

tints, from pure white, to rose and pink. The smooth water was covered with the blossoms, and, as I rowed from one to another, I always found something new to admire. We met the plants frequently afterwards, and the higher we advanced, the more gigantic they became. We measured a leaf which was 6 feet 5 inches in diameter, its rim five and a half inches high, and the flower across fifteen inches." It is said that a French traveller discovered the same, or a similar plant, in the river Plato, as early as 1828; and it was seen in a branch of the Amazon, in 1832; and other travellers have found it occupying large districts in all the lakes, and tranquil tropical rivers of South America; where its seeds are roasted and eaten by the natives, who call them *Water Maize*.

Various attempts to introduce it into Europe, were made by Sir Robert Schomburg, but all to no purpose, until the year 1849, when some seeds sent to Sir J. W. Hooker, at the Royal Gardens, of Kew, England, gave germs of active vitality. We extract the following account of these plants from the Annual of Scientific Discovery: "They were immediately sent to Chatsworth, where, under the care of Sir Joseph Paxton, they grew and flowered. The germs were planted in a large tank, prepared especially for the purpose, in loam, and fine sand. The water was kept by means of hot-water pipes, at a temperature of 75°, to 90° F., and, in order to place the plant, as far as possible, under the same conditions in which it exists naturally, a small water-wheel was placed in the pond, in order to produce gentle undulations, as in the Guiana rivers. The development of a leaf, on first arising to the surface of the water, presents a most curious sight not easily described. Rolled into a body of a brownish color, and covered with thorny spines, it might readily be taken for some large species of sea-urchin. The form of the leaf is almost orbicular, the ribs are very prominent; almost an inch high, radiating from a common centre; there are eight principal ones, with many others branching off from them; the veins contain an enormous quantity of air-cells of considerable size, which give the leaves great buoyancy. The young leaf is convolute, and expands slowly. The under side of the leaves, as well as the long stems by which the flowers and leaves seem anchored in the water, are thickly covered with thorns, about