as well as the old drakes had all assumed their full and gorgeous livery, the youthful birds being scarcely inferior in beauty to the adults; and perhaps a more interesting and lovely sight was never seen in the Gardens of the Zoological Society, rich as it has ever been in objects of the highest interest, than was to be observed in the aviary which contained this double brood of Mandarin Ducks. At least ten out of the sixteen birds were males, which during a part of the day were frequently to be seen perched on the branches of the trees, and at others were exhibiting in the proudest manner their lovely hues while swimming in the oval stone basin of water provided for their use. Circumstances having prevented me from continuing my observations beyond the date above-mentioned, I requested B. Misselbrook, the intelligent keeper who had charge of the birds, to take notes of the resumption of the full plumage of the old males, and the following are the details with which he has furnished me:—

August the 20th. The old Mandarin male began to change his plumage. The first indication of the change was the appearance of two or three white feathers on each side of the breast.

August the 23rd. The crest began to appear and the under parts of the body became nearly white.

August the 28th. The purple feathers on the breast began to show themselves.

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September the 5th. The two large fan-shaped feathers began to appear, and also the small speckled feathers which cover the thighs.

September the 29th. The change was now entirely completed and the bird in the height of his beauty.

The manners of this pretty species appear to be as gentle and loving as its dress is gay and beautiful; on which account, as Mr. Bennett informs us, it is regarded by the Chinese as an emblem of conjugal fidelity, and is usually carried about in pairs in their marriage processions. When once mated their attachment appears to cease only with life; even those in captivity being constantly seen moving about in pairs.

The adult male has the forehead deep green; crown and back of the head chestnut, glossed with crimson; crest-feathers deep bluish green; feathers on the side of the head white; lores stained with pale rustred, passing into the rich deep reddish chestnut of the feathers of the sides of the neck, each of which has a lighter stripe down the centre, the stripes on the upper ones being nearly white; back of the neck, back, wing-coverts, rump and upper tail-coverts olive; lower part of the neck and sides of the breast rich reddish plum-colour, immediately behind which on each side are three irregular crescentic bands of black, between which are two bands of white; scapularies nearest the body olive, the next row olive at the base, dull velvety black on the outer web, and shining purplish blue on the inner; to this succeeds a row white on the external web, olive on the inner, and tipped with steel-blue, and lastly a row, curving upward, white broadly bordered externally with velvety black; primaries dull black, broadly margined externally with silvery white and largely tipped on the internal web with green; bases and inner webs of the secondaries olive, the apical half of their outer webs deep shining green, passing into dull black near the tips, which are white; interior web of the inner secondary developed into a fan-shape, standing upright, and, together with a portion of the tip of the outer web, rich rust-red, edged on its upper half with white and on its lower half more broadly with black; outer web rich blue; flanks pale reddish brown, becoming much paler towards the extremity of the feathers, and transversely rayed with fine irregular lines of black, the rays increasing in breadth towards the extremities of the feathers, where they terminate in a conspicuous line of white, bounded at the tip with a broader one of black; under surface pure white; on either side near the tail a spot of purplish chestnut; tail-coverts olive-green; tail brown; bill vermilion; nail orange; feet yellow; eyes full, brownish black.

The female has the head, neck and crest dark brownish slate-grey; transverse line down the sides of the upper mandible, circle surrounding the eye and continued down the side of the head, and the chin white; upper surface, wings and tail olive-brown; secondaries tipped with white, several of them with a mark of purplish green near the tip bounded with velvety black, and with a line of white along the basal portion of the margin; breast and flanks brown, with an oval spot of very pale brown near the tip of each feather; under surface white; bill bluish grey; nail orange; tarsi and toes dull greyish yellow; webs greyish black.

The nestling bird has the whole of the upper surface, wings and tail brown; under surface brownish buff; behind the eye two narrow lines of brown.

The egg is of a delicate buffy stone-colour, two inches long by one inch and a half broad.

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The Plate represents the two sexes of the natural size, from a spirited and beautiful sketch taken by Mr. Wolf from the living birds in the Gardens of the Zoological Society.