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 habitué 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 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 im- pecuniosity, due rather to excess of expenditure than to smallness of income. He had £300 a year from his gazetteership, £100 as gentleman usher to Prince George, £800 from the Barbados estates of his first wife,@@1 and some fortune by his second wife—Mrs Mary Scurlock, the “Dear Prue” of his charming letters. But Steele lived in considerable state after this second marriage, and was reduced to the necessity of borrowing before he started *The Tatler.* The assumed name of the editor was Isaac Bickerstaffe, 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 in January 1711.

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 March 1, 1711 till December 6, 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-five numbers, of which Steele wrote eighty-two and Addison fifty-three. This was the last of his numerous periodicals in which he had the assistance of the great essayist. But he continued for several years to project journals, under great variety of 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, ardent and earnest in his political as in his other convictions. *The Englishman*

was started in January 1714, immediately after the stoppage of *The Guardian,* to assail the policy of the Tory ministry. *The Lover,* started some six weeks later, 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 in the same year he 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 in it he had to contend against his old ally Addison. The subject of controversy between the two life-long friends was Sunder­land’s Peerage Bill. Steele’s last venture in journalism was *The Theatre,* 1719-20, the immediate occasion of which was the revocation of his patent for Drury Lane. So ready was Steele in this kind of enterprise, which he could always conduct single-handed, that apparently whenever he felt strongly on any subject he at once started a journal to give vent to his feelings. 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, on the South Sea mania in 1720.

The fortunes of Steele as a zealous Whig varied with the fortunes of his party. He lost his gazetteership when the Tories came into power in 1710. 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. 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 in 1718, he was deprived of some of his offices, but when Walpole became chancellor of the exchequer in 1721 he was reinstated. But with all his emoluments 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 on the 1st of September 1729.

A selection from Steele’s essays has been edited by Mr Austin Dobson, who prefixes a careful and sympathetic memoir. Mr Dob­son has since written a fuller biography in Mr Lang’s series of *English Worthies.* (W. M.)

STEELYARD, Merchants of the, were Hanse mer­chants who settled in London in 1250 at the steelyard on the river side, near Cosin Lane, now Iron Bridge Wharf. Henry III. in 1259, at the request of his brother Richard, earl of Cornwall, conferred on them important privileges, which were renewed and confirmed by Edward I. It was chiefly through their enterprise that the early trade of London was developed, and they continued to flourish till, on the complaint of the Merchant Adventurers in the reign

@@@1 The name of this lady—a widow, Mrs Margaret Stretch—and some facts about her have been ascertained by Mr George A. Aitken. See *Athenaeum,* May 1, 1886, and Mr Dobson’s *Steele,* pp. 51, 218.