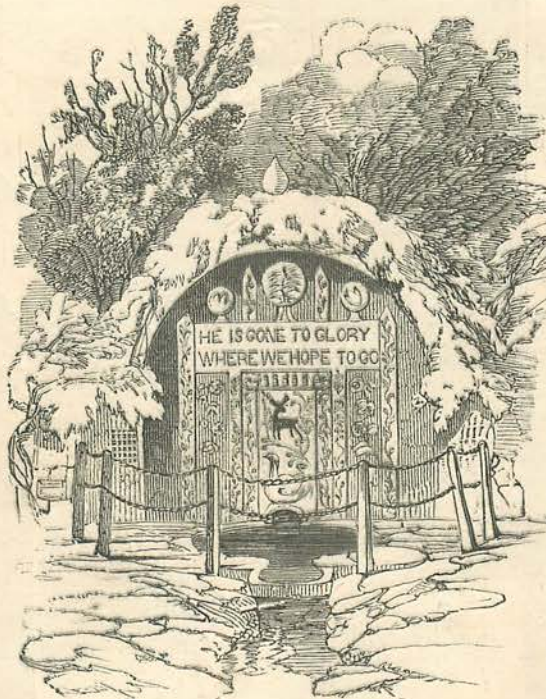


MAY.

WELL-DRESSING ON HOLY THURSDAY.

ONE of the prettiest festivals of May is the custom of decorating wells with flowers on Holy Thursday. In the beautiful village of Tissington, in Derbyshire, five springs are thus dressed or flowered every year. That which we have engraved is the Hall Well; named from its being nearest Tissington Hall, the ancestral seat of Sir Henry Fitzherbert, Bart. The decoration usually consists of various flowers, in pleasing devices, inserted in moist clay, upon boards; and each Well bears a scriptural precept, for the custom is a sacred one. It commences with divine service in the church; after which the congregation walk in procession to the Hall Well, where a psalm is read by the clergyman; and some verses, composed for the occasion, are sung, accompanied by music. The ceremony is also performed at the other wells. The villagers in the afternoon entertain their friends at home; and refreshments are served in booths near the churchyard.

"The massive tablet, graced with sculptured lay,  
Awhile holds faithful to its sacred trust,  
But Time resistless in its sov'reign sway,  
E'er long impels it to the mould'ring dust;  
Yet sudden Fate, nor varying Age  
The records of th' Almighty's praise  
Can e'er o'erwhelm! sacred each page,  
Indelible the mystic lays!  
Whilst Time, propitious in its circling race,  
Each trophied rite sustains with ever-blooming grace."

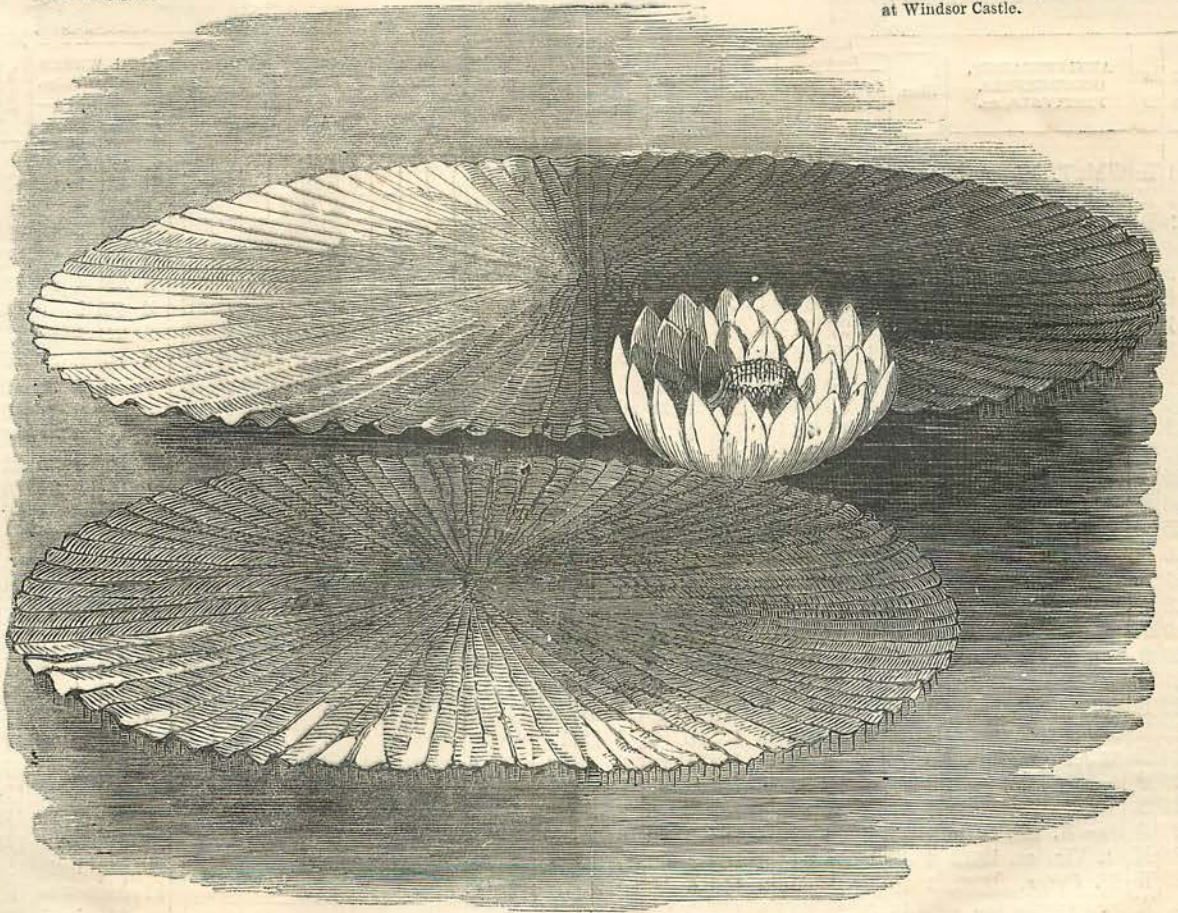


WELL-DRESSING AT TISSINGTON.

THE VICTORIA REGIA.

THIS Royal Water Lily is associated with the Great Exhibition Palace in Hyde Park; since it was in constructing rapidly a house for this beautiful aquatic that Sir J. Paxton devised the principle upon which the Crystal Palace was erected. The gigantic flower (originally found in a river of British Guiana) first flowered in England at Chatsworth; and in May, 1851, a fine specimen flowered in the open air at King's Road, Chelsea, at the nursery of Messrs. Weeks. A leaf of only five days' growth is five feet in diameter: "the under side presents a beautiful example of natural engineering in the cantilevers, which radiate from the centre, with large bottom flanges, and very thin middle-ribs, between each pair of which are cross-girders, to keep the ribs from buckling; their depth gradually decreasing towards the circumference of the leaf, where they also ramify." Upon this "natural engineering," Sir J. Paxton assures us that he first devised the self-supporting principle, which he has applied in the roof of the Great Building in Hyde Park.

The largest leaves of the plant measure fourteen feet in circumference; they are able to sustain astonishing weights; a young lady placed upon one, at Chatsworth, was borne up for sometime with safety. The first flower-bud appeared at Chatsworth, Nov. 1, 1849; and a few days after Sir J. Paxton presented a leaf and flower to Her Majesty and Prince Albert, at Windsor Castle.



THE VICTORIA REGIA IN FLOWER.