again tried his fortune on the stage with *The Conscious Lovers,* the best and most successful of his comedies, produced in December 1722.

Meanwhile the gallant captain had turned aside to another kind of literary work, in which, with the assistance of his friend Addison, he obtained a more enduring reputation. There never was a time when literary talent was so much sought after and rewarded by statesmen. Addison had already been waited on in “ his humble lodgings in the Haymarket,” and advanced to office, when his friend the successful dramatist was appointed to the office of gazetteer. This was in April or May 1707. It was Steele’s first connexion with journalism. The periodical was at that time taking the place of the pamphlet as an instru­ment for working on public opinion. The *Gazette* gave little opening for the play of Steele’s lively pen, his main duty, as he says, having been to " keep the paper very innocent and very insipid ”; but the position made him familiar with the new field of enterprise in which his inventive mind soon discerned materials for a project of his own. The *Tatler* made its first appearance on the 12th of April 1709. It was partly a newspaper, a journal of politics and society, published three times a week. Steele’s position as gazetteer furnished him with special advan­tages for political news, and as a popular frequenter of coffee-houses he was at no loss for social gossip. But Steele not only retailed and commented on social news, a function in which he had been anticipated by Defoe and others; he also gradually introduced into the *Tatler* as a special feature essays on general questions of manners and morality. It is not strictly true that Steele was the inventor of the English "essay ”—there were essayists before the 18th century, notably Cowley and Temple; but he was the first to use the essay for periodical purposes, and he and Addison together developed a distinct species, to which they gave a permanent character, and' in which they had many imitators. As a humbler motive for this fortunate venture Steele had the pinch of impecuniosity, due rather to excess of expenditure than to smallness of income. He had £300 a year from his gazetteership (paying a tax of £45), £100 as gentleman waiter to Prince George, £850 from the Barbadoes estates of his first wife, a widow named Margaret Stretch, and some fortune by bis second wife—Mrs Mary Scurlock, the "dear Prue ” of his charming letters. But Steele lived in con­siderable state after his second marriage, and before he started the. *Taller* was reduced to the necessity of borrowing. the assumed name of the editor was Isaac Bickerstaff, but Addison discovered the real author in the sixth number, and began to contribute in the eighteenth. It is only fair to Steele to state that the success of the *Tatler* was established before Addison joined him, and that Addison contributed to only forty-two of the two hundred and seventy-one numbers that had appeared when the paper was stopped, obscurely, in January 1711. Some papers satirizing Harley appeared in the *Tatler,* and Steele lost or resigned the post of gazetteer. It is possible that this political recklessness may have bad something to do with the sudden end of the venture.

Only two months elapsed between the stoppage of the *Tatler* and the appearance of the *Spectator,* which was the organ of the two friends from the 1st of March 1711 till the 6th of December 1712. Addison was the chief contributor to the new venture, and the history of it belongs more to his life. Nevertheless, it is to be remarked as characteristic of the two writers that in this as in the *Tatler* Addison generally follows Steele’s lead in the choice of subjects. The first suggestion of Sir Roger de Coverley was Steele’s although it was Addison that filled in the outline of a good-natured country gentleman with the numerous little whimsicalities that convert Sir Roger into an amiable and exquisitely ridiculous provincial oddity. Steele had neither the fineness of touch nor the humorous malice that gives life and distinction to Addison’s picture; the Sir Roger of his original hasty sketch has good sense as well as good nature, and the treatment is comparatively commonplace from a literary point of view, though unfortunately not commonplace in its charity. Steele’s suggestive vivacity gave many another hint for the elaborating skill of his friend.

The *Spectator* was followed by the *Guardian,* the first number of which appeared on the 12th of March 1713. It had a much shorter career, extending to only a hundred and seventy-six numbers, of which Steele wrote eighty-two. This was the last of his numerous periodicals in which be had the material assist­ance of Addison. But he continued for several years to project journals, under various titles, some of them political, some social in their objects, most of them very short-lived. Steele was a warm partisan of the principles of the Revolution, as earnest in his political as in his other convictions. The *Englishman* was started in October 1733, immediately after the stoppage of the *Guardian,* to assail the policy of the Tory ministry. The *Lover,* started in February 1714, was more general in its aims; but it gave place in a month or two to the *Reader,* a direct counterblast to the Tory *Examiner.* The *Englishman* was resuscitated for another volume in 1715; and he subsequently projected in rapid succession three unsuccessful ventures— *Town Talk,* the *Tea Table* and *Chit Chat.* Three years later he started his most famous political paper the *Plebeian,* rendered memorable by the fact that it embroiled him with his old ally Addison. The subject of controversy between the two lifelong friends was Sunderland’s Peerage Bill. Steele’s last venture in journalism was the *Theatre,* 1720, the immediate occasion of which was the revocation of his patent for Drury Lane. Besides these journals he wrote also several pamphlets on passing ques­tions—on the disgrace of Marlborough in 1711, on the fortifica­tions of Dunkirk in 1713, on the “ crisis ” in 1714, *An Apology for Himself and his Writings* (important biographically) in the same year, and on the South Sea mania in 1720.

The fortunes of Steele as a zealous Whig varied with the fortunes of his party. Over the Dunkirk question he waxed so hot that he threw up a pension and a commissionership of stamps, and went into parliament as member for Stockbridge to attack the ministry with voice and vote as well as with pen. But he had not sat many weeks when he was expelled from the house for the language of his pamphlet on the *Crisis,* which was stigmatized as seditious.. The *Apology* already mentioned was his vindication of himself on this occasion. With the accession of the House of Hanover his fortunes changed. Honours and substantial rewards were showered upon him. He was made a justice of the peace, deputy-lieutenant of Middlesex, surveyor of the royal stables, governor of the royal company of comedians —the last a lucrative post—and was also knighted (1715). After the suppression of the Jacobite rebellion he was appointed one of the commissioners of forfeited estates, and spent some two years in Scotland in that capacity. In 1718 he obtained a patent for a plan for bringing salmon alive from Ireland. Differing from his friends in power on the question of the Peerage Bill he was deprived of some of his offices, but when Walpole became chancellor of the exchequer in 1721 he was reinstated. With all his emoluments however the imprudent, impulsive, ostentatious and generous Steele could never get clear of financial difficulties, and he was obliged to retire from London in 1724 and live in the country. He spent his last years on his wife’s estate of Llangunnor in Wales, and, his health broken down by a paralytic seizure, died at Carmarthen on the 1st of September 1729.

A selection from Steele’s essays, with a prefatory memoir has been edited by Mr Austin Dobson (1885; revised 1896). Mr Dobson contributed a fuller biography to Mr Andrew Lang’s series of *English Worthies,* in 1886. In 1889 another and more exhaustive life was published by Mr G. A. Aitken, who has also edited Steele’s plays (1898) and the *Taller* (1898). (W. Μ.; A. D.)

**STEELE, THOMAS** (1788-1848), Irish politician and writer, a member of a Somerset family which settled in Ireland during the 17th century, was born on the 3rd of November 1788. He was educated at Trinity College, Dublin, and at Magdalene College, Cambridge, and succeeded to a large estate in Co. Clare. As a volunteer he fought against the Bourbons in Spain in 1823, and, returning to Ireland, he became an enthusiastic worker for Roman Catholic emancipation, helping greatly to