

stopped joking and told them all how it came about that my footsteps had been straying in such an altogether unlikely direction.

PINK WATER-LILIES.

It was a chance question put to me by a girl friend that was the motive power in the first instance, for she said to me:—

"Have you seen the water-lily pond at the Central Prison?"

Had she asked me if I had seen the Czar of all the Russias playing poptag the association of ideas would have seemed hardly less incongruous to me, for I had never been within sight of the prison grounds, and naturally not having seen them one would hardly expect to find anything that is beautiful in such environments.

I thought of that water-lily pond for the rest of the day, and I dreamed of it all that night, and the next morning found me on my way thither, although indeed, I was due at the exhibition ground at that very time.

I fear you will smile at my ignorance when I confess that I had to consult my map of the city before I started, so as to be sure of where I must leave the trolley; for my ideas of the location of the Central Prison were hazy in the extreme.

"Down Strachan avenue, and cross the railway tracks, and turn to the right," I repeated to myself as I went along, but when I had followed these directions carefully to the end, and then found myself before wide open gates that led into exquisite grounds, luxuriant with beautiful trees and flowers and velvety lawns, I paused to consider whether I had not, in some unaccountable manner, missed my way.

"Is this the entrance to the Central Prison?" I enquired of a man who was passing by.

"Certainly it is," he replied, and just then a man in the unmistakable garb of a prisoner came down the carriage road with a basket in his hand, pausing here and there to cut a slip from some of the plants that adorned the

brilliant ribbon border on either side.

So I turned into the gateway, and, following the walk, soon came to the water-lily pond where I desired to be, and then, though I was quite alone, I uttered a quick exclamation of delight, as you would have done also had you been in my place.

I had expected to see something lovely, for what else, indeed, are all water-lilies? But surely this was beautiful far beyond all expectation. I had expected to find masses of pure white lilies, and perhaps a few of the single yellow ones, that are so common in our shallow streams everywhere. What I did find, however, must be seen to be fully appreciated, and anyone that goes there will find herself well repaid for her trouble. Great pink lilies she will see, surrounded with big, glossy leaves, the size and shape of a palm-leaf fan, that are beautifully marked "Nymphaea Devoiensis" these pink lilies at the east side of the pond are called, and a beautiful purple lily is known as "Nymphaea Zanzibarensis," while pale yellow ones are there, also, that bear the somewhat appalling name of "Nymphaea Marliacea Chromatella," and one wondered how they ever lived at all so weighted down with cognomens. I must not omit to mention the beautiful white lilies, however, for some of them are enormously large, like the pink ones, and others have a faint pink blush upon them more delicate in tint than the glow on a maiden's cheek.

There are five enormous leaves in the centre of the pond, with edges turning straight up for at least three inches on all sides. These leaves are bright green and very glossy, and are marked and outlined heavily, while the lower part of the leaf, as shown by the upturned edges, is dark-pink in color. Two buds appeared above the water that day beside these leaves, covered with sharp thorns, like a cactus. The flowers, when open, are like the ordinary white water-lily, only larger, and this variety rejoices in the fitting name of "Victoria Regia."