STEELE'S TATLER AND THE REFORMATION OF MANNERS

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STEELE'S TATLER AND THE REFORMATION OF MANNERS

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PREFACE

Published thrice weekly, the Tatler first appeared on London streets on April 12, 1709, and achieved a run of 271 issues, the last number being distributed on January 2, 1711. In this periodical Richard Steele, editor and chief contributor, devoted his space to news, entertainment, and expostulation, including in it accounts of the recent developments in the War of the Spanish Succession, brief and informal literary criticism, a taste of scandal through sketches of London society delivered under fictitious names, and advice on polite dress, behavior, and conversation. In addition, Steele waged a campaign against gambling and duelling and wrote briefly on any other subject that crossed his mind.

Past criticism of the Tatler has inclined to dwell on the importance of the paper in the history of English journalism, to evaluate it as the forerunner of the Spectator, and to note in it the beginning of the literary partnership between Joseph Addison and Richard Steele. The reformatory character of the Tatler has been cited but glossed over, critics usually stating only that the Tatler proscribed the limits of proper behavior for men and women, delved into the problems of love and marriage, and campaigned against duelling and gambling.

In reality, the importance of the content of the Tatler lies in its reformatory character, and since through this periodical Steele did
influence contemporary manners and morals, there is a need to ascertain specifically what behavior he censured, what behavior he advocated, and the principles underlying his judgments.

This study proposes to fill the vacuum with detail about Steele's efforts at the reformation of manners in the Tatler by determining against what behavior Steele directed his wit, how he proposed to reform what he found objectionable, and the degree of consistency in his views. The Tatler operated under no over-all plan of organization, Steele merely writing whatever he felt inspired to write; consequently the complex problem of assembling and categorizing his dicta had to be met before any conclusions could be drawn about the nature of his pronouncements; therefore, only the investigation of the first 136 issues has been undertaken, the analysis of the entire 271 issues being too vast a project for a master's thesis. It has here been assumed that in the second half of the Tatler Steele did not radically alter any opinion expressed in the first half but only augmented his original counsel with additional evidence and detail.
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

On April 12, 1709, under the pseudonym of Isaac Bickerstaff, Richard Steele published the first issue of his Tatler, setting the tone of the entire paper by drolly promising that it would appear each Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday for the instruction needed by "politic persons, who are so public-spirited as to neglect their own affairs to look into transactions of state. . . . these gentlemen, for the most part being persons of strong zeal, and weak intellects," and for "entertainment to the fair sex, in honour of whom . . . [was] invented the title of this paper." The first issue laid out the general arrangement of the paper and presented broad categories of topics to be discussed. Items concerning "gallantry, pleasure, and entertainment" were to be dated from White's Chocolate-house, poetry from Will's Coffee-house, learning from the Grecian, news from Saint James's Coffee-house, and a miscellany from Bickerstaff's apartment.

\[1\] Richard Steele and others, The Tatler, Vols. I and II of The British Essayists, edited by Robert Lyman, 30 vols. (London, 1827), No. 1, p. 11. Subsequent references will be to this edition of The Tatler and will give the volume number, the number of the issue, and the page number of this edition.
Bickerstaff was a name already solidly established in the minds of English citizens by a pamphlet which had appeared in the early part of 1708 bearing the inscription "Predictions for the year 1708, wherein the month, and the day of the month, are set down, the persons named, and the great actions and events of next year particularly related, as they will come to pass. Written to prevent the people of England from being further imposed on by vulgar Almanack-Makers. By Isaac Bickerstaff, Esq." Bickerstaff, in reality Jonathan Swift, proceeded to offer as evidence of the incompetence and ignorance of astrologers the prediction, hitherto unannounced, that John Partridge, almanac-maker, would die on March 29 of a fever, implying that since Partridge could not foresee his own future, he certainly was incapable of predicting anyone else's. Swift later duly reported the details of the demise of Partridge and succeeded so well in convincing the public of Partridge's death that the poor victim was moved to publish an angry refutation of Swift's statements in his almanac for 1709. Swift calmly replied to Partridge's denial, presenting several ridiculous arguments as proof of Partridge's end: that upon reading the astrologer's denial in his almanac, several persons had been heard to exclaim that 'They were

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sure no man alive ever writ such damned stuff as this"; that Mrs.
Partridge often had been heard to lament that her husband "had neither
life nor soul in him"; that only the dead conversed with the devil, as the
neighbors were sure Mr. Partridge did in order to tell fortunes; and
that he, Bickerstaff, would not have been likely to be so careless as
to begin his predictions with a false statement. ³ Thus the name of
Bickerstaff came to be synonymous with waggish wit.

Steele took advantage of Bickerstaff's reputation to predispose
the public to favor his paper and piqued its interest by promising,
among other things, to write about the new beauties and wits "as also
in whose places they are advanced: for this town [London] is never
good-natured enough to raise one without depressing another." ⁴ But
he had in mind a more serious and noble objective than the entertainment
of the British populace by wit and gossip, believing that "the end of all
public papers ought to be the benefit and instruction, as well as the
diversion of the readers," ⁵ and he presented an excellent argument
to support his contention that many were the people who needed instruction:
The present grandeur of the British nation might make us
expect, that we should rise in our public diversions, and
manner of enjoying life, in proportion to our advancement

³Ibid., pp. 159-164, 288. ⁴The Tatler, Vol. I, No. 4, p. 27.
⁵Ibid., No. 38, p. 219.
in glory and power. Instead of that, survey this town, and you will find rakes and debauchees are your men of pleasure; thoughtless atheists and illiterate drunkards call themselves freethinkers; and gamsters, banterers, biters, swearers, and twenty new-born insects more, are, in their several species, the modern men of wit. 6

Being willing enough to offer instruction to the delinquent, Isaac proclaimed himself a one-member "Society for Reformation of Manners," seemingly especially intent on reforming the manners of the upper class, who, he felt, had an obligation to provide examples of praiseworthy conduct for their inferiors. Taking as his theme the assumption that "the greatest evils in human society are such as no law can come at," 7 Steele did not scruple to convert by fear of publicity those who would not be converted by reason, declaring that it would be "a very moral action to find a good appellation for offenders, and to turn them into ridicule under feigned names." 8

Steele's avowed purpose in writing the Tatler was "to expose the false arts of life, to pull off the disguises of cunning, vanity, and affectation, and to recommend a general simplicity in . . . dress, . . ."

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6Ibid., No. 12, p. 77. The Whig party to which Steele belonged strongly supported the war.

7Ibid., No. 61, p. 342.

8Ibid.
discourse, and . . . behavior."\textsuperscript{9} Disgusted by the prevalence in English society of "human nature . . . distorted from its natural make by affectation, humour, custom, misfortune, or vice,"\textsuperscript{10} Steele called for a turning to reason and moderation and in the name of the clever Isaac Bickerstaff dryly announced that even as certain families and individuals enjoyed patents for medicines and processes, the Bickerstaffs possessed the exclusive right to pry into the private lives of Englishmen to ferret out vice and virtue, that privilege having been accorded the family legally by virtue of the marriage of a Bickerstaff male to the daughter of a famous jester of the past century.\textsuperscript{11}

The Bickerstaffian right was a handy instrument indeed for a reformer, and in Steele's hands it ruthlessly exposed pretentiousness, worthlessness, and vice wherever he found them. Naturally enough, since those who were the objects of Isaac's investigations did not always appreciate his admirable purpose, he often had to rebuke them for their blatant disregard of his admonitions. Being perplexed by how to deal with the impenitent, Isaac had also to contend with people of such hypersensitive consciences that they mistakenly imagined themselves to be the culprits described in the Tatler. Steele was very much concerned about injuring the innocent, but he defended his policy of public censure.

\textsuperscript{9\textit{Ibid.}} \textsuperscript{10\textit{Ibid., No. 29, p. 170.}} \textsuperscript{11\textit{Ibid., No. 9, p. 60.}}
by maintaining that since all evildoers in the Tatler sketches were exposed under fictitious names, no particular person could be identified as the original of any offender without a statement from a witness to the crime or the confession of the guilty party. To the argument that Isaac had no right to reprove his social betters, Steele replied that no man could be above being blamed for a sin which he had not been above committing.  

Not only major vices but also petty faults came under the scrutiny of Isaac's sharp eye, and in order to guard against satirizing anyone unjustly, Steele formulated a general principle for determining fit objects of satire, saying that

no man ought to be ridiculed for any imperfection, who does not set up for eminent sufficiency in that way wherein he is defective. Thus cowards, who would hide themselves by an affected terror in their mien and dress; and pedants, who would show the depth of their knowledge by a supercilious gravity, are equally the objects of laughter. Not . . . for their want of courage, or weakness of understanding; but that they seem insensible of their own place in life, and unhappily rank themselves with those whose abilities, compared to their defects, make them contemptible.

Despite his circumspect use of satire and his policy of impartial divulgence of error, Steele found himself accused "of being moved rather by party than opinion." To the charges of self-interest brought against him, Steele replied,

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I really have acted in these cases with honesty, and am concerned it should be thought otherwise: for wit, if a man had it, unless it be directed to some useful end, is but a wanton frivolous quality. 14

Having rejected amusement as the sole purpose of his writings, Steele worked to the end that the Tatler might decry the excesses of the day and proffer simplicity, intelligence, and virtue as essential principles of polite conduct.

The Tatler, therefore, was meant to reform English society, but it was also meant to sell, and since most people seem to bear an antipathy toward being told that they ought not to be doing whatever they are doing, it is very likely that the existence of the Tatler would have been of brief duration had not Steele made his criticism palatable by making it witty. Several characters employed by Steele as commentators on current behavior and several metaphors and devices were so effective that he used them over and over throughout the first 136 issues of the paper.

One of his happiest schemes for combining wit and expostulation was suggested to him by the Bickerstaff-Partridge affair, in which Jonathan Swift had declared dead an old quack astrologer who was preying on gullible individuals. The incident had been laughed about all over London, and Steele capitalized on the public's familiarity with it to support his contention that "none but a useful life . . . is any life at all." 15

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14 Ibid., preface, p. 9.  
15 Ibid., No. 96, p. 165.
no life at all, of course, being equivalent to death. Thus, in the first
issue of the Tatler, Steele announced his intention of publishing bills of
mortality on which would be listed the names of all persons who were
not living, and therefore dead, by virtue of their making no useful con-
tribution to society. It was a theme which was to recur throughout the
first 136 issues of the paper as Steele exploited its possible variations
and expanded it to include a company of undertakers anxious to enlarge
its business and to remove a health hazard from London by burying
those dead persons who were still stubbornly walking about. The ranks
of the dead were large, for Steele included in them

all persons, of what title or dignity soever, who bestow most
of their time in eating and drinking, to support that imaginary
existence of theirs, which they call life; or in dressing and
adorning those shadows and apparitions, which are looked upon
by the vulgar as real men and women. In short, whoever re-
sides in the world without having any business in it, and
passes away an age without thinking on the errand for which
he was sent hither, is... a dead man to all intents and pur-
poses. ... The living are only those that are some way or
other laudably employed in the improvement of their own
minds, or for the advantage of others... 16

This definition of the dead included almost all of fashionable society,
whom Steele further offended by saying that "of all the vanities under
the sun, I confess that of being proud of one's birth is the greatest,"17
further declaring that a man's actions, rather than his birth, should

16Ibid., p. 166.  
17Ibid., Vol. I, No. 11, p. 73.
determine his worth, the only truly vulgar people being those who acted beneath the stations to which by chance they had been born. Such opinions were heresy to the grand ladies and aristocratic gentlemen of England, whose chief business in life was to entertain themselves.

A method of bringing subjects before the public for dissection and ridicule which Steele found particularly effective and one that he eventually combined with his metaphor about the living death of uselessness was that of holding an imaginary trial in which all persons accused of violating his dicta were brought to trial, Isaac Bickerstaff, of course, presiding over the affair. The court scene gave Steele the opportunity of exactly expressing his opinions without seeming to be didactic, for he so exaggerated the dress and mannerisms of the defendants that they were ridiculous, and the reader could not help being entertained instead of offended by Steele's moralizing. Stubborn offenders could escape court trial unmolested by paying Isaac a fine to continue to act as they pleased, the idea of issuing licenses to wear articles of apparel or to indulge in customs which Isaac had railed against as being affected or dandified having originated in No. 30, where Isaac inserted a notice that people in bizarre clothes would have to obtain a license from him to wear them or take off the offending apparel. 

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18 Ibid., Vol. II, No. 69, p. 41.
Later on, Steele combined the idea of the court trial with the metaphor of death to underline his conviction that much of the dress, as well as many of the customs and amusements of his time, was vain, trivial, affected, frivolous, or worthless. In No. 99 he began to use the satire of the living dead extensively, introducing in that issue a letter from some undertakers, the Company of Upholders, who complained that the corpses walking around London were refusing to be buried and that their refusal constituted a health hazard and a threat to the well-being of the nation's economy—the morticians, coffin-makers, and sextons being in danger of losing their jobs from a lack of business. The undertakers desired authorization from Isaac to go out and forcibly bury the dead. Bickerstaff replied that because his remonstrances to the defunct had had little success in reviving them, he would indeed commission the living to bury them. Isaac's decision to have the dead buried with or without their consent led to a hilarious contest between the morticians and the dead to see whether they would or would not be buried. The dispute between the two parties provided Steele with a clever ruse by which to ridicule any element of eighteenth century English life of which he did not approve, and he made good use of it. At first Steele printed in the Tatler letters purportedly from dead people who desired to present evidence to Isaac that they were alive and thus escape
burial by the upholders, but later Steele hit upon the idea of having the morticians bring persons they judged to be dead into court, where Isaac ruled on the condition of each defendant after weighing the evidence in each case. Regarding the lady who asked to be declared living by virtue of having performed a dance in front of several people, Isaac ruled that her petition would be granted only if she could prove that she could make a pudding, thus illustrating his theory that only people who were useful were alive. 21

Another metaphor employed by Steele in the Tatler consisted of equating disregard of reason and virtue with madness. The idea that any man who cultivated affectation, vanity, indolence, or any of the other vices of the age was mad first appeared in No. 125, where Steele cited Cicero as an authority for his contention that unreasonable behavior was demented behavior. Mentioning the prevalence of illogical conduct in England, Steele declared that neither its widespread existence nor its harmlessness negated the essentially insane character of such behavior and that a man or woman who entertained an exalted opinion of his own worth was no less ready for Bedlam than a person who imagined himself to be royalty. As in the case of the metaphorically defunct, Steele proposed a scheme to rid England of madmen: to put those whose

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20 Ibid., No. 106, p. 211.
behavior indicated their insanity into a building he recommended be erected to house them. The building, a square, was to be made by adding three sides to the asylum at Moorfields, and it was to have over the doors figures such as those adorning a college, except that they were to be appropriate to the function of the edifice, depicting examples of lunacy fashionable in London,

as of an envious man gnawing his own flesh; a gamester pulling himself by the ears, and knocking his head against a marble pillar; a covetous man warming himself over a heap of gold; a coward flying from his own shadow, and the like. 22

Having proposed a building to house the insane, Steele then invited all Tatler readers to help him with his project by bringing in all maniacs they found on the streets, such as

any politician whom they shall catch raving in a coffee-house, or any free-thinker whom they shall find publishing his deliriums, or any other person who shall give the like manifest signs of a crazed imagination; and I do at the same time give this public notice to all the madmen about this great city, that they may return to their senses with all imaginable expedition, lest if they should come into my hands, I should put them into a regimen which they would not like. . . . 23

In No. 127 Steele continued his discussion of madness, this time emphasizing the kinship of pride and madness by showing that most of the

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22 Ibid., No. 125, p. 288.

23 Ibid., p. 289.
inmates of Moorfields were suffering from delusions of grandeur which
 differed very little from those entertained by some of England's best
citizens.  

Another weapon Steele employed in his battle to reform society
was letters, at least one of which appeared in almost every issue of
the Tatler. The letters printed in the Tatler were written about a wide
variety of subjects; some asked Isaac for advice, especially in matters
of the heart, and some offered him advice. Steele confessed in No. 91
that he was occasionally guilty of composing his own epistles but pro-
tested to a skeptical reader that some of them were genuine. It is
no wonder that Steele sometimes wrote letters to himself, for the letters
in the Tatler served a variety of purposes: they provided a convenient
method of broaching subjects for discussion, they offered Steele an
opportunity to display his wit, and they, by agreeing with Steele, created
the illusion of public acceptance of his opinions.

Another device Steele used to lend variety to the presentation of
his satire was the character of Jenny Distaff, half-sister to Isaac, who
first appeared in the Tatler in No. 10. By occasionally having her write
an issue when her brother was supposedly engaged in other business,

24 Ibid., No. 127, p. 294.

Letters to the Tatler and Spectator (Austin, 1959), pp. 4-29.
Steele was able to present a woman's viewpoint of certain matters, particularly those dealing with love, marriage, or the behavior of men, and by having Isaac frequently refer to her in the paper, Steele was able to bring up the subject of women for comment naturally and easily.

In addition to Jenny and Isaac, Steele frequently employed another character as his mouthpiece in the Tatler: a spirit named Pacolet, whom Steele appointed as a sort of guardian angel to Isaac. Being a spirit and therefore incorporeal, Pacolet was able to visit great people unseen and to make reports to Isaac. His revelations and Isaac's reflections on them provided an excellent method of reproving and satirizing the great of the world. Steele's explanation of Pacolet's former existence as a mortal and of the manner of his becoming a spirit humorously but pointedly denounced the treatment of children in wealthy families, where the paternity of a child often was doubtful and where a mother frequently preferred keeping her figure to feeding her baby. In such households infants were given over to a motley assembly of wet nurses and inept servants for care; quite naturally, babies did not always survive the callous treatment they received. One of the victims of that system of child care, said Steele, was Pacolet, whose account of the month he spent on earth as a baby included how he was dosed, frightened, handed for care to inexperienced servants, suckled by a woman who almost starved him by paying more attention to the footman than him, and
drowned by a philosopher who was trying to demonstrate his theory about the efficacy of cold baths. Although the death of Pacolet differed from that endured by indolent, self-centered people, nevertheless his demise, like theirs, resulted from wrong living.

Thus, in the Tatler essays, Richard Steele pronounced judgment on contemporary manners and morals in the guise of three different individuals: Isaac Bickerstaff, Isaac's half-sister, Jenny Distaff, and his guardian spirit, Pacolet. In addition, Steele employed letters to express his opinions, sometimes using those sent to him by readers and sometimes composing his own, and he created two unforgettable satirical devices with which he lashed society: death as the metaphor for indolence and affectation and madness as the metaphor for pride.

\[26\text{Ibid.},\text{ Vol. I, No. 15, p. 94.}\]
CHAPTER II

THE MANNERS OF MEN

Steele championed simplicity and naturalness in an age when perfume-handkerchiefed coxcombs, energetically gesturing with ornate canes they did not need, strutted London streets wearing embroidered suits with ridiculously long pockets and a superabundance of buttons, red stockings, and red-heeled shoes. Artificiality was the vogue, and Steele found that the majority of the people around him had given themselves over to it: they pranced, and they posed; they simpered and lisped and flirted and sent billet-doux by the ream; they talked loud, argued over trifles, settled their disputes with duels, and callously staked whole fortunes on the outcome of a game of cards. There was hardly a genuine emotion or a grain of common sense to be found in the whole of London society. Steele deplored the situation and determined to alter it—to make good breeding and intelligent, sober behavior popular by making its antithesis to appear as ridiculous as it really was. To satirize the absurd dress, mannerisms, and behavior of his contemporaries, he instituted a feature in the Tatler wherein he described and named the characters he daily met. Employing London jargon for the names of the personalities he sketched, he acridly and unforgottably
delineated a "Dapper," a "Rake," a "Very Pretty Gentleman," and a host of other characters commonly seen in eighteenth century London. An investigation of the description given of each of these characters and of the miscellaneous references to them and their types of behavior throughout the first 136 issues of the Tatler discloses much information about Steele's opinion of what constituted objectionable and laudatory conduct; the personality types are therefore of great value in a study of what Steele desired to reform through his journal.

The first paragraph of No. 21 introduced this feature to Tatler readers:

A gentleman has writ to me out of the country a very civil letter, and said things which I suppress with great violence to my vanity. There are many terms in my narrative which he complains want explaining; and has therefore desired that, for the benefit of my country readers, I would let him know what I mean by a Gentleman, a pretty Fellow, a Toast, a Coquet, a Critic, a Wit, and all other appellations of those now in the gayer world, who are in possession of these several characters; together with an account of those who unfortunately pretend to them. ¹

The first definition presented a highly original opinion of what constituted a gentleman in that the primary requisite for a gentleman was declared to be a steadfastly inoffensive manner:

It is generally thought, that warmth of imagination, quick relish of pleasure, and a manner of becoming it, are the most essential qualities for forming this sort of man.

But any one that is much in company will observe, that the height of good breeding is shewn rather in never giving offence, than in doing obliging things: thus he that never shocks you, though he is seldom entertaining, is more likely to keep your favour, than he who often entertains, and sometimes displeases you. The most necessary talent therefore in a man of conversation, which is what we ordinarily intend by a fine Gentleman, is a good judgment. He that hath this in perfection is master of his companion, without letting him see it; and has the same advantage over men of any other qualifications whatsoever, as one that can see would have over a blind man of ten times his strength.  

Having defined a gentleman, Steele sketched an individual who fit the definition, Sophronius, and described him, his most notable quality being the ability to act in almost any situation with grace and poise.

Identifying judgment as the criterion for polite behavior, Steele pointed out that a lack of it resulted in affectation, pedantry, pride, and a host of other faults which characterized the personality types which he sketched, most of whom were trying to be gentlemen but failing. Their failure was understandable to Steele, who declared

that a gentleman's life is that of all others the hardest to pass through with propriety of behaviour; for though he has support without art or labour, yet his manner of enjoying that circumstance is a thing to be considered; and you see, among men, who are honoured with the common appellation of gentlemen, so many contradictions to that character, that it is the utmost ill fortune to bear it.  

For instance, in No. 64 appeared a man of many accomplishments who was in every respect except one a gentleman. That man's faulty

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2 Ibid.  
judgment had led him into an arrogant pride which negated the effect of all his accomplishments and attributes and which gave warning to Tatler readers who might become proud:

Cleontes is a man of good family, good learning, entertaining conversation, and acute wit. He talks well, is master of style, and writes not contemptibly in verse. Yet all this serves but to make him politely ridiculous; and he is above the rank of common characters only to have the privilege of being laughed at by the best. His family makes him proud and scornful; his learning assuming and absurd; and his wit, arrogant and satirical. He mixes some of the best qualities of the head with the worst of the heart. Everybody is entertained by him, while nobody esteems him.  

Pride was a vice which Steele discovered at every level of society, even in a poor cobbler whose hunger for deference caused him to construct as a convenient receptacle for his tools a statue of a man in the posture of a perpetual bow with his right arm extended.  

Lamenting the prevalence of pride in men, Steele declared that "there is no affection of the mind so much blended in human nature, and wrought into our very constitution, as Pride. It appears under a multitude of disguises, and breaks out in ten thousand different symptoms."  

Steele contended in the Tatler that excessive pride was only a form of lunacy,  and to dramatize that contention and to call attention to the absurd pride in rank entertained by some members of London  

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4 Ibid., No. 64, p. 17.  
5 Ibid., No. 127, p. 292.  
6 Ibid.  
7 Ibid., p. 294.
society, he related the ridiculous behavior of four consummately proud people whom he designated as ready for the madhouse. The first of these, an elderly courtier much reduced in fortune, displayed his derangement by habitually offering youthful acquaintances favors he could no longer bestow and by addressing everyone in a most condescending manner. Said Isaac of him,

He answers to matters of no consequence with great circumspection; but, however, maintains a general civility in his words and actions, and an insolent benevolence to all whom he has to do with. . . . In a word, he is a very insignificant fellow, but exceeding gracious. The best return I can make him for his favours is, to carry him myself to Bedlam, and see him well taken care of.  

The second person mentioned likewise displayed a streak of insanity by considering himself superior to the rest of mankind, not because of what he had done, but because of his station in life:

The next person I shall provide for is of a quite contrary character; that has in him all the stiffness and insolence of quality, without a grain of sense of good-nature, to make it either respected or beloved. His Pride has infected every muscle of his face: and yet, after all his endeavours to shew mankind that he contemns them, he is only neglected by all that see him, as not of consequence enough to be hated.  

The third individual's pride was perhaps the most unreasonable of all in that it derived from satisfaction in being thought contemptible:

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8 Ibid., p. 295.  
9 Ibid., p. 296.
A third, whom I have in my eye, is a young fellow, whose lunacy is such, that he boasts of nothing but what he ought to be ashamed of. He is vain of being rotten, and talks publicly of having committed crimes which he ought to be hanged for by the laws of his country. 10

The last person described qualified as a madwoman on much the same grounds as the arrogant nobleman, for the exalted opinion which she held of herself was based solely on her family lineage:

There are several others whose brains are hurt with Pride, and whom I may hereafter attempt to recover; but shall conclude my present list with an old woman, who is just dropping into her grave, that talks of nothing but her birth. Though she has not a tooth in her head, she expects to be valued for the blood in her veins; which she fancies is much better than that which glows in the cheeks of Belinda, and sets half the town on fire. 11

Pride was not the only quality that disqualified Englishmen from really being gentlemen; affectation obviously was a prevalent vice and one which Steele again and again ridiculed in its many forms. In No. 21 he presented a character, the "Pretty Fellow," to illustrate how deserving of contempt was affected behavior. The pretty fellow, who distinguished himself by a rather exaggerated, self-conscious imitation of the behavior of a gentleman through his studied carelessness, was epitomized in Jack Dimple, whom Steele compared to Sophronius:

Sophronius just now passed into the inner room directly forward; Jack comes as fast after as he can for the right and left looking-glass, in which he had just approved himself by

10 Ibid. 11 Ibid.
a nod at each, and marched on. He will meditate within for half an hour, until he thinks he is not careless enough in his air, and come back to the mirror to recollect his forgetfulness. 

In Steele's vocabulary the terms "Pretty Fellow" and "Coxcomb" were synonymous, for in No. 38 a coxcomb was described as "ugly all over with the affectation of a fine gentleman," and in No. 14 a coxcomb, Frank Careless, was characterized by his "much studied negligence": "Frank Careless, as soon as his valet had helped on and adjusted his clothes, goes to his glass, sets his wig awry, tumbles his cravat; and, in short, undressed himself to go into company." 

The next member of the numerous "Fellow" family which Steele treated, a "Very Pretty Fellow," appeared in No. 24. He also suffered from a certain lack of sensibility, being differentiated from the pretty fellow principally by his extreme animation and the favor shown him by ladies. The representative of this group was Colonel Brunett,

who is a man of fashion, because he will be so; and practises a very janty way of behaviour, because he is too careless to know when he offends, and too sanguine to be mortified if he did know it. Thus the Colonel has met with a town ready to receive him, and cannot possibly see why he should not make use of their favour, and set himself in the first degree of conversation. Therefore he is very successfully loud among the wits, and familiar among the ladies, and dissolute among the rakes: thus he is admitted in one place, because he is so

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12 Ibid., Vol. I, No. 21, p. 126.  
14 Ibid., No. 14, p. 91.  
13 Ibid., No. 38, p. 221.  
15 Ibid., No. 24, p. 142.
in another; and every man treats Brunett well, not out of his particular esteem for him, but in respect to the opinion of others. . . . What gives most delight to me in this observation is, that all this arises from pure nature, and the Colonel can account for his success no more than those by whom he succeeds. 16

Having stated that the colonel was by nature a very pretty fellow, Steele expressed his opinion that only by birth could a person attain that station, no amount of practice being enough to substitute for native ingenuousness:

By the way, it is fit to remark, that there are people of better sense than these, who endeavor at this character; but they are out of nature. . . . But, where nature has formed a person for this station amongst men, he is gifted with a peculiar genius for success, and his very errors and absurdities contribute to it. . . . 17

Three subclasses of very pretty fellows were isolated and thereby ridiculed by Steele: excessive drinkers, lovers renowned for their exploits, and favorites of the ladies, appropriately designated "Happy Fellows" by Isaac. A happy fellow certainly deserved his name, for

he is admitted at all hours; all he says or does, which would offend in another, are passed over in him; and all actions and speeches which please, doubly please if they come from him; no one wonders or takes notice when he is wrong; but all admire him when he is in the right. 18

A third member of the "Fellow" family, the "Smart Fellow," derived his name from the practical approach he took to life. To the affectation and insensitivity of the pretty fellows he added liberal

16 Ibid., p. 143. 17 Ibid. 18 Ibid.
amounts of gall and selfishness. He was introduced in No. 26 by means of a letter purportedly written to Isaac by a reader who, having taken pains to be a proficient pretty fellow, wanted Isaac to put a stop to men's calling themselves pretty fellows when they observed only the letter and not the spirit of Isaac's definition:

... an insinuating, increasing set of people... do assume the name of Pretty Fellows; nay, and even get new names, as you very well hint. Some of them I have heard calling to one another as I have sat at White's and St. James's by the names of Betty, Nelly, and so forth. You see them accost each other with effeminate airs: they have their signs and tokens like Freemasons. They rail at woman-kind; receive visits on their beds in gowns, and do a thousand other unintelligible prettinesses that I cannot tell what to make of. 19

Desiring to be counted among the ranks of the pretty fellows, the author of the letter presented credentials which demonstrated a callous selfishness that Steele satirized:

To enumerate but a few particulars. There is hardly a coachman I meet with, but desires to be excused taking me, because he has had me before. I have compounded two or three rapes; and let out to hire as many bastards to beggars. I never saw above the first act of a play; and as to my courage, it is well known I have more than once had sufficient witnesses of my drawing my sword both in tavern and playhouse. 20

Steele, in answer to the letter writer, characterized the smart fellow as a devotee of expediency:

19 Ibid., No. 26, p. 155.  
20 Ibid.
The pretensions of this correspondent are worthy a particular distinction; he cannot, indeed, be admitted as a "Pretty," but is what we more justly call a "Smart Fellow." Never to pay at the playhouse is an act of frugality that lets you into his character; and his expedient in sending his children begging before they can go, are characteristic instances that he belongs to this class. I never saw the gentleman; but I know by his letter, he hangs his cane to his button; and by some lines of it he should wear red-heeled shoes; which are essential parts of the habit belonging to the order of "Smart Fellows."

The subject of smart fellows arose again in No. 28 in a letter to Isaac in which the writer desired to know whether or not calling a person a smart fellow constituted an insult. Isaac replied negatively, saying,

I absolutely pronounce, that there is no occasion of offence given in this expression; for a "Smart Fellow" is always an appellation of praise, and is a man of double capacity. The true case or mould in which you may be sure to know him is, when his livelihood or education is in the civil list, and you see him express a vivacity or mettle above the way he is in by a little jerk in his motion, short trip in his steps, well-fancied lining of his coat, or any other indications which may be given in a vigorous dress. Now, what possible insinuation can there be, that it is a cause of quarrel for a man to say, he allows a gentleman really to be what his tailor, his hosier, and his milliner, have conspired to make him? . . . Indeed it is a most lamentable thing, that there should be a dispute raised upon a man's saying another is what he plainly takes pains to be thought.

The smart fellow lacked three virtues which Steele praised highly in the Tatler: "humanity and tenderness, without which there can be no

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21 Ibid., p. 156.  
22 Ibid., No. 28, p. 166.
true greatness in the mind” \(^{23}\) and gallantry to women, which he said polished every virtue that a man possessed and made him even more noble than he was before. \(^{24}\) In No. 58 Isaac recounted the story of Scipio's refusal to ruin a beautiful young captive who had been betrothed in her own country. Scipio returned the girl, with a sum of money, to her fiancé. The man listening to Isaac's story then commented that chastity was a rare virtue in London, to which Isaac replied,

\[\ldots\text{we ought not to lose our ideas of things, though we had debauched our true relish in our practice, for, after we have done laughing, solid virtue will keep its place in men's opinions: and though custom made it not so scandalous as it ought to be, to insnare innocent women, and triumph in the falsehood; such actions, as we have here related of Scipio, must be accounted true gallantry, and rise the higher in our esteem the farther they are removed from our imitation.}\(^{25}\)

Although Steele did not specifically name any man to illustrate the company of smart fellows, he did devote a large part of Nos. 50 and 51 to the history of a man well qualified to bear the name smart fellow. Designated Orlando the Fair by Isaac, he was a very handsome man, one so physically attractive that no female could resist his charms. However, since Orlando could not remain faithful to one woman, he gave himself to the world at large. Despite his perfections, he decided to pursue a romantic career as a soldier in order to enhance his already

\(^{23}\) Ibid., Vol. II, No. 98, p. 175.

\(^{24}\) Ibid., No. 94, p. 156.

\(^{25}\) Ibid., Vol. I, No. 58, p. 327.
irresistible charms. Finally, when he returned to Great Britain from his military exploits, he found one woman who seemed perfect enough to be his mate and asked her to marry him. The lady being very wealthy, Orlando began to appear in such a rich equipage that youths followed him in the street, and on one occasion he was forced to stop his coach and to command the boys to desist, declaring that he did not wish to harm a one of them because he did not know but that they were all his own bastards. The coach he rode in was a clue to his smart-fellow qualities:

This vehicle, though sacred to love, was not adorned with doves; such an hieroglyphic denoted too languishing a passion. Orlando therefore gave the eagle, as being of a constitution which inclined him rather to seize his prey with talons, than pine for it with murmurs. 26

Despite his history of triumphs in love, Orlando failed in his last affair, though, it must be added, through circumstances beyond his control:

In all these glorious excesses from the common practice did the happy Orlando live and reign in an uninterrupted tranquility, until an unlucky accident brought to his remembrance, that one evening he was married before he courted the nuptials of Villaria [his rich fiancée]. Several fatal memorandums were produced to revive the memory of this accident; and the unhappy lover was for ever banished her presence, to whom he owned the support of his just renown and gallantry. . . . 27

Calculating selfishness, an inordinate love of finery, and a conscienceless approach toward getting what he wanted stamped Orlando as a smart fellow.

\[26\text{Ibid., No. 50, p. 287.}\] \[27\text{Ibid., No. 51, p. 291.}\]
Though not of the immediate "Fellow" family, another gentleman who was greatly concerned about his appearance was a type familiar to Londoners, the red-waistcoated country dweller, the "Dapper," identifiable by his rustic endeavor at affectation. He was introduced to Tatler readers in No. 85 in the person of Tim Dapper:

Tim is one of those who are very necessary, by being very inconsiderable. . . . This Tim is the head of a species: he is a little out of his element in this town: but he is a relation of Tranquillus [Jenny's fiancé], and his neighbour in the country, which is the true place of residence for this species. The habit of a Dapper, when he is at home, is a light broad-cloth, with calamanco or red waistcoat and breeches; and it is remarkable, that their wigs seldom hide the collar of their coats. They have always a peculiar spring in their arms, an wriggle in their bodies, and a trip in their gait. All which motions they express at one in their drinking, bowing, or saluting ladies; for a distant imitation of a forward fop, and a resolution to overtop him in his way, are the distinguishing marks of a Dapper. These under-characters of men, are parts of the sociable world by no means to be neglected: they are like pegs in a building; they make no figure in it, but hold the structure together, and are as absolutely necessary as the pillars and columns. 28

Although Steele compared the dapper to a fop, he did not, unfortunately, in the first 136 issues of the Tatler define a fop, only implying what he meant by a brief description of two men designated as fops. The first of these, Nice, appeared in No. 14 and was known "by his laborious exactness" and the fact that he "is so little satisfied with his dress, that all the time he is at a visit he is still mending it"; 29 the

other, Sir Taffety Trippet of No. 47, was described as a man "whose follies are too gross to give diversion; and whose vanity is too stupid to let him be sensible that he is a public offence." In No. 38 appeared a description of a man who by his excessive concern for his appearance and his lack of a sense of propriety fit Steele's implied definition of a fop. The exclamation of despair that the character elicited from Jenny Distaff in the Tatler echoed Steele's own exasperation with the extreme vanity and self-preoccupation of his age:

... thou, dear Will Shoe-string! ... Will you be combing your wig, playing with your box, or picking your teeth? or choosest thou rather to be speaking; to be speaking for thy only purpose in speaking, to shew your teeth? Rub them no longer, dear Shoe-string: do not premeditate murder: do not for ever whiten. Oh! that for my quiet and his own they were rotten! 31

In No. 96 Steele further ridiculed the affectation of eighteenth century Englishmen by setting forth infallible marks of identification for social types he had previously discussed, and he warned all people not wishing to be classed with these types to note his descriptions and to abstain from exhibiting the dress or mannerisms of any of the people he had described:

A cane upon the fifth button shall from henceforth be the type of a Dapper; red-heeled shoes, and a hat hung upon one side of the head, shall signify a Smart; a good periwig made into a twist, with a brisk cock, shall speak a Mettled

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30 Ibid., No. 47, p. 269.  
31 Ibid., No. 38, p. 222.
Fellow elsewhere not mentioned in the first 136 issues; and an upper-lip covered with snuff, denote a Coffee-house Statesman. But as it is required that coxcombs hang out their signs, it is on the other hand expected that men of real merit should avoid any thing particular in their dress, gait, or behaviour. . . . I have lately met with [men], who at a distance seem very terrible; but upon a stricter inquiry into their looks and features, appear as meek and harmless as any of my own neighbors. These are country gentlemen, who of late years have taken up a humour of coming to town in red coats, whom an arch wag of my acquaintance used to describe very well, by calling them "sheep in wolves' clothing." I have often wondered, that honest gentlemen, who are good neighbours, and live quietly in their own possessions, should take it in their heads to frighten the town after this unreasonable manner.32

This description demonstrates the ridicule that Steele directed throughout the first 136 issues of the Tatler toward flamboyant, ornate dress and mannerisms that bespoke foppery. In No. 103 he satirized the popular custom of using canes for ornament rather than as an aid to walking by presenting a court session in which people desiring to carry canes presented Isaac with petitions for licenses to carry them. The first man to apply for a license was one Simon Trippit, who based his petition on the fact that he had so long used a cane that it had become an indispensable part of his person and aid to his conversation:

That . . . the petitioner having been bred up to a cane from his youth, it is now become as necessary to him as any other of his limbs.

That, a great part of his behaviour depending upon it, he should be reduced to the utmost necessities if he should lose the use of it.

That the knocking of it upon his shoe, leaning one leg upon it, or whistling with it in his mouth, are such great reliefs to him in conversation, that he does not know how to be good company without it.

That he is at present engaged in an amour, and must despair of success if it be taken from him. 33

Being moved by pity for the condition of Mr. Trippit, Isaac ruled that he would be weaned by degrees from the use of his cane and allowed him to wear it three days a week, only taking from him a cane with a transparent amber head and blue ribbon and replacing it with a plain one.

In the same issue Steele thought fit to ridicule the affectation of two other individuals: the person employing perspective glasses in order to attract attention to himself and the person, designated by Steele an "orange-flower-man," always seen wafting a perfumed handkerchief. The latter individual Isaac congratulated for his consideration of his fellow man, the perfume acting as a sort of embalming fluid which covered up what might otherwise have been an objectionable aroma emanating from a man dead because of his uselessness and folly. Steele concluded this issue with his reasons for ridiculing such petty points of behavior:

33 Ibid., No. 103, p. 196.
... however slightly men may regard these particulars, "and little follies in dress and behaviour, they lead to greater evils. The bearing to be laughed at for such singularities, teaches us insensibly an impertinent fortitude, and enables us to bear public censure for things which more substantially deserve it." By this means they open a gate to folly, and oftentimes render a man so ridiculous, as to discredit his virtues and capacities, and unqualify them from doing any good in the world. Besides, the giving into uncommon habits of this nature, is a want of that humble deference which is due to mankind, and, what is worst of all, the certain indication of some secret flaw in the mind of the person that commits them. 34

Steele further analyzed the prevalent affectation in No. 77, where he complained that the world seemed much worse than it was because many of its inhabitants had a curious ambition to appear more dissolute, more frivolous, or more unhealthy than they really were. These people, dubbed "false hypocrites" by Isaac, included individuals in the best of health who thought it a fashionable distinction to affect a physical defect. To this group of hypocrites belonged the man who constantly complained of the delicacy of his stomach even while devouring everything in sight, the lady who dined privately before the lunch hour so as to appear unable to eat when she appeared in public, the man who carried a cane on his button in order to denote his lameness as genteel rather than genuine, the individual who gloriéd in being unable to pronounce an h or an s, and the person who found it gratifying to be so deaf that all the lackeys

34 Ibid., p. 199.
had to shout their compliments into his ear again and again. Isaac said that five years before that time blindness had been the vogue and that no man would recognize his friends until he had first scrutinized them with his perspective glass; this affliction, however, had passed out of style and been succeeded by limping:

I think I have formerly observed, a cane is part of the dress of a prig, and always worn upon a button, for fear he should be thought to have an occasion for it, or be esteemed really, and not genteelly, a cripple. I have considered, but could never find out the bottom of this vanity. I indeed have heard of a Gascon general, who, by the lucky grazing of a bullet on the roll of the stocking, took occasion to halt all his life after. But as for our peaceable cripples, I know no foundation for their behaviour, without it may be supposed that, in this war-like age, some think a cane the next honour to a wooden leg.35

Another type of false hypocrite was the young man who flaunted his atheism every day in public and said his prayers every night in private. Steele wrote a brief description of this kind of man in No. 77, promising to devote a whole chapter to him later. He more than kept his promise, for the greater parts of both No. 111 and No. 135 deal with the professed atheist, whom Steele wholeheartedly denounced. In No. 111 he declared that the English atheist was generally a person of so little wit that to declare himself an unbeliever was his only means of distinguishing himself, and Steele scathingly described such pretenders:

35 Ibid., No. 77, p. 81.
These are the wretches, who, without any show of wit, learning, or reason, publish their crude conceptions with an ambition of appearing more wise than the rest of mankind, upon no other pretence than that of dissenting from them. One gets by heart a catalogue of title-pages and editions; and, immediately, to become conspicuous, declares that he is an unbeliever. Another knows how to write a receipt, or cut up a dog, and forthwith argues against the immortality of the soul. I have known many a little wit, in the ostentation of his parts, rally the truth of the Scripture, who was not able to read a chapter in it. These poor wretches talk blasphemy for want of discourse, and are rather the objects of scorn or pity, than of our indignation; but the grave disputant, that reads and writes, and spends all his time in convincing himself and the world that he is no better than a brute, ought to be whipped out of a government, as a blot to civil society, and a defamer of mankind. I love to consider an infidel, whether distinguished by the title of deist, atheist, or free-thinker, in three different lights, in his solitudes, his afflictions, and his last moments.36

The last moments of one atheist were recounted in ridicule of the superficiality of his type of philosophy, Isaac saying that thirty years before the man had been constrained in a storm at sea suddenly and abjectly to confess his error and repent of his ways; however, when the ship safely reached shore he once more became an atheist, at least until he was wounded in a duel, whereupon he again turned Christian—until the wound healed. That man, said Isaac, was now engaged in writing a learned treatise to disprove the existence of fairies.37

Steele contended that the skeptical individual—atheist, deist, or any other type of free thinker—was a person afflicted with "distemper of the mind" and cautioned English citizens to beware of trying to be

fashionable through disbelief; for, declared Steele, "there is nothing which favours and falls in with this natural greatness and dignity of human nature so much as religion, which does not only promise the entire refinement of the mind, but the glorifying of the body, and the immortality of both." 39

Because many of the renowned men of antiquity had been free thinkers, Steele devoted most of No. 135 to differentiating the skeptical philosophy of the ancients from that of a contemporary man. Socrates and Cicero, said Steele, were trying to prove to men the fundamental truth of "the formation of the universe, the superintendency of Providence, the perfection of the Divine Nature, the immortality of the soul, and the future state of rewards and punishments." 40 By contrast, contemporary free thinkers aimed "by a little trash of words and sophistry, to weaken and destroy those very principles, for the vindication of which, freedom of thought at first became laudable and heroic." 41 In withering terms Steele denounced modern unbelievers and ridiculed dispassionate old men who academically advocated an un-Christian libertinage they felt no inclination to practice:

A chaste infidel, a speculative libertine, is an animal that I should not believe to be in nature, did I not sometimes meet with this species of men, that plead for the indulgence

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38 Ibid., p. 233.  
39 Ibid., No. 108, p. 221.  
40 Ibid., No. 135, p. 325.  
41 Ibid.
of their passions in the midst of a severe studious life, and talk against the immortality of the soul over a dish of coffee. 42

Another kind of false hypocrite, the "marriage-hater," loudly denounced marriage while secretly suffering from unrequited love. 43

Closely akin to the marriage-hater was the man who boasted of his authority over and even mistreatment of his wife but who in private meekly deferred to her wishes. 44

Having described types of people who insisted on pretending to be worse than they were, Isaac concluded that they were victims of thwarted ambition whose only method of gaining recognition was to affect some vice or defect:

The motive of this monstrous affectation, in the above-mentioned and the like particulars, I take to proceed from that noble thirst of fame and reputation which is planted in the hearts of all men. As this produces elegant writings and gallant actions in men of great abilities, it also brings forth spurious productions in men who are not capable of distinguishing themselves by things which are really praiseworthy. As the desire of fame in men of true wit and gallantry shews itself in proper instances, the same desire in men who have the ambition without proper faculties, runs wild and discovers itself in a thousand extravagances, by which they would signalize themselves from others, and gain a set of admirers. 45

Man's thirst for admiration received additional treatment in No. 81, where Steele declared that there were two kinds of immortality.

42Ibid., p. 326. 44Ibid.

43Ibid., No. 77, p. 32. 45Ibid.
the real life of the soul and the fame that a man had after his death, and that most great actions proceeded from a hope of one or the other. To describe the siren call of fame and the various reactions of men to it, Steele related a dream that Isaac had had in which he had seen a great multitude of people on a huge plain from which rose an exceedingly steep, high mountain. Although a strangely pleasant sound emanated from a trumpet on the top of the mountain, very few of the people on the plain paid any attention to it, being preoccupied with three sirens dressed like goddesses: Sloth, Ignorance, and Pleasure. The best of the men, however, listened to the trumpet and tried to climb the mountain, taking with them whatever they thought would aid their climb: swords, quadrants, rolls of paper, and compasses. Every man took a different path, but most of the artisans seemed to choose blind alleys. Others were very active but seemed to get nowhere, for they had tried to find short cuts up the hill and had got themselves in a maze. Still others took a step backward that negated all the progress they had made or were likely to recover. Toward the top of the hill all the paths began to merge into two great roads, each road being menaced by a huge phantom: Death or Envy. Most of the men with swords in their hands traveled the road of Death, whereas those with contemplative looks took the road of Envy. The mountain air past the phantoms was intoxicating, and the company soon reached the top, where there stood a palace with four doors opening
to the four corners of the world. A goddess sat on the top blowing the silver trumpet, and historians gathered at the doors to decide who could pass into the temple of fame. In previous issues Steele had urged his readers to send in lists of the names of the twelve most famous men of history; consequently, in the vision in No. 81 the twelve men he had selected as being the most famous of all time walked through the doors guarded by the historians: Alexander the Great, Homer, Julius Caesar, Socrates, Aristotle, Virgil, Cicero, Hannibal, Pompey, Cato of Utica, Augustus, and Archimedes. 46

Just as affected as the false hypocrites whose desire for fame led them astray were the pedantic critic and wit, whom Steele lumped together as "the nearest each other, in temper and talents, of any two classes of men in the world." 47 By the critic, Steele meant the man who nursed a compulsion to criticize which made him to be "earnest upon trifles, and dispute on the most indifferent occasions with vehemence." 48

A thorough Critic is a sort of Puritan in the polite world. As an enthusiast in religion stumbles at the ordinary occurrences of life, if he cannot quote Scripture examples on the occasion, so the Critic is never safe in his speech.

or writing, without he has, among the celebrated writers, an authority for the truth of his sentence... 49

Related to the critics by their concern over trifles were Will Dactyle, epigrammatist, Jack Comma, grammarian, and Nick Cross-grain, writer of anagrams. The affectation of these was brought to the attention of Tatler readers in No. 58 in a relation of a discussion of the particle for, a debate which they had carried on at Will's Coffee-house. As added emphasis of the absurdity of such affected pedantry, Steele introduced another character, Martius, who suggested that it would be more in keeping with their stations if they discussed for-as-much. This suggestion set Jack Comma off on a harangue about the importance of the particle for in the world's affairs, a harangue which allowed Steele to expound the evils of pretentious learning:

Want of learning makes Martius a brisk entertaining fool, and gives him a full scope; but that which Comma has, and calls learning, makes him diffident, and curbs his natural misunderstanding, to the great loss of the men of railing. . . . learning usually does but improve in us what nature endowed us with. He that wants good sense is unhappy in having learning, for he has thereby only more ways of exposing himself; and he that has sense knows that learning is not knowledge, but rather the art of using it. 50

Less disputatious but equally as irritating as the critic was the studied, well-rehearsed joker, the wit:

49 Ibid. 50 Ibid., No. 58, p. 329.
This gentleman takes himself to be as much obliged to be merry as the other [i.e., the Critic] to be grave. . . . If wit is to be measured by the circumstances of time and place, there is no man has generally so little of that talent as he who is a Wit by profession. What he says, instead of arising from the occasion, has an occasion invented to bring it in. 51

As examples of the critic and the wit respectively, Steele wrote of Spondee, "dull, and seems dull," and Dactyle, "heavy with a brisk face." 52

Not only the pretentious conversation of pedants but also numerous other kinds of trivial, insipid conversation or affected mannerisms of speech irritated Steele, who relegated without regret people guilty of exaggerated, artificial speaking to the company of the defunct in his paper. The sight of a man dead because of his bombastic speech being carried out of White's Chocolate-house—and many of the dead seem to have spent a great deal of their time in coffee and chocolate houses—by the Upholders so moved Isaac that he wrote a brief elegy for the departed:

He was in his person between round and square; in the motion and gesture of his body he was unaffected and free, as not having too great a respect for superiors. He was in his discourse bold and intrepid; and as every one has an excellence, as well as a failing, which distinguishes him from other men, eloquence was his predominant quality, which he had to so great perfection, that it was easier to him to speak, than to hold his tongue. This sometimes exposed him to the derision of men who had much less parts than himself: and indeed his great courage he shewed on

51 Ibid., No. 29, p. 173.  
52 Ibid., p. 174.
those occasions, did sometimes betray him into that figure of speech which is commonly distinguished by the name of Gasconade. 53

From the host of people who spoke without purpose or intelligence, Steele singled out several types for special attention, one being the individual who ostentatiously whispered to friends in public places in order to appear to be saying something of great importance and another, the man, christened Lord No-where by Isaac in No. 38, who habitually whispered to the servants of great people as if he shared an important secret about them. 54 In No. 37 Isaac cautioned his readers that he had much to say on the subject of unnecessary, pompous, and affected speech:

Expect, therefore, to hear of the whisperer without business, the laugh her without wit, the complainer without receiving injuries, and a very large crowd, which I shall not forestal, who are common (though not commonly observed) impertinents, whose tongues are too voluble for their brains. . . . 55

The subject of improper and unnecessary speech was later brought up in the Tatler in a discussion of suitable topics for the paper, Isaac declaring that all trite expressions used in court by lawyers to retard the proceedings or to distract the judges, all devices used by conceited

55 Ibid., No. 37, p. 217.
coxcombs to turn the conversation toward themselves, and all the stratagems employed by women to allow themselves to gossip about their friends without seeming disloyal were "flowers in rhetoric, and little refuges for malice . . . and naturally belong only to Tatlers."  

Another malicious trick of conversation that attracted Steele's attention was the habit of ending the praise of a person with but, as in Mr. X is a kind, generous person, but he . . . (and here the speaker names a fault). The practice of mentioning at least one fault when praising a person stemmed, said Steele, from the mistake of considering an individual in the light of perfection. It was a mistake peculiar to moderns, for the ancients had considered only a man's virtues and talents and had been content to deify a man if he possessed only one outstanding trait no matter how many defects he had, viz., Hercules, who was certainly deficient in cunning and forethought. The result of the English demand for perfection was that lampooners flourished.  

Likewise Steele decried the affectation of punctuating conversation with sniffs of snuff, that is, the fashionable practice "of taking snuff, and looking dirty about the mouth by way of ornament" as a substitute for thought in conversation. To illustrate his point, Steele told the story

56 Ibid., No. 51, p. 294.
57 Ibid., Vol. II, No. 92, pp. 147-148.
of a famous politician whose snuff box was stolen in the middle of his conversation. The man simply could not continue his tale, and Steele concluded that "a pinch supplied the place of 'As I was saying'; and 'So, Sir'; and he went on currently enough in that style which the learned call the insipid. This observation easily led me into a philosophic reason for taking snuff, which is done only to supply with sensations the want of reflection." 59

The London citizen who successfully avoided the conversation of snuff addicts had still to contend with "Sneerers," evidently a numerous type of undesirable, for in No. 44 Steele mentioned a friend who, being unable to laugh and be laughed at, had had to leave London. Concluding the item, Steele remarked, "... I took a place in the northern coach for him and his family; and hope he has got to-night safe from all sneerers in his own parlour." 60 Sneerers were perfidious rascals who cultivated the company of a man for the sole purpose of finding out his secret faults to laugh about with their friends for an evening's entertainment. 61

In the same issue in which sneerers were mentioned, Steele commented on the "Biter, . . . a dull fellow, that tells you a lie with a grave face, and laughs at you for knowing him no better than to believe

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59 Ibid., p. 204.  
60 Ibid., No. 44, p. 257.  
61 Ibid., No. 12, p. 79.
The biter seems to have been a contemporary and therefore vicious version of a former London notable, the "Droll," who as suggested by his name, was noted "for a certain pleasant subtlety, and natural way of giving you an unexpected hit." Vexed as he was by these conversational peculiarities, Steele reserved his most pungent comment for the practice of punning: "I have several arguments ready to prove, that he cannot be a man of honour, who is guilty of this abuse of human society."

The next member of the affected "Fellow" family, the "Fiery Fellow," attempted to be thought spirited by being irascible but succeeded, according to Steele, in only being vexatious and ridiculous: "You see, in the very air of 'a fellow of fire, ' something so expressive of what he would be at, that if it were not for self-preservation, a man would laugh out." Finding that "Firemen" appeared in all ranks of society and levels of education, Steele bemoaned the fact that the term fire was used by men "to support them in being pert and dull, and saying of every fool of their order, 'Such a one has fire.' " Society's acceptance of those people who seemed to think that being quick-tempered

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62 Ibid.
63 Ibid., p. 78.
64 Ibid., No. 32, p. 192.
65 Ibid., No. 61, p. 340.
66 Ibid., p. 341.
compensated for a lack of breeding or sense irked Steele, who complained,

> It is very unhappy for this latitude of London, that it is possible for such as can learn only fashion, habit, and a set of common phrases of salutation, to pass with no other accomplishments in this nation of freedom, for men of conversation and sense. All these ought to pretend to is, not to offend; but they carry it so far as to be negligent whether they offend or not; "for they have fire." 67

The last of the "Fellow" family, the "Modest Fellow," appeared in No. 52 in a discussion of whether modesty was a virtue in a man. A group of ladies contended that modesty was to be highly valued in a man as in a woman, but Steele seemed to take a utilitarian view of the merits of modesty, saying that it was desirable only if it did not hinder a man's advancement in the world:

> I took the liberty to say, "it [modesty] might be as beautiful in our behaviour as in theirs, yet it could not be said, it was as successful in life; for as it was the only recommendation in them, so it was the greatest obstacle to us, both in love and business." A gentleman present was of my mind, and said, that, "we must describe the difference between the modesty of women and that of men, or we should be confounded in our reasonings upon it; for this virtue is to be regarded with respect to our different ways of life. The woman's province is to be careful in her economy, and chaste in her affections; the man's to be active in the improvement of his fortune, and ready to undertake whatever is consistent with his reputation for that end." Modesty, therefore, in a woman, has a certain agreeable fear in all she enters upon; and in men it is composed of a right judgment of what is proper for them to attempt. From hence

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67 Ibid.
it is, that a discreet man is always a modest one. It is to be noted that modesty in a man is never to be allowed as a good quality, but a weakness, if it suppresses his virtue, and hides it from the world, when he has at the same time a mind to exert himself. 68

Despite this view, in No. 86 Steele adopted an altogether different tone, declaring modesty to be one of the most becoming of virtues:

A gentleman this evening, in a dictating manner, talked, I thought, very pleasingly in praise of modesty, in the midst of ten or twelve libertines, upon whom it seemed to have had a good effect. He represented it as the certain indication of a great and noble spirit. "Modesty," said he, "is the virtue which makes men prefer the public to their private interest, the guide of every honest undertaking, and the great guardian of innocence. It makes men amiable to their friends, and respected by their very enemies. In all places, and on all occasions, it attracts benevolence, and demands approbation."

This I say of modesty, as it is the virtue which preserves a decorum in the general course of our life; but, considering it also as it regards our mere bodies, it is the certain character of a great mind. 69

Considering the terms "a modest man" and "a modest fellow," Steele noted a difference in meaning between the two: "the modest man is in doubt in all his actions; a modest fellow never has a doubt from his cradle to his grave." 70 For the benefit of those perplexed about what constituted a "Modest Fellow," Steele defined him as a man unimpeded by pride:

70 Ibid., Vol. I, No. 52, p. 300.
"A modest fellow" is a ready creature, who, with great humility, and as great forwardness, visits his patrons at all hours, and meets them in all places, and has so moderate an opinion of himself, that he makes his court at large. If you will not give him a great employment, he will be glad to a little one. He has so great a deference for his benefactor's judgment that as he thinks himself fit for any thing he can get, so he is above nothing which is offered. Of a completely different temperament from the modest fellow was the "Rake," whom Steele described at length with a sympathy which perhaps arose from an intimate acquaintance with the problems of that particular type, "the most agreeable of all bad characters." Unlike most of the other personalities Steele described, the rake had as his vice not affectation but rather excess, to which he was driven by his constitution:

A Rake is a man always to be pitied; and, if he lives, is one day certainly reclaimed; for his faults proceed not from choice or inclination, but from strong passions and appetites, which are in youth too violent for the curb of reason, good sense, good manners, and good-nature; all which he must have by nature and education, before he can be allowed to be, or to have been, of this order. He is a poor unwieldy wretch, that commits faults out of the redundancy of his good qualities... His desires run away with him through the strength and force of a lively imagination, which hurries him on to unlawful pleasures, before reason has power to come in to his rescue. Thus, with all the good intentions in the world to amendment, this creature sins on against Heaven, himself, and his country, who all call for a better use of his talents... I must repeat it that I think this a character which is the

71 Ibid., p. 299.  
72 Ibid., No. 27, p. 160.
most the object of pity of any in the world. . . of all ill characters, the Rake has the best quarter in the world; for when he is himself, and unruffled with intemperance, you see his natural faculties exert themselves, and attract an eye of favour towards his infirmities.

It being a treasured maxim of Steele's that the errors of a rake proceeded from an innate disposition which he was helpless to alter, those people who attempted to assume the character of a rake in order to conform to stylish conduct felt the lash of Steele's tongue:

. . . how many dull rogues are there, that would fain be what this poor man hates himself for? All the noise towards six in the evening is caused by his mimics and imitators. . . . Second-hand vice, sure of all is the most nauseous. There is hardly a folly more absurd, or which seems less to be accounted for (though it is what we see every day), than that grave and honest natures give into this way, and at the same time have good sense, if they thought fit to use it. . . .

Thus, although the rake himself was not affected, many men affected his character.

Although few people were compulsive sinners like the rake, nevertheless many suffered from his defect, the inability to say no. In No. 83 Steele discussed this problem and concluded that it stemmed from a desire to be accepted and liked by people:

. . . I believe more people are drawn away against their inclinations, than with them. A young man is afraid to deny any body going to a tavern to dinner; or, after being gorged there, to repeat the same with another company at

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73 Ibid.
74 Ibid., p. 161.
supper, or to drink excessively, if desired, or go to any other place, or commit any other extravagancy proposed. The fear of being thought covetous, to have no money, or to be under the dominion or fear of his parents and friends, hinder him the free exercise of his understanding; and affirming boldly the true reason, which is, his real dislike of what is desired. If you could cure this slavish facility, it would save abundance at their first entrance into the world.  

Probably the preoccupation of the fashionable world with scandal inspired Steele to define the "Gunner" and the "Gunster," who received extremely lengthy treatment in No. 88, at least half of that issue being taken up with an explanation of the terms. According to Isaac, a gunner was a man who told untrue stories in order to cause trouble; a gunster, a person who related outlandish tales only to entertain. The former was undesirable, but the latter diverting; the first dangerous, the second laughable.  

The first of several varieties of gunners was the "Bombardier," who specialized in throwing bombs at men in important places and in great cities in order to cause confusion and fear. Because of the attraction of the bombardier to the great of the world, no one of any consequence at all could feel safe from his work, and many faced the problem of how to react to his tactics. Steele counseled an indifference that was to be achieved through a just self-concept uninfluenced

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Ibid., No. 88, p. 130.
by the opinions of others, remarking that "undeserved praise can please only those who want merit, and undeserved reproach frighten only those who want sincerity." Advocating silence in the face of slander, Steele said,

But Silence never shews itself to so great an advantage, as when it is made the reply to calumny and defamation, provided that we give no just occasion for them. . . . To forbear replying to an unjust reproach, and overlook it with a generous, or, if possible, with an entire neglect of it, is one of the most heroic acts of a great mind; and I must confess, when I reflect upon the behaviour of some of the greatest men of antiquity, I do not so much admire them, that they deserved the praise of the whole age they lived in, as because they contemned the envy and detraction of it. All that is incumbent on a man of worth, who suffers under so ill a treatment, is to lie by for some time in silence and obscurity, until the prejudice of the times be over, and his reputation cleared.

The second type of gunster, the "Miner," was primarily interested in destroying particular persons and families, being especially proficient at insinuating himself into the confidence of families and then blowing them up. A person designated "Fly-blow" in No. 38 exemplified the actions of a miner by the slander he constantly directed toward all his acquaintances:

. . . Fly-blow (who is received in all the families in town, through the degeneracy and iniquity of their manners) is to be treated like a knave, though he is one of the weakest of

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78 Ibid., No. 92, p. 150.  
80 Ibid., No. 88, p. 131.  
79 Ibid., No. 133, p. 319.
fools; he has by rote, and at second hand all that can be said of any man of figure, wit, and virtue, in town. Name a man of worth, and this creature tells you the worst passage of his life. Speak of a beautiful woman, and this puppy will whisper the next man to him, though he has nothing to say of her. He is a fly that feeds on the sore part, and would have nothing to live on if the whole body were in health. 81

Many of the best miners were ladies, their talent being "a wonderful solicitude for the reputation of their friends, and a more than ordinary concern for the good of their neighbours." 82 Another variation on the gunner was the "Squib," the journalist renowned for blackening his victims; however, it was observed that a Squib disturbed "only weak minds." 83 The fourth type of gunner, while seeming to be the least noteworthy of all, was really the most destructive. Known as the "Serpent," he employed a weapon that sounded much like a whisper. Although the gunster was believed to be much less dangerous than any of the gunners because his weapons usually only made others laugh at him, nevertheless, the gunster possessed a dangerous propensity for becoming a gunner and often set off a bomb accidentally. 85 The gunsters amazed Steele with their complete disregard of veracity:

81 Ibid., Vol. I, No. 38, p. 223. 84 Ibid.
82 Ibid., Vol. II, No. 88, p. 131. 85 Ibid., p. 132.
83 Ibid.
This sort of engineers are the most unaccountable race of men in the world. Some of them have received above a hundred wounds, and yet have not a scar in their bodies; some have debauched multitudes of women, who have died maids. You may be with them from morning until night, and the next day they shall tell you a thousand adventures that happened when you were with them, which you knew nothing of. They have a quality of having been present at every thing they hear related; and never heard a man commended, who was not their intimate acquaintance, if not their kinsman. 86

The love of scandal and the multifarious scandalmongers which Steele derided probably resulted from a vice which Steele waged war against throughout the first half of the Tatler: idleness. Believing that every life should be spent in service to others or in self-improvement, 87 Steele hesitated not a second to point a literary finger at anything that seemed to him to violate his principle. Thus he took to task the custom of making visits to convalescents who were not yet well enough to receive visitors by men who had absolutely nothing else to do, and he published a letter from a sick man who complained of unwanted visitors:

Men never consider whether the sick person be disposed for company, but make their visits to humour themselves. . . . I think one's most intimate friend may be too familiar, and that there are such things as unseasonable wit and painful mirth. 88

In reply to the man's inquiry about how Isaac felt about the subject,

86 Ibid. 87 Ibid., No. 96, p. 166. 88 Ibid., No. 89, p. 137.
Steele answered that the problem arose from idlers who could find nothing to do:

It is with some so hard a thing to employ their time, that it is a great good fortune when they have a friend indisposed, that they may be punctual in perplexing him, when he is recovered enough to be in that state which cannot be called sickness or health. . . . It is no uncommon case, if a man is of any figure or power in the world, to be congratulated into a relapse. 89

Steele also reprimanded idleness and uselessness in No. 10, where he sketched the typical young gentleman of fashion who had nothing better to do than spend all his waking moments in preening himself or in profitlessly conversing with other idlers in a coffee house. Said the young man of his activities,

My hours of existence, or being awake, are from eleven in the morning to eleven at night; half of which I live to myself, in picking my teeth, washing my hands, paring my nails, and looking in the glass. The insignificance of my manners to the rest of the world, makes the laughers call me a Quidnunc; a phrase which I neither understand, nor shall ever inquire what they mean by it. The last of me each night is at St. James's coffee-house, where I converse; yet never fall into a dispute on any occasion; but I leave the understanding I have passive of all that goes through it, without entering into the business of life. And thus . . . have I arrived, by laziness, to what others pretend to by philosophy, a perfect neglect of the world. 90

To just such young men as this one was Steele speaking in No. 112 when he cited the danger of restless, unoccupied minds and recommended to

the gentlemen of leisure such simple, honest pastimes as feeding the
ducks or playing with children to fill their empty hours:  

It grieves me to the very heart, when I see several young
gentlemen, descended of honest parents, run up and down,
hurrying from one end of the town to the other, calling in
at every place or resort, without being able to fix a quarter
of an hour in any, and in a particular haste without knowing
for what. It would, methinks, be some consolation, if I
could persuade those precipitate young gentlemen to com-
pose their restlessness of mind, and apply themselves to
any amusement, how trivial soever, that might give them
employment, and keep them out of harm's way. . . . But
these busy, idle animals are only their own tormentors.
The turbulent and dangerous are for embroiling councils,
stirring up seditions, and subverting constitutions, out of
a mere restlessness of temper, and an insensibility to all
the pleasures of life that are calm and innocent. . . . How
often have I wished, for the good of the nation, that several
famous politicians could take a pleasure in feeding
ducks. . . .  

In No. 89 Steele praised leisure which was used to read good books
and enjoy the beauties of nature and declared that the kind of man who
thus employed himself in his idle hours must be intelligent and well
educated, although he probably was not esteemed by the rabble:  

That calm and elegant satisfaction which the vulgar call
melancholy is the true and proper delight of men of knowl-
edge and virtue. What we take for diversion, which is a
kind of forgetting ourselves, is but a mean way of enter-
tainment, in comparison of that which is considering,
knowing, and enjoying ourselves. The pleasures of ordinary
people are in their passions; but the seat of this delight is
in the reason and understanding.  

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92 Ibid., p. 236. 94 Ibid., p. 136.
The contemplative man and the restless idler exemplified the two alternative ways of life which Steele discussed in No. 97 through the allegory of Hercules's being courted by virtue and pleasure in the person of two women who came to him when he was trying to decide how to govern his life. The first woman was attractive in a rather artificial, bold, affected way; she promised him a life of beauty and pleasure without pain. When asked her name, she replied that her friends called her Happiness, her enemies Pleasure. The second lady came forward and in a modest manner asked Hercules to follow her, promising him pleasure and honor only at the expense of great labor and pain. Pleasure then began to mock the rewards of Virtue, but Virtue reminded her that her followers were truly happy and satisfied, both in youth and in old age.  

95 Steele always recommended a life lived according to virtue and throughout the Tatler cited examples of virtue to encourage his readers  

96 and examples of vice to warn them,  

97 and he took care to state that invaluable aids to a life lived according to virtue and wisdom were "a happy education, conversation with the finest spirits, looking abroad into the works of nature, and observations upon mankind."  

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95 Ibid., No. 97, pp. 169-172.

96 Ibid., Vol. I, Nos. 5, 14, 25; Vol. II, Nos. 72, 78, for example.

97 Ibid., Vol. II, Nos. 69, 71, and 73, for example.

98 Ibid., No. 87, p. 126.
And Steele declared that rank did not excuse one from the responsibility of being virtuous, saying that wealth and position should defer to learning and accomplishment. He avowed that the kind of education a young man received was of utmost importance, saying, "It is hardly to be imagined what great evils or benefits arise from putting us in our tender years to what we are fit or unfit. . . ." And he had some comments to make about current modes of training for young gentlemen. He implied that the kind of training obtained by the individual whose letter was printed in No. 123 produced fools:

. . . I am an esquire of an ancient family, born to about fifteen hundred pounds a year; half of which I have spent in discovering myself to be a fool, and with the rest I am resolved to retire with some plain honest partner, and study to be wiser. I had my education in a laced coat, and a French dancing-school; and, by my travel into foreign parts, have . . . much breeding to spare . . . which I intend to exchange as fast as I can for old English honesty and good sense.

Steele indicated in No. 93 that a course of travel did not benefit all men, for "a man that goes out a fool cannot ride or sail himself into

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99 Ibid., No. 122, p. 274.


101 Ibid., No. 30, p. 176.

common sense," Using this cousin Harry as an example of the type of man unfit for travel, Isaac declared,

Men of this solid make are not to be hurried up and down the world, for, if I may so speak, they are naturally at their wit's end; and it is an impertinent part to disturb their repose, that they may give you only a history of their bodily occurrences, which is all they are capable of observing. . . . for there is a certain sort of men, who are no otherwise to be regarded but as they descend from men of consequence, and may beget valuable successors. 104

Not even the country gentleman--absorbed in his dogs and his guns, ignorant, dull, slovenly, and coarse--had enough sacredness about him to escape Isaac's mockery and to avoid being banished to the realm of the dead because of the worthless, idle life that he led. 105

Thus in No. 36 Steele introduced a group of elderly gentlemen from the country and through a description of their behavior satirized their idleness and rusticity and the inordinate attention they paid to rank. The group included Sir Harry Quickset, Baronet; Sir Giles Wheelbarrow, Knight; Thomas Rentfree, Esquire; Andrew Windmill, Esquire--a justice of the quorum--and Mr. Nicholas Doubt, grandson to Sir Harry. These gentlemen caused a great deal of laughable confusion by their intrigues to gain the seat of honor next to Sir Harry (whom Steele described as "so reverend a vegetable; for you are to know, that is my sense of a

103 Ibid., No. 93, p. 153. 105 Ibid., No. 118, p. 258.

104 Ibid., p. 154.
person who remains idle in the same place for half a century"\(^\text{106}\) and by their rustic manner of drinking and their insistence on ordering items found in the country but not in London. \(^\text{107}\) An even earlier commentary on country squires occurred in No. 19 in a discussion of who was and who was not entitled to be called squire:

\[\text{We} [\text{esquires}] \text{are indeed derived from the field; but shall that give title to all that ride mad after foxes, that halloo when they see a hare, or venture their necks full speed after a hawk, immediately to commence Esquires: No: our order is temperate, cleanly, sober, and chaste; but these rural Esquires commit immodesties upon haycocks, wear shirts half a week, and are drunk twice a day. These men are also, to the last degree, excessive in their food: an Esquire of Norfolk eats two pounds of dumpling every meal, as if obliged to do it by our order: an Esquire of Hampshire is as ravenous in devouring hogs' flesh: one of Essex has a little mercy on calves'. But I must take the liberty to protest against them, and acquaint those persons, that it is not the quantity they eat, but the manner of eating, that shews an Esquire.}\(^\text{108}\)

This unflattering description of country squires was not the end of Isaac's business with them, and in No. 37 they came in for another drubbing:

\(\text{Every county of great Britain has one hundred or more of this sort of fellows, who roar instead of speaking; therefore, if it be true, that . . . women are also given to a}\)

\(^{106}\) Ibid., No. 86, p. 122.

\(^{107}\) Ibid., pp. 122-124.

\(^{108}\) Ibid., Vol. I, No. 19, p. 115.
greater fluency of words than is necessary, sure she that disturbs but a room or a family, is more to be tolerated than one who draws together whole parishes and counties, and sometimes (with one estate that might make him the blessing and ornament of the world around him) has no other view and ambition, but to be an animal above dogs and horses, without the relish of any one enjoyment which is peculiar to the faculties of human nature.  109

Isaac was often downcast because of the stubborn refusal of people to harken to his advice, but at least one "dead" country dweller heeded Isaac's admonitions and rejoined the living. In No. 118 appeared a letter recounting the resuscitation and incidentally giving a good description of the usual employments of a country squire:

For these several years past, there was not a hare in the country that could be at rest for him [the country squire]; and I think, the greatest exploit he ever boasted of was, that when he was high-sheriff of the county, he hunted a fox so far, that he could not follow him any farther by the laws of the land. All the hours he spent at home, where in swelling himself with October, and rehearsing the wonders he did in the field. Upon reading you, he has sold his dogs, shook off his dead companions, looked into his estate, got the multiplication-table by heart, paid his tithes, and intends to take upon him the office of churchwarden next year.  110

Unfortunately, this gentleman was exceptional, for more dead stayed dead than revived, especially among the elderly, whose idle talk and irascibility Steele many times censured in the Tatler. For instance, in discussing the laws of life, Pacolet, Isaac's guardian spirit, informed

109 Ibid., No. 37, p. 216.

Isaac that each man has an allotted span of life, a stamen, which some men live beyond, usually with undesirable results:

I may now add an observation to you, that all who exceed that period, except the latter part of it is spent in the exercise of virtue and contemplation of futurity, must necessarily fall into an indecent old age; because with regard to all the enjoyments of the years of vigour and manhood, childhood returns upon them: and as infants ride on sticks, build houses in dirt, and make ships in gutters, by a faint idea of things they are to act hereafter; so old men play the lovers, potentates, and emperors, from the decaying image of the more perfect performances of their stronger years: therefore be sure to insert Aesculapius and Aurengzebe in your next bill of mortality of the metaphorically defunct. 111

The Aesculapius and Aurengzebe whom Pacolet wanted on the mortality lists were an old physician and an elderly merchant. Aesculapius had made himself eligible for Isaac's lists by falling in love with one of his young female patients and consequently making himself ridiculous as her suitor. 112 Aurengzebe had distinguished himself by affecting the character of an Eastern potentate and spending his time at the Exchange giving young men unasked advice or at bawdy houses ogling the inhabitants. 113

Steele further censured the usual occupations of elderly gentlemen by a sketch of the private club to which Isaac belonged, a sketch in which Isaac expressed his feelings about his friends:


112 Ibid., No. 44, p. 253.

113 Ibid., No. 46, p. 263.
I could not but reflect with myself, as I was going out, upon the talkative humour of old men, and the little figure which that part of life makes in one who cannot employ his natural propensity in discourses which would make him venerable. I must own, it makes me very melancholy in company, when I hear a young man begin a story; and have often observed, that one of a quarter of an hour long in a man of five-and-twenty, gathers circumstances every time he tells it, until it grows into a long Canterbury tale of two hours by that time he is threescore.

The only way of avoiding such a trifling and frivolous old age is, to lay up in our way to it such stores of knowledge and observation, as may make us useful and agreeable in our declining years. The mind of man in a long life will become a magazine of wisdom or folly, and will consequently discharge itself in something impertinent or improving. For which reason, as there is nothing more ridiculous than an old trifling storyteller, so there is nothing more venerable, than one who has turned his experience to the entertainment and advantage of mankind. 114

To present his concept of proper conduct in the aged, Steele described old people of meritorious behavior in several issues of the Tatler. In No. 45 a sketch showed how old men could make welcome contributions to discussions by intelligent conversation, a particular gentleman having won the admiration of the young men around him not only by his virtues but also by his charitable attitude toward their follies. 115 Tolerance for the young and delicacy in dealing with them were recommended by Steele several times in the Tatler, as in No. 9 in the story of Parisatis, the elderly aunt and guardian of a spirited

114 Ibid., Vol. II, No. 132, p. 316.

eighteen-year-old girl, Pastorella. Knowing that her niece habitually
eavesdropped, Parisatis decided to guide Pastorella into decorous be-
behavior by arranging to have the young woman overhear her earnestly
praying that Pastorella would be of such a carriage and deportment that
the lord who was then courting her would have his intentions changed to
honorable ones. The girl changed from a bold, boisterous personality
to "everything... commendable in a fine young lady" and received
the kind of masculine attention that her aunt had desired for her. Isaac
commended the aunt's diplomatic handling of her niece, saying,

I scarce remember a greater instance of forbearance of
the usual peevish way with which the aged treat the young
than this, except that of our famous Noy, whose good nature
went so far, as to make him put off his admonitions to his
son, even until after his death; and did not give him his
thoughts of him until he came to read that memorable pas-
sage in his will: "All the rest of my estate," says he, "I
leave to my son Edward (who is executor to this my will),
to be squandered as he shall think fit; I leave it him for
that purpose, and hope no better from him." A generous
disdain, and reflection upon how little is deserved from so
excellent a father, reformed the young man, and made Ed-
ward, from an arrant rake, become a fine gentleman.

During the time Steele was writing the Tatler, England was en-
gaged in the War of the Spanish Succession, and one of the personalities
he described was a product of the times. Interest in the war was keen,
and a regular feature of the first issues of the Tatler was a report of

116 Ibid., No. 9, p. 62.  117 Ibid.
the latest developments in the campaign. As in most periods of war, the climate was unfavorable for critics of the government or doubting Thomases who questioned the truth of government reports of victories; consequently, the "Battle Critic" received harsh treatment from Steele, who described finding several men of disgruntled aspect after the news of a great victory had been released. These men, who were asking where the lists of captured and slain were and why the exact strategy of the campaign had not been released if a battle had actually been won, were dubbed battle critics and defined thus:

He is a fellow that lives in a government so gentle, that although it sees him an enemy, suffers his malice, because they know his impotence. 118

... battle-critics are like all others; you are the more offended, the more you ought to be, and are convinced you ought to be, pleased. 119

Another kind of person who asked questions, though the asking seemed to originate only from a rather harmless desire to receive attention, was appropriately named the "Questioner." A friend of Isaac's supplied the definition of the type in No. 41:


119 Ibid.
He told me, before that person joined us, that he was a questioner, who, according to his description, is one who asks questions, not with a design to receive information, but an affectation to shew his uneasiness for want of it. He went on in asserting, that there are crowds of that modest ambition, as to aim no farther than to demonstrate that they are in doubt. 120

An altogether different type were the jovial, likable Trubies, whose mirth proceeded from their constitutions rather than from their circumstances:

The Trubies are a well-natured family, whose particular make is such, that they have the same pleasure out of goodwill, which other people have in that scorn which is the cause of laughter; therefore their bursting into the figures of men, when laughing, proceeds only from a general benevolence they are born with; as the Slyboots smile only on the greatest occasion of mirth; which difference is caused rather from a different structure of their organs, than that one is less moved than the other. 121

Surprisingly, Steele did not seem to care for good-natured people like the Trubies, for in No. 76 he stated that much evil came from a good nature which allowed itself to be imposed on out of sheer laziness. Such a person could not be a friend to others or to himself because he was negligent in all matters, not wishing to exert himself to mend difficulties. That kind of person was a boon to the professional gambler, who was prevalent in London society, for he often led other people into


121 Ibid., Vol. II, No. 63, p. 10.
the clutches of the card cheat. Similarly in No. 9 Isaac complained of the good-natured nobleman exemplified by La Bruyere's character Lord Timon: a man of great but indiscriminate generosity who by his carelessness in giving encouraged cupidity instead of gratitude in his beneficiaries. This good man through extreme indifference let himself be cheated and encroached on by every servant.

Exactly contrasting to the people of excessive good nature was the individual described in No. 80 as having a disorder of the spleen, that is of being moody and sensitive, whom Steele complained of as a type more prevalent in Great Britain than in any other country. Such was the man who wrote that he had been singularly disgraced in a visit to Lady Haughty's by being seated on a footstool in the presence of twelve other visitors who sat in comfort and honor in armchairs. Not only was he suffered to sit on a stool, but he also had to bear the stares of twelve pairs of eyes, and as a consequence he desired Isaac to point out the inhumanity of such social distinctions. After sending the letter, the writer came in person to Isaac, relating several other agonies he had endured:

He opened his heart to me at the same time concerning several other grievances; such as, being overlooked in

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122 Ibid., No. 76, p. 75.
123 Ibid., Vol. I, No. 9, p. 60.
public assemblies, having his bows unanswered, being helped last at table, and placed at the back part of a coach. . . . 124

Isaac answered him that the trouble was more with him than with the rest of the world, for he obviously suffered from spleen. Isaac recommended taking a long cold bath every morning until the malady was cured and promised to relate the results in the Tatler because a great part of England suffered from the same sickness. 125

Number 13 sketched two other undesirable types of people: the "Gamester" and the "Swearer," both of whom were described through Pacolet, who said that he had recently spent some time with each and had the opportunity to examine the cranial cavities of both men. The swearer, whose wont it was to inject generous numbers of expletives into his conversation without plan or purpose, had only half of his brain in use, the other half being filled with oaths. Deciding to break the swearer of his bad habit, Pacolet wrote down his conversation for half an hour and then handed the paper to him. Steele implied by Pacolet's plan that if only the swearer once actually listened to his conversation, he would realize its vapidity and desist from swearing.

The stratagem had so good an effect upon him, that he grew immediately a new man, and is learning to speak without an oath, which makes him extremely short in his phrases; for, as I observed before, a common swearer has a brain without

124 Ibid., Vol. II, No. 30, p. 94. 125 Ibid., p. 95.
any idea on the swearing side; therefore my ward has yet mighty little to say, and is forced to substitute some other vehicle of nonsense, to supply the defect of his usual expletives. 126

Despite his success with the swearer, Pacolet did not effect a cure for the gamester, whose passion was the playing of cards for money, an activity extremely popular with London gentlemen. 127

Steele abhorred it because professional card players had made luring overly-confident amateurs into games a lucrative business. The professionals, working in groups which Steele likened to packs of dogs, were welcomed in the homes of the best families, who often became unwitting recruiters for victims. 129 Whole estates were lost by foolish young men with gambling fever, and the sharpers, as Steele called professional gamblers, grew wealthy on their losses. The very first issue of the Tatler mentioned gambling, noting the regrettable effect it had had on conversation at Will's Coffee-house:

This place is very much altered since Mr. Dryden frequented it; where you used to see songs, epigrams, and satires, in the hands of every man you met, you have now only a pack of cards; and instead of the cavils about the turn of expression, the elegance of the style, and the like, the learned now dispute only about the truth of the game. 130

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127 Ibid., p. 86.  
128 Ibid., No. 59, p. 330.  
The second reference to gamesters, occurring in No. 12, placed them in the same category as "thoughtless atheists" and "illiterate drunkards," hardly pleasant company. Next came the sketch of Pacolet and the gamester he was directed to watch in No. 13. Pacolet's description of the man emphasized the irrationality of a gambler's behavior:

In his brain, I found no one ordinary trace of thinking; but strong passion, violent desires, and a continued series of different changes, had torn it to pieces. There appeared no middle condition; the triumph of a prince, or the misery of a beggar, were his alternate states. I was with him no longer than one day, which was yesterday. In the morning at twelve, we were worth four thousand pounds; at three, we were arrived at six thousand; half an hour after, we were reduced to one thousand; at four of the clock, we were down to two hundred; at five, to fifty; at six, to five; at seven, to one guinea: the next bet, to nothing. This morning he borrowed half-a-crown of the maid who cleans his shoes; and is now gaming in Lincoln's-inn-fields among the boys for farthings and oranges, until he has made up three pieces, and then he returns to White's into the best company in town. 132

With No. 13 Steele began a campaign to alert the public to the foolhardiness of gambling, the next attack being made in No. 15, where Steele showed the folly of playing at cards for huge stakes:

We [Pacolet and Isaac] got in hither, and my companion threw a powder round us, that made me as invisible as himself; so that we could see and hear all others, ourselves unseen and unheard.

131 Ibid., No. 12, p. 77.  
132 Ibid., No. 13, p. 86.
The first thing we took notice of was a nobleman of a
goodly and frank aspect, with his generous birth and temper
visible in it, playing at cards with a creature of a black and
horrid countenance, wherein were plainly delineated the arts
of his mind, cozenage and falsehood. They were marking
their game with counters on which we could see inscriptions,
imperceptible to any but us. My Lord had scored with
pieces of ivory, on which were writ "Good Fame, Glory,
Riches, Honour, and Posterity." The spectre over-against
him had on his counters the inscriptions of "Dishonour, Im-
pudence, Poverty, Ignorance, and want of Shame." "Bless
me," said I; "sure my Lord does not see what he plays for?"
"As well as I do," says Pacolet. "He despises that fellow
he plays with, and scorcs himself for making him his com-
panion." At the very instant he was speaking, I saw the fel-
low, who played with my Lord, hide two cards in the roll of
his stocking. Pacolet immediately stole them from thence;
upon which the nobleman soon after won the game. The little
triumph which he appeared in, when he got such a trifling
stock of ready money, though he had ventured so great sums
with indifference, increased my admiration. But Pacolet be-
gan to talk to me. "Mr. Isaac, this to you looks wonderful,
but not at all to us higher beings: that nobleman has as
many good qualities as any man of his order, and seem to
have no faults but what, as I may say, are excrescences
from virtues. He is generous to a prodigality, more affable
than is consistent with his quality, and courageous to a rash-
ness. Yet, after all this, the source of his whole conduct
is... mere avarice. The ready cash laid before the game-
ster's counters makes him venture, as you see, and lay dis-
tinction against infamy, abundance against want; in a word,
all that is desirable against all that is to be avoided."133

After No. 15 Steele became temporarily preoccupied with duelling,
but in No. 56 he returned to the subject of gambling, having Isaac and
some of his friends try to explain what a sharper was to a young
foreigner. Their explanations pointed out the incongruity of the attitude

133 Ibid., No. 15, p. 96.
of society toward those professional parasites, who preyed on the gulli-

bility and avarice of their fellow man. Isaac's answer to the young man's

query about a sharper pointed out the absurdity of well-bred people's

associating with such criminals:

... I told him, "they were a sort of tame hussars, that
were allowed in our cities, like the wild ones in our camp;
who had all the privileges belonging to us, but at the same
time were not tied to our discipline or laws." Aletheus,
who is a gentleman of too much virtue for the age he lives
in, would not let this matter be thus palliated; but told my
pupil, "that he was to understand that distinction, quality,
merit, and industry, were laid aside among us by the in-
cursions of these civil hussars; who had got so much counte-
nance, that the breeding and fashion of the age turned their
way to ruin of order and economy in all places where they
are admitted."\(^{134}\)

To point out the ancient age of the order of dishonest professional
gamblers, Steele had one of the participants in the conversation declare
that sharpeners were mentioned in Homer under the name of Myrmidons,
"who were a body that kept among themselves, and had nothing to lose;
therefore never spared either Greek or Trojan, when they fell in their
way, upon a party."\(^{135}\)

Steele intensely disliked the bold shamelessness of the sharpeners
and used the story of the Myrmidons to point it out, describing two of
them, Thersites and Pandarus, as

\(^{134}\) Ibid., No. 56, p. 316. \(^{135}\) Ibid., p. 318.
less renowned for their beauty than their wit, but each had this particular happiness, that they were plunged over head and ears in the same water which made Achilles invulnerable; and had ever after certain gifts, which the rest of the world were never to enjoy. Among others, they were never to know they were the most dreadful to the sight of all mortals, never to be diffident of their own abilities, never to blush, or ever to be wounded but by each other. 136

By his fight against professional card players, Steele was reminded of another group of men who were perhaps even more reprehensible than the sharpers, and in No. 57 he spoke out against them, using the ruse of a letter supposedly written by a sharper, Tom Trump, to ask whether the moneylender was not a greater curse to humanity than the card cheat, for the usurer preyed on unhappy men, but the card player cheated only foolish ones:

All mankind are indifferently liable to adverse strokes of fortune; and he who adds to them, when he might relieve them, is certainly a worse subject, than he who unburdens a man whose prosperity is unwieldy to him. 137

Isaac's reply continued the attack:

I allowed Trump there are men as bad as himself, which is the height of his pretensions: and must confess, that Coopersmith [the usurer] is the most wicked and impudent of all Sharpers: a creature that cheats with credit, and is a robber in the habit of a friend. 138

In No. 59 Steele returned to the gamblers and became more acrid than ever in declaring that he would imitate Aesop and disguise his
denunciations in the form of a fable, choosing a pack of dogs as the animals most like the sharers. 139 He then gave warning to the people harboring the sharers and to the people who insisted on being their victims that they faced public censure in the Tatler unless they mended their ways. 140 Three issues later he described in detail the members of a pack of dogs and the general area of London where they could be found and warned people to ostracize them or be ready to find their names in his paper. 141 The metaphor of the pack of dogs was continued, with notices being inserted at various times at the ends of issues to announce the whereabouts and activities of the dogs. In No. 71 Isaac announced a month-long truce in his war against the sharers and explained the reason for the respite as being the possibility of passing a law against them:

... I must not make a truce, without letting them know, that at the same time I am preparing for a more vigorous war: for a friend of mine has promised me, he will employ his time in compiling such a tract, before the session of the ensuing parliament, as shall lay gaming home to the bosoms of all who love their country or their families; and he doubts not but it will create an act, that shall make these rogues as scandalous as those less mischievous ones on the high road, 142

139 Ibid., No. 59, p. 330.
140 Ibid., p. 331.
141 Ibid., Vol. II, No. 62, p. 3.
142 Ibid., No. 71, p. 51.
Despite his declared intentions, Steele returned to the sharpers two issues later when a gentleman designated Monoculus supposedly wrote him a letter protesting being mentioned in the Tatler and warning Isaac, i.e. Steele, to be careful about angering him. If Isaac's reply can be taken at face value, Monoculus, a sharper himself, had informed on the members and activities of the group of gamblers. Adopting a condescending tone, Steele replied to Monoculus's veiled threat by saying, "Fye, fye, I am really ashamed for you, and shall no more depend upon your intelligence. Keep your temper, wash your face, and go to bed." Irked by the impudence of Monoculus, Steele included in the same issue an account of the sharpers' movements in a certain part of London and a plan they had tried to execute. Having gathered at a tavern, the pack of sharpers had determined to fleece a young gentleman recently come into his estate. They had tried various ways to meet the heir but had failed, and at last the landlord, who was one of the pack, had approached the man's good friend and had asked him to bring the young man to them to be cheated, promising him a cut of the booty, saying,

"Sir, as I take you to be a lover of ingenuity and plain dealing, I shall speak very freely to you. In few words, then, you are acquainted with Sir Liberal Brisk. Providence has, for our emolument, set him a fair estate; for

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143 Ibid., No. 73, p. 61.
men are not born for themselves. Therefore, if you will bring him to my house, we will take care of him, and you shall have half the profits. There is Ace and Cutter will do his business to a hair. You will tell me, perhaps, he is your friend: I grant it, and it is for that I propose it, to prevent his falling into ill hands.

In short there are, to my certain knowledge, a hundred mouths open for him. . . . Besides, Partridge has cast me his nativity, and I find by certain destiny, his oaks must be felled.  

After this conversation the friend had gone to Brisk and had told him all that had happened. They had first thought to fight the scoundrels, then had proposed to play with them to show them that the young man was not the booby the sharpers thought, but they had finally decided the best course of action would be to write to Isaac and "get them enrolled in the order of the Industry." This tale was told to alert rich young men to the fact that the sharpers considered them easy game and laid careful plans to catch them, Isaac cautioning all prospective victims to remember the dire prophecy in the words "his oaks must be felled."  

After this issue, at least through No. 136, Steele desisted from the attack on sharpers.

Other pastimes besides gambling were also discussed by Steele, who in No. 134 deplored the popular sports of cock fighting, bull baiting, bear fighting, and prize fighting, saying that England had justly been censured by other countries for such amusements. In reply to those
who would argue that only common people indulged in such recreations,

Steele said that men of high rank exhibited the same delight in blood by their taste in drama:

*It will be said, that these are the entertainments of common people. It is true; but they are the entertainments of no other common people. Besides, I am afraid, there is a tincture of the same savage spirit in the diversions of those of higher rank, and more refined relish. Rapin observes, that the English theatre very much delights in bloodshed. . . . We act murders, to shew our intrepidity; and adulteries, to shew our gallantry. . . . The virtues of tenderness, compassion, and humanity, are those by which men are distinguished from brutes, as much as by reason itself; and it would be the greatest reproach to a nation, to distinguish itself from all others by an defect in these particular virtues. For which reasons, I hope that my dear countrymen will no longer expose themselves by an effusion of blood, whether it be of theatrical heroes, cocks, or any other innocent animals, which we are not obliged to slaughter for our safety, convenience, or nourishment. When any of these ends are not served in the destruction of a living creature, I cannot but pronounce it a great piece of cruelty, if not a kind of murder. 147*

As vigorous as the fight against gambling was the battle Steele waged against duelling, a custom arising from what he considered to be a misguided sense of honor. Beginning his campaign to eradicate that dire method of soothing wounded feelings and settling differences of opinion, in No. 25 he declared that a young lady whose lover had been wounded in a duel had written a pitiful letter about the incident which had him ponder the folly of duelling and to consider the reasons why men

147 Ibid., No. 134, p. 323.
engaged in it. He found, he said, one obstacle in the way of his investi-
gation: the impossibility of explaining the term satisfaction, for he could
in no wise see how an insulted man could gain satisfaction from giving
his insulter a chance to run him through with a sword.  

The whole system of duelling seemed to be as illogical as the term satisfaction, and
the only reason Isaac could find for the popularity of duelling was the
prevalence of men who mistakenly believed honor to mean defending
bad actions instead of doing good ones. Such a philosophy resulted
in gentlemen's hazarding their lives against unprincipled scoundrels:

Thus you often see a common sharper in competition with
a gentleman of the first rank; though all mankind is con-
vinced, that a fighting gamester is only a pickpocket with
the courage of a highwayman. One cannot with any patience
reflect on the unaccountable jumble of persons and things in
this town and nation; which occasions very frequently, that
a brave man falls by a hand below that of a common hang-
man, and yet his executioner escapes the clutches of the
hangman for doing it.

After stating that "most of the quarrels I have ever known, have pro-
ceeded from some valiant coxcomb's persisting in the wrong, to defend
some prevailing folly, and preserve himself from the ingenuousness of
his own mistake," Steele rendered into plain English the meaning
of a typical letter of challenge to show the absurdity of offering a rascal
the opportunity to kill a man he had insulted:

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148 Ibid., Vol. I, No. 25, p. 149
149 Ibid., p. 150.
150 Ibid.
151 Ibid.
Your extraordinary behaviour last night, and the liberty you were pleased to take with me, makes me this morning give you this, to tell you, because you are an ill-bred puppy, I will meet you in Hyde-park an hour hence; and because you want both breeding and humanity, I desire you would come with a pistol in your hand, on horseback, and endeavour to shoot me through the head to teach you more manners. If you fail of doing me this pleasure, I shall say you are a rascal on every post in town: and so, Sir, if you will not injure me more, I shall never forgive what you have done already. Pray, Sir, do not fail of getting every thing ready; and you will infinitely oblige, Sir, your most obedient humble servant, &c. 152

Likewise the artificiality of duelling was exposed in a comparison of the motives of Spanish fighters with those of the English, where it was made clear that the Spanish were motivated by a genuine desire for revenge, the English by a desire to appear well-bred:

... a man of honour in Spain, though you offend him never so gallantly, stabs you basely; in England, though you offend him never so basely, challenges fairly: the former kills you out of revenge, the latter out of good-breeding. 153

Continuing the attack, Steele published a facetious treatise on the origin of duelling, pointing out that the southern European and Asiatic nations knew nothing of that custom and satirically attributing some of the duello to the Laplanders. 154 After briefly considering the fighting habits of other countries and of the English army and comparing them with the

152 Ibid.
153 Ibid., No. 28, p. 168.
154 Ibid., No. 31, p. 183.
custom of duelling, Isaac concluded that "wise nations do not admit of fighting, even in the defence of their country, as a laudable action." 155

Besides being illogical, duelling often stooped to the level of the ludicrous, men frequently resorting to that method to settle the pettiest of disputes. In No. 38 Steele exploded the notion that duelling was romantic or noble by recounting a disagreement about the sale of a bear that had led to one party's demanding satisfaction from the other. The participants had gathered in a room near the place where the quarrel occurred and were ready to begin the duel when they remembered Isaac's admonitions against that practice and decided to fight with their fists. The fight, in which each man laid on blows with all his strength, had lasted fifteen minutes when one of the men, finding that he, far from desiring a combat to the death, did not even want to suffer the blows of the other any longer and cried out, "I am satisfied enough! Whereupon the combat ceased, and both were friends immediately." 156

As an effective means of showing the false glory, the illogic, and the real danger inherent in duelling, Steele employed Pacolet, who in No. 26 recited to Isaac the events that had occurred immediately after his death when a second in a duel who had just been killed arrived at the celestial abode at the same time as Isaac's guardian spirit:

155 Ibid., No. 28, p. 168
156 Ibid., No. 38, p. 220.
You are to know that, when men leave the body, there are receptacles for them as soon as they depart, according to the manner in which they lived and died. At the very instant I was killed, there came away with me a spirit which had lost his body in a duel. . . . Me the whole assembly[of spirits] looked at with kindness and pity . . . they pronounced me very happy, who had died in innocence; and told me, "a quite different place was allotted to me, than that which was appointed for my companion; there being a great distance from the mansions of fools and innocents; though at the same time," said one of the ghosts, "there is a great affinity between an idiot who has been so for a long life, and a child who departs before maturity. But this gentleman who had arrived with you is a fool of his own making, is ignorant out of choice, and will fare accordingly." The assembly began to flock about him, and one said to him, "Sir, I observed you came in through the gate of persons murdered, and I desire to know what brought you to your untimely end?" He said, "he had been a Second." 157

At this point Steele brought in Socrates to argue against duelling:

Socrates (who may be said to have been murdered by the commonwealth of Athens) stood by, and began to draw near him, in order, after this manner, to lead him into a sense of his error by concessions in his own discourse. "Sir," said that divine and amicable spirit, "what was the quarrel?" He answered, "We shall know very suddenly, when the principal in the business comes, for he was desperately wounded before I fell." "Sir," said the sage, "had you an estate?" "Yes, Sir," the new guest answered, "I have left it in a very good condition, and made my will the night before this occasion." "Did you read it before you signed it?" "Yes, sure, Sir," said the new comer. Socrates replies, "Could a man, that could not give his estate without reading the instrument, dispose of his life without asking a question?" That illustrious shade turned from him, and a crowd of impertinent goblins . . . made themselves very merry with questions about the words cart and tierce, and

157 Ibid., No. 26, p. 158.
other terms of fencers. But his thoughts began to settle into reflection upon the adventure which had robbed him of his late being; and with a wretched sigh, said he, How terrible are conviction and guilt, when they come too late for penitence? 158

Having shown the lack of logic in the custom of duelling, Steele considered why men engaged in it and concluded that chiefly two reasons caused men to risk their lives, the same slavish devotion to fashion that made them wear ruffs in the past and periwigs in the present and the approbation and support given duelling by women:

It is to avoid being sneered at for his singularity, and from a desire to appear more agreeable to his mistress, that a wise, experienced, and polite man, complies with the dress commonly received, and is prevailed upon to violate his reason and principles. . . . This is the more surprising, because men of the most delicate sense and principles have naturally in other cases a particular repugnance in accommodating themselves to the maxims of the world: but one may easily distinguish the man that is affected with beauty, and the reputation of a tilt, from him who complies with both, merely as they are imposed upon him by custom; for in the former you will remark an air of vanity and triumph; whereas, when the latter appears in a long Duvillier full of powder, or has decided a quarrel by the sword, you may perceive in his face, that he appeals to custom for an excuse. 159

The most lengthy treatment of duelling occurs in No. 39, where there is a long dialogue between three men about the custom of demanding and giving satisfaction. The conversationalists, represented as "men of honour and experience in the manners of men," 160 brought

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158 Ibid.  
160 Ibid., No. 39, p. 228.  
159 Ibid., No. 29, p. 171.
out the fact that duelling was not at all the fashion in former times when
Cromwell led his army, probably because the court encouraged it among
its followers in order to appear more aristocratic and glorious. Neither
did the Romans, although they were known for their invective and had
many legitimate occasions for duelling, indulge in that custom:

Perhaps the Romans were of opinion, that ill language
and brutal manners reflected only on those who were guilty
of them; and that a man's reputation was not at all cleared
by cutting the person's throat who had reflected upon it;
but the custom of those times had fixed the scandal in the
action; whereas now it lies in the reproach. 161

The conversation then turned to a discussion of how a man of honor,
wanting to be fair in all matters, could possibly make the contest equal
between two men of unequal swordsmanship or marksmanship, that
question being of utmost importance in a matter considered to be "an
affair of honor." The conclusion was that one man or the other was al-
most certain to have an advantage and that the only way to insure com-
plete fairness in the fight was to draw lots to see which one would be
shot. 162

Therefore, although duels were called affairs of honor, there
was no honor in a situation where one man had an unfair advantage over
his adversary. The whole overemphasized concept of honor was like-
wise, as Steele pointed out in No. 48, contradictory and artificial

because it was an exaggerated distortion of conscience contrived by
man which sometimes actually worked in opposition to ethical principles.

To demonstrate the difference between conscience and honor, Steele in
No. 48 presented two spirits, Alethes and Verisimilis, denoting re-
spectively conscience and honor. The former individual expressed a
grace and naturalness in his dress and gait that strongly contrasted
with the bizarre appearance of his companion, who wore shoes with
heels so high that he would have fallen down without the support of Alethes.

Indeed Pacolet pointed out the dependence of Verisimilis on Alethes and
the fact that when he was within his proper limits Verisimilis was sub-
servient to Alethes:

You observed [said Pacolet] Verisimilis frowned when he
first saw me. What he is provoked at is, that I told him
one day, though he strutted and dressed, with so much
ostentation, if he kept himself within his own bounds, he
was but a lackey, and wore only that gentleman's livery
whom he is now with. This frets him to the heart: for
you must know, he has pretended a long time to set up
for himself, and gets among a crowd of the more unthink-
ing part of mankind, who take him for a person of the first
quality; though his introduction into the world was wholly
owing to his present companion.163

Noting that the commercial world considered Alethes an impediment
to its business and that more people were attracted to Verisimilis than
to Alethes, Isaac concluded No. 48 with the observation that if a life

163 Ibid., No. 48, p. 277.
were lived according to reason it would be a life guided by conscience:

Were men so enlightened and studious of their own good, as to act by the dictates of their reason and reflection, and not the opinion of others, conscience would be the steady ruler of human life: and the words truth, law, reason, equity, and religion, could be but synonymous terms for that only guide which makes us pass our days in our own favour and approbation. 164

In No. 105 Steele pointed out the emptiness of honor as the term was popularly used and advocated common sense in the matter of points of honor by telling the story of a fiddler, Will Rosin, whose young wife decided to prevent the proposed marriage of her lover by proclaiming to all the world that she had been intimate with the man. The marriage was discontinued, but the father of the prospective bridegroom sued Will for defamation, and Will landed in jail because he could not pay the fine. His friends bailed him out, and he retaliated against the lover's family by loudly proclaiming himself a cuckold. Isaac concluded the tale with the observation that many a wealthy man in Will's position would have engaged himself and his family in a never-ending feud with another family over such an incident. 165

No better summary of exactly what masculine faults Steele censured could be made than that provided by a sketch begun in No. 110 and concluded in No. 113. Contrary to his usual practice of referring

164 Ibid., p. 279.

165 Ibid., Vol. II, No. 105, pp. 204-207.
only briefly to the metaphorically deceased, Steele devoted most of those numbers to a court scene in which Isaac judged whether several people were living or dead. The first defendant was a young woman alleged to have killed several young men by the magic of her eyes and the aid of a looking glass and certain kinds of fabric. The lady pleaded not guilty by virtue of the fact that she was trying only to get a husband and would have married any one of the men who sent her letters proclaiming his readiness to die for love of her, but for the fact that they all disappeared when they found her willing to accept their proposals. Isaac ruled that henceforward any man who said he would die for a lady would have to marry her or endure prison without bail. The second defendant provided a continuation of Steele's ridicule of fashionably languishing for the love of a reigning belle. This man had sent the aforementioned lady a letter saying that he died for her, and the undertakers had taken this as proof of his death. When asked why he had written such a statement if he were not really dead, he answered that it was just the fashion to do so. Whereupon Isaac said that he would have to make an example of him, and the man began to berate Isaac in a witless fashion, all the while toying with his snuff box. When Isaac caused the box to be taken from him, the Upholders had to carry him out dead, for he had been struck dumb the minute his box had been removed.  

166 Ibid., No. 110, pp. 226-227.
At this point Steele abandoned the subject of the young man to bring other persons to trial. The next two individuals who appeared before Isaac were speedily sentenced to be buried because they were dead: an old man who spent his time smoking his pipe, eating, playing backgammon, and talking about his former mistress; and a young man who spent his day eating, dressing, and talking about women he never spoke to. The next group to be judged consisted of authors who (1) had produced dead children, (2) had first produced living but later conceived dead children, and (3) had produced both living and dead children, the last offspring being living; and the last group to appear before Isaac was composed of elderly officers of colleges, old lawyers and judges, and old government officials. These Isaac ordered to be decimated, the remaining ones to be given a year in which to revive. Thus ended No. 110.

But the matter of the young man whose death resulted from the removal of his snuff box again arose in No. 113, where Steele recited in detail the property of the dead man to show what items the metaphorically defunct were likely to have in their possession:

A very rich tweezer-case, containing twelve instruments for the use of each hour in the day.
Four pounds of scented snuff, with three gilt snuffboxes; one of them with an invisible hinge, and a looking-glass in the lid.

167 Ibid., pp. 227-228.
Two more of ivory, with the portraits on their lids of two ladies of the town; the originals to be seen every night in the side-boxes of the playhouse.

A sword with a steel diamond hilt, never drawn but once at May-fair.

Six clean packs of cards, a quart of orange-flower-water, a pair of French scissors, a toothpick-case, and an eyebrow-brush.

A large glass-case containing the linen and clothes of the deceased; among which are, two embroidered suits, a pocket perspective, a dozen pair of red-heeled shoes, three pair of red silk stockings, and an amber-headed cane.

The strong box of the deceased, wherein were found, five billet-doux, a Bath shilling, a crooked sixpence, a silk garter, a lock of hair, and three broken fans.

A press for books; containing on the upper shelf,

Three bottles of diet-drink.

Two boxes of pills.

A syringe, and other mathematical instruments.

On the second shelf are several miscellaneous works; as,

Lampoons.

Plays.

Taylor's bills.

And an almanack for the year seventeen hundred.

On the third shelf,

A bundle of letters unopened, indorsed, in the hand of the deceased, 'Letters from the old Gentleman.'

Lessons for the flute.

Toland's 'Christianity not mysterious'; and a paper filled with patterns of several fashionable stuffs.

On the lower shelf,

One shoe.

A pair of snuffers.

A French grammar.

A mourning hat-band; and half a bottle of usquebaugh. 168

This inventory is almost a complete summary of all that Steele had to say in the first 136 issues about the vices of men, and in it can be found items declared to be the characteristic property of men.

168 Ibid., No. 113, pp. 238-239.
belonging to the personality types sketched in the Tatler. Almost every item implies a fault of eighteenth century society condemned by Steele: excessive vanity (the elaborate tweezer-case, the snuff box with mirrored lid, the perfume, French scissors, toothpick case, eyebrow-brush), ostentation (embroidered suits, red-heeled shoes, red silk stockings), affectation (scented snuff, gilt snuff boxes, ivory snuff boxes, an amber-headed cane), dalliance (snuff boxes with ladies' pictures in the lids, love letters, the crooked sixpence, a silk garter, lock of hair, broken fans), gambling (six packs of cards), bravado (ornate sword drawn only once), delight in scandal (lampoons), free thinking (the deistic Toland's Christianity not Mysterious), dilettantism (the miscellaneous assortment of mathematical instruments, plays, flute lessons, and a French grammar carelessly thrown between clothes, letters, and mementos), overeating (bottles of diet drink, pills, and a syringe), drinking (the bottle of usquebaugh [whiskey]), disregard and disrespect for parents (unopened epistles marked "Letters from the old Gentleman"), ignorance (the almanac), and irresponsibility (tailor's bills).
CHAPTER III

THE MANNERS OF WOMEN

Women also were typed by Steele, who presented his description of feminine personalities to Tatler readers to recommend what he considered meritorious behavior and to censure what he considered reprehensible. In his sketches he condemned the affectation, vanity, egocentricity, hypocrisy, addiction to gossip, and uselessness of fashionable eighteenth century ladies and advocated simplicity, decorum, modesty, and wisdom in their conduct. Although not so elaborate as the classifications of men, his four classes of women represented the four most glaring feminine vices: vanity, censure, affectation, and uselessness; and each of the four types, although differing from her sisters in method, desired to secure the same end as the others: the attention and approbation of men.

To obtain that end the vain coquette, characterized as a woman "who lives in continual misapplication of her beauty,"\(^1\) boldly displayed her charms with an unfeminine aggressiveness that was as unattractive

\(^1\) The Tatler, Vol. I, No. 27, p. 162.
as it was unnatural. Like the coxcomb, she was completely absorbed in herself and consequently unable to genuinely converse with her companions, being less interested in exchanging information than in reciting her conquests in order to bring to mind her attractiveness. Her vanity, a vice shared by almost all women, evidenced itself in an excessive concern for her looks, a concern that induced her to affect a lisp, a squint, or pretended levity in an attempt to enhance her charms; however, in Steele's opinion, she succeeded only in marring the effect of her beauty by her affectation:

... she is ever in practice of something which disfigures her, and takes from her charms, though all she does tends to a contrary effect. She has naturally a very agreeable voice and utterance, which she has changed for the prettiest lisp imaginable. She sees what she has a mind to see at half a mile distance; but poring with her eyes half shut at every one she passes by, she believes much more becoming... the chief person present has all her regards. And she who giggles at divine service, and laughs at her very mother, can compose herself at the approach of a man of a good estate.

Totally absorbed in herself and so vain that she needed continual assurance of her attractiveness, the coquette hungered for new conquests and was therefore attracted only to men who gave her no attention.

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2 Ibid., No. 7, p. 49.
3 Ibid., No. 27, p. 162.
She was incapable of genuine love and insensible to the feelings of those who loved her. To the man who appealed to Isaac for advice on how to cure his love for a young woman who had declared herself attracted to him but had then abandoned him for a young man whose only distinctions were a slight handsomeness and a great deal of money, Steele replied that the fickle young woman was a coquette who was attracted to the newcomer only because he cared nothing about her. Pronouncing a coquette "a chaste jilt, and differs only from a common one, as a soldier, who is perfect in exercise, does from one that is actually in service," Isaac recommended, as a method of destroying love for her, concentration on all her faults and imperfections, especially her callousness toward those who loved her. And in No. 126 her faults were declared to be vanity, self-centeredness, and a hunger for the admiration of men.

Though not in general as vain as the coquette, women were portrayed in the Tatler as having a large portion of that fault, which often led them astray. For instance, in No. 14 appeared the story of the rich young widow who was thinking of remarrying. Her maid had decided to try to marry her to a sharper, and Steele declared that doubtless if the lady and the gambler ever were introduced, she would marry him, for

5 Ibid., No. 107, p. 214.
6 Ibid., No. 126, pp. 289-291.
"this fellow has undone so many women, that he will certainly succeed if he is introduced; for nothing so much prevails with the vain part of that sex, as the glory of deceiving them who have deceived others." 7

The same type of vanity led Teraminta, whose sad tale graced No. 45, to fall victim to a dishonorable man who made her his mistress by breaking down her defenses with flattery. Her words accurately reflected the extent of feminine vanity: "Let the flattery be never so apparent, the flatterer never so ill thought of, his praises are still agreeable, and we contribute to our own deceit." 8

A more widely recognized result of vanity also was discussed in the Tatler: the feminine love of paint and finery. In No. 61 the excessive interest displayed by woman in her appearance and the false value which that concern led her to place on her face received criticism in a discussion of how long a woman ought to make beauty her chief concern. Isaac declared that never should beauty be the chief goal of a woman, for if she had only beauty, she would be valued only as a female, but accomplishments made a lady valuable as a person. Isaac therefore advised a certain lady of fifty not to try to look fifteen, explaining that every age had its own grace and beauty and that a woman was wise to achieve what was appropriate to her years. 9

7 Ibid., Vol. I, No. 14, p. 92. 8 Ibid., No. 45, p. 259. 9 Ibid., No. 61, pp. 343-344.
Steele deplored not only obsession with appearance but also the lengths to which women went in order to improve their looks. Ladies who patched extravagantly or who wore false hair found their cosmetic extravagances discussed in No. 67, in which Isaac declared that he had formerly decided to write personal letters of admonition to people with faults before he published the faults in his paper in order to give the offenders time to mend their ways in private; since, however, he had sent three letters and had received not the slightest sign of repentance by the guilty parties, he designed to publish the letters to show the sins. He had sent the first letter to a handsome young lady with an abundance of fine hair which she artfully showed off to advantage. In his note Isaac had begged the young woman to frizz her hair or in some other way impair its beauty so that another lady would not have to spend large sums of money to buy false hair and to bribe her maid not to tell that her hair was gray. Curiously enough, the young woman ignored Isaac and continued to display her beautiful hair. The second letter, equally unsuccessful in converting the addressee to Isaac's point of view, had been sent to a lady who wore patches. Isaac had promised her that if she would take the multitude of patches off her left cheek, he would allow her to keep two more patches under her left eye than she already wore there, cautioning her that one large patch on her chin would look much better than the ten small dots she presently displayed. Thus Steele ridiculed
the vanity of ladies. The last letter he had written had been sent to two sisters who violated his rule against idleness by continually hanging out of a window as if they either had nothing to do or wanted to invite people in. When Isaac saw them at their same places in the window some time after they had received his letter, he abandoned private communication as a method of motivating reform.

Another product of feminine vanity was the preoccupation of women with place and rank, an interest so dear to their hearts that when Isaac directed a letter to Castabella, a lady who had suffered the insult of being pushed from her proper place at the opera by another woman, he comforted the lady by saying that the only attention the usurper got was that which resulted from her impropriety, but he refused to chasten the culprit further because of the danger of incurring feminine wrath from discussing a lady's proper place: "... for though it was taking your place of right... yet it is so tender a point, and on which the very life of female ambition depends, that it is of the last consequence to meddle in it."  

The obsession of women to be ranked foremost in company received additional attention in two sketches. The first, in No. 16, related the outrageous behavior of two aging belles at Bath who had both determined to gain sway over the society there--by

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fair means or foul. One lady, by taking advantage of every public occasion to display her talents and graces, tried to dazzle the company into submission; the other, perhaps wiser, circumspectly visited various cliques to secure alliances with them: the lame, the sick, the aged, and such people as could not bear to see another person enjoying public approbation. The battle for supremacy between the two women was carried to such an extreme that one ferreted out and distributed documents attesting to the other's age.  

Perhaps less vicious was the battle described in No. 36, where the actions of two sisters-in-law, both of whom wanted the lion's share of regard and deference, were related by a letter from Jenny's friend Martha. Martha recounted the actions of Autumn, a rich widow much concerned with manners and rank, and Springly, a young lady not willing to defer to Autumn's greater wealth and age. These two had married two brothers, Springly, the elder (a knight) and Autumn, the younger (whom she made a knight with her money). Being very sensitive about matters of etiquette and place, Autumn was sorely tried by Springly's arrogance, but she bore the younger woman's impertinence in silence until one day when she carried Springly to some country races in her carriage and her ungrateful guest relinquished her company for that of a gentleman she met. That

night at supper the ladies' subtly malicious remarks began an argument that ended in a brawl which forced the whole family to leave the country in order to avoid the laughter that ensued from the incident.  

No more striking example of the vanity and affectation of women was discussed in the Tatler than the voluminous petticoat known as the farthingale, described as being so large that the wearer needed a machine to hoist her into her carriage, she being unable to pass through the door because of the girth of her clothing. After numerous mentionings of the petticoat in several issues, it was brought to trial in No. 116 and found unacceptable by Isaac, who declared that he held no prejudice against finery in general, only against that which was contrary to good sense:

I would not be understood, that, while I discarded this monstrous invention [the farthingale], I am an enemy to the proper ornaments of the fair sex. On the contrary, as the hand of nature has poured on them such a profusion of charms and graces, and sent them into the world more amiable and finished than the rest of her works; so I would have them bestow upon themselves all the additional beauties that art can supply them with, provided it does not interfere with, disguise, or pervert those of nature. I consider woman as a beautiful romantic animal, that may be adorned with furs and feathers, pearls and diamonds, ores and silks. . . . All this I shall indulge them in; but as for the petticoat I have been speaking of, I neither can nor will allow it.  

13 Ibid., No. 36, pp. 210-212.  
14 Ibid., Vol. II, No. 113, pp. 239-240.  
15 Ibid., No. 116, p. 252.
Besides condemning the evidences of vanity, Steele condemned vanity itself, as in No. 34, where he slyly recommended "Bickerstaff's circumspection water," which caused the user of it to appear deformed when she went to a mirror only to admire herself but to appear more comely when she looked into a glass to improve her appearance for her friends. More pointed was the sketch in No. 102 of the Goddess of Justice's visit to earth, when all womankind appeared before her to hear her judgments. To their satisfaction the goddess announced that the important matter of place among them would be decided on the basis of beauty and that each lady would be allowed to determine her own rank after consulting the mirror of truth which the goddess held. The mirror had the faculty of making the features conform to the soul of the beholder so that to their general dismay, great beauties were beautiful no longer, the loveliest face reflected in the mirror being that of a little old shrunken woman, gray and wrinkled. In such a manner Steele tried to convince his feminine readers of the worthlessness of physical beauty without spiritual beauty.

As an antidote to vanity Steele recommended modesty and humility, demonstrating the value of those virtues by describing two young ladies of equal beauty and accomplishment who had asked him

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16 Ibid., Vol. I, No. 34, p. 199.
to judge which was the more handsome. After watching them dance, Isaac declared the more modest to be the more attractive, saying, "beauty loses its force if not accompanied with modesty. She that has a humble opinion of herself, will have every body's applause, because she does not expect it; while the vain creature loses approbation through too great a sense of deserving it." 18 Having recommended humility, Steele in No. 57 slyly alluded to the lack of it among women in advice he gave to a lady who had moved from London to the country and had been snubbed by her new neighbors: "The best course Emilia can take is, to have less humility. . . . Until she has arrived at this value of herself, she must be contented with the fate of that uncommon creature, a woman too humble." 19

By recommending that a woman should be both unassuming and also sensitive to propriety, Steele advocated two different types of modesty, demonstrating his opinion about the latter meaning of modesty in No. 84, where he discussed the practice of ladies' visiting rape trials at Old Bailey. Observing that ladies naturally had a sympathy for a victim and a great interest in a crime from which only they could suffer, nevertheless they could not sit on juries and thus were unable to fulfill any useful purpose at the trials. It seemed to Steele that

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attendance at such trials, since women could not be jurors, showed a certain indelicacy and lack of one of the most becoming feminine virtues, modesty:

In short, I must tell my female readers, and they may take an old man's word for it, there is nothing in woman so graceful and becoming as modesty. It adds charms to their beauty, and gives a new softness to their sex. Without it, simplicity and innocence appear rude; reading and good sense, masculine; wit and humour, lascivious. 20

This pronouncement on the desirability of modesty brought to Isaac's mind a letter he had received from a lady protesting Lucretia's absence from his table of fame. 21 To the writer of the letter Isaac replied, "... although I know Lucretia would have made a graceful figure at the upper end of the table, I did not think it proper to place her there, because I knew she would not care for being in the company of so many men without her husband." 22

A second feminine type, the prude, attempted to monopolize a vice usually attributed to the whole female sex: a penchant for conducting an exhaustive, caustic analysis of the behavior of others, an inclination whose universality was mentioned in No. 37, where Jenny declared men to be gossipy: "... and, for all they [men] pretend so

much to the contrary, they are as talkative as our sex, and as much at a loss to entertain the present company, without sacrificing the last, as we ourselves. 23 This widespread failing also was criticized in No. 42, in contrasting women of former times to modern ladies, Isaac declaring that although there were a few modern women like Aspasia who were well educated and accomplished, such persons were greatly outnumbered by superficial, idle gossips like Poluglossa, described as

acquainted with all the world but herself; who has the appearance of all, and possession of no one virtue: she has, indeed, in her practice the absence of vice, but her discourse is the continual history of it; and it is apparent, when she speaks of the criminal gratifications of others, that her innocence is only a restraint, with a certain mixture of envy. 24

Steele described female gossips, the prudes, as "female hypocrites, who have a short way of being virtuous, by showing that others are vicious," 25 and declared that the affected virtue of the prude was no more real than the boldness of the coquette:

The motive of action in both is the affectation of pleasing men. They are sisters of the same blood and constitution; only one chooses a grave, and the other a light dress. The Prude appears more virtuous, the Coquette more vicious, than she really is. The distant behaviour of the Prude tends


24 Ibid., No. 42, p. 245.

25 Ibid., Vol. II, No. 102, p. 194.
to the same purpose as the advances of the Coquette; and you have as little reason to fall into despair from the severity of one, as to conceive hopes from the familiarity of the other. What leads you into a clear sense of their character is, that you may observe each of them has the distinction of sex in all her thoughts, words, and actions. . . . As for Prudes, it must be confessed, that there are several of them, who, like hypocrites, by long practice of a false part, become sincere; or at least delude themselves into a belief that they are so. 26

Steele must have been thinking of the prude when, speaking through Jenny Distaff, he asserted that the cause of many of the vices of men was the secret approbation women gave to libertine characters in men and contended that "it is impossible to believe, that if a man thought he should be for ever incapable of being received by a woman of merit and honour, he would persist in an abandoned way; and deny himself the possibility of enjoying the happiness of well-governed desires, orderly satisfactions, and honourable methods of life." 27 For any woman in doubt about whether or not she was a prude, Steele supplied a decisive test: If she could sincerely desire that all her male acquaintances be endowed with chaste thoughts, she was safe from prudery. 28

The third type of woman, the Platonic, or learned, lady perhaps represented, at least in Steele's mind, affectation, for he pronounced

26 Ibid., No. 126, p. 290.


hers to be an "unnatural part" and disparaged it by having a rake and his friends seduce a whole group of ladies who had retired to a nunnery for intellectual contemplation. The rake accomplished his feat by a measure which Steele smugly advocated as irresistible to all women: a subtle flattery, which would surely return a Platonic lady to her rightful state. What Steele considered to be a woman's rightful state—in contrast to the preoccupation of the Platonne with intellectual matters—can be inferred from his derogatory comments on a proposed school for girls:

To remedy this evil[ of improper female education], she [Madonella, the lady who originated the plan for the school] has laid the scheme of a college for young damsels; where (instead of scissors, needles, and samplers) pens, compasses, quadrants, books, manuscripts, Greek, Latin, and Hebrew, are to take up their whole time. Only on holidays the students will, for moderate exercise, be allowed to divert themselves with the use of some of the lightest and most valuable weapons; and proper care will be taken to give them at least a superficial tincture of the ancient and modern Amazonian tactics. . . . Another of the professors is to be a certain lady, who is now publishing two of the choicest Saxon novels, which are said to have been in as great repute with the ladies of Queen Emma's court, as the 'Memoirs from the New Atalantis,' are with those of ours. I shall make it my business to inquire into the progress of this learned institution, and give you the first notice of their 'Philosophical Transactions, and Searches after nature.'

30 Ibid., p. 189.
31 Ibid., Vol. II, No. 63, p. 11.
The fourth type of lady, the toast, perhaps received her name from the habit of gentlemen to toast their favorite ladies at their clubs; a toast was the fortunate young woman who received the applause of males coveted by the prudes and coquettes. The descriptions of two ladies singled out as toasts in No. 24 indicate that a toast could be of either an admirable and appealing or a disagreeable and affected disposition. Mrs. Gatty was characterized as a lighthearted, good-natured person who ennobled the men who admired her; her followers were the wits and their followers, the coxcombs. Her rival, Mrs. Frontlet, was in every way different, being proud and aloof and having a deleterious effect on her admirers, the "politicians and pretenders."[32] Steele's last remark about the two women illustrated his preference for the type of behavior presented by Mrs. Gatty: "Their reign will be best judged of by its duration. Frontlet will never be chosen more; and Gatty is a toast for life."[33]

In a humorous speculation on the origin of the term toast and an interpretation of the meaning of the custom of inscribing the name of a toast on a glass with a diamond, Steele declared that the glass symbolized the fragility of a toast's position and that the diamond bespoke the imaginary quality of her value; therefore, a toast should beware of placing

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33 Ibid.
much significance on her beauty: "This wise design of the glass and diamond admonish her, neither to overrate or depreciate her charms; as well considering and applying, that it is perfectly according to the humour and taste of the company, whether the toast is eaten, or left as an offal." 34

The toast, described as one who "has no more to do in this life but to judge and accept of the first good offer of marriage," 35 exemplified the uselessness and laziness about which Steele complained just as vehemently when found in women as when found in men, emphasizing that people who practiced those vices were dead. For instance in a sketch of a lady on a round of formal visits, Steele caused a young serving woman to mistake the torches of the lady's attendants for funeral torches. By the end of the sketch, after Isaac had questioned the lady about the custom of making visits on designated days and had brought out the fact that most of the visits were made to people whom the lady did not know or like and whom she expected to be absent from their homes on their own visits, it becomes quite clear to the reader that the serving woman's idea was significant. Steele concluded that formal visits were a meaningless custom made in deference to etiquette, "not made out of good-will, but for fear of ill-will," 36 and that "the trifling way the

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34 Ibid.
36 Ibid., Vol. II, No. 109, p. 223.
women have in spending their time, and gratifying only their eyes and ears, instead of their reason and understanding.37 led to many of the troubles experienced by families. Formal visiting exemplified Steele's quarrel with the upper class: "Thus are the true causes of living, and the solid pleasures of life, lost in show, imposture, and impertinence."38

Believing that "to be well-dressed, in good humour, and cheerful in the command of her family, are the arts and sciences of female life,"39 Steele condemned the vanity, affectation, gossip, and idleness to be found in fashionable women, declaring that those vices were caused by a haphazard, deficient education which varied widely among families, causing a visitor always to be unsure of the reception he was likely to have in a home:

I defy any man in England, except he knows the family before he enters, to be able to judge whether he shall be agreeable or not when he comes into it. You find either some odd old woman, who is permitted to rule as long as she lives, in hopes of her death, and to interrupt all things; or some impertinent young woman, who will talk sillily upon the strength of looking beautifully.40

37Ibid., p. 224.

38Ibid.

39Ibid., No. 75, p. 74.

40Ibid., Vol. I, No. 61, p. 344.
Yet despite his criticism of women, Steele obviously respected and admired them, frequently voicing his esteem, as in No. 10, when through Jenny Distaff he stated his belief in women's inspirational influence: "He observes, that no man begins to make any tolerable figure until he sets out with the hopes of pleasing some one of us: no sooner he takes that in hand, but he pleases every one else by the bye; it has an immediate effect upon his behavior." And, again, Isaac in No. 33 expressed his regard for women:

I gladly embrace this opportunity to express myself with resentment I ought, on people who take liberties of speech before that sex, of whom the honoured names of Mother, Daughter, and Sister, are a part: I had liked to have named Wife in the number; but the senseless world are so mistaken in their sentiments of pleasure, that the most amiable term in human life is become the derision of fools and scorners. . . . I ever argue, that the frailties of women are to be imputed to the false ornaments, which men of wit put upon . . . their folly and coquetry.

Through various sketches of women and scattered comments, Steele declared his concept of a praiseworthy woman, as in No. 83, when he printed a letter of self-recommendation by a lady: "I am not without hopes that Isaac would return her love, because I am not like the tawdry gay things that are fit only to make bonelace. I am neither childish-young, nor beldam-old, but, the world says, a good agreeable

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41 Ibid., No. 10, p. 65.
42 Ibid., No. 33, p. 193.
Another clue to Steele's preferences can be found in a
description of Belvidera in No. 126, where Steele said,

There is no sort of company so agreeable as that of
women who have good sense without affectation, and can
converse with men without any private design of imposing
chains and fetters. Belvidera, whom I visited this evening,
is one of these. There is an invincible prejudice in favour
of all she says, from her being a beautiful woman; because
she does not consider herself as such when she talks to
you.44

Elsewhere, in No. 62, Steele stated his admiration for the conversation
of an intelligent woman by saying,

You see in no place of conversation the perfection of
speech so much as in an accomplished woman. . . you
may observe a wonderful freedom in their utterance, and
an easy flow of words, without being distracted (as we
often are who read much) in the choice of dictions and
phrases. . . .45

But the paragon of feminine character was presented in No. 42 in the
person of Aspasia: humble, pious, artless, industrious, chaste, and
modest, who was described in glowing words:

Her countenance is the lively picture of her mind, which
is the seat of honour, truth, compassion, knowledge, and
innocence. . . . In the midst of the most ample fortune,
and veneration of all that behold and know her, without the
least affectation, she consults retirement, the contempla-
tion of her own being, and that Supreme Power which be-
stowed it. Without the learning of schools, or knowledge
of a long course of arguments, she goes on in a steady

45 Ibid., No. 62, p. 4
course of uninterrupted piety and virtue, and adds to the severity and privacy of the last age all the freedom and ease of this. The language and mien of a court she is possessed of in the highest degree; but the simplicity and humble thoughts of a cottage are her more welcome entertainments. Aspasia is a female philosopher, who does not only live up to the resignation of the most retired lives of the ancient sages, but also to the schemes and plans which they thought beautiful, though inimitable. This lady is the most exact economist, without appearing busy; the most strictly virtuous, without tasting the praise of it; and shuns applause with as much industry, as others do reproach. 46

Thus Steele brought together in one person the virtues he admired in women: intelligence, chastity, simplicity and modesty of deportment, and prudence in the management of the home. And it should be observed that these virtues are those which through the ages have been deemed suitable to women; nowhere in the first 136 issues of the Tatler did Steele advocate equal social, economic, or political rights— or responsibilities— for women, although he wrote at a time when a woman ruled Britain. He was conservative in his view of women's place in society and of their inherent capacities, declaring that men should love, respect, and protect them, as beautiful, weak creatures.

46 Ibid., Vol. I, No. 42, p. 244.
Mingled with the personality sketches and diatribes against gambling and duelling can be found Steele's comments on one of his favorite topics, the relationship between the sexes. His observations on this subject are numerous and intermittent and often incidental to his reflections on the behavior of men and women, as his adverse criticism of the selfish exploitation of love by the coquette and the smart fellow is incidental to his treatment of these two personalities. Consequently, in a discussion of Steele's views on love, courtship, and marriage, many characters will again appear who have been considered earlier in this paper in the analysis of Steele's concept of circumspect behavior.

One of Steele's chief purposes in the Tatler was to censure the current degraded condition of love, which was well summarized in a poem that appeared in No. 5:

Who names that lost thing love, without a tear,
Since so debauch'd by ill-bred customs here!
To an exact perfection they have brought
The action love, the passion is forgot. 1

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1 The Tatler, Vol. I, No. 5, p. 32.
To explain the poem, Steele cited several ways in which love had been debauched, among them love's having become the object of obscene wit and passion's being relegated to prostitutes. Steele disapproved of any form of illicit love, not only because it violated his moral principles, but also because it resulted in unhappiness; he likened love to Cupid and lust to satyr:

Love is a beauteous blind child, adorned with a quiver and a bow, which he plays with, and shoots around him, without design or direction; to intimate to us, that the person beloved has no intention to give us the anxieties we meet with, but that the beauties of a worthy object are like the charms of a lovely infant; they cannot but attract your concern and fondness, though the child so regarded is as insensible of the value you put upon it, as it is that it deserves your benevolence. On the other side, the sages figured Lust in the form of a satyr: of shape, part human, part bestial; to signify that the followers of it prostitute the reason of a man to pursue the appetites of a beast. This satyr is made to haunt the paths and coverts of the wood-nymphs and shepherdesses, to lurk on the banks of rivulets, and watch the purling streams, as the resorts of retired virgins; to shew, that lawless desire tends chiefly to prey upon innocence, and has something so unnatural in it, that it hates its own make, and shuns the object it loved, as soon as it has made it like itself. Love, therefore, is a child that complains and bewails its inability to help itself, and weeps for assistance, without an immediate reflection or knowledge of the food it wants: Lust, a watchful thief, which seizes its prey, and lays snares for its own relief; and its principal object being innocence, it never robs, but it murders at the same time.

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2 Ibid.
3 Ibid., No. 49, p. 280.
Steele demonstrated the corrupting effect of lustful, illicit love in the story of Duumvir, whose wife was "affable, humble, discreet, and affectionate" and whose mistress was "haughty, imperious, expensive, and fantastic." Despite the sterling qualities of his wife, Laura, Duumvir preferred his mistress, Phillis, because "the affectionate part of his heart being corrupted, and his true taste that way wholly lost, he has contracted a prejudice to all the behaviour of Laura, and a general partiality in favour of Phillis. It is not in the power of the wife to do a pleasing thing, nor in the mistress to commit one that is disagreeable." Steele also ridiculed the idea that a mistress was indispensable to a fashionable gentleman in the story of Tom Varnish, a young man newly come into his inheritance who decided that it would be "very proper, that he, as a man of wit and pleasure of the town, should have an intrigue with his merchant's wife." This young man's attempt to seduce the honest woman ended in his being locked in a trunk by the amused husband and wife and shipped out of the country. Steele contrasted the conduct of Varnish with that of the merchant and his wife.

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4 Ibid., No. 54, p. 306.
5 Ibid., p. 307.
7 Ibid., pp. 329-331.
and implied therein a contrast between true love and an immoral, fashionable passion when Isaac said that "these live in that mutual confidence of each other, which renders the satisfactions of marriage even greater than those of friendship, and makes wife and husband the dearest appellations of human life."  

Steele implied that the selection of mates for any reason except love also was a degrading custom. He illustrated current reasons for choosing partners for marriage through the story of Cynthio and his unsuccessful suit for Clarissa, 9 who preferred Beau Fisk to both Cynthio and Jack Freeland because Cynthio idolized her and Freeland held her in no esteem. She believed that the feelings of both would be turned to contempt, but Fisk, who wanted to be fashionable, could be depended on to treasure her because she was the belle of the town. Since Fisk valued her because others desired her, so long as she remained coquetish she would be assured of his devotion. 10

Another wrong reason for choosing a partner was, in Steele’s opinion, wealth or social standing. He expressed his view with a sketch of a woman who asked Isaac which of two men she should marry:

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Crassus, rich but undistinguished by any virtue or accomplishment, or Lorio, moderately wealthy but well travelled, well bred, and intelligent. Isaac answered the lady by saying,

But, indeed, Madam, when I behold that beauteous form of yours, and consider the generality of your sex, as to their disposal of themselves in marriage, or their parents doing it for them without their own approbation, I cannot but look upon all such matches as the most imprudent prostitutions. Do but observe, when you are at a play, the familiar wenches that sit laughing among the men. These appear detestable to you in the boxes. Each of them would give up her person for a guinea; and some of you would take the worst there for life for twenty thousand. If so, how do you differ but in price? As to the circumstance of marriage, I take that to be hardly an alteration of the case; for wedlock is but a more solemn prostitution, where there is not a union of minds.\textsuperscript{11}

Likewise Steele cautioned ladies not to marry a man because of pride in getting what no other woman could trap, citing the disastrous results of such a union by the story of Duumvir and Laura, Duumvir being the man who neglected his wife for a mistress. \textquote[Steele]{"Laura's hours are now spent in the sad reflection on her choice, and that deceitful vanity, almost inseparable from the sex, of believing she could reclaim one that had so often insnared others. . . ."}\textsuperscript{12}

Steele also disapproved of marrying a person only because he seemed tractable, a practice which Steele attributed to grand ladies such as Cleora:

\textsuperscript{11} Ibid., Vol. II, No. 91, p. 144.

\textsuperscript{12} Ibid., Vol. I, No. 54, p. 308.
To women of this worldly turn, as I apprehend Cleora to be, we must reckon backward in our computation of merit; and when a fair lady thinks only of making her spouse a convenient domestic, the notion of worth and value is altered, and the lover is the more acceptable, the less he is considerable. 13

Another practice of which Steele especially disapproved was marriage between a young woman and an old man. The results of such a marriage Steele effectively demonstrated in No. 20 by relating the plight of a lady about thirty years of age who desired Isaac to advise her how to obtain a divorce from a man who was not performing his matrimonial duties. After trying several arguments to persuade her that obtaining a divorce would be unsatisfactory and embarrassing, Bickerstaff asked how old her husband was. She replied that he was fifty and that she had been married to him for fifteen years. Asked why she had never told her story to friends, the lady answered that she had had the problem only a fortnight, to which Isaac replied that the law would not sanction a divorce for an infirmity that came only with age. The lady declared that since Isaac was an unsatisfactory advisor, she would go for advice to a young man of twenty-five just out of Oxford. 14

Said Isaac, "Thus I have entirely lost my client; but if this tedious narrative preserves Pastorella from the intended marriage with one twenty

14 Ibid., Vol. I, No. 20, pp. 119-121.
years her senior—to save a fine lady, I am contented to have my learning
decried, and my predictions bound up with poor Robin's Almanacks."

The desire of another young lady to marry a man of sixty Steele
attributed to a "spirit of contradiction" and advised her family to dress
and call on her as a group to take her to the wedding. Once she found
she had no opposition, she would no longer be interested in marrying
the man. However, said Isaac,

if this expedient does not succeed, I must be so just to the
young lady's distinguishing sense, as to applaud her choice.
A fine young woman, at last, is but what is due from fate to
an honest fellow, who has suffered so unmercifully by the
sex; and I think we cannot enough celebrate her heroic vir-
tue, who (like the patriot that ended a pestilence by plunging
himself into a gulf) gives herself up to gorge that dragon
which has devoured so many virgins before her.

On the other hand, Steele implied that an old man's desire to marry a
young woman was only a form of avarice. He illustrated his contention
by analyzing the motives of Aesculapius, an elderly doctor who fell in
love with one of his young patients:

Long before this disaster, Aesculapius was far gone in the
unnecessary and superfluous amusements of old age, in in-
creasing unwieldy stores, and providing in the midst of an
incapacity of enjoyment of what he had, for a supply of more
wants than he had calls for in youth itself. But these low
considerations are now no more, and love has taken place
of avarice, or rather it is become an avarice of another
kind, which still urges him to pursue what he does not want.

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15 Ibid., p. 121.  
16 Ibid., No. 22, p. 136.  
17 Ibid.  
18 Ibid., No. 44, p. 254.
Steele also disapproved of the custom forbidding a woman's showing her feelings in matters of love and affirmed that "the condition of a woman in love is of all others the most miserable. . . . A female lover is in the condition of a ghost, that wanders about its beloved treasure, without power to speak, until it is spoken to." And Steele sympathized with the lady who wrote Isaac to say, "I am a woman in love, and that you will allow to be the most unhappy of all circumstances in human life. Nature has formed us with a strong reluctance against owning such a passion, and custom has made it criminal in us to make advances." Besides prohibiting a lady from making advances, custom also forbade her to complain when her lover was false because when a lady was jilted "the very grief . . . \[was\] looked upon as a reproach, and a complaint, almost a breach of chastity." Thus the enforced silence of women protected their betrayers, and "treachery and falsehood" became "male vices." Woman's plight seemed even more unfair in comparison with man's situation: "A man that is treacherously dealt with in love, may have recourse to many consolations. He may gracefully break through

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20 Ibid.

21 Ibid., No. 128, p. 298.

22 Ibid.
all opposition to his mistress, or explain with his rival; urge his own constancy, or aggravate the falsehood by which it is repaid. But a woman that is ill-treated, has no refuge in her griefs but in silence and secrecy."

In contrast to the degraded love he reprehended, Steele praised the love that fulfilled itself in marriage and children, declaring, "The love of a wife is as much above that idle passion commonly called by that name, as the loud laughter of buffoons is inferior to the elegant mirth of gentlemen." Many people, however, overlooked the resources for happiness contained in marriage, and Steele therefore determined to aid them to understand how "to heighten the satisfactions and deaden the sorrows" of marriage:

There are several persons who have many pleasures and entertainments in their possession, which they do not enjoy. It is, therefore, a kind and good office to acquaint them with their own happiness, and turn their attention to such instances of their good fortune as they are apt to overlook. Persons in the married state often want such a monitor; and pine away their days, by looking on the same condition in anguish and murmur, which carries with it in the opinion of others a complication of all the pleasures of life, and a retreat from its inquietudes.

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23 Ibid.

24 Ibid., No. 95, p. 162.

25 Ibid., No. 90, p. 139.

26 Ibid., No. 95, p. 160.
Despite its capacity for giving happiness, marriage all too often resulted in a condition like that described in No. 7 involving a tailor and his bride on a muddy country road:

They seemed both to have a month's mind to make the best of their way single; yet both tugged arm in arm: and when they were in a dirty way, he was but deeper in the mire, by endeavouring to pull out his companion, and yet without helping her. The bridegroom's feathers in his hat all drooped; one of his shoes had lost a heel. In short, he was in his whole person and dress so extremely soused, that there did not appear one inch or single thread about him unmarried.27

Such an unhappy condition, in Steele's opinion, could be avoided through "reason, prudence, and good-nature . . . provided they have always a real and constant love to work upon."28 But, according to Steele, many ladies showed more affection to their lap dogs than to their husbands,29 and as a consequence numerous husbands found little pleasure in matrimony:

In marriage are two happy things allow'd
A wife in wedding sheets, and in a shroud.
How can a marriage state then be accurs'd,
Since the last day's as happy as the first?30

28Ibid., Vol. II, No. 90, p. 140.
30Ibid.
Steele reminded ladies that to any husband "an inviolable fidelity, good humour, and complacency of temper, outlive all the charms of a fine face, and make the decays of it invisible," and he cautioned them against quarreling because it easily became a habit, "and when to displease is thought of no consequence, to please is always of as little moment."

The frequency of disagreements in marriages led Steele to compare the behavior of many married people to the old student game of snapdragon, in which participants tried to snatch raisins from flaming brandy without burning their fingers:

You may go into many a family, where you see the man and wife at this sport; every word at their table alludes to some passage between themselves; and you see by the paleness and emotion in their countenances, that it is for your sake, and not their own, that they forbear playing out the whole game in burning each other's fingers. In this case, the whole purpose of life is inverted, and the ambition turns upon a certain contention, who shall contradict best, and not upon an inclination to excel in kindness and good offices.

Having in mind the frequency with which a spirit of battle appeared in marriage, Steele advised women to avoid quarreling by being "above trifles" since most unpleasantness "proceeded from slight occasions."

And as an example of a great unhappiness produced by a slight occasion, he related how a quarrel developed between Sir Harry Willit and his

32 Ibid., No. 85, p. 118.
33 Ibid.
34 Ibid., No. 79, p. 89.
wife because the lady playfully threw a pet squirrel into her husband's lap on top of a book he was reading. Sir Harry wrathfully dashed the animal from his lap, his wife rebuked him for his ill nature, and the incident ended in a separation. Steele declared that such misfortunes could be avoided if ladies would be mindful to be "above trifles" and to defer to their husbands in important matters, in which the men should have better judgment than they. And as a lesson for shrews, Steele published a poem about a marriage between a great beauty and a gentleman which soured because the lady was both ill humored (from being spoiled and flattered) and shrewish. The marriage was saved only when the lady followed the course recommended by an uncle of holding a magic elixir in her mouth when her husband came home. Of course, the elixir was plain water, but holding it in her mouth prevented the lady from nagging and thereby restored her husband's love. In warning all potential naggers, Steele said,

let nothing provoke you to fall upon an imperfection he cannot help; for, if he has a resenting spirit, he will think your aversion as immovable as the imperfection with which you upbraid him. But, above all . . . be careful of one thing, and you will be something more than woman . . . which is, to take pleasure in your power to give pain. It is even in a mistress an argument of meanness of spirit, but in a wife it is injustice and ingratitude.
Steele's advice to men was much briefer, consisting primarily of a reminder that marriage should be approached with veneration as well as enthusiasm and that in a good husband were to be found "the fondness of a lover, the tenderness of a parent, and the intimacy of a friend." In addition, Steele thoughtfully included for men a reliable method of curing a wife's temper fits, a method consisting of leaving a lady until she decided to behave sensibly.

Steele's approach to love and marriage in the Tatler was conservative and reasonable. He denounced illicit relationships arising from either ambition to be fashionable or passion, demonstrated the adverse effects of lust, and condemned marriage for any consideration but love. He praised, moreover, the joys of home and family and advised his readers to be unselfish and even-tempered in order to obtain the maximum of happiness from their marriages. His thesis is that love ought to fulfill itself in marriage and that marriage is the happiest and best state of being.

39 Ibid., No. 79, p. 88.
40 Ibid., No. 104, p. 201.
CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

The concept of the Tatler and the major responsibility for writing it belong to Richard Steele, although Joseph Addison, beginning with No. 18, wrote about forty-two issues and collaborated with Steele on others. 1 The credit for utilizing Swift's creation of Isaac Bickerstaff and for the scheme and the witty style of the journal goes to Steele; whereas Addison, according to John Gay, contributed "all the Visions, and other Tracts in that way of Writing, with a very great number of the most exquisite Pieces of Wit and Raillery." 2 At first the Tatler, which by the end of 1709 was probably London's most popular journal, 3 contained material falling roughly into the categories of wit, learning, poetry, and news; but "little by little, the Tatler took the world of manners and conduct for its theme, dropping one after another of the departments less congenial to its conductor." 4

1 Walter Graham, English Literary Periodicals (New York, 1930), p. 74.


3 Graham, p. 70.

4 Ibid., p. 74.
The reason for the increasing prominence of reformatory material is conjectural. Walter Graham says that

Steele was a good journalist. He gave his readers what he knew they liked to read. . . . La Crosse, Dunton, and Defoe had popularized reform. Manners and morals, matters of human conduct and social relations, had long been the subjects of discussion by writers of periodicals. For example, the genial observations of Steele regarding the worth of family ties and the delights of conjugal felicity find certain anticipation in the Ladies Mercury of 1694 and the Memoirs for the Curious of 1701.

John Gay, however, in a 1711 pamphlet implies that Steele, unlike his contemporaries, dared to censure a society disinclined toward reform:

. . . there is a noble difference between him and all the rest of our Polite and Gallant Authors: The latter have endeavour'd to please the Age by falling in with them, and encouraging them in their fashionable Vices, and false notions of things. . . . Bickerstaff ventur'd to tell the Town, that they were a parcel of Fops, Fools, and vain Coquettes; but in such a manner, as even pleased them, and made them more than half enclin'd to believe that he spoke Truth.

Instead of complying with the false Sentiments or Vicious tastes of the Age, either in Morality, Criticism, or Good Breeding, he has boldly assur'd them, that they were altogether in the wrong, and commanded them with an Authority, which perfectly well became him, to surrender themselves to his Arguments for vertue and Good Sense.

Donald F. Bond defends Gay's evaluation by saying,

Gay's remarks are not extravagant when compared with other contemporary testimony. Many of these tributes

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5 Ibid., p. 69. 6 Gay, p. 75.
were brought together by Aitken in his monumental biography of Steele, and since 1889 other contemporary sources have been published which give corroborating support. 7

Graham claims that Steele in his reformatory comment merely gave his public what they asked for. Gay implies that Steele's reproof found acceptance only because it was witty. The difference in opinion probably stems from the fact that Graham and Gay were talking about two different classes of people, Graham about the middle class and Gay about the upper class. The aristocracy may not have invited suggestions for moral improvement, but the rising middle class did, for "the middle class had discarded old aristocratic ideals, without having yet learnt to trust entirely to their own." 8

Steele's speaking primarily to the middle class explains not only the Tatler's popularity but also the moral coloring of Bickerstaff's pronouncements, since the middle class was more likely to be round-head than cavalier. This sober, conservative class of people could be expected to look askance at the affectation and frivolity of the aristocracy and at the same time to be unsure in the face of their new-found wealth.

7Donald F. Bond, editor, Essays on Wit (Ann Arbor, Michigan, 1947), p. 3.

and political power of what code of behavior to adopt for themselves. They welcomed the advice of Steele, whose didacticism covered three broad topics: the behavior of men, the behavior of women, and the institution of marriage. His effort was twofold: to denounce fashionable standards of behavior and to offer a new code of conduct based on simplicity, intelligence, and virtue. In the main, Steele conveyed his consistent concepts of acceptable behavior by sketching a multitude of London character types to illustrate with wit and insight the faults and virtues of contemporary manners. He devoted the greatest amount of space to the manners of his own sex. In these pages he declared against the old standards of courtly conduct, in which extravagance and self-indulgence were prominent, and urged cultivation of the intellect, dignity, and usefulness to society. In his views of the behavior of women, in which he deplored fashionable superficiality and vanity, he advocated not intellectual depth, but simplicity, chastity, and devotion to family. Similarly, he extolled the virtues of true love and marriage and censured illicit attachments, which he felt were fostered by the skepticism and even atheism of fashionable society.
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