

Anear, the bull-frog's dismal croak,
The speckled toad's discordant cries,
The buzzing of the venom'd flies;
These sounds alone the silence broke.

O spot accursed of God ! I cried ;
Forsaken both of God and man,
What part hast thou in nature's plan ?
But from the depths no voice replied.

Once more beside that mere I stand ;
And, lo, a wondrous change is wrought,
A change surpassing utmost thought :
For never did enchanter's wand

Or hoar magician's potent rod
Such changes work ; awhile I gaze
Upon the scene in mute amazement,
Then bowing say, Lo, here is God !

Up from the dark and slimy ground,
Through waters black, their snakelike stems
The lilies rear, and, lo, with gems
Of floral grace the lake is crowned.

Huge palm-broad leaves of richest green
Bedeck the bosom of the lake,
And emerald-bued flotillas make,
Where resting gracefully are seen

White flowers whose waxen leaves enfold
(Half-hiding them from outward view,
Yet letting half their warmth burn through
Their pointed spires) rich hearts of gold.

And, borne upon the summer breeze,
Come subtle perfumes, rare and sweet
As are the odorous gales which greet
The voyager on Southern seas.

With emerald wing and throat of gold,
The ruby-breasted humming-bird
Flits to and fro, less seen than heard,
Till, made by admiration bold,

He pauses in his arrowy flight
To fan some lily's blushing cheek,
Then darts away fresh fields to seek ;
He is in truth a lover light.

And hither comes the honey bee
To revel mid these sweet perfumes :
He leaves the garden's cultured blooms,
The myriad flowers that deck the lea,

And in his boat of shining pearl,
On couch of gold, at anchor lies,
Nor heeds the mimic waves that rise
And round his vessel foam and curl.

Bright butterflies on gaudy wing
Go fluttering from flower to flower,
Enjoying well their life's brief hour,
In idleness and wantoning.

Like lances robed in living light,
The crested dragon-flies are seen
To brush their wings of emerald shaven
Against the lilies, creamy white.

O pearly leaves ? O hearts of gold !
O subtle perfumes, rare and sweet !
Here have I found a mercy seat,
A sacred place where I may hold

Communion with the God of love,
Communion with the God of grace,
Who rules in every realm and race,
Whose fitting emblem is the dove.

He calls no spot "accursed ground,"
But where sin hath all beauty slain,
Where basks foul error's reptile train,
There doth his grace the more abound.

Then bloom ye on, ye flowerets fair ;
Bloom on, nor shall your lives be lost ;
Still let your petals, wavelet tossed,
Shake honied perfumes on the air ;

For while on your magnificence
I gaze with wonder and delight,
I learn a lesson from the sight
As touching God's omnipotence ;

That not alone from cultured lands,
By churchly rite, and rule walled in,
But oftimes from the wilds of sin,
From moral deserts, barren sands,

From stagnant fens of unbelief,
From Etna heights were passions flame,
From fetid pools of crime and shame,
Spring fragrant flower and verdant leaf,

That in a chaplet fair to see
By angel hands are wreathed and bound
About the Brows with thorns once crowned,
A coronal of victory ;

That forms of faith where seem to meet
The dark, the cold may yet give birth
To Christlike lives, to glad the earth
With beauty and with fragrance sweet ;

That even the vague and mystic creeds
Of Eastern lands, creeds centuries old,
In their dim depths perchance may hold,
Hidden from sight, some precious seeds

Which, quickened by the holy light
Of God's free grace, may germinate,
To gem the floods of strife and hate
With love's pure lilies fair and white ;

That sometimes from the dark abyss
Of pain, all pain, God's grace may bring
The pure and perfect blossoming
Of endless joy and righteousness.

Then bloom ye on, ye flowerets fair ;
Bloom on—your lives shall not be lost !
Still let your petals, wavelet tossed,
Shake honied perfumes on the air !

For while on your magnificence
I gaze with wonder and delight,
I learn a lesson from the sight
As touching God's omnipotence.
—S. H. Sabine, West Point, P. E. Island.