

—April, 1924.—

By J. W. Mellor, Lockleys.

White-backed Magpies (*Gymnorhina hypoleuca*) have been very numerous at Lockleys of late, doubtless on account of being rigidly protected. They have built their nests in various trees round about and brought out several broods of young, one late

brood from last season being in company with the parent birds even now. I noted as many as ten Magpies feeding about on the short grass in front of the house on the first day of the month, and these are still frequenting the same spot. I am exceedingly glad to relate that the Galahs (*Cacatua roseicapilla*) are still frequenting the fine old Gums in the back paddocks at Mellor Park, and seem quite at home fossicking about in the hollows that many of the trees have, and which form snug retreats for the Cockatoos at night-time and in rough stormy weather. I noted no fewer than eight birds on 10th April. They were quite delighted that it was raining, and would fly round for a while making their clinking notes, and then settle on a bough and call to each other from tree to tree. Next day I saw them on the ground, diligently searching in the short grass for the seeds of the yellow star thistles, upon which they seem to feed chiefly, although they also eat the seeds of the variegated Scotch thistle. They were still about the paddocks at the end of the month, and will probably remain. On 15th I saw a White-plumed Honey-eater (*Meliphaga penicillata*) with a very small piece of material, like a piece of cobweb, in its mouth, and on watching it saw it go to the top leaves of a red geranium-bush a few feet away, and after a little looking about twisted it on to the leaves. It was the very start of the nest, and in the remarkably short space of a week all was finished and lined ready for occupation. On 21st an egg was laid, and by 23rd there were two eggs, the bird sitting closely in its snug little home, well protected on the warm side of the house. Numbers of Purple-crowned Lorikeets (*Glossopsitta porphyrocephala*) were about in the native Bluegums, which were for the most part in flower. On 19th the White-fronted Herons (*Notophox novae-hollandiae*) returned to the old Gumtree in the big paddock, apparently as a preliminary to taking up their quarters for nesting later on, as they breed here each year. The Miners (*Myzantha garrula*) that were nesting late last month were noted with three large young in the nest on 26th, the parent birds feeding them on insect food. I noted a very fine sight of hundreds of Welcome Swallows (*Hirundo neoxena*) and Tree-Martins (*Hylochelidon nigricans*) flying and skimming over the tops of the grass in the back paddock. There were thousands of gnats and flies about, and the birds were catching them wholesale.