



THE VICTORIA REGIA.

ON the Continent of Europe, much time and skill have been devoted to the cultivation of certain plants. We have heard of the splendid tulips and hyacinths of Holland, and the wonderful varieties and beauties, which the rose presents in France, but in no country is floriculture in every point carried to so great an extent, as at this time in Great Britain. We shall not be surprised at this, when we remember that with many noblemen, and persons of wealth, gardening is a passion; and they expend immense sums of money upon their favorite plants and flowers, and the gardeners they employ are men of high intelligence. The exhibitions of the Horticultural, and of the Royal Botanic Societies, are the most wonderful sights of the kind in the world. Such has been the interest taken by the English in the subject of botany, that men have spent years in foreign countries, to collect rare plants, learn their habits, and if possible bring home specimens for cultivation. Among the foreign plants discovered by English botanists, perhaps none is more remarkable than the splendid *Victoria Regia*. This Queen of water lilies, was discovered in 1837, by Sir Robert Schomburg, in his progress up the river Berbice, in British Guiana. All the calamities and trials, which he had endured in his explorations, were forgotten, when he saw this vegetable wonder. He says, "I felt as a botanist, and felt myself rewarded, when I saw a gigantic leaf, *from five to six feet in diameter*, salver shaped, with a broad rim; of a light green above, and a vivid crimson below, resting upon the water. Quite in character with the wonderful leaf, was the luxuriant flower, consisting of many hundred petals, passing in alternate