

ADDISON, THE HUMORIST.



HERE is not a name in the entire range of English literature to which so full and universal an appreciation has been given by posterity as to that of Addison. He had his critics in his day: he had, indeed, more than critics, and from one quarter at least has received in his breast the fiercest and sharpest sting which a friend estranged could put into poetic vengeance. But the burden even of contemporary voices was always overwhelmingly in his favor, and nowadays there is no one in the world, we believe, who has other than gentle words for the gentle writer—the finest critic, the finest gentleman, the most tender humorist, of his age. It is not only admiration, but a sort of personal affection with which we look back, detecting in all the bustling companies of that witty and depraved period his genial figure, with a delightful simplicity in the midst of all the formalism, and whole-heartedness among the conceits and pretensions, of the fops and the wits, the intriguing statesmen and busy conspirators, of an age in which public faith can scarcely be said to have existed at all. Addison is the very embodiment of that delightful gift of humor on which we pride ourselves so much as a specially English quality. That in its way his style is the perfection of English style is less dear and delightful to us than that what it conveys is the perfection of feeling. His art is the antipodes of that satirical art which allows human excellence only to gird at it, and insinuate motives which diminish or destroy. Addison, on the other hand, allows imperfections which his interpretation turns into something sweeter than virtue, and throws a delightful gleam of love and laughter upon the eccentricities and characteristic follies of individual nature. That he sees everything is one of the conditions of his genial forgiveness of all that is not mean, or base, or cruel. With these he makes no terms.

This most loved of English writers was the son of one of those English parsons who confuse our belief in the extremely unfavorable account of the condition of country clergymen given by both the graver and the lighter historians of the time. Neither Parson Adams in his virtue, nor Parson Trulliber in his grossness, nor Macaulay's keen and clear picture, nor Thackeray's fine, disrespectful studies of the chaplain

who marries the waiting-maid, seem to afford us any guidance to the nature of the household which the Rev. Launcelot Addison, after many wanderings and experiences, set up in the little parish of Milston in Wiltshire somewhere about the year 1670. Steele's description of it has, no doubt, the artificial form affected by the age, and sets it forth as one of those models of perfection, and examples to the world, which nowadays we are more disposed to distrust and laugh at than to follow. Dr. Addison had seen the world in no very brilliant or luxurious way. He had been chaplain at Dunkirk, and afterward at Tangiers among the Moors, upon which latter strange experience he wrote a book; and he rose afterward to be dean of Lichfield, a dignified clergyman. One of the brothers went to India, and attained to some eminence; the other was eventually, like Joseph, a fellow of Magdalen. They dispersed themselves in the world as the children of a clergyman might very well do at the present day, and it is evident belonged distinctly to the caste of gentlemen. The sons—or at least the son with whom we have specially to do, after sundry local schoolings, went to the Charterhouse, which he left at fifteen for Oxford, perhaps because of his unusual advancement, but more probably because the custom of the time sent boys earlier to the university, as is still the practice in Scotland. Addison was much distinguished in that elegant branch of learning, the writing of Latin verse, a kind of distinction which remains dear to the finest minds, in spite of all the remarks concerning its inutility, and the time wasted in acquiring the art, which the rest of the world has so largely indulged in. A copy of verses upon the accession of King William, written while he was still a very youthful scholar at Queen's College,—no more than seventeen,—got him his first promotion. The boy's verses came perhaps from some proud tutor at Queen's, boasting what could be done under the cupola in the High street,—finer than anything attempted in more distinguished seats of learning,—into the hands of the Provost of Magdalen, to the amazement and envy of that more learned corporation. There had been no election of scholars in the previous year, during the melancholy time when the college was embroiled with King James, and the courtly Quaker Penn had all the disturbed and troubled fellows under his heel; but now that freedom had returned with the revo-



ENGRAVED BY PETER AITKEN, FROM MEZZOTINT BY JOHN SMITH.

AFTER THE PAINTING BY SIR GODFREY KNELLER.

SIDNEY, EARL OF GODOLPHIN.

lution and the Heaven-sent William, there was room for a double number of distinguished poor demies. Dr. Lancaster of Magdalen decided at once that to leave such Latinity as that of the young author of these verses to a college never very great in such gifts would be a sin against his own, and young Addison was accordingly elected to all the privileges of a Magdalen demyship. The stranger may realize still in the quiet of the cloistered shades how the shy young student wandered in Addison's Walk, and pondered his verses, and formed the delicate wealth of speech which was to distinguish him from all his companions. He spent about ten years in his college, first as a student, and then as a fellow, in the position which, perhaps, is more ideal for a scholar than any other in Christendom. But the young man was not much more enlightened than the other young

men of his age, notwithstanding his genius at Latin verses, and that still finer genius which had not as yet come to utterance. He wrote an "Account of the Greatest English Poets," not much wiser than the school-boy essays of our own day which set Lord Tennyson and Mr. Browning down in their right places. Addison went further. He leaves out all mention of Shakspeare, and speaks of Cowley as a "mighty genius." He describes "the spacious times of great Elizabeth" as "a barbarous age," amused by "Old Spenser" with "long-spun allegories" and "dull morals," which have lost all power to charm an age of understanding. The youth, indeed, ran amuck among all the greatest names till we shiver at his temerity. But he knew better afterward, and, if he still condescended a little to his elders and betters, learned to love and comprehend them, too.

It would seem that he wavered for a time whether he should not take orders, a step necessary to retain his fellowship, and dedicate himself to the church, as was the wish of his father. The manner in which the question was decided is curiously characteristic of the age. The matter came to the ears of Charles Montague, afterward Lord Halifax, himself an elegant scholar, and at that time in office. He wrote to the authorities of Magdalen, begging that Addison might not be urged into holy orders, and in the mean time took more active measures to secure him for the state. Lord Somers was equally interested in the young man's career. Between them the two statesmen secured for him a pension of three hundred a year, on no pretense of work to be done or duty fulfilled, but merely that he might be able to prepare himself the better for the public service, and be thus at hand and ready when his work was wanted. Public opinion has risen up nowadays against any such arrangement, and much slighter efforts at patronage would now be denounced as a job over all England. And yet one wonders whether it was so profitless a proceeding as we think it. Addison was worth more than the money to England. To be sure, without the money he would still have been Addison; yet something of the mellow sweetness of humanity in him was, no doubt, due to this fostering of his youth.

He went abroad in 1699, and addressed himself in the first place to the learning of French, which he did slowly at Blois, without apparently gaining much enlightenment as to the state of France or the other countries which he visited in his prolonged tour. No doubt, with his pension and the income of his fellowship, Addison traveled like a young man of fortune and fashion in those times of leisure, with excellent introductions everywhere, seeing the best society, and the greatest men both in rank and letters. Boileau admired his Latin verses as much as the English statesmen did, and the young man went upon his way more and more convinced that Latin verses were the high road to fame. From France he went to Italy, making a classical pilgrimage. "Throughout," says Mr. Leslie Stephen, quaintly, "if we are to judge by his narrative, he seems to have considered the scenery as designed to illustrate his beloved poets."

When Addison returned home after four years of classical wanderings, it was to prospects sadly overcast. King William had died a year before, which had stopped his pension; Halifax was out of office, and all the hopes of public life, for which he had been training himself, seemed to drop as he came back. It is said that during the last year he had charge of a pupil; but there is no proof of the state-

ment, nor has the pupil ever been identified by name. An offer was made to him to accompany upon his travels a son of the Duke of Somerset, his services in that office to be paid by the present of a hundred guineas at the year's end, which did not seem to Addison an advantageous offer; but this, which came to nothing, is the only authentic reference to any possible "bear-leading" such as Thackeray refers to in "Esmond"; and fine as is the sketch made by that kindred humorist, he seems to exaggerate at once the poverty and the neglect into which for the moment Addison fell. He returned to England in 1703, being then thirty-one, full of every accomplishment, but with only his fellowship to depend upon. But if he carried a disappointed or despondent heart, he never made any moan on the subject, and, it is very likely, enjoyed his freedom and the happy sense of being at home like other young men. He seems to have been at once advanced to the membership of the Kit-Cat Club, which would supply him with the finest of company, and a center for the life which otherwise must have appeared as if it had come to a broken end. It was not long, however, that this period of neglect was suffered to last, and once more the transaction which elevated Addison to the sphere in which he passed the rest of his life is admirably characteristic of the period, and, alas! profoundly unlike anything that could happen to a young man of genius now.

We will not return again to any bewildering discussion of the Whigs and Tories of Queen Anne, but only say that Godolphin and Marlborough, those "great twin brethren" of the state, had come into the possession of England. The Lord Treasurer, who had everything in his hands at home, while his great partner fought and conquered abroad, was almost comically at a loss how to sound the trumpet of warlike success so as to excite the country, and, if possible, turn the heads of the discontented. He went to Halifax to ask where he could find what was wanted—a poet. So it happened that that day, all blazing in gold lace and splendor, the coach of the Chancellor of the Exchequer stopped before the little shop in the Haymarket over which the young scholar had his airy abode; and that great personage clambered up the long flights of stairs, carrying with him, very possibly, the patent of the appointment which was an earnest of what the powers that were could do for Addison. This was how the great poem of the "Campaign," that illustrious composition, was brought into being. Poems made to order seldom fulfil expectation, but in this case there was no disappointment. Godolphin and England alike were delighted, and Addison's life and success were at once secured, yet no one now, save as an illustration of his-

tory, would think of reading the "Campaign," though it served Addison well.

Two years later he was promoted to be one of the under-secretaries of state, and from that time languished no more in the cold shade of obscurity, where Halifax had upbraided the Government for leaving him. He was not a man born to linger there. Shy though he was, and little apt to put himself forward, this favorite of the muses—to use the phraseology of his time—was also the favorite of fortune. Everything that he touched thrived with him.

This event brought more than mere prosperity to the fortunate young man. If he had been already of note enough to belong to the Kit-Cat Club, with what a blaze of modest glory would he now appear!—not swelling in self-conceit, like so many of the wits; not full of silent passion, like the strange big Irish clergyman who pushed into the chattering company in the coffee-house, and astounded them with his masterful and arrogant ways; but always modest—never heard at all in a large company, opening out a little when the group dispersed and an audience fit but few gathered around him, but with one companion *half* divine. The one companion by and by became often that very same Irishman whose silent prowl about the room in which he knew nobody had amused all the luckier members. It was then that the "Travels in Italy" were published, while the fame of the "Campaign" was still warm; and Addison gave his new friend a copy inscribed to "Jonathan Swift, the most agreeable companion, the truest friend, and the greatest genius of his age." They were both in their prime—Swift thirty-eight, Addison five years younger, still young enough to hope for everything that could befall a man. Addison gave "his little senate laws" for many years in these convivial meetings, and all who surrounded him adored him. But Swift was never again so close a member of the little company. Politics, and the curious part which the Irish parson took in them, separated him from the consistent and moderate politician who acted faithfully with his party, and who was always true, whoever might be false. But Swift held fast to Addison so far, at least, as feeling was concerned. Over and over he repeated the sentiment, that "if he had a mind to be king he would hardly be refused."

In 1708 Addison lost his post as under-secretary by a change of the ministry, or rather of the minister, it being the habit in those days to form a government piecemeal, a Whig here, a Tory there, as favor or circumstances required, so that it was by no means needful that all should go out or come in together. But no sooner was the under-secretary deprived of one place than he obtained another, that of Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland—

the same office, we presume, as that which is now called Chief-Secretary for Ireland, though its seriousness and power are now so much greater. In those days there was no Irish people to deal with, however; only a very lively, contentious, pushing, and place-hunting community—the Protestant English-Irish, which, so far as literature and public knowledge go, has by mistake been accepted as the type of the Celt, a much darker and less simple character. The wild, mystic, morose, and often cruel nature of the native race, with its gleams of poetry, and dreams of fortune, has turned out a very different thing to reckon with. Addison's post was "very lucrative," we are told,—in fees and pieces of patronage, no doubt, for the income was only £2000 a year,—and he soon acquired an even greater popularity on the one side of the Channel than on the other. Something amiable and conciliatory must have rayed out of the man: otherwise it is curious to understand the popularity in brilliant and talkative Dublin of a stranger whose chief efforts in conversation were only to be accomplished *tête-à-tête*. But he had the foil of a detestable and detested chief—Wharton, whose corrupt and brutal character gave double acceptance to the Secretary's charm and goodness, and the Tories contended with the Whigs, says Swift, as to which should speak best of this favorite of fortune.

It was while Addison was in Ireland, thus gathering golden opinions, that an event occurred which was of the utmost importance to his reputation, so far, especially, as posterity was concerned. Among the little band of friends over whom he held a kind of genial sway, and who acknowledged his superiority with boundless devotion, was one who was more nearly his equal than any other of the band; a friend of youth, one of those erratic but generous natures whose love of excellence is almost rapturous, though they are unable themselves to keep up to the high level they approve. Steele can never be forgotten where Addison is honored. He had been at Charterhouse and at Oxford along with his friend, and no doubt it was a wonder among the reading men, in their earlier days, how it was that the correct, the polished, the irreproachable scholar of Magdalen, with his quiet ways, could put up with that gay scapegrace who was perpetually in trouble. But Addison was not a mere "spectator" so far as the friend of his youth was concerned. When he began to rise, there seems little reason to doubt that he pulled Steele up with him, introducing him to the notice of the fine people who in those days might make the fortune of a gentlemanly and clever adventurer, and that either by his own interest, or by that of one of his powerful friends, he procured him a place, and

started him in public life. Steele had already floated into literature, and whether it is true or not that Addison helped him in the concoction of one play at least, it is clear that the latter kept his purse and his heart well open to his friend, now a man about town, ruffling at the coffee-houses with the best, and full of that energy and readiness which so often strike out new ways of working, though it may require steadier heads to carry them out.

It was, however, while Addison was in Ireland that Steele was moved by the most important of these original impulses, an idea full, as it proved, of merit and practical use. Journalism was then in its infancy. A "News-Letter" or a "Flying Post"—a shabby broad-sheet containing the bulletin of a battle, a formal and brief notice of parliamentary proceedings, an account of some monstrous birth, as a child with two heads, or that perennial gooseberry which has survived into our own time, and an elaborate list of births, deaths, and marriages—was almost all that existed in the way of public record. The post to which Steele had been appointed was that of *Gazetteer*, which naturally led him to the consideration of such matters; and among the crowd of projects which worked together in his "barmy noddle," there suddenly surged uppermost the idea of a paper which should come out on the post days, the Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays which were, up to that time, the only days of communication with the country—a paper written after the fancy of the time, in itself a letter from the wits and the knowing persons in town, revealing not only the existing state of public affairs, but all those exquisite particulars of society which have always been the delight of country circles, and which were doubly sure to please at a time when society was governed by talk, when all public criticism was verbal, and the echoes of the wits in the coffee-houses were blown about on all the breezes. Steele saw at once what a thing it would be to convey these impressions at first hand, in a privileged "Tatler," direct to the houses of the gentry all over the country. Perhaps he did not perceive at first what a still finer thing it would be to have them served up with the foaming chocolate, or fragrant tea, at every breakfast in Mayfair.

Steele had gone on for some numbers before his new venture attracted the attention of Addison. He recognized whose the hand was from a classical criticism in the sixth number which he himself had made to Steele; and he must have been pleased with the idea, since he soon after appears as a coadjutor, sending his contributions from the Secretary's office in Dublin. There has been a great and prolonged controversy upon the respective merits of these two friends: some, and first among them Ma-

caulay, will have it that Addison had all the merit of the publication. "Almost everything good in the 'Tatler' was his," says the historian. But there are many who, despite Macaulay's great authority, find a certain difficulty in distinguishing Addison from Steele and Steele from Addison, and are inclined to find Steele as entertaining and as gifted as his friend. Indeed, we think in these early essays at least, it would be a mistake for the critic to risk his reputation on the superiority of Addison. He set up no higher standard than that which his friend had raised, but fell into the same humor, adding his contribution of social pictures with less force of moral generally, and with more delicacy of workmanship, but with no remarkable preëminence. The character of the publication changed gradually as the great new pen came into it; but whether by Addison's influence, or by the mere action of time and a sense of what suited the audience he had obtained,—which a soul so sympathetic as Steele's would naturally divine with readiness,—no one can tell. Gradually the news which at first had regularly filled a column dropped away. It had been, no doubt, well authenticated news, the freshest and best, as it came from the authorized hand of the *Gazetteer*; but either Steele got tired of supplying it, or a sense of the inexpediency of publishing anything which might displease his patrons and the Government convinced him that it was unnecessary.

The "Tatler" ended in January, 1711; the "Spectator" began in March of the same year. The one died only to be replaced by the other. It is said that Addison did not know of his friend's intention to cut the "Tatler" short, and it was he who was the chief agent in beginning the "Spectator." Therefore it may have been that the breach was only an impatience of Steele's, to which his slow, less impulsive, and more constant comrade could not permanently consent. No doubt Addison had by this time learned the advantage of such a mode of utterance, and felt how entirely it suited his own manner of work and constitution of mind. There is, perhaps, no book which is so characteristic of an epoch in history, and none which gives so clear a conception of the English world of the time. We sit and look on,—always amused, often instructed, while the delicate panorama unfolds before us,—and see everything pass—the fine coaches, the gentlemen on foot, the parsons in their gowns, the young Templars jesting in the doorways; but always with the little monologue going on which accompanies the movement, and runs off into a hundred byways of thought, sometimes serious, sometimes gay, often with no particular connection with the many-colored streams of passers-by, yet never obscuring our

sight of them as they come and go. Like other men, he takes it for granted that the fashion of his contemporaries is to go on forever. For posterity that smiling, keen observer takes no thought.

But of all the things that Addison did, there remains one preëminent creation which is his chief claim to immortality. "The Campaign" has disappeared out of literature; "Cato" is known only by a few much-quoted lines; the "Spectator" itself, though a work which "no gentleman's library can be without," dwells generally in a dignified retirement there, and is seldom seen on any table but the student's, though we are all supposed to be familiar with it: but Sir Roger de Coverley is the familiar friend of most people who have read anything at all, and the acquaintance by sight, if we may so speak, of everybody. There is no form better known in all literature. His simple rustic state, his modest sense of his own importance, his kind and genial patronage of the younger world, which would laugh at him if it were not overawed by his modesty and goodness, and which still sniggers in its sleeve at all those kind, ridiculous ways of his as he walks about in London, taken in on all sides, with his hand always in his purse, and his heart in its right place, and always familiar and delightful. We learn with a kind of shock that it was Steele who first introduced this perfect gentleman to the world, and can only hope that he was Addison's idea from the first, and that he did not merely snatch out of his friend's hands, and appropriate, a conception so entirely according to his own heart. To Steele, too, we are indebted for some pretty scenes in the brief history: for Will the Huntsman's wooing, which is the most delicate little enamel, and for the knight's own love-making, which, however, is pushed a little too near absurdity. But it is Addison who leads him forth among his country neighbors, and to the assizes, and meets the gipsies with him, and brings him up to town, carrying him to Westminster, and to Spring Gardens, in the wherry with the one-legged waterman, and to the play.

We have all met in later years a certain Colonel Newcome, who is very like Sir Roger, one of his descendants, though he died a bachelor. But the Worcestershire knight was the first of his lineage, and few are the gifted hands who have succeeded in framing men after his model. We seem to know Sir Roger from our cradle, though we may never even have read the few chapters of his history. This is the one infallible distinction of genius above all commoner endowments. Of all the actors in that stirring time Sir Roger remains the most living and real. The queen and her court are no more than shadows moving across the historic stage. Halifax, and Somers, and Harley, and even the

great Bolingbroke, what are they to us? Figures confused and uncertain, that appear and disappear.

We are not informed that the "Tatler" and the "Spectator," the real foundations of his fame, gave Addison any help in his career. That was assured by the "Campaign." He received his first post, that of "a commissionership with £200 a year," at once, in the end of 1704. In 1706 he became Under-Secretary. In 1708 his chief, Lord Sunderland, was dismissed, and Addison along with him; but he stepped immediately into the Irish Secretaryship. Two years afterward Addison, with his leaders, was once more out of office; but in 1714 they came triumphantly back, and he rose to the height of political elevation as Secretary of State, with a seat in the Cabinet. Though he did not retain this position long, on account of his failing health, he retired on a pension of £1500 a year. In 1711, at a period when he was supposed to be at a low ebb of fortune, in the cold shade of political opposition, he was able to buy the estate of Bilton, near Rugby, for which he paid £10,000 — which is not bad for a moment of misfortune. The success of the "Spectator," however, which was more his than Steele's (as the "Tatler" had been much more Steele's than Addison's), was apparently very considerable; Addison himself says, in an early number, that it had reached the circulation of 3000 copies a day. On a special occasion 14,000 copies are spoken of; and the passing of the Stamp Act, which destroyed many of the weaker publications of the time, did comparatively little harm to the "Spectator," which doubled its price without much diminishing its popularity. It had also what no other daily possessed, and very few periodicals of any time ever reach, the advantage of a permanent issue afterward in a succession of volumes, of which the first edition seems to have reached an issue of 10,000 copies. Fortunate writers! pleasant public!

The "Spectator" ended with the year 1712, having existed less than two years. Whether the authors had found their audience beginning to fail, or their inspiration, or, as is most likely had considered it wise, to forestall the possibility of either catastrophe, we are not informed. Almost immediately after the conclusion of this the greatest undertaking of his life, Addison plunged into what probably appeared to the weakness of the contemporary vision a much greater undertaking, the production of his tragedy "Cato," which made a commotion such as few plays did even at that period. It was partly as a political movement, to stir up the patriotism and love of liberty which were supposed to be failing under the dominion of the Tories, suspected of all manner of evil designs, that his Whig friends urged Addison to bring out the great play which had been simmering in his

brain since his travels, and which had no doubt been read in detached acts and pieces of declamation to all his literary friends. These friends had received several additions in the mean time, especially in the person of Pope, who was still young enough to be proud of Addison's notice, yet remarkable enough to be intrusted with the composition of a prologue to the great man's work. Swift, notwithstanding the coldness which had ensued between them on his change of politics, was still sufficiently in Addison's friendship to be present at a rehearsal, and the whole town on both sides was moved with excitement and expectation. On the first night, "Our house," says Cibber, "was in a manner invested, and entrance demanded by twelve o'clock at noon; and before one it was not wide enough for many who came too late for their places."

Of this great tragedy, which turned the head of London, and which the two great political parties vied with each other in applauding, there are only a few lines virtually existing nowadays. To be sure, it is in print, with the rest of Addison's works, to be read by whosoever will. But very few avail themselves of that privilege.

The end of a man's life is seldom so interesting as the beginning. After he has achieved all of which he is capable, our interest is more usually a sad than a cheerful one. Addison made in 1716 what seems to have been an ambitious marriage, though he was not the man, one would think, to care for the rank which gave his wife always a distinct personality and another name than his. The Countess of Warwick was, however, it would appear, a beautiful woman. She had the charge of a troublesome boy, for whom, no doubt, she would be eager to have the advice of such a man as Mr. Addison, whom all the world respected and admired. The little house at Chelsea (the house was called Sanford Manor House, and was figured some years ago against its present doleful background of gasometers in *THE CENTURY*) which that statesman had acquired, and where he delighted to withdraw from the noise and contention of town, was within reach through the fields of Holland House, the residence of Lady Warwick.

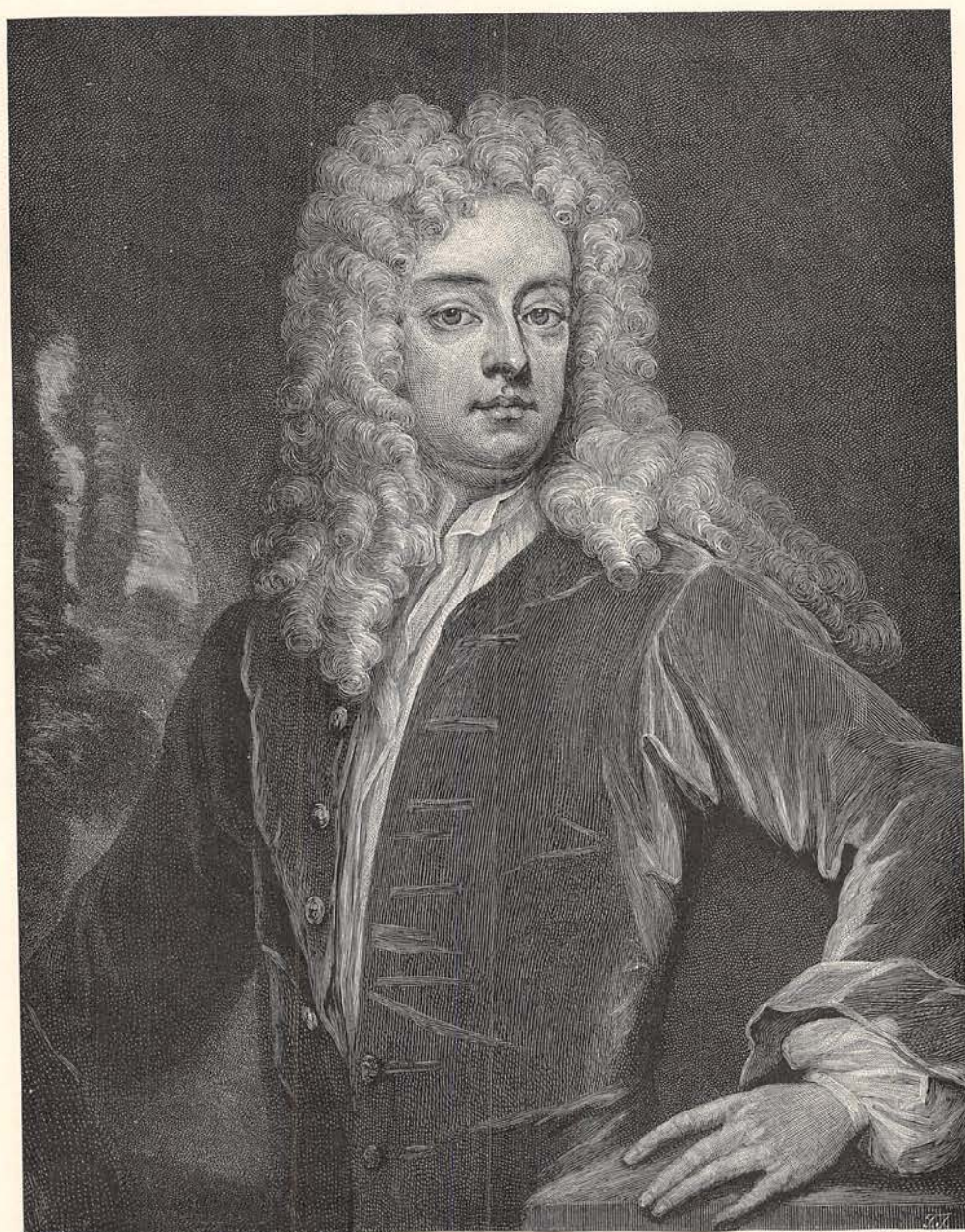
Addison was forty, and her ladyship had been a widow for fifteen years; but there is no reason for concluding that there was no romance in the wedding, which, however, is always a nervous sort of business under such circumstances. There was the boy, too, to be taken into account, who evidently was not a nice boy, but a tale-bearer, who did not love his mother's faithful lover, and made mischief when he could. There seems no evidence, however, that the marriage was unhappy, beyond a malicious note

of Pope's, which all the commentators have enlarged. The poor women who have the misfortune to be married to men of genius fare badly at the hands of the critics. There seems no warrant whatever for Thackeray's picture of the vulgar vixen whom he calls Mrs. Steele. Steele's letters exist, but not those of poor Prue, who was so sadly tried in her husband; and so that suffering woman has to suffer over again in her reputation after her life's trouble is over. It is very unfair to the poor women who have left no champions behind.

The end of our "Spectator's" life, was, however, clouded with more than one unfortunate quarrel, the greatest of which has left its sting behind to quiver in Addison's name as long as Pope and he are known. It is neither necessary nor edifying to enter at length into the bitterness of the past. Pope fancied himself aggrieved in various ways by the man who had warmly acknowledged his youthful merits, and received him (though so much his senior in years and fame) on a footing of equality, and who all through never spoke an ill-natured word of the waspish little poet.

Addison did not end his periodical work with the "Spectator." He took up that familiar character once again for a short time, long enough to produce an additional volume,—the eighth,—in which he had no longer the help of his own vivacious companion. The series is full of fine things, but we are not sure, though Macaulay thinks otherwise, that we do not a little miss the light and shade which Steele helped to supply. And other publications followed. Steele himself set up the "Guardian," in which Addison had little share; and various others after that in which the latter had no share at all. And Addison himself had a "Freeholder," in which he said some notable things; but these are all dead and gone, like so much of the contemporary furnishings of the age. Students find and read them in the old, collected editions; but life and recollection have gone out of them. Perhaps his own time even had by then got as much as it could enjoy and digest out of Addison. We, at least, have done so after nearly two centuries, and are capable of no more.

Thackeray has a little scoff at him as a man without passion. But Addison's fine and meditative genius had no need of passion. He is the "Spectator" of humankind. He had little temptation in his own calm nature to descend into the arena: the honors of the fight came to him somehow without any soil of the actual engagement. But it is not his part to fight. He makes no pretense of any inclination that way. He is the looker-on, and, as such, more valuable than a thousand men-at-arms.



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