

And Kaidi, with his knees knocking together, did as he was told. Kore-gore seized him by the neck with both claws and held him. Then, turning to Mingul, he ordered him to approach.

"You wished to eat Kaidi," he said. "Come and do so now."

At these words Mingul's mouth watered, and he licked his lips with his long red tongue. But as his teeth closed on the rabbit, he let go with a howl.

"I can't!" he cried. "I can't! My toothache is too bad!"

Kore-gore smiled ever so little.

"Good," he said. "Now it is Kaidi's turn."

He released the rabbit, and hopped to the ground. Presently he flew back to his branch with one claw full of dry grass.

"Kaidi!" he ordered. "Come here!"

This time, the rabbit, who had got over his fright, advanced boldly.

"You wished to eat dry grass," said Kore-gore. "Come now and do so."

At that Kaidi's mouth watered, and he ate up every blade of grass that the mopeke held out to him.

Kore-gore smiled ever so little.

"Good," he said, "So it shall be."

Then, turning to both of the animals, he spoke:

"In this world we eat what we can," he said. "Mingul, you are unable to eat Kaidi, therefore you must leave him alone. Kaidi, on the other hand, is able to eat your grass, therefore he is at liberty to do so."

And with that, Kore-gore, the Mopoke, flew away to catch beetles for his supper.

"Good," said Ngangan, when Yerumba had finished. "That is a very good story, and I shall not eat you. Perhaps you will tell me another story some day," he added, as he put Yerumba safely back in the nest.

"My dear Ngangan, I certainly will," said Yerumba. "From the bottom of my heart I thank you, and may you be happy and comfortable and full of good things to eat all the days of your life."

So Ngangan picked up his wadna and his ullyinga and his bark-cooleman full of witchedy-grubs and yelka bulbs, and went back home to Kelje-bin.

WESTERN AUSTRALIAN TREES.

No. 11: The Manna Wattle.

(By C. A. GARDNER, Government Botanist.)

Dwellers in the eastern districts are familiar with the shrubby wattle which perfumes the bush just at the time when the fragrance of the Sandalwood flower is waning. The days of June see this small tree in all the splendour of full blossom when the contrast of its small pale yellow flowers is offset by its almost bluish cast of foliage

In the late summer most people are familiar with the tree because of the gum which it yields. This gum exudes from the trunk and branches in pieces which vary from small "tears" to lumps the size of a fist. On the younger wood it is often almost colourless, but on the older branches and trunks where it breaks through the thicker bark it becomes discoloured through its contact with the bark while in a liquid state, and varies in colour from a pale amber to an orange red. The Manna gum is a valuable commercial article, being worth (at the present time) £34 5s. per ton, or 3½d. per pound. It is exported in small quantities, forming a substitute for the clear Gum Arabic of commerce, which, principally on account of its greater purity and transparency, is much more valuable. The bark of the Manna Wattle is also used for the tanning of skins and hides, because it contains a relatively high percentage of tannins. It will, therefore, be seen that the Manna Wattle is quite a valuable tree. In addition it makes a most handsome ornamental tree for planting around homesteads. It shows a decided preference for granite soils, or soils in which Salmon Gum and Jam grow together.

The flower has a structure which is typical of all wattles. This type was discussed last month in reference to the Comb Wattle. The calyx of the Manna Wattle is not so distinctive an organ, and may consist of short lobes, or separate into distinct sepals. The pod is large and long, and contains fairly large black seeds. The phyllode of the Manna Wattle, which is really a leafy leaf-stalk, is somewhat sickle-shaped, thin and drooping on the tree. It varies greatly in shape and size, but always has a more or less well-defined midrib and faint secondary veins; and there may be one or two small glands near the inner base of the leaf. The flowers, which are in globular heads, are borne in clusters of the type known as a raceme, *i.e.*, there is a main axis or stalk upon which the flower-heads are borne, but each flower-head has its own special stalk which arises from the main stalk. The clustered and small flowers give this wattle its specific name of *microbotrya*, meaning small racemes; the name *botrys*, which means a raceme, being the Greek word for a bunch of grapes.

The Manna Wattle is most common in the Avon district and southwards in the districts of the Great Southern Railway, being particularly abundant around granite outcrops, when the trees may number six to ten per acre. The trees usually occur in small groups even where they are not so plentiful; rarely are they seen as isolated individuals. The bark is rough and fibrous, and during the months June-October this bark is easily stripped from the trunk and branches. After October it is an extremely difficult matter to strip the bark, because it does not come away freely from the wood. The timber of the tree is a deep red, and although very fibrous, is not strong like that of its sister species the Jam tree; neither is the timber resistant to the attacks of white ants. The outline of the tree is roughly spherical, the crown being comparatively heavy. The bark of the upper portions of the plant is a reddish-green, becoming quite green towards the extremities of the branches.

Many children wishing to make a little pocket money would be doing good work by actively collecting Manna Gum. In many centres,

such as Kununoppin, Kellerberrin, Quairading, Brookton, and Meckering, there are considerable patches of Manna trees. This gum should be collected in as clean a state as possible, that is, free from dirt and bark. The quantity collected will soon reach 100 pounds, and in this way a Savings Bank account can soon be built up or augmented, and the wealth of the State thereby increased.