

clared a royal bank in 1718. The shares rapidly appreciated in value—upwards of twenty-fold that of the original—and in 1719, they were worth eighty times the amount of all the current specie in France. That great fabric of false credit fell to the ground the following year, and almost prostrated the French government in its fall. Tens of thousands of families were utterly ruined.

¹⁴⁹ It is a singular fact that a scheme of speculation similar to that of Law's in France, had birth in England the same year (1710), and exploded the same year (1720). A company was incorporated in 1716, under the name of the *South Sea Company*. The affair promised immense gains to the stockholders, and the shares, originally £100, raised to the enormous price of £1000! As in France, almost every person of wealth in Great Britain, became stockjobbers and speculators in the fatal scheme. The airy fabric fell in 1720, and ruined thousands of families. The estates of the directors, valued at £2,014,000, were seized in 1721. Mr. Knight, the cashier, absconded with £100,000, but compounded for £10,000, and returned. The success of Law's scheme in France, was the origin of the similar scheme in England. The papers and pamphlets of the time, contained many squibs during the prevalence of the mania, and after the bubble burst, caricatures in abundance appeared, in ridicule of the whole thing. "Bubble-Cards" were used