

Some Goldfields' Trees.

The Central Division of Western Australia, lying between latitudes 26 and 32 degrees south; bounded on the west by longitude 119 degrees, and on the east by 124 degrees, embraces what is known as the Eastern Goldfields. There are two primary regions of vegetation—the Austin or Murchison type, which extends as far south as Menzies, and the Coolgardie type, which occupies the remainder.

This southern part (which for convenience may be called the Coolgardie district), while including much of the Eremæa or sand-plain type of country, has large forests of Eucalyptus from which the gold mines derive their timber and firewood. The forests extend over the loam and gravel country, and are of the type known as Savannah forests. Eucalyptus trees occur at intervals, with an undergrowth of shrubs and salt bush, or even grass. The trees vary in height from 30 to 80 feet, and are more or less erect with a bare trunk, and spreading branches at the summit. Many trees have a smooth bark, with a collar or ring of rough persistent bark at the base of the trees. The leaves are thick and leathery and hang vertically to reduce evaporation; the roots spread for a considerable distance, but do not appear to penetrate to any depth.

Shrubs, remarkable for their rigid, tough, or hairy leaves which retard transpiration and reduce the intensity of illumination.—The chief families represented are Myoporaceæ, Sapindaceæ, Proteaceæ, Chenopodiaceæ, and Leguminosæ. The family Myrtaceæ and the section Papilionaceæ of Leguminosæ, so prevalent in other parts of the State, are comparatively scarce in the shrubs here. The leading genera are Exemophila, with many beautiful species; Dodonaea, the "Native Hop," some species of which are used for tanning with good results; Atriplex, the "Salt bush," which is an article of food for stock, and Cassia, a shrub with large yellow flowers, common throughout the goldfields.

Two other types of country in the Coolgardie district are the sand-plains, and the salt-pans or lakes. The sand-plains occur always on rising ground, the soil consisting of yellow sand and gravel. There are large patches of mallees, notably *E. incrassata* and *E. calycogona*, var. *gracilis*, the "Snap and rattle." Many species of *Grevillea* and *Casuarina* (Sheoak) occur. One particularly interesting shrub is the "Water Bush" (*Grevillea nematophylla*), which is quite common and conspicuous in December with its large pinkish-white flowers. The

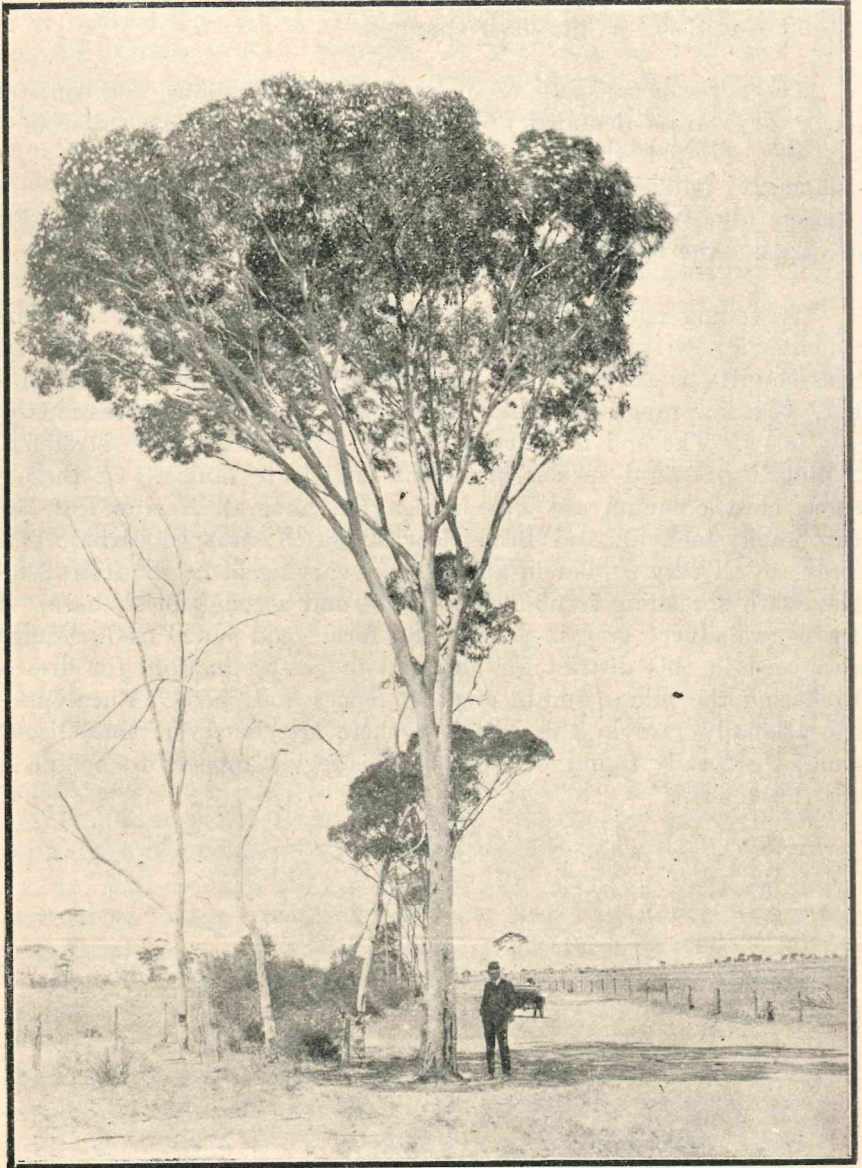
roots of this tree if taken up, cut into sections and drained, yield water which is said to be quite sweet, and to have saved many lives in this arid region. Three useful shrubs, now being used satisfactorily for tanning purposes, occur on the sand-plains. These are *Dodonaea lobulata*, *Acacia salicina*, and *Halgania lavandulacea*. *Dodonaea lobulata*, the "Goldfields Hop," is the most common.

The lakes or salt-pans occur in shallow depressions, and sometimes cover large areas denuded of vegetation and filled with water in wet seasons. Around their margins we see *Casuarina*, *Grevillea*, and frequently *Callitris*. The undergrowth is more characteristic, and consists almost entirely of *Chenopodiaceæ*, *Portulaccaceæ*, and *Frankeniaceæ*; the last-named appears to be restricted to this type.

Travelling northwards from Kalgoorlie, in the vicinity of Menzies we enter a new type of country. This is the Austin or Murchison type. This country is all over 1,000 feet above sea level, and is more or less flat, with low ranges or peaks at intervals, and a few depressions with salt lakes. The soil is gravelly, and is dotted with wide stretches of "Mulga." Several species of *Acacia* constitute mulga. Of these the three most common are Pine mulga (*A. aneura*), Narrow leaf Mulga (*A. brachystachya*), and Broad leaf Mulga (*A. craspedocarpa*). These trees are all very similar in appearance, varying in height from 8 to 16 feet, with spreading scrub-like branches and a rough black bark. The leaves are silvery grey in colour, and form good camel feed. Mulga is also used in this district for charcoal in gas-production, for firewood, timbering the mines, and in erecting fences and sheds. *Eucalypts* are exceptionally rare in this district; there are, however, small isolated clumps generally found in creeks. This region appears to be too arid for the genus.

Following are some of the trees of the Coolgardie Goldfields :—

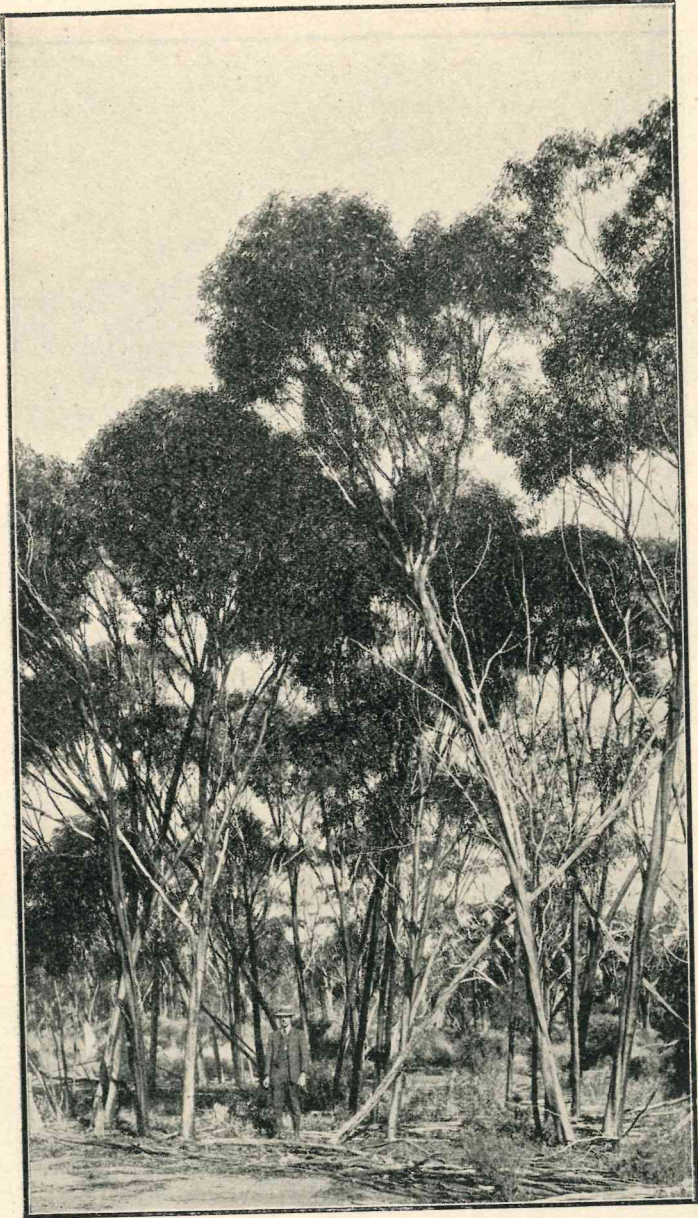
SALMON GUM (*Euc. salmonophloia*).—A tree of 80 to 100 feet with a long straight trunk, and a smooth bark of a pink or grey colour. This



Salmon Gum.

tree has a beautiful crown of dark shining leaves. The timber is the second strongest in Australia. Its chief uses are for timbering the gold mines.

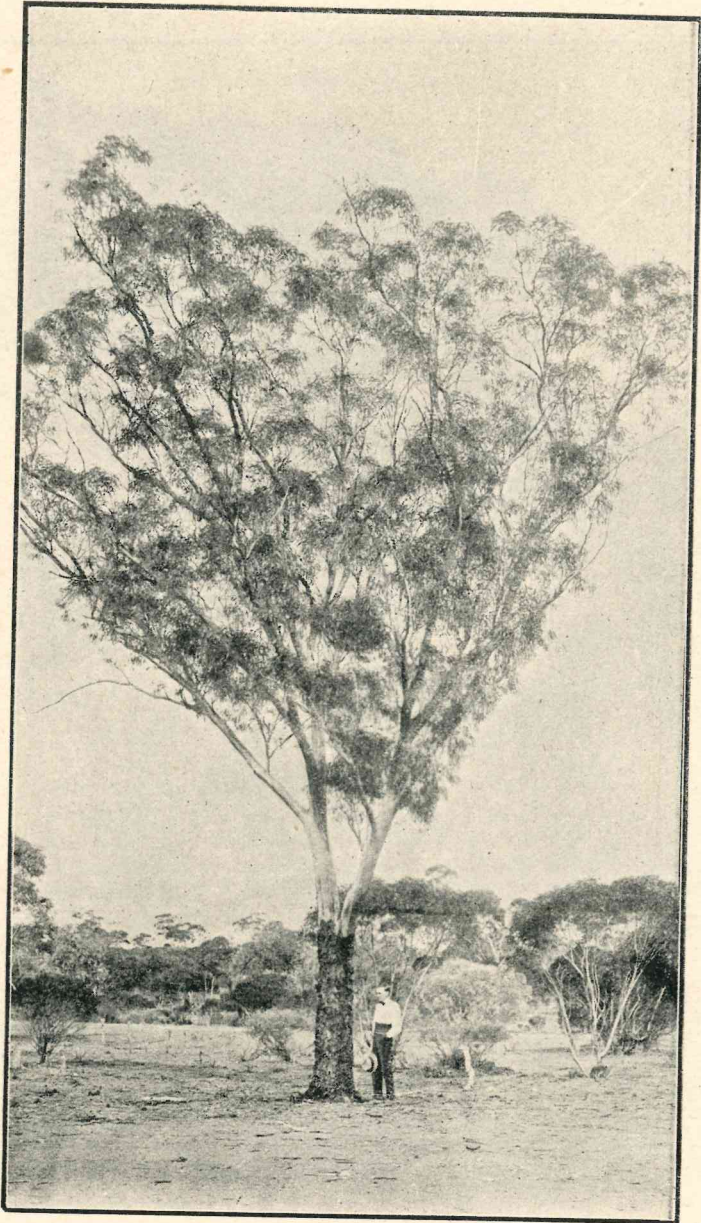
GIMLET (*Euc. salubris*).—A tree generally associated with Salmon Gum, 60 to 80 feet in height. The trunk is usually slender, and in the



Gimlet.

young tree spirally twisted or fluted—hence the name. The bark is smooth and of a light brown colour. This tree has a very dense timber, but unfortunately does not attain any great diameter.

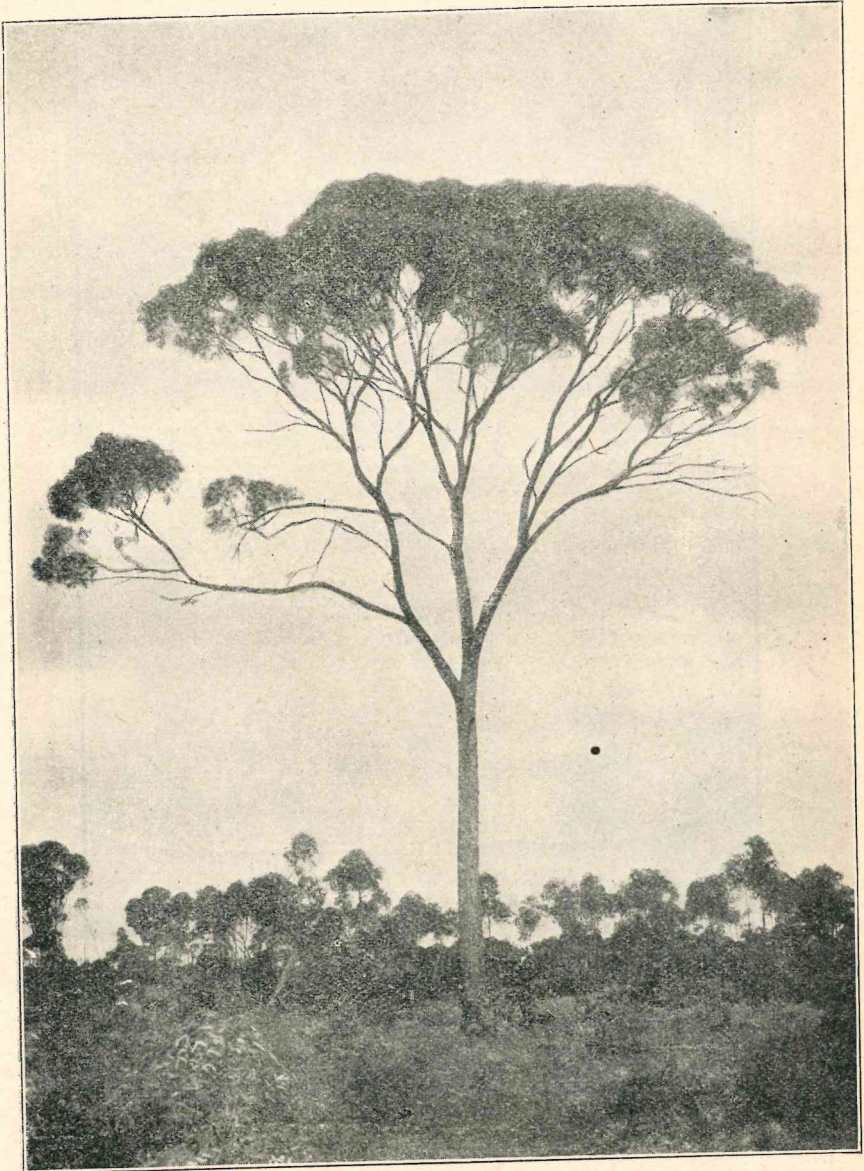
GOLDFIELDS BLACKBUTT (*Euc. Le Souefii*).—A tree of 30 to 50 feet in height. The bark is of an orange-brown colour, with a collar of flaky black bark at the base of the trunk two to six feet in height, other-



Goldfields Blackbutt.

wise smooth. The branches are more spreading than in the preceding species, and the leaves of a grey-green colour. The timber is light brown and very dense, but is useless for anything except firewood, as the trees of any size are nearly always eaten by white ants.

MORRELL (*Euc. longicornis*, and *E. oleosa*).—These trees, very similar in habit, attain about 50ft. in height, and have widely spreading branches. The bark is grey, rough, and persistent on the trunk and part



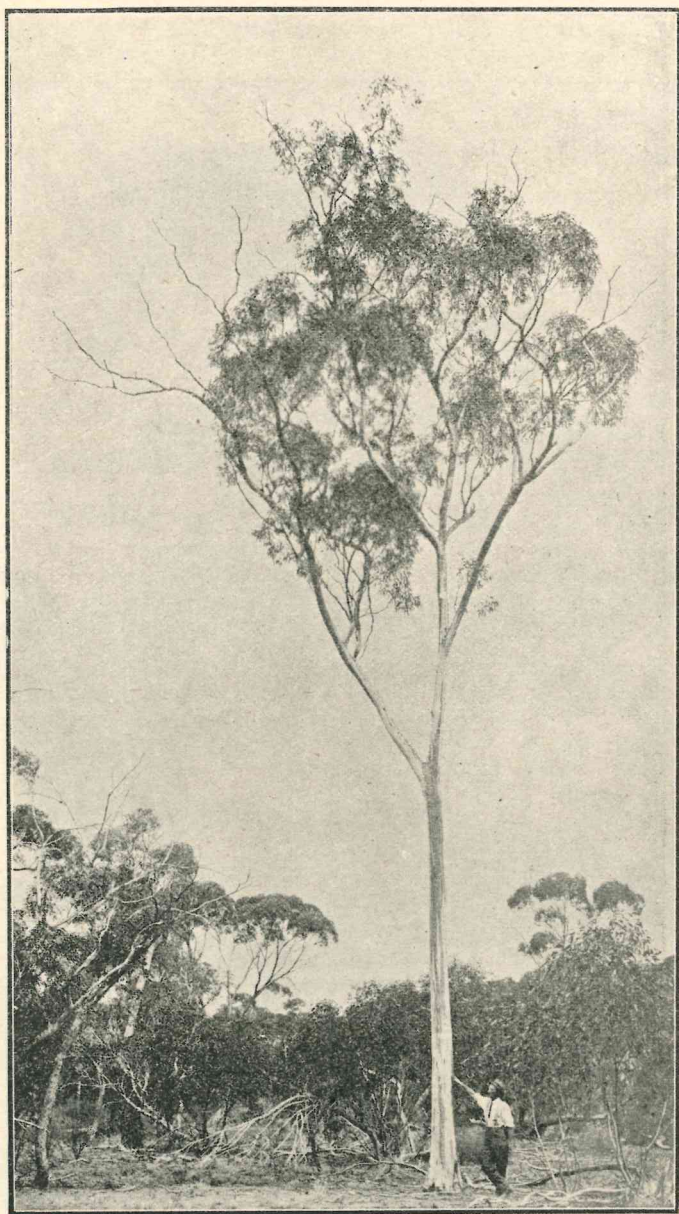
Morrell (*Euc. oleosa*).

of the branches, the upper parts having a smooth greenish-brown bark ; the leaves are small and shining. The timber is very strong, but the trees do not here attain the size that they do in the Avon District.



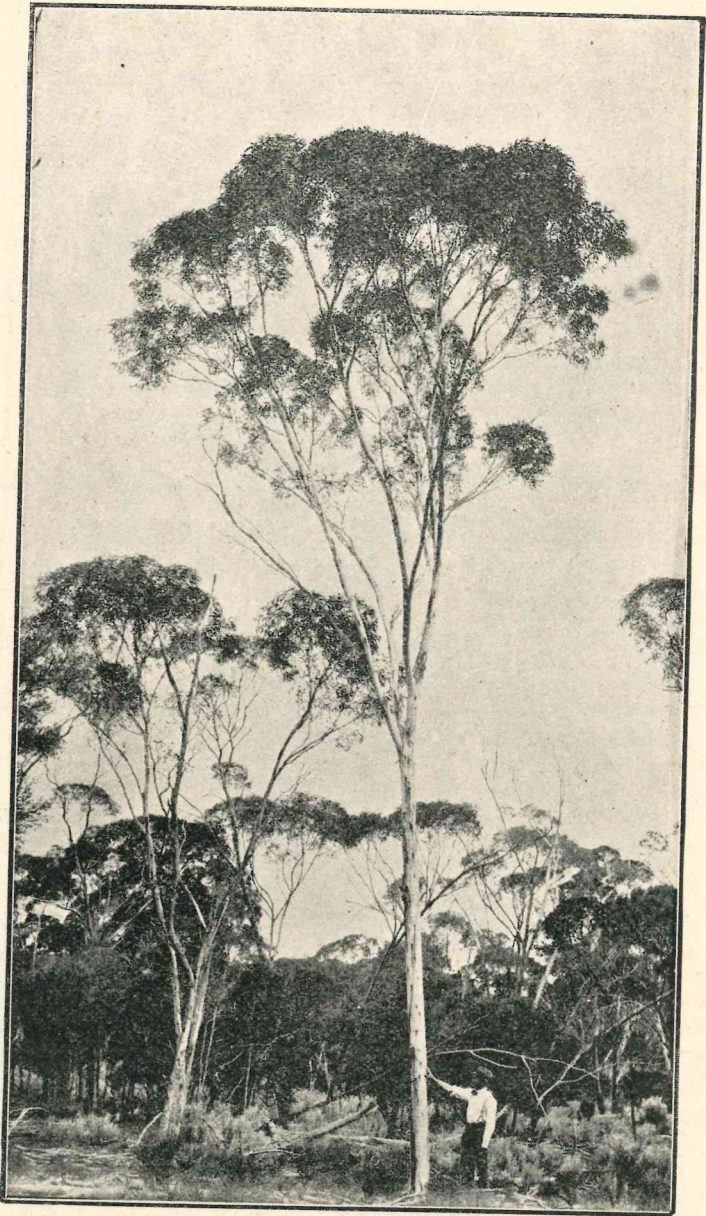
Blackbutt.

BLACKBUTT (*Eucalyptus Griffithsii*) is quite unlike *E. Le Souefii*, having a dark grey flaky bark almost over the whole trunk, and is seldom over 35ft. high. In general appearance it is intermediate between *Euc. Le Souefii* and *E. longicornis*.



Goldfields Redwood.

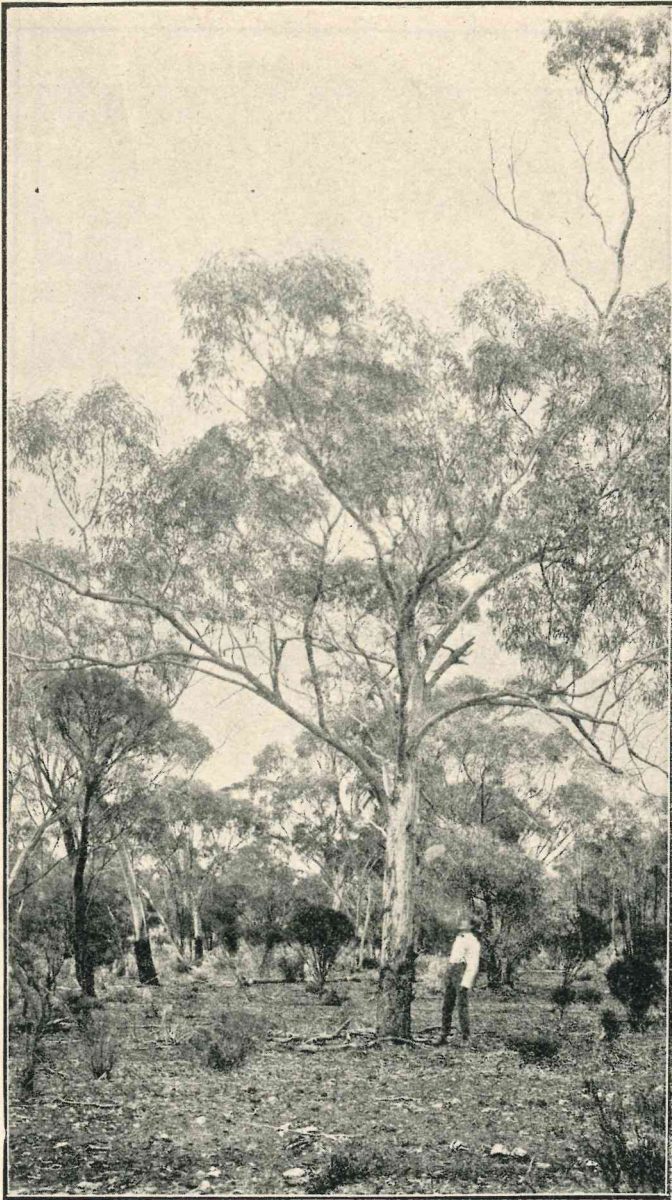
REDWOOD (*Eucalyptus transcontinentalis*).—A tree not unlike the Salmon Gum, except that it is more slender, has a silver-grey bark, yellow flowers, and the young branches and leaves are powdery and a bluish-green colour. The timber is reddish-brown in colour.



Goldfields Whitegum.

GOLDFIELDS WHITE GUM (*Eucalyptus Flocktoniae*).—A tree resembling the “Wandoo” of the Darling Range, but smaller, more slender, and a much whiter bark. This tree grows in low lying places in forests of Salmon Gum.

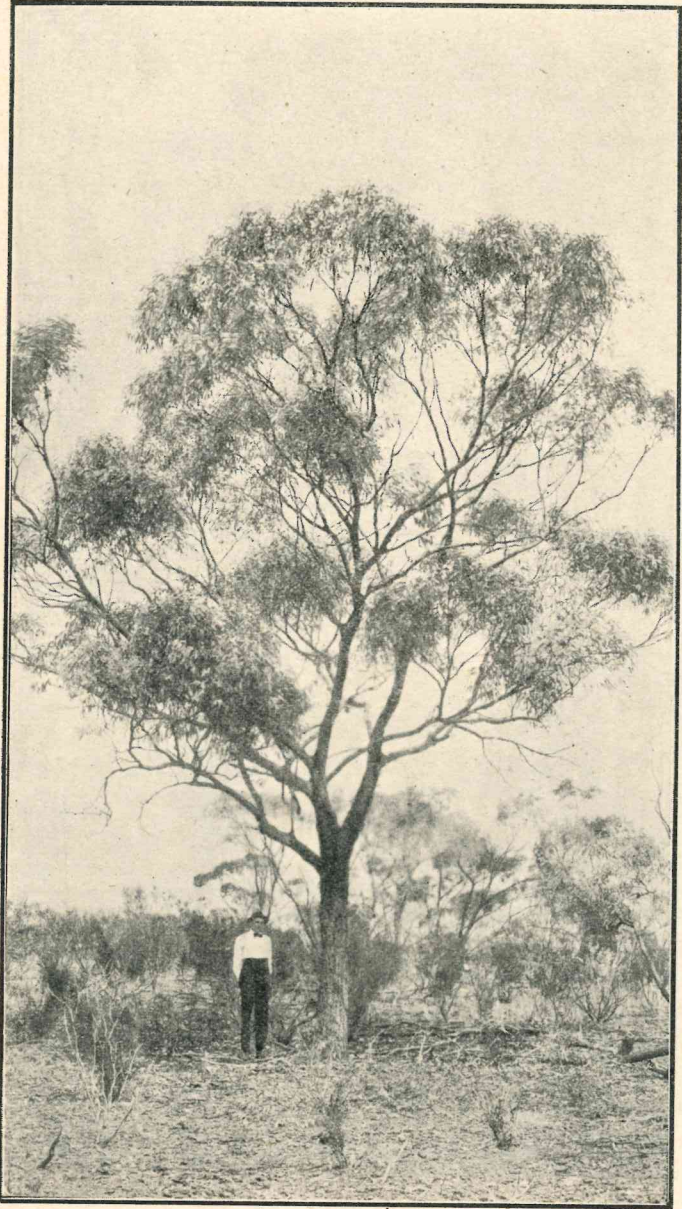
EUCALYPTUS STRICKLANDI is a tree of 20 to 30 feet with a light brown bark covered with grey flakes of decortivating bark. The branches



Euc. Stricklandii.

are very spreading or even drooping. The young branches are powdery-white, the leaves grey-green and often above 6in. long. This tree has very handsome large greenish-yellow flowers.

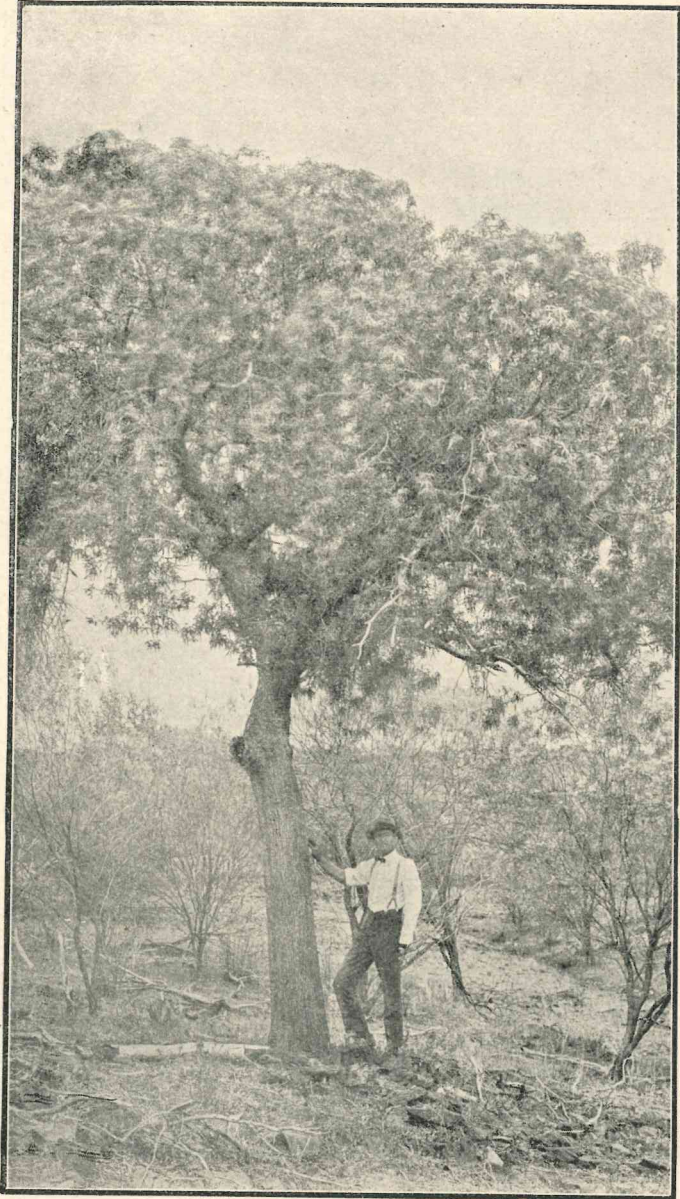
GOLDFIELDS RED FLOWERING GUM (*Eucalyptus torquata*).—Also known as the “Christmas Tree.” A small stout tree of 20 to 30ft., with a rough black bark, and always occurs on rising ground in gravelly



Goldfields Red Flowering Gum.

soil. The flowers are of a bright coral-pink or scarlet, and when the tree is in bloom in December the effect is wonderful. This tree is well worthy of a place in our public gardens.

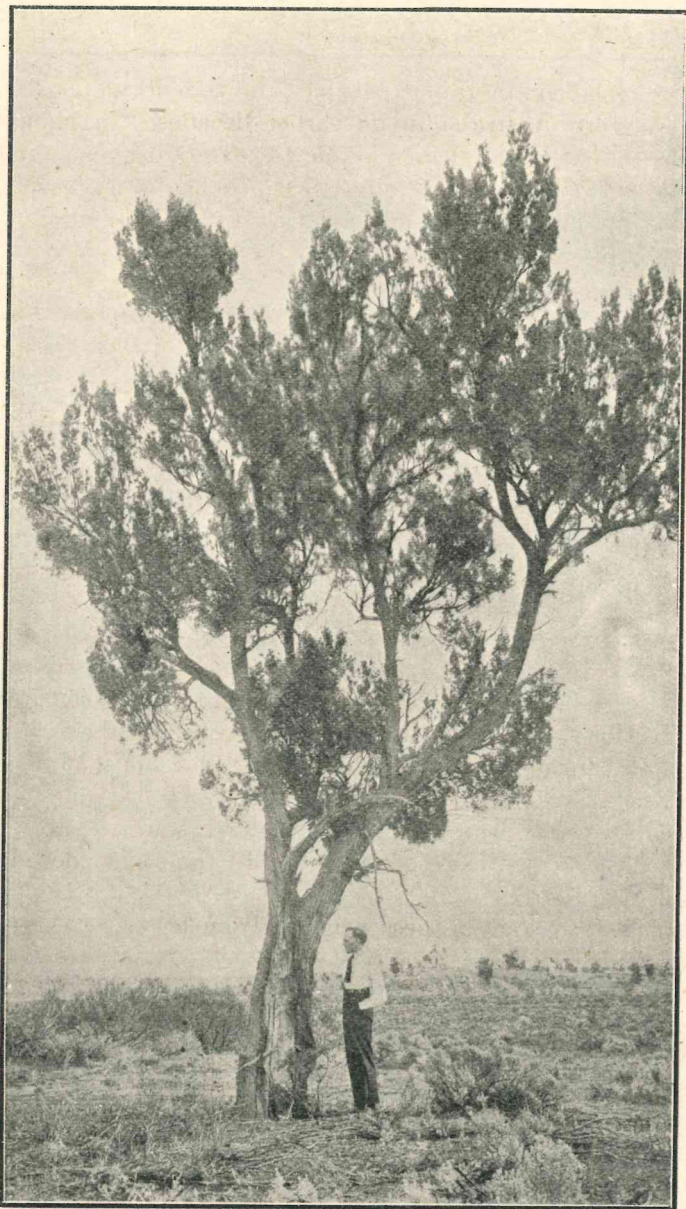
KURRAJONG (*Sterculia Gregorii*).—A tree attaining 25ft. with a thick straight trunk and widely spreading dense branches. The bark is rough and persistent, and of a light-grey colour. The wood is spongy, and may possess qualities which will make it useful for paper-making.



Kurrajong.

The cambium ring yields a strong fibre. This is a handsome tree and should be used more for shade and ornamental purposes. It is a much more graceful tree and not so symmetrical as the New South Wales Kurrajong which is supposed to beautify our parks.

THE GOLDFIELDS PINE (*Callitris glauca*) is the largest of the pine shrubs of the goldfields. This tree attains 30ft. in height, and has more or less spreading branches which give it a cedar-like appearance. The



Goldfields Pine.

leaves are of a bluish-green, the bark almost black and fibrous. This tree is very much like its sister the Rottneest Pine (*Callitris glauca*), and occurs on the margins of salt lakes in open country.