

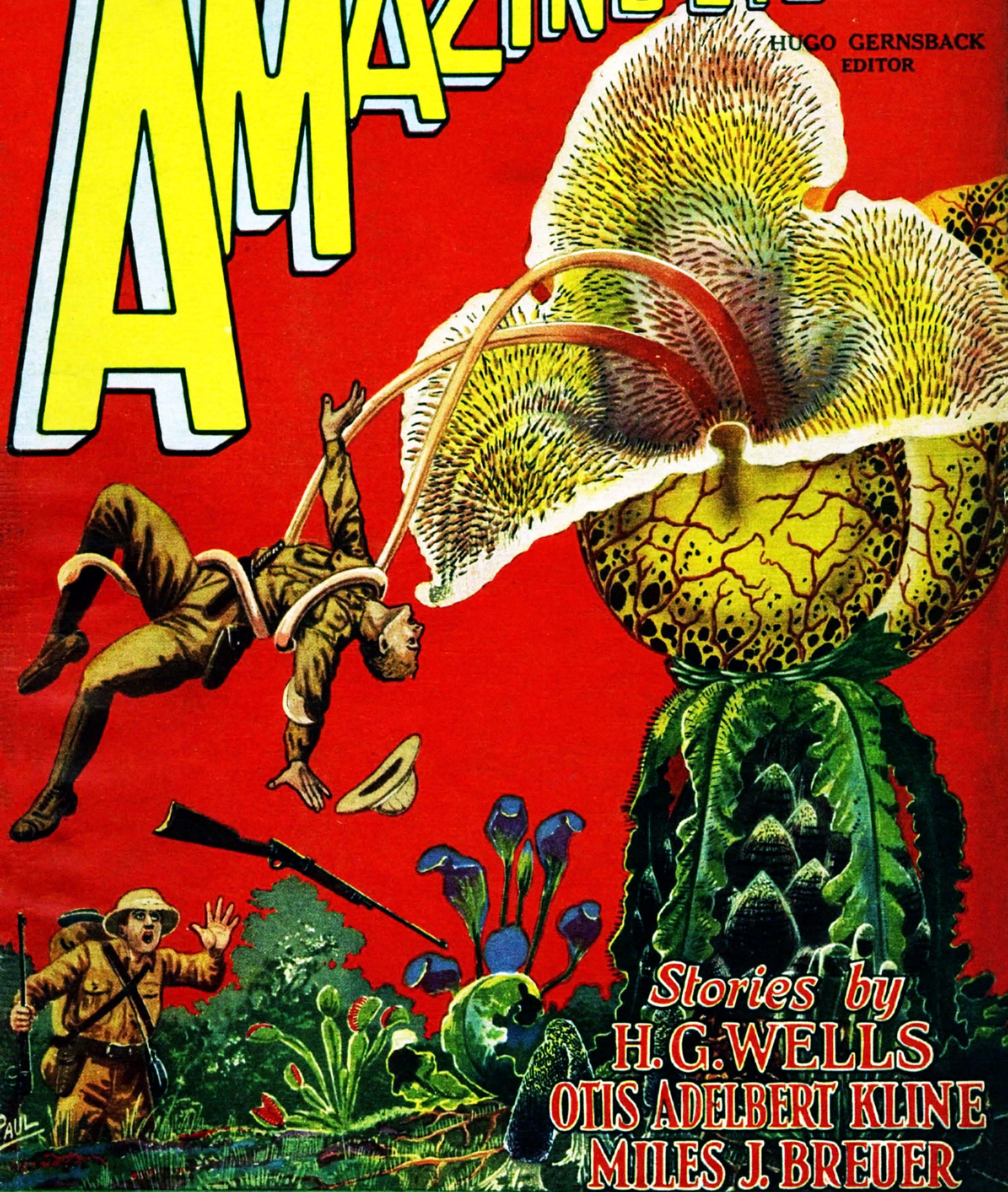
September

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# AMAZING STORIES

HUGO GERNSBACK  
EDITOR



*Stories by*  
**H. G. WELLS**  
**OTIS ADELBERT KLINE**  
**MILES J. BREUER**

EXPERIMENTER PUBLISHING COMPANY, NEW YORK, PUBLISHERS OF  
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JULES VERNE'S TOMBSTONE AT AMIENS  
PORTRAYING HIS IMMORTALITY

# AMAZING STORIES

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### Our Cover

this month depicts a scene from "The Malignant Flower," in which the evil, gigantic flower has caught Sir William Armstrong with its sucking arms, lifting him by the shoulder, higher and higher, preparatory to drawing him within its calyx, and closing its petals.

HOW TO SUBSCRIBE FOR "AMAZING STORIES." Send your name, address and remittance to Experimenter Publishing Co., 230 Fifth Ave., New York City. Checks and money orders should be made payable to Experimenter Publishing Co., Inc. Mention the name of the magazine you are ordering inasmuch as we also publish RADIO NEWS, SCIENCE & INVENTION, RADIO REVIEW and FRENCH HUMOR. Subscriptions may be made in combination with the other publications just mentioned

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## In Our Next Issue:

AROUND THE UNIVERSE, by Ray Cummings. If you love interplanetary stories—and who doesn't—here is a story that will do your heart good. It is written in an entirely different vein, and yet contains excellent science all the way through. Incidentally, the astronomy contained therein is most excellent as well as correct, and gives you an insight into the wonders of the universe that perhaps few other "space" stories can boast. We know you will greatly enjoy this story. It is a classic.

TREASURES OF TANTALUS, by Garret Smith (A Serial in 2 Parts). Here is one of the most daring and exciting stories which we have ever read. Now that we have television, the idea of the author's *Telephonoscope*, by which it is possible to spy upon people and see what is happening right in their own homes and offices is of tremendous interest. How one man succeeded in practically controlling the entire world thereby, is told in inimitable style by this famous and well-known author, who has also written "After A Million Years"—"On The Brink of 2,000," and other famous scientific tales. THE WINGED DOOM, by Kenneth Gilbert. Now that aviation has come to the fore again, through the exploits of our American flyers, this story gives you a peep into the future, and you see what may happen when a powerful nation is about to invade this country. Here we have aviation to the *nth* degree, and yet, as you read on, you will become convinced of the possibilities contained in the story.

HICKS' INVENTIONS WITH A KICK (The Hicks' Hydraulic Bank Protector), by Henry Hugh Simmons. Being a true inventive genius, Mr. Hicks, despite his luckless demonstrations, bobs up once more with a more marvellous invention than ever. This time it is a contrivance for the absolute protection of banks against any and all robbers. High water pressure plays an effective part here—too effective in this demonstration, in fact.

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# The MALIGNANT FLOWER

By Anthos



...John Bannister hastened to the flower with giant paces...and tried to destroy the tough tentacles of the plant, closely clinging to each other. ...He seized the axe and accurately and carefully delivered blow after blow, which swelled up to a sort of clangor, as if a bell were cracking.



ALA Daulat Ras had finished his story.

For a while he stood there, stiff and straight as a statue in front of the Englishman who was immersed in deep thought. He measured him with a glance in which the mysticism of ancient wisdom of his native home and enigmatic cruelty were mingled. Then he left slowly with measured steps.

Sir George William Armstrong started up from his dreaming and gulped down a glass of whiskey. It was perfect lunacy what the Hindoo had told him, and yet, and yet one had to believe him word for word, for Baulat Ras was a Yoghi, and a Yoghi never lies. But he wanted to, and had to settle for himself whether occult powers abided in these strange men, who hate the European and very seldom bring to light the "nature secrets" of their land. Sir George was well off and without any ties. No sport was strange to him. He could certainly start the undertaking, but he needed a reliable as well as taciturn companion. The native servant familiar with the ways of the land, to whom he disclosed his plan, said he would sooner be thrown alive to a tiger or be buried in an ant-hill. So he had to turn to his faithful old John Bannister.

In the long full years of their connection, he had become more than a mere valet. Indeed, he was a sort of confidential friend. True and watchful as a dog, tenacious and indefatigable in hardships, courageous in danger. His skin was like parchment, no red blood seemed to flow beneath it, but in spite of his 65 years he was muscular and had a constitution like iron and steel. And Sir George took him into his confidence. But this it was which Daulat Ras had related:

Some ten days journey from here, in an accurately-indicated little valley of the Himalayas, which is about 200 yards long, there is a curious little bit of earth, a ravine hedged in by three high perpendicular walls. The only access is on one of the four sides, over a sort of quagmire or pond, out of which poisonous vapors rise. You had to row closely along the edge of it in a boat in order to avoid the poisonous gases. The ravine itself, completely overgrown with flowers, is the home for demons, mischievous satanic forms, mixtures of man and woman, against whom all the weapons of civilization are useless. In spring and in fall they reveal their mysterious power. Woe to him who treads upon their reservation. Death and insanity is his fate. If he escapes the destruction alive, he remains dead,—as far as earthly love is concerned. Mark this,—death for all earthly love.

John Bannister smiled sneeringly. His master stood immersed in deep thought. He thought of the blonde fiancée, whom in this very month he was to take to her future home. Near Calcutta, in a picturesque suburb, is a charming bungalow, which was even then being erected in feverish haste according to his directions. Then he would be at an end, once for all, as a restless globe-trotter and adventurer. But till then, Harriet Richards was to suspect nothing of the goal of the journey, was not to be given one second of worry or of anxiety. He would pretend a business trip. And he laid out his plan. The railroad went part of the way. He would buy reliable maps of the country, would get provisions and a little row-boat, would use porters until he would get to the entrance of the ravine. In the bright mid-day he would enter it, while this last bit of the journey, he and his valued John Bannister should conquer alone. John rubbed his hands in satisfaction. He was satisfied with the party.....

THE Hindoo had spoken the truth. The ravine was there. Behind dusky black marshlands was a bright tropical carpet of flowers in the most gorgeous colors of the young autumn. The goal was reached. The porters pushed the boat into the swamp and lay

down trembling in a little hollow. Three hours of waiting was assigned them, enough time for the adventurers to go all over the little valley which was to be explored.

Countless little bubbles rose. The air was filled with strong biting vapors as the two discoverers glided along the edge of the turbid and scum-covered river. On each side the bare cliffs were in curious contrast to the blooming flora which awaited them in the valley. A quantity of withered thorn bushes,

with dried and crooked branches, rose on the edge of the stream, which thickened steadily. The sun poured down obliquely. No wind stirred in this silent afternoon siesta of nature. As they got out of the boat, a heavy veil of vapor stretched over the upper valley. The atmosphere seemed to brew sultry over all and purple lightning jerked over the landscape. A hedgehog sprang up before them. Fearless and confident, he sized up the unusual visitors, trotted alongside of them for a while, then sat upon his hind legs and nibbled at an artichoke. Their shadows fell before them, dumb, trembling companions, while the adventurers, between bare cliffs, dropped down into the valley of the flowers, which stood in their second most exquisite bloom. Sir George forged ahead, carefully watching every step. Directly be-

---

*THIS story, which has just come to us from Germany, is not only a little literary masterpiece, but is a scientific gem as well. Of course, stories of man-eating plants are nothing new in literature, but we believe that this one is so unusual, and so excellent, that it deserves your particular attention. And lest you think that a man-eating plant is an impossibility, your attention is called to the illustrations which we are printing elsewhere, being actual photographs of flowers as tall as, and taller than, human beings. The story of man-eating plants has persisted for many years and there is no good reason why such a plant should not, or could not, exist. Flesh-eating plants are well known to science. There are many flowers and plants that catch not only flies and other insects, but small mammals as well. There is, therefore, no reason to doubt the existence of such plants. It is quite possible that even if no such plants are in existence today—which is a possibility—there might have been many of them in the remote ages.*

---

hind him came his companion, and both were armed to the teeth.

A wonder garden spread before their enraptured gaze. Flower after flower, each of inimitable brilliancy of color, pictures of never glimpsed dimensions, ever thicker, ever higher, rather trees than flowers. A whole forest through which it was only with difficulty that one could make his way. Orchids of the most varied kinds were here on the frontier of the highest giant cliffs of the world! Wary, dreamlike, gigantic flowers, with heat-trembling calyxes, covered the whole ravine, cutting off all vision beyond it. Brusquely and undeterred, Sir George forced his way forward and onward, and his companion had more than once to warn him to look out for unknown dangers. What would rise up from behind or between this colored scenery? What kind of beings lurked behind it all, waiting for them?

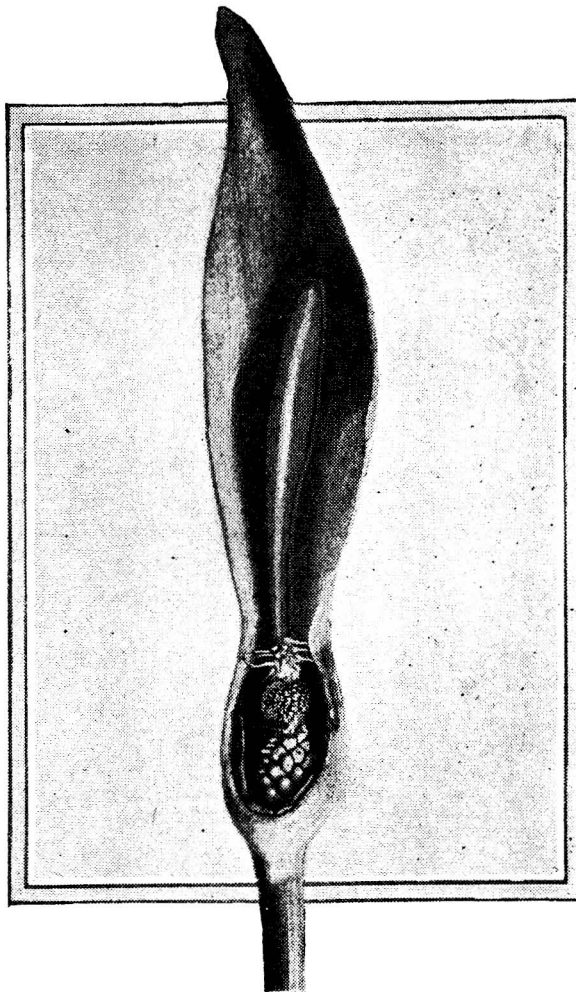
There was nothing to be seen but flowers and more flowers. In feverish excitement they observed the size of the strange forest with its great plant growths as high as men, whose flowers in silent and majestic quiet were throned upon their stems. Nothing moved. Once only a Himalayan fox moved past them like a streak of lightning, and again there was the silence of a graveyard. Only the overcoming perfume of these myriads of blooms increased, and further progress seemed to oppress the very senses, and the two wanderers were overcome by a fantastic dreamlike mood. These flowers, these giant butterflies, or magnificent dazzling color, fluttering around them—were they not

all satanically beautiful beings, which resembled reasoning creatures, benumbing the senses with a whirl, while they simulated the human organs—ear, eyes, lips, and tongue? Sir George gave free reign to his imagination. These ruthless beings which emitted this perfume out of their great languishing calyxes, at once seeming to have unsatisfied longing and dreaming, were they not half-flower, half-animal? Like slender white giant candelabra, their bodies rose upward. What kind of a secret did they hide?

And he began energetically and impatiently to forge ahead. Already he was easily ten yards ahead of his companion, half of the length of the valley through

which they were walking was well behind him. The black, bare, steeply-rising cliff, which might have been poured from sealing wax, and which closed the valley, seemed to vibrate far in the distance. John Bannister started to run in order to catch up with his master, but his progress was ever retarded by creeping plants or round rock boulders, and now a sudden thicket rising from the ground cut off his steps and his view ahead. He forced his way through laboriously and found himself in an open glade nearly at the end of the ravine. And the sight that met his gaze..... "But such a thing is impossible!"

thought John Bannister to himself, as he rubbed his hand over his eyes. The unheard-of wonder did not vanish, but stood in a monumental quiet. In the middle of the glade a colossal flower rose up to a height of nearly 10 feet, the stem nearly a foot thick, looking like an immense hemlock cone. From the top five or six great leaves, resembling leather, reached down to the ground. From the blooms there dropped a fluid of overcoming strength of scent. And he saw Sir George William Armstrong, sunk in wonder, standing close by this queen of the valley. John Bannister involuntarily stood still. Something had moved. The pair of blooms of this great flower which hitherto had hung down, stiffened themselves visibly,—the piercing sweet perfume streamed out of them overpoweringly, and the three-fold thorny lips with their colored pattern trembled in the atmosphere back and forth, while the Doric column of the stem, dark yellow and sprinkled with black spots, seemed



Here is an unusual photograph of an insect-eating or insectivorous flower in cross section. The small spider is caught at the constriction in the plant. The claim is made that the plant itself derives nourishment from feeding upon all sorts of insects and arachnids which are unfortunate enough to travel down to imbibe of the sweet nectar.

to curve upwards, showing a labyrinthian net of blood red veins. What was this frightful spotted viperlike body, whose spots swelled up to thick berrylike eruptions?

Whatever it was, it meant danger. And John Bannister screamed out with the full strength of his lungs. "Sir George, take care, for Heaven's sake!"

But even then the awful thing came to pass. The flower slowly opened, and something bright and flesh-colored shot out of it. What darted so suddenly? Was it the sucking arms of an octopus? Was it the soft arms of a woman? From Sir George there came a scream that cut to the very marrow, and

John Bannister, frozen stiff with fright, saw his master lifted by his shoulders, up, higher and higher, saw him hanging for a couple of seconds in uncertain balance, and finally disappearing slowly into the calyx of the atrocious, malignant flower, whose petals once more drew themselves together with a start. In this way Sir George celebrated a symbolic marriage with nature, a festival more overcoming, but also more horrible than that for which he had prepared himself. Over the whole scene horror seemed to sweep on dark bat's wings.

There was the fraction of a second only, and John Bannister had regained his senses. He hastened to the flower with giant paces, drew his knife and tried to destroy the tough tentacles of the plant, closely clinging to each other. The knife went to pieces like glass in his grip, then he seized the axe, and accurately and carefully delivered blow after blow, which swelled up to a sort of clangor, as if a bell were cracking. After ten minutes of strenuous work, he had freed his master from his dangerous position, literally peeled out of a sheath.

Pale as death he lay before him on the grass, a grim and frozen smile as if half of supernatural pleasure, half of the fear of death was on his rigid features. But he breathed, lived, appeared uninjured, and allowed himself to be dragged away as if lifeless.

The return journey was silent and oppressive, first going back to the waiting porters, then the whole party returned to civilization. Nothing could induce Sir Armstrong to open his lips. He stared before him as if his mind had completely left him.

Later when Harriet Richards came to his bed in the hospital, he at first failed to recognize her. Then, while foam appeared at the corners of his lips, he rose up in his bed and with a frightful, piercing yell, he pushed her away....

And Sir George has not led Harriet Richards to the altar. Fourteen days after the catastrophe his hair became white as snow. A broken man for the rest of his life, he was taken to the City Insane Asylum, lingered there a year and a half until death set him free.

**R**ETURNING from the burial, John Bannister suddenly saw Daulat Ras, the Yoghi, who seemed to have risen from the ground as by magic. "You had your warning," said he, and an undefinable expression played about his lips. "But how was it," cried out the other, "that Sir George rushed to his fate and to destruction, while I was spared?" On the features of the Asiatic lay the impenetrable mask of the Sphinx. With his forefinger he touched the parchment white face of the old servant. "Blood," said he, meaningly,

*(Continued on next page)*

## The Largest Flower in the World

*We reprint this article and pictures from SCIENCE & INVENTION, to prove once more the possibility of seemingly impossible things. Here and on the previous page are photographs of actual flowers which exist today. Who knows but that some bold explorer might venture into still unknown lands and discover a flower even more nearly approximating the description of "The Malignant Flower?"*

**O**N the Island of Sumatra, in the Dutch East Indies, some of the most exotic and curious plants are to be found growing wild. It is here that we must look for the largest flower in the world. On the 19th of March, 1925, a scientist planted a large bud of the Giant Amorphophalle. Twenty-two days

later it was 22 inches high. It continued to grow and in June 24th at midday, the point of the spathe be-

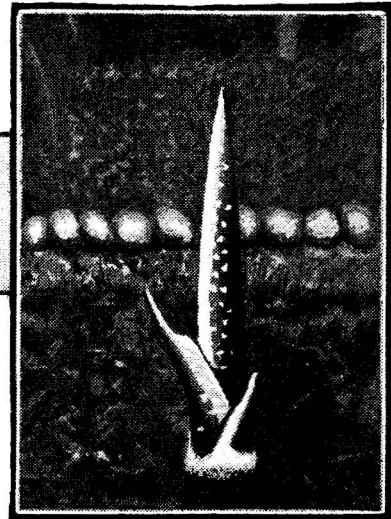
height about 6 feet 6 inches, appeared in all its beauty. M. Dakkus, the scientist conducting the experiment, fortunately took the trouble to photograph the Amorphophalle in its whole expansive bloom, so as to preserve for us the fragile beauty of this rare and transient flower.



In March, 1926, the Amorphophalle presented the appearance of a small tree about 10 feet tall. The plant blooms but once in its life-time.



The Giant Amorphophalle blooming in a Java garden, June 24, 1925. The stick is 2 meters long and the flower 6 feet 6 inches in height.



Thirty-two days after planting, the Giant Amorphophalle presented the appearance of a spire 34 inches in height, as in the photograph above.

gan to unroll itself, and four hours later the flower, which then had a

—then he glided back and disappeared in the crowd of mourners.

THREE years passed. Harriet Richards moved to Liverpool, and managed the household for her brother Jack, the ship-owner. Life resumed its usual way and even in her memory, the frightfulness of the events gradually paled. One evening, as Harriet sat in the comfortably-heated sitting room opposite her brother, the winter storm howling over the Atlantic, her glance rested on a column in the "Daily Telegraph."

Instinctively she took it up and read: "The Life Memoirs of the recently deceased Professor Dr. de Palfi, known as a botanist and explorer will soon appear. The professor's greenhouses, with their orchid cultures, situated in Vienna, his adopted home city, have enjoyed great European fame for the last ten years. In his memoirs, the professor tells in an impressive way of his extended explorations which took him into the most distant regions of all the continents. With the permission of the publisher we can quote from its contents today the sensational information that de Palfi on his last journey in which he reached the interior of Madagascar, actually came upon the

much-debated 'Man Eating Plant.' It is supposed to be a very rare variety of *Cypripedia gigantea* belonging to the class of the giant orchids, and is the largest flower on earth. These plants, growing in certain remote valleys, have ascribed to them the power to seize small and also larger animals, and even men, who come within their reach. In the spring and fall, always according to de Palfi's observation, the pericarp, or seed-container, forms a sort of natural trap. It thrusts out a quantity of sharp claw-like points, which, as they sink into the flesh, are strong enough to hold the large animals prisoners. Within, the plant is covered all over with suction caps, containing a sort of resinous gum that acts like birdlime in a bird trap. By virtue of a certain plant stimulus, a reflex motion back and forth sets up, enabling the enormous orchid to draw into itself even the body of a full-grown man. The plant, it is understood, is a pure flesh-eater. It feeds itself principally on large animals and men. Sometimes the victims can be freed from the embraces of the flower after the murderous attack of the plant. Otherwise the captured individual is completely absorbed and fourteen days later the bare skeleton is cast out."

THE END