

## THE BUBBLES.

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OF all the metaphorical allusions derived from objects either in nature or in art, to describe the evanescent character of life and its pursuits, that of a Bubble is perhaps the most perfect. Even the fair form of Creation, with its "pomp of groves and garniture of fields," has not inaptly been compared to the same object: its buoyancy in space, its excavated interior, and its partial explosions, bear out the resemblance, and have furnished philosophers, moralists, and divines, with their world of vanity, emptiness, and disappointment.

"Lean not on earth,—'twill pierce thee to the heart;  
A broken reed at best, but oft a spear,  
On whose sharp point Peace bleeds and Hope expires."

YOUNG.

The world and its emptiness have been quaintly described by Quarl, in his Emblems: a man is re-

presented as striking upon a terrestrial globe, and listening to the sound that proceeds from a thing so hollow. But, however apt the allusion of the figure and character of our globe may be to a bubble, the schemes and projects of its inhabitants resemble it still more strikingly. Some no sooner appear than they burst; while others, buoyant for a time, become the objects of admiration and applause, according to the degree of altitude they attain, or the brilliant colours they exhibit; still their duration is but evanescent, and at length they vanish into air. Thus it is with the visions of Ambition, of Science, and of Wealth; the resemblance may readily be traced, and, though the observation may be trite, it is just.

Then there is the skull, with its spherical form: its teeming brain, like the vapour in an alembic, is ever in motion; till, exhausted by its efforts, it expires, or becomes, like Hamlet's, a "distracted globe."

Every age has its bubbles, great and small; and their history would furnish no uninteresting sub-

ject for the pen or the pencil. In such a history the builders of Babel would be among the first and most prominent actors: how that bubble burst is well known. The builders of the pyramids had duration for their object: knowing that Death would put out the bubble of their existence, they imagined they could perpetuate the memory of their names and exploits by a work that the hand of Time could not destroy; but where is the history of their makers, or the names they were meant to perpetuate?

But, leaving the bubbles of antiquity, our own times have had their full share, both in magnitude and importance; nor have their effects been less on the civilized world than any that have preceded them; and, though the mightiest of them has burst, the recollection of its character still remains, and will long remain impressed on the minds of the present generation.

The bubble alluded to, and its final breaking at St. Helena, will doubtless be anticipated; for still, "in the mind's eye," its portentous form is



contemplated. How it soared and glittered in the sun, intercepting its beams and overshadowing the nations! Great as was the admiration which this bubble excited in the minds of some; there were those who regarded the mighty phenomenon as destined to burst, and to have its fragments scattered; but who would have imagined that the perspective of time would have exhibited such an ending,—of one, too, who compassed the earth in his mind's grasp,—confined to a little island, playing the mock emperor, and vapouring at destiny only to be released by the hand of Death! Here let the sons of “ vaulting ambition” pause, contemplate the mighty bubble, and then pursue their projects “ with what appetite they may.”

PROTEUS.

