

Transcribed Poetry from *Botany for Beginners and Familiar Lectures of Botany*
by Almira Lincoln Phelps

1. Water Lilies:

Here on this gently sloping bank
Of mossy flowers, I love to lie;
While round, the vernal grass so rank,
Of green, reflects the richest dye.
The placid lake of silver sheen,
Fans with soft breath my burning cheek,
While from its bosom all serene,
Fresh odours rise from blossoms meek.

Sweet, modest plants, condemned to dwell
In solitude and lonely shade;
Oh, do you not sometimes rebel,
That thus obscure your lot is made?
But come with me to fairy bowers,
Deck'd by the tasteful hand of art;
And ye shall know of brighter hours,
And share the pleasures of my heart.

Nymphaea* hears my earnest plea,
Meek, white-robed lily of the lake;
And wafting forth a sigh to me,
The unambitious flowret spake.
Mortal, forbear! Thou knowest not,
How idle is thy foolish dream; --
Nor is our lowly, humble lot,
Sad as thy erring heart may deem.

Round us the silver trout do glide,
Blithe zephyrs dance amidst our bowers,
And with us insects gay abide,
Who call us sweetest of the flowers.
We make these solitudes rejoice,
Adorn and bless our parent wave;
And should it be her children's choice,
To leave her, but -- to find a grave?

We should not be in bowers of art,
Blooming and fresh, as we are here --

Soon would our loveliness depart
And wither'd things we should appear
See yellow Naphar* now so gay,
Blue Pontederia,+ fresh and fair,
Oh, they would droop the very day,
Should take them from their natal air!

And I, she said in accents sweet,
Whose robe of plain and simple white
Is for those shades a garment meet;
I could not bide the glaring light,
White gaudy tulips love so well --
Oh grant me, Heav'n my little day
Untouch'd by pride may pass away!

* The White water-lily

* The Yellow water-lily.

+ A beautiful aquatic flower, with
blossoms thickly crowded upon a spike;
this flower, inter-mixed with the White
and Yellow lilies, produced a fine effect.

2. Strawberry:

The Strawberry blooms upon its lowly bed,
Plant of my native soil! The Lime may fling,
More potent fragrance on the zephyr's wing:
The milky Cocoa richer juices shed,
And white Guava lovelier blossoms spread;
But not, like thee, to fond remembrance bring,
The vanish'd hours of life's enchanting spring.
Short calendar of joys forever fled!
Thou bidst the scenes of childhood rise to view,
The wild wood path which fancy loves to trace,
Where, veiled in leaves, thy fruit of rosy hue,
Lurked on its pliant stem with modest grace.
But, ah! When thought would later years renew,
Alas! Successive sorrows crowd the space!

3. The Succession of Flowers:

“Fair rising from her icy couch,
Wan herald of the floral year,
The *Snowdrop* marks the spring’s
approach,
E’re yet the *Primrose* groups appear,
Or peers the *Arum** from its spotted
veil,
Or odorous *Violets* scent the cold,
capricious gale.

Then, thickly strewn in woodland
bowers,
Anemonies their stars unfold;
Then spring the *Sorrel*’s veined flowers,
And rich in vegetable gold.
From calyx pale the freckled *Cowslip*
born,
Receives in amber cups the fragrant
dews of morn.

Lo! The green *Thorn* her silver buds,
Expands to May’s enlivening beam,
*Hottonia** blushes on the floods;
And where the slowly tickling stream,
Mid grass and spiry rushes stealing
glides,
Her lovely fringed flowers, fair
*Menyanthes** hides.

In the lone copse, or shadowy dale,
Wild Clustered knots of *Harebells* blow,
And droops the *Lily* of the *Vale*.
O’er *Vinca*’s* matted leaves below,
The *Orchis* race with varied beauty
charm,
And mock the exploring bee, or fly’s
aerial form.

Wound in the hedge-row’s oaken
boughs,
The *Woodbine*’s tassels float in air,
And blushing, the uncultured *Rose*,
Hangs high her beauteous blossoms
there;
Her fillets there the purple *Night-shade*
weaves,
And the *Brionia* winds her pale and
scalloped leaves.

To later summer’s fragrant breath,
Clematis’* feathery garlands dance;
The hollow foxglove nods beneath,
While the tall *Mullein*’s yellow lance,
Dear to the greedy tribe of insects,
towers,
And the weak *Galium** weaves its
myriad fairy flowers.

Sheltering the Coot’s and Wild duck’s
nest,
And where the timid *Halcyon* hides,
The *Willow-herb* in crimson drest,
Waves with *Arundo* o’er the tides;
And there the bright *Nymphaea** loves
to lave,
Or spreads her golden orbs upon the
dimpling wave.

And thou, by pain, and sorry blest,
Papaver!* That an opiate dew
Conceal’st beneath thy scarlet vest,
Contrasting with the *Cornflower* blue,
Autumnal months behold thy gauzy
leaves,
Bend in the rustling gale, amid the
tawny sheaves.

* *Arum* = Wild Turnip

* *Vinca*’s = Periwinkle

* *Nymphaea* = White Pond Lily

* *Hottonia* = Water Violet

* *Clematis* = Virgin’s Bower

* *Menyanthes* = Buckbean

* *Galium* = Bedstraw

* *Papaver* = Common Poppy

