrong. You boys may be sorry some day that you ever provoked Foolish Joe. Have you forgotten that he wrung the necks of every one of Mrs. Dabney's black Spanish fowls because she threw stones at his old rooster when it came into her yard?"

"Oh, he won't do anything to us boys," said Fred. "There's no danger of that. He's mortally afraid of us. Why, when

we were trying to get the dog away from him, he whimpered like a big baby."

"I advise you to let him alone," said Mr. Gay. "As your mother says, it is neither brave nor manly to torment the helpless. There is no 'fun' in it, that I can see. Joe should be pitied not abused. I shall be very angry if I hear of your teasing him again."

Abashed by this rebuke neither Will nor Fred spoke again during the meal, and as soon as it was over, escaped from the room, and ran off to where three of their friends were waiting for them under a tree at the corner of the next street.

"Where's the dog?" asked Will.

"We've shut him up in a shed back of Dr. Wilbur's house," answered Tom Halliday. "Such a time as we had getting him

in without anyone seeing us! And Joe's gone home, crying like a good fellow! Who'd have thought he set so much by that dog! It would be a mercy to kill the little beast; he's nothing but skin and bone."

"No; we mustn't do that," said Bert Snyder. "That would be mean. But we can keep him hidden over Sunday, just for fun. And Joe'll just go wild."

"Well, what are we going to do this afternoon?" inquired Will.

"I'm going to Bug Island to fish," said Luke French.

"We can't," said Fred. "It would cost us a dollar to hire a boat."

Luke smiled sagely.

"We don't need to hire one," he said. "Perry Thompson's gone to stay over Sunday and he left the key of his boat-house with me, and said I could use the boat today, if I felt like it. We can all go. It's big enough to hold five."

Jubilant, and with anticipations of a fine time, the boys started for the river at once, stopping at a bakery on the way to fill their pockets with fresh doughnuts, for they felt sure they would be hungry before supper-time.

"There's all the fishing-tackle here we want," said Luke, as he unlocked the door of the boat-house. "Perry won't mind our using it. He's the best fellow that ever breathed."

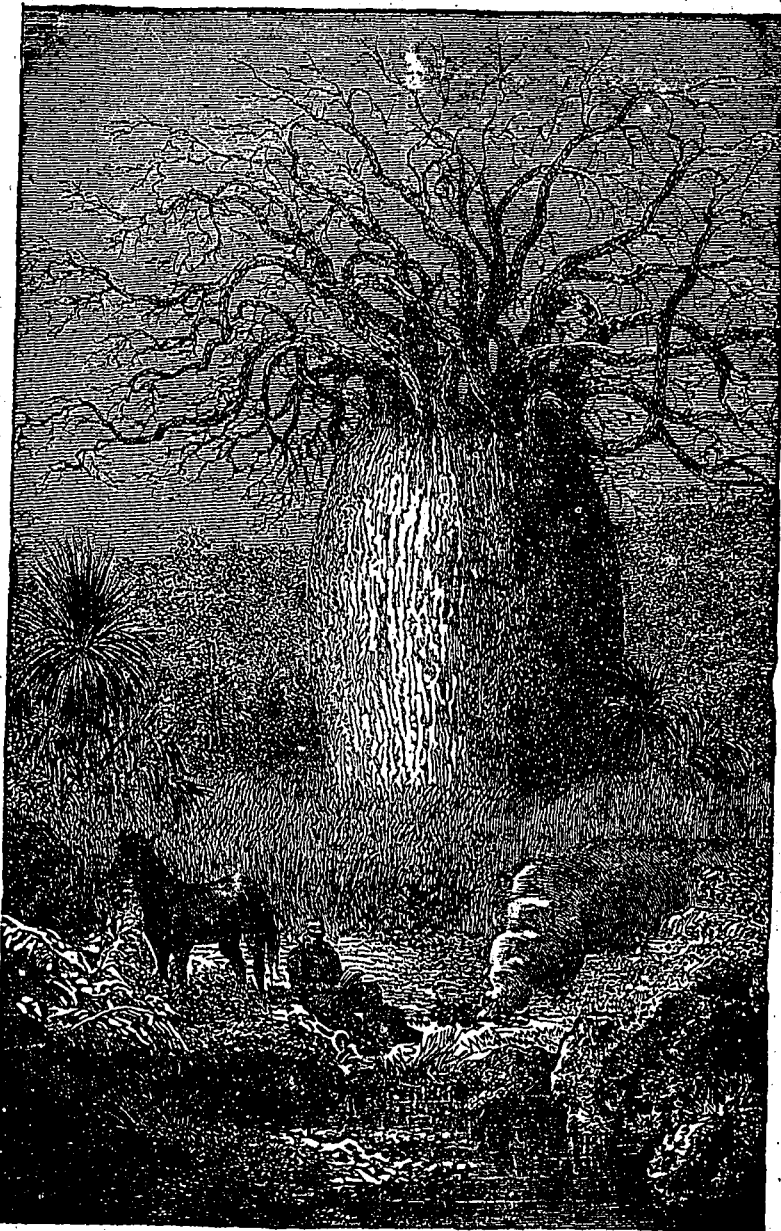
The boat was soon launched, and the five boys rowed off, unconscious that they were watched by Foolish Joe, who, anxious to obtain possession of his dearly beloved dog, had followed them unobserved and hidden himself behind the boat-house.

Careless Luke had forgotten, when he closed the door, to take the key from the lock, and this fact Joe perceived as soon as the boat was out of sight, and he found himself at liberty to make a tour of inspection.

Of course, he entered the boat-house at once, and with idle curiosity examined everything it contained. What appeared to please him most, was a small boat called the "Nellie," which Perry Thompson kept exclusively for his own use, and which could seat only one. It was a very light affair, gaily painted and handsomely fitted up.

Joe sat down on a low stool, and with his head on his hands, remained some time plunged in thought. Then he rose, and with a most malevolent expression of countenance, opened the boat-house door, and dragged the "Nellie" out. Two minutes later it was rocking on the river, with Foolish Joe handling the oars.

Mr. Thompson and all his family, except Perry, had gone to the White Mountain for the summer, and as the house stood a long distance from any other, and not even



THE BOTTLE TREE.