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The Blossoms and the Leaves: A Paramyth

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(From the German of Jean Paul Richter.)

THE BLOSSOMS AND THE LEAVES.

A PARAMYTH.

MAY came, and the blossoms pale and thin, fell from the trees; then said the leaves, "Behold these puny things, how useless! hardly have they seen the light, before they fade and die; but we, we grow stronger, enduring the heat of summer, which serves only to make us larger, more brilliant, and more luxuriant, until at last, after many months of usefulness, when we have raised the most beautiful fruit, and given it to the children of earth, we sink into our graves ornamented with the colors of *many orders*, while the thunders of autumnal storms roll over our heads." But the fallen blossoms said, "Willingly do we abandon life now; for we have fulfilled our mission—we have given birth to the fruit that is to live after us."

Be not discouraged, ye silent, unnoticed men of books, though ye pass away quickly—ye little esteemed martyrs in the school-room, ye noble benefactors of mankind, whose names are not inscribed upon the tablets of history; and you, mothers, whose lot is to dwell in obscurity, be not discouraged in the presence of the proud statesmen, the rich merchant princes, the haughty conquerors; be not discouraged—for you are the *blossoms*.