

THE SAGE AND THE FOOL.

“The air hath bubbles as the water hath.

* * * * and do but blow them to their trials, the bubbles are out.”

SHAKSPEARE.

“How he marks his way
With dreadful waste of what deserves to shine!

Art, genius, fortune, elevated power,—

With various lustres these light up the world,
Which Death puts out, and darkens human race.”—YOUNG.

WHEN this globe of the earth
First sprang into birth,
And man on its surface 'gan crawl,
'Twas knowledge he sought,—
But a bubble he caught,
And gave for an apple his all.

And we hear, too, beside,
That the bubble of pride
Drove a host of the angels from Heaven ;
Is it, then, such a wonder
That mortals should blunder,
And break the command that was given ?

So, ever since then,
'Tis the practice of men
To shape all their courses in trouble ;
Yet in colours so bright,
That they dazzle the sight,
But end, like their hopes, in a bubble.

Thus, ambition and fame,
While they glitter in name,
And show in the prospect so fair ;
Yet, ere hold you can take,
The gay phantoms break,
Or vanish, like bubbles, in air.

Even friendship and love,
Like stars from above,
That brighten our paths as we go,
Too often we find
Of the same brittle kind,—
As bubbles in colour and show.

Then the fool and the sage,
In every age,
Lift their schemes into life with a breath ;
Or of science or wealth,
They escape as by stealth,
Or are presently put out by Death.