in all probability have done as the French marshal desired, were by the fortune of war afforded the opportunity of surprising a part of the enemy’s forces. For in the 17th century, when the objects of a war were as far as possible secured without the loss of valuable lives, and general decisive battles were in every way considered undesirable, a brilliant victory over a part, not the whole, of the enemy’s forces was the tactical idea of the best generals, and accordingly William, having completely misled the enemy by forcing a detected spy to give Luxemburg false news, set his army in motion before dawn on July 23rd/ August 3rd to surprise the French right about Steenkirk. The advanced guard of infantry and pioneers, under the duke of Württemberg, deployed close to the French camps ere Luxemburg became aware of the impending blow; at this moment the main body of the army farther back was forming up after the passage of some woods. When the fight opened, Luxemburg was completely surprised, and he could do no more than hurry the nearest foot and dragoons into action as each regiment came on the scene. But the march of the Allies’ main body had been mismanaged; while Württemberg methodically cannonaded the enemy, wait­ing for support and for the order to advance, and the French worked with feverish energy to form a strong and well-covered line of battle at the threatened point, the Allies’ main body, which had marched in the usual order, one wing of cavalry leading, the infantry following, and the other wing of cavalry at the tail of the column, was being hastily sorted out into infantry and cavalry, for the ground was only suitable for the former. A few battalions only had come up to support the advanced guard when the real attack opened (12.30). The advanced guard had already been under arms for nine hours, and the march had been over bad ground, but its attack swept the first French line before it. The English and Danes stub­bornly advanced, the second and third lines of the French in­fantry giving ground before them, but Luxemburg was rapidly massing his whole force to crush them, and meanwhile the con­fusion in the allied main body had reached its height. Count Solms, who commanded it, ordered the cavalry forward, but the mounted men, scarcely able to move over the bad roads and heavy ground, only blocked the way for the infantry. Some of the English foot, with curses upon Solms and the Dutch generals, broke out to the front, and Solms, angry and excited, thereupon refused to listen to all appeals for aid from the front. No attempt was made to engage and hold the centre and left of the French army, which hurried, regiment after regiment, to take part in the fighting at Steenkirk. William’s counter-order that the infantry was to go forward, the cavalry to halt, only made matters worse, and by now the advanced guard had at last been brought to a standstill. At the crisis Luxemburg had not hesitated to throw the whole of the French and Swiss guards, led by the princes of the royal house, into the fight, and as, during and after this supreme effort, more and more French troops appeared from the side of Enghien, the Allies were driven back, contesting every step by weight of numbers. Those troops of the main body, foot and dragoons, which suc­ceeded in reaching the front, served only to cover and to steady the retreat of Württemberg’s force, and, the *coup* having mani­festly failed, William ordered the retreat. The Allies retired as they had come, their rear-guard showing too stubborn a front for the French to attack. The latter were indeed in no state to pursue. Over eight thousand men out of only about fifteen thousand engaged on the side of the Allies were killed and wounded, and the losses of the French out of a much larger force were at least equal. Contemporary soldiers affirmed that Steen­kirk was the hardest battle ever fought by infantry, and the battle served not only to illustrate the splendid discipline of the old professional armies, but also to give point to the reluctance of the generals of those days to fight battles in which, once the fighting spirit was unchained, the armies shot each other to pieces before either would give way.

**STEEPLE** (akin to “steep”), a general architectural name (Fr. *clocher*, Ital, *campanile.* Ger. *Glockenturm)* for the whole arrangement of tower, belfry, spire, &c.

**STEEPLECHASE,** a variety of horse-racing not run on the flat, but either across country or on a made course with artificial fences, water-jumps, &c. (see Horse-racing). The origin of the sport and the name is due to matches run by owners of hunters, the goal being some prominent landmark, such as a neighbouring church steeple. There is an early record of such a match in 1752 in Ireland, when the course was 41/2 m., “ from the Church of Buttevaut to the spire of St Leger Church.” The name is sometimes used of cross-country running or of a race on a made course over hurdles and other obstacles. It is also given to an English variation of the old French game of Goose (*q.v.*) It is played with two dice on a board, on which is depicted a race-course with hurdles, water-jumps and other obstacles. The course is marked in 60 compartments by means of radii, and the game is won by the player whose horse makes the circuit in the fewest throws. Each player is provided with a marker, usually in the form of a jockey on horseback, which is moved forward after each throw to the space to which the number thrown entitles it.

**STEER, PAUL WILSON** (i860- ), English painter, was

born at Birkenhead. He was trained first at the Gloucester school of art and afterwards in Paris at the Académie Julian, and in the École des Beaux Arts under Cabanel. After 1886, before which date he had shown three pictures at the Royal Academy, practically the whole of his work was seen in the exhibitions of the New English Art Club, of which he is a pro­minent member. His figure subjects and landscapes show great originality and technical skill (see Painting: *Recent British),* His portrait of himself is included in the collection in the Uffizi Gallery, Florence.

**STEEVENS, GEORGE** (1736-1800), English Shakespearian commentator, was born at Poplar on the 10th of May 1736, the son of an East India captain, afterwards a director of the company. He was educated at Eton and at King’s College, Cambridge, where he resided from 1753 to 1756. Leaving the university without a degree, he settled in ’chambers in the Temple, removing later to a house on Hampstead Heath, where he collected a valuable library, rich in Elizabethan literature. He also accumulated a large collection of Hogarth prints, and his notes on the subject were incorporated in John Nichols’s *Genuine Works of Hogarth.* He walked from Hampstead to London every morning before seven o’clock, discussed Shake­spearian questions with his friend, Isaac Reed, and, after making his daily round of the booksellers’ shops, returned to Hampstead. He began his labours as a Shakespearian editor with reprints of the quarto editions of Shakespeare’s plays, entitled *Twenty of the Plays of Shakespeare . .* . (1766). Dr Johnson was im­pressed by the value of this work, and suggested that Steevens should prepare a complete edition of Shakespeare. The result, known as Johnson’s and Steevens’s edition, was *The Works of Shakespeare with the Corrections and Illustrations of Various Commentators* (10 vols., 1773), Johnson’s contributions to which were very slight. This early attempt at a variorum edition was revised and reprinted in 1778, and further edited in 1785 by Isaac Reed; but in 1793 Steevens, who had asserted that he was now a “ dowager-editor,” was persuaded by his jealousy of Edmund Malone to resume his labours. The definitive result of his researches was embodied in an edition of fifteen volumes. He made changes in the text sometimes apparently with the sole object of showing how much abler he was as an emendator than Malone, but his wide knowledge of Elizabethan literature stood him in good stead, and subsequent editors have gone to his pages for parallel passages from contemporary authors. His deficiencies from the point of view of purely literary criticism are apparent from the fact that he excluded Shakespeare’s sonnets and poems because, he wrote, “ the strong­est act of parliament that could be framed would fail to compel readers into their service.” In the twenty years between 1773 and 1793 he was less harmlessly engaged in criticizing his fellows and playing malicious practical jokes on them. Dr Johnson,who was one of his stanchest friends, said he had come to live the life of an outlaw, but he was generous and to a small circle