county of Wexford. His father, a counſellor at law in Dublin, was private ſecretary to James duke of Ormond ; but be was of Engliſh extraction : and his ſon, while very young, being carried to London, he put him to ſchool at the Charter-houſe, whence he was removed to Merton College in Oxford. Our author­ left the univerſity, which he did without taking any degree, in the full reſolution to enter into the army. This step was highly diſpleaſing to his friends ; but the ardour of his paſſion for a military life rendered him deaf to any other propoſal. Not being able to procure a better ſtation, he entered as a private gen­tleman in the horſe guards, notwithſtanding he there­by loſt the ſucceſſion to his Iriſh eſtate. However, as he had a flow of good-nature, a generous openneſs and frankneſs of ſpirit, and a ſparkling vivacity of wit, theſe qualities rendered him the delight of the ſoldiery, and procured him an ensign’s commiſſion in the guards. In the mean time, as he had made choice of a profeſſion which ſet him free from all the ordinary reſtraints in youth, he ſpared not to indulge his inclinations in the wildeſt exceſſes. Yet his gaieties and revels did not paſs without ſome cool hours of reflection ; it was in theſe that he drew up his little treatiſe intitled *The Christian Hero,* with a deſign, if we may believe himſeſſ, to be a check upon his paſſions. For this purpoſe it had lain ſome time by him, when he print­ed it in 1701, with a dedication to Lord Cutts, who had not only appointed him his private ſecretary, but procured for him a company in Lord Lucas’s regiment of Fuſileers.

The ſame year he brought out his comedy called *The Funeral,* or *Grief a la mode.* This play procured him the regard of King William, who reſolved to give him ſome eſſential marks of his favour ; and though, upon that prince’s death, his hopes were diſappointed, yet, in the beginning of Queen Anne’s reign, he was appointed to the profitable place of gazetteer. He owed this poſt to the friendſhip of lord Halifax and the earl of Sun­derland, to whom he had been recommended by his ſchool-fellow Mr Addiſon. That gentleman alſo lent him an helping hand in promoting the comedy called *The Tender Huſband,* which was acted in 1704 with great ſucceſs. But his next play, The Lying Lover, had a very different fate. Upon this rebuff from the stage, he turned the ſame humorous current into ano­ther channel ; and early in the year 1709, he began to publiſh the Tatler : which admirable paper was under­taken in concert with Dr Swift. His reputation was perfectly eſtabliſhed by this work ; and, during the courſe of it, he was made a commiſſioner of the ſtamp- duties in 1710. Upon the change of the miniſtry the same year, he joined the duke of Marlborough, who had ſeveral years entertained a friendſhip for him ; and upon his Grace’s diſmiſſion from all employments in 1711, Mr Steele addreſſed a letter of thanks to him for the ſervices which he had done to his country. However, as our author still continued to hold his place in the ſtamp-oſſice under the new adminiſtration, he forbore entering with his pen upon political subjects ; but, adhering more cloſely to Mr Addiſon, he dropt the Tatler, and afterwards, by the aſſiſtance chiefly of that ſteady friend, he carried on the ſame plan much improved under the title of *The Spectator.* The ſucceſs of this paper was equal to that of the for­mer ; which encouraged him, before the cloſe of it, to proceed upon the ſame deſign in the character of the *Guardian.* This was opened in the beginning of the year 1713, and was laid down in October the same year. But in the courſe of it his thoughts took a ſtronger turn to politics: he engaged with great warmth againſt the miniſtry ; and being determined to proſecute his views that way by procuring a ſeat in the houſe of commons, he immediately removed all obſtacles thereto. For that purpoſe he took care to pre­vent a forcible diſmiſſion from his poſt in the ſtamp of­fice, by a timely reſignation of it to the Earl of Oxford; and at the ſame time gave up a penſion, which had been till this time paid him by the queen as a ſervant to the late prince George of Denmark. This done, he wrote the famous Guardian upon the demolition of Dunkirk, which was publiſhed Aug. 7. 1713; and the parlia­ment being diſſolved next day, the Guardian was ſoon followed by ſeveral other warm political tracts againſt the admimſtration. Upon the meeting of the new parliament, Mr Steele having been returned a member for the borough of Stockbridge in Dorſetſhire, took his ſeat accordingly in the houſe of commons ; but was ex­pelled thence in a few days after, for writing the cloſe oſ the paper called the *Engliſhman,* and one of his poli­tical pieces intitled the *Crisis.* Preſently after his expulsion, he publiſhed propoſals for writing the hiſtory of the duke of Marlborough ; at the ſame time he alſo wrote the *Spinſter ;* and, in oppoſition to the *Examiner,* he ſet up a paper called the *Reader,* and continued publiſhing ſeveral other things in the same ſpirit till the death of the queen. Immediately after which, as a re­ward for theſe ſervices, he was taken into favour by her ſucceſſor to the throne, king George I. He was appointed ſurveyor of the royal fiables at Hampton- Court, governor of the royal company of comedians, put into the commiſſion of the peace for the county of Middleſex, and in 1715 received the honour oſ knighthood. In the firſt parliament oſ that king, he was choſen member for Boroughbridge in Yorkſhire ; and, after the ſuppreſſion of the rebellion in the north, was appointed one of the commiſſioners of the forfeited eſtates in Scotland. In 1718, he buried his second wife, who had brought him a handſome fortune and a good eſtate in Wales ; but neither that, nor the ample additions lately made to his income, were ſufficient to anſwer his demands. The thoughtleſs vivacity of his ſpirit often reduced him to little ſhifts of wit for its ſupport ; and the project of the Fiſh-pool this year owed its birth chiefly to the projector’s neceſſities. This veſſel was intended to carry fiſh alive, and with­out waiting, to any part of the kingdom : but not­withſtanding all his towering hopes, the ſcheme proved very ruinous to him ; for after he had been at an immenſe expence in contriving and building his veſſel, beſides the charge of the patent, which he had pro­cured, it turned out upon trial to be a mere project. His plan was to bring ſalmon alive from the coaſt of Ireland ; but theſe fiſh, though supplied by this contri­vance with a continual ſtream of water while at ſea, yet uneaſy at their confinement, ſhattered themſelves to pieces againſt the ſides of the pool ; ſo that when they were brought to market they were worth very little.

The following year he oppoſed the remarkable peer­age bill in the houſe of commons ; and, during the