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On the Cover

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John Thornton was an English artist and entrepreneur who began issuing a series of botanical plates in 1799. He employed the very best artists and spared no expense in combining the techniques of mezzotint, stipple engraving, and aquatint to produce his large and beautiful images. He published thirty-three engravings in all, and they were gathered into a volume, The Temple of Flora, in 1807. Unfortunately, the project ruined Thornton financially, and he died in poverty. The cover illustration shows the Egyptian Sacred Lotus in pink, and the American Water-lily in yellow (photo and caption courtesy of the Linda Hall Library of Science, Engineering & Technology).