AIX GALERICULATA.

Mandarin Duck

Anas galericulata, Linn. Syst. Nat., tom. i. p. 539.—Ib. Gmel. Edit., tom. i. p. 539.—Lath. Ind. Orn., tom. ii. p. 871. —Shaw, Mus. Lev., t. 10.—Ib. Gen. Zool., vol. xii. part ii. p. 94. pl. 47.—Lath. Gen. Hist, vol. x. p. 363.—Vieill. Gal. des Ois., tom. ii. pl. 287.—Temm. and Schleg. Fauna Jap., p. 127.—Less. Traité

Querquedula Sinensis, Briss. Orn., tom. vi. p. 450.—Id. 8vo, tom. ii. p. 478.

Kinmodsui, Kæmpf. Jap., p. 129. pl. 10. fig. 3.

Yung-iang, of the Chinese.

Sarcelle de la Chine, Buff. Hist. des Ois., tom. ix. p. 276. pl. 19.—Ib. Pl. Enl. 805, 806.

Chinese Teal, Lath. Gen. Syn., vol. vi. p. 548.—Edw. Glean., pl. 102.

Le Canard de la Chine, Cuv. Règn. Anim., tom. i. p. 538.

Aix galericulata, Boie, Isis, 1828, p. ?—Gray and Mitch. Gen. of Birds, vol. iii. p. 614.—List of Birds in Coll. of

Cosmonessa galericulata, Kaup, Isis, 1829.

Dendronessa galericulata, Swains.—Anim. in Menag., p. 233.

Lampronessa galericulata, Wagl. Isis, 1832.

Perhaps no group of birds is so generally dispersed over the surface of the globe as the great family of the Anatidæ or Duck tribe; even the arctic and antarctic portions of the globe being tenanted by species peculiarly adapted to those regions; the distant islands of New South Shetland, New Zealand and Kerguelen's Land having species which never approach the continents of Australia, Africa or America, while in the temperate regions of both hemispheres the species are various and abundant. As might be supposed, the members of a family so universally dispersed present much diversity of form, and comprise numerous genera, some of which are strictly marine, others lacustrine, others adapted for a rocky residence, and others again for perching on trees, &c. In this great group of birds two species occur pre-eminent for their beauty, viz. the Aix sponsa of North America and the Aix galericulata of China and Japan; these two birds are so precisely alike in structure and so similar to each other in colour for a short period of the year, as to require the scrutinizing eye of a good ornithologist to determine which is the one and which is the other; during the remainder of the year, the males, in obedience to a law which pervades the entire group, are dressed in a style of plumage so very different and so gorgeous in colouring, that they may not only dispute for the palm of beauty with each other, but are rendered some of the most conspicuously beautiful, interesting and extraordinary objects in the whole range of ornithology; the Chinese bird here represented will, however, doubtless secure the preference. Both species are as proud as they are beautiful, at the same time they are extremely docile, and not only display their lovely hue on the ground and while swimming, but both have a habit of perching on the branches of trees, and, consequently, as pets they are esteemed in the highest degree. The Mandarin Duck, whose native habitat is China and Japan, is so highly prized there, that not only is a high price demanded for living examples, but they are held back from Europeans with a degree of obstinacy which almost amounts to prohibition of their import; notwithstanding which many examples of both sexes have lately been brought to Europe, and, contrary to the assertion of Latham and others that they will not breed in this country, have bred repeatedly in the Gardens of the Zoological Society of London, and in the Menagerie of the late Earl of Derby; and the like success has attended their introduction into Holland. May we not then hope, that through the instrumentality of the Zoological Society, the lovely bird here represented may become fully naturalized? for although it can scarcely be serviceable as an article for the table, a more ornamental addition to our lakes and lawns cannot be found.

George Bennett, Esq., of Sydney, New South Wales, who has given an interesting account of this species in his "Wanderings in New South Wales, China, &c.," having stated that in its native country the male bird loses his gay plumage in May and remains until August in a dress which bears a close resemblance to that of the female, I was anxious to ascertain if a similar change took place at the same period in this country, and the following is the result of my observations on the specimens in the Society's Gardens.

The first egg was laid on the 2nd of May, 1851, the female began to sit on the 20th, and the young were hatched on the 20th of June. When the female commenced sitting the male began to throw off his fine plumage, and by the 1st of July had become so like the female as to be scarcely distinguishable; the primaries, however, which are only moulted once a year, were not fully perfected until the 3rd of August; these feathers were then beautiful green, with a narrow stripe of snow-white, for about an inch in length from their tips: the bill at this period was less brilliant, and the old male, the female, and their progeny were all so similar in size and colour as to render it difficult to distinguish one from the other, all having a beautiful olive mottled plumage, both chaste and elegant. One female laid six, another seven eggs; one set of which were incubated by one of the parent birds, the other by a common domestic hen; the latter incubating the eggs entrusted to her care two days earlier than the Duck. By the beginning of October the young males of these broods