

## "HE WHO WOULD REAP WELL, MUST SOW WELL."

and not being very deeply impressed by his own reasoning and pious examples, as a counterpoise he wrote a comedy, *The Funeral, or Grief à la Mode*, which was very successful. Steele had dedicated the *Christian Hero* to his colonel, Lord Cutta, who appointed him his secretary, and promised him a captain's command in the volunteers. It was not long, however, before Steele found that in exchanging the pen or the sword he had made a mistake; and he lost no time in following his more congenial pursuits. He wrote a number of plays, which were very successful; and through the popularity thus obtained he secured an appointment in the Stamp-Office, London, which he resigned on being elected member for Stockbridge.

His parliamentary career, however, was not brilliant, for he was expelled the House for writing two alleged libels, called respectively *The Englishman*, and *The Crisis*, "which expulsion," says Lord Mahon, "was a fierce and most unwarrantable stretch of party violence."

Steele had married a lady, who, dying shortly after their marriage, left him an estate in Barbadoes. He married again, and his second wife ("Molly Scurlough") added to his fortune. But, despite the care of his wife, who tried to keep a tight rein upon him, Steele lived in the most extravagant manner, and was never free from pecuniary difficulties. His letters to his wife, of which four hundred have been preserved, show that he was familiar with duns and bailiffs, with misery, folly, and repentance. As an illustration of the straits his extravagance brought him to, the following is related:—

Steele had one day invited a number of distinguished guests to dinner, and startled them by the profuseness of his domestic arrangements, and the large number of livery servants apparently engaged to do honour to so important a gathering. When the wine had circulated freely, and the restraints of sobriety had fled, one of the guests asked somewhat anxiously how ever he managed to maintain so many servants with his small income. Steele confessed they were too numerous, and that he had no objection to get rid of them. "Then why not discharge them?" was the reply. "Why," said Steele, "to tell the truth, these fellows are all bailiffs, who have seized upon my household goods; and, as I could not get rid of them, I thought I would get a little honour from their residence here, and so decked them in livery."

Of course the friends laughed heartily; and, all being in a good humour, they passed a subscription amongst themselves, and paid the debt of their unfortunate host, and so dismissed a large number of his unwelcome retainers.

It is also related that Addison lent Steele, on his bond, one thousand pounds; and when the time came for payment, the bond not being repaid, an execution was put in force, and the money was recovered. But Steele was pleased to say that Addison only intended this as a friendly warning against his style of living, and "taking it as he believed it to be meant, he met him afterwards with the same gaiety of temper he had always shown."

The accession of George I. was a fortunate circumstance for Steele; for he not only received the honour of knighthood, but was appointed to a post of some importance at Hampton Court; and, what was far more congenial, was appointed Governor of the Royal Company of Comedians. And when the Rebellion of 1715 placed a number of forfeited estates at the disposal of the Government, Steele was appointed a member of the Commission for Scotland. In this capacity, in 1717, he visited Edinburgh, and while there he is said on one occasion to have given a splendid entertainment to a multitude of decayed tradesmen and beggars collected from the streets!

Steele appears to have received fair remuneration for his literary work; and on the publication of his *Conscious Lovers*, in 1722, the king, to whom it was dedicated, gave him £500. But he was always poor, because always lavish, scheming, and unbusiness-like—but nothing could depress the elasticity of his spirits. Being always engaged in some unsuccessful scheme or other, and with labours both benevolent and lavish, he wasted his regular income in anticipation of a greater, until absolute pecuniary distress was the result. Shortly before his death he retired into Wales, solely for the purpose of retrenching his affairs, so that he might pay his creditors. But it was too late, and before he could carry his honest intentions into effect, death overtook him, and enfeebled by dissipation and excess he died, on September 1, 1729, at the age of fifty-eight.

It is as a witty and polished writer that Steele is best known, and especially as the originator of the *Tatler*, a paper in which Addison and some of the best writers of the time remarked on the politics of the age in which they lived. The *Tatler*, and *Guardian*, also received contributions from Steele's pen; and although the state of things which produced these works has passed away, yet these essays still rank as a worthy part of the standard literature of England.

### ADVICE LONG REMEMBERED!

(1.)—THE REV. ROWLAND HILL paid a visit to an old friend a few years before his death, who said to him:—

"Mr. Hill, it is just sixty-five years since I first heard you preach, and I remember your text and a part of your sermon. You told us that some people were very squeamish about the delivery of different ministers who preached the

same Gospel. You said: 'Supposing you were attending to hear a will read where you expected a legacy to be left you, would you employ the time when it was reading in criticising the manner in which the lawyer read it? No, you would not; you would be giving all ear to hear if anything was left you, and how much it was. That is the way I would advise you to hear the Gospel.'

This was excellent advice, and was well worth remembering.

### THE ROMAN CATHOLIC RELIEF BILL!

(13.)—At the time of passing the Catholic Emancipation Bill, Lady Clerk wrote to Lord Eldon congratulating him upon the energetic stand he had made to prevent the Bill becoming law. His answer was laconic, and to the following effect:—

"Dear Molly Dear,—I am happy to find you approve of my endeavours to oppose the Catholic Relief Bill. I have done what I thought my duty. May God forgive me if I have done wrong, and may God forgive my opponents (if he can). Yours affectionately, ELDON."

Whilst the Bill was being discussed in the House of Commons, a "war of petitions" went on, and it is supposed that Lord Eldon presented in the House of Lords no less than one thousand against the measure; and in presenting them, he made many speeches to explain and enforce the sentiments of the petitioners. On one occasion he said:—

"The petition which he presented was from the Company of Tailors at Glasgow. Lord Lyndhurst (aside, in a stage whisper, while sitting on the woolsack): 'What! do the tailors trouble themselves about such measures?' Lord Eldon: 'No wonder; you can't suppose that tailors like turn-coats.' (A laugh.)

On another day, after presenting an immense number of petitions, Lord Eldon said:—

"I now hold in my hand, my Lords, another, which I do not know how to treat. It is a petition signed by a great many ladies. I am not aware whether it be any precedent for admitting ladies as petitioners to your Lordships' House; but I will search the Journals, and see whether they have ever been prevented from remonstrating against measures which they consider injurious to the Constitution." Lord King: "Will the noble and learned Earl inform the House, as it may materially influence your Lordships' decision, whether this petition expresses the sentiments of young or of old ladies?" Lord Eldon: "I cannot answer the noble Lord as to the exact age of these petitioners; but of this I am sure, that there are many women, both young and old, who possess more knowledge of the Constitution, and more common sense, than some descendants of Lord Chancellors." (A laugh.)

The Lord King (nephew of John Locke, the philosopher), to whom this sarcasm was applied, was a descendant of the first Lord King, who commenced life as an apprentice to his father, a grocer at Exeter; and who by the force of his abilities raised himself to the high position of Lord Chancellor of England. He died in the year 1734, leaving four sons, who, singularly enough, all inherited the title in succession.

### THE WRONG PERSON!

(22.)—THE following anecdote is narrated of MADAME DE STAEL, the celebrated French authoress, in that most interesting work, *Lord Conesbury's Life and Times*:—

"Madame de Stael made it a point never to waive any of the ceremonial which she thought properly belonged to her rank. She always took care to have the gully watch outside turned out whenever she approached a position, and never failed to accept all the honours of literature. Following out her custom in this respect, she had written to announce her approach to a post resident at Venice, whose name happened to be identical with that of the principal butcher of the city. By some blundering of the postal authorities Madame la Baronne's letter was delivered to Signor —, the butcher, instead of to Signor —, the poet; and the former, anxious to secure so distinguished a customer, hastened to his arrival, and lost not a minute in paying his respects to the Baroness. She, of course, was prepared to receive the homage of genius, *en cour plénière*, and her friends were convened to witness the meeting. Neither of the high saluting parties knew the person of the other, and it was some time before an explanation came about, the ridiculous character of which it is easier to conceive than to describe!"

Madame de Stael has been called the greatest female writer of all ages and countries. She was certainly the most distinguished for talents among the women of her age. Surrounded by a happy, domestic circle, and esteemed by all, she died in Paris, in the year 1817.