which set him free from all the ordinary restraints in youth, he spared not to indulge his inclinations in the wildest excesses. Yet his gayeties and revels did not pass without some cool hours of reflection ; it was in these that he drew up his little treatise entitled *The Christian Hero,* with a design, if we may believe himself, to be a check upon his passions. For this purpose it had lain for 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 fusiliers.

During the same year he brought out his comedy, called *The Funeral, or Grief à la Mode.* This play procured him the notice of King William, who resolved to give him some essential marks of his favour ; and though, upon that prince's death, bis hopes were disappointed, yet, in the beginning of Queen Anne’s reign, he was appointed to the profitable place of gazetteer. This post he owed to the friendship of Lord Halifax and the Earl of Sun­derland, to whom be had been recommended by his schoolfellow Mr Addison. That gentleman also lent him a 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 rendered to his country. As, how­ever, he still continued to hold his place in the stamp­office under the new administration, he wisely declined the discussion of political subjects ; and, adhering more closely to Addison, he dropped 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; and, before the close of it, he was thus encouraged 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 iιis views by procuring a seat in the House of Commons, he immediately removed all the obstacles that stood in his way. 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 hitherto been paid to him by the Queen as a servant to the late Prince George of Den­mark. He now wrote the famous Guardian upon the demolition of Dunkirk. It was published August 7, 1613; and the parliament being dissolved next day, the Guardian was soon followed by several other warm political tracts against the administration. Upon the meeting of the new parliament, Steele having been returned a member for the borough of Stockbridge in Hampshire, took his seat accordingly in the House of Commons ; but was expelled in the course of a few days, for writing the close of the paper called the *Englishman,* and one of his political pieces entitled 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 papers and tracts in the same spirit till the death of the queen. As a reward for these services, he was immediately taken into favour by her successor to the throne, King George

I. ; was appointed surveyor of the royal stables at Hampton Court, and governor of the royal company of co­medians was put into the commission of the peace for the county of Middlesex, and in 1715 received the honour of knighthood. In the first parliament of 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 with a good estate in Wales; but neither this, nor the ample addi­tion lately made to his income, was 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 wasting, to any part of the kingdom ; but notwithstanding all bis 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 course of this opposition to the court, his license for acting plays was revoked, and his patent rendered inef­fectual at the instance of the Lord Chamberlain. He did his utmost to prevent so great a loss; and finding every direct avenue of approach to his royal master effectually barred against him by his powerful adversary, he had recourse to the method of applying to the public, in hopes that his complaints would reach the ears of his sovereign, though in an indirect course, by that channel. In this spirit he formed the plan of a periodical paper, to be published twice a-week, under the title of the *Theatre ;* the first number of which appeared on the 2d of January 1719-20. In the mean time, the misfortune of being out of favour at court, like other misfortunes, drew after it a train of more. During the course of this paper, in which he had assumed the feigned name of *Sir John Edgar,* he was outrageously attacked by Mr Dennis, the noted critic, in a very abusive pamphlet, entitled *The Character and Conduct of Sir John Edgar.* To this insult he made a proper reply in the *Theatre.*

While he was struggling with all his might to save himself from ruin, he found time to turn his pen against the mischievous South Sea scheme, which had nearly brought the nation to ruin in 1720; and the next year he was restored to his office and authority in the play­house in Drury-Lane. Of this it was not long before he made an additional advantage, by bringing his cele­brated comedy called the *Conscious Lovers* upon that stage, where it was acted with prodigious success; so that the receipt there must have been very considerable, besides the profits accruing by the sale of the copy, and a purse