

## THE VICTORIA REGIA.

The Victoria Regia leaves are from six to eight feet in diameter, and the stem which bears them up is a hollow tube as large round as a stout woman's wrist. From the stem ribs shoot out which are two inches in depth and regular compartments are formed by intersecting ribs, resembling nothing so much as the frame work of a house. Spines project downward from the ribs, which are very sharp, necessitating wary handling. The leaf is green on the surface, and a purplish red beneath. The fleshy part is very thin and delicate, so much so, indeed, that the least impression will puncture it, while the leaves as a whole, thanks to the compartments underneath, which are filled with air, is very buoyant and capable of sustaining astonishing weight. A healthy baby 12 months old may be laid on one of them with security, and a plank stretched over two of them will bear up easily a full grown man. Its growth under the water is exceedingly interesting, as each day the leaves shoot out and make for the surface so fast as to create the delusion that one can see them moving or lengthening. Around

them at Kew; successfully cultivated also at Chatsworth by the Duke of Devonshire early during Victoria's reign. Its original discoverer was a German scientist named Henke, who found it growing in the marshes beside the Rio Mamore, a branch of the Amazon river, as early as the year 1801. Sir R. H. Schomburgk made a scientific visit to British Guiana, January 1st, 1837, and while sailing in a canoe up the river Berbice, he was astonished to see, for over a mile of water, that the whole basin of the river was overpread with huge, round, curiously margined leaves and hundreds of magnificent, white and rose-tinted flowers, each measuring over a foot in diameter, scenting the whole atmosphere with a rich perfume like the pineapple. The natives called it "Y'repa," or Water Platter. The plants at Kew flowered in 1851, and between June and November produced 61 flowers.

The root is a large spindle-shaped tuber, with bundles of fibrous rootlets attached, which appear with every bud and leaf. The leaf is a bright green above, and a dull crimson below, with a rim several inches in width. The ribs are very prominent, almost an inch high and are eight in number, with similar ones branching

from Philadelphia. The plants were raised in 1851, and the same plants lived for several years. One of them flowered 200 times. The plant was exhibited in 1865, near the Central park, New York, and during that summer produced 70 flowers.

The Victoria Regia has been successfully grown from the seed at Golden Gate Park, San Francisco, and during its recent flowering attracted many thousands of visitors by its wondrous beauty.

LITTLE THINGS.—Mrs. Harbert, in the *Inter-Ocean*, gives the girls the following little lecture: A word of caution to our girls as to care for "little things" is perhaps wholly unnecessary when such testimony from those whom we must love to please is overwhelming upon this point. The girl who educates herself to uniformly kind speaking to "brother" as well as to her "admirers" will never be left musing at home while everybody else is "having a good time." Though her dress may be less ruffled than her mate's, her temper may be smoother; if her neighbor is a more sprightly conversationalist, she can strive to charm by the obliging distribution of her



THE QUEEN OF WATER LILIES—THE VICTORIA REGIA.

each leaf, when fully developed, is a rim, which gives it the appearance of an immense floating dish. A niche or opening in this rim is a curious natural provision against disaster.

The flower of the great queen lily possesses many interesting features. It is from 10 to 12 inches in diameter. It lasts in perfection only two days, but the rapidity with which they succeed each other on a healthy plant makes amends for their brief existence. They bloom only at night. About twilight the petals open with a sudden jerking motion, one after the other, and close up promptly at daybreak. On the first day the flower is pure white, which changes on the second to an exquisite shade of rose pink. These flowers are very rare even in England, the country of their adoption, and £60, or \$300, is a moderate price for a fair specimen.

Mrs. Anna Gettz Lucas, of San Francisco, has made an especial study of the Victoria Regia, having ably reproduced the flower in wax. She has also compiled many interesting facts from the literature of the lily, and from her writings we shall take the following facts: The Victoria Regia, though indigenous to the climate of tropical America, growing in its magnificent beauty in the river Amazon and its tributary streams, is claimed as an English production, was named for its reigning Queen, and brought to the Royal Gar-

den from them. The stem is in the center of the leaf, fully an inch in thickness, and has a brown, thorny appearance. The leaf is produced in a cycle of five. Twenty-five or 26 leaves appear before the flower bud. The leaf is from 10 to 13 feet in size; the flowers from 12 to 18 inches.

The flower stem is over an inch thick near the calyx, thickly studded with thorns about an inch long. The calyx is four-leaved, upwards of seven inches long and three inches broad, thick at the base, creamy white side, reddish brown and thorny outside, measuring from 12 to 17 inches in diameter. The pistils and stamens are numerous, the stamens growing like pointed scales around the pistils, the outside row, 20 in number, forming a crown around the rest. The color of the stamens is a brilliant yellow tipped in crimson. The flower petals are from 50 to 60 in number, or three distinct sets, each growing smaller near the stamens. The first row next the stamens are of a brilliant rose color, spotted and flecked with crimson. The fruit, when ripe, is half as large as a full-sized human head, and is full of seeds. The natives of South America call it "mayz de Yagua," for from its seeds a farina is produced from which a paste cake is made, which they consider a luxury.

The first flower raised in the United States was at Springbrook, the country house of Caleb

stores of knowledge when sought. Should her companion be an artistic singer, she may please by willing service in this art, rather than in a showy display of an inferior talent. Comparatively few people are good judges of music, and a willingness to amuse and please a company will often win favor when greater talent will be overlooked in those less obliging. The politeness of the Frenchman who offered a disappointed lady the last seat at a favorite opera, which he had procured before her arrival, was true kindness, though courtesy forbade its acceptance. Unselfishness, which gives to another the favorite seat, or the most desirable accommodation, often furnishes a key to character which unlocks the door to many an enjoyable and profitable friendship. Remembering, as we must, how much of life's happiness is made up of these "little things," and how often life's "angels" appear to us in disguise, the only wonder is that we do not oftener excel as prophets, and, with the wisdom of a seer, penetrate the veil of the future, which conceals the circumstances of life for good fortune or ill, to discover the hair that suspends the sword by a more careful thought for the significant "little things."

A WELL-KNOWN M. C. recently began a speech with the assertion that "he could not keep silent without saying a few words."