

PENGUIN CLASSICS



RICHARD STEELE AND  
JOSEPH ADDISON

SELECTIONS FROM THE  
TATLER AND THE  
SPECTATOR



Richard Steele and Joseph Addison

*Selections from*  
**THE TATLER**  
*and*  
**THE SPECTATOR**

Edited with an Introduction and Notes by

ANGUS ROSS

PENGUIN BOOKS

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SELECTIONS FROM *THE TATLER*  
AND *THE SPECTATOR*

RICHARD STEELE was born in Dublin in 1672 and educated at Charterhouse, where he became acquainted with Joseph Addison. He studied at Christ Church and at Merton College, Oxford, before enlisting in the Life Guards. He hoped for rapid military advancement, but his lack of finances and connections prevented this and he left the army in 1705. He published *The Christian Hero* in 1701 and this was followed by *The Funeral*, his first work for the theatre. He wrote two further comedies, *The Lying Lover* and *The Tender Husband*. In 1701 Steele became gazetteer for the *London Gazette*, the official government journal, and in the same year married Mary Scurlock, who was his second wife. In 1709 he launched his thrice-weekly essay periodical *The Tatler*, which printed until 1711. Together with Joseph Addison he founded the *Spectator*, which was equally successful and ran for twenty-two months. He established several other periodicals, the last entitled the *Theatre*. In 1713 he was elected MP for Stockbridge. The following year he published *The Crisis*, a pamphlet in favour of the Hanoverian succession, and this led to his expulsion from the House of Commons in 1714. With the accession of George I, however, he was appointed supervisor of the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane, and received a knighthood in 1715. In 1718 he denounced in the *Plebeian* Lord Sunderland's Peerage Bill, and this led to a break with Addison, who opposed Steele in his own paper, the *Old Whig*. His last comedy, *The Conscious Lovers*, was produced in 1722. He retired to Wales and died at Carmarthen in 1729. His letters to his wife, Mary Scurlock, were printed posthumously in 1787.

JOSEPH ADDISON was born in Wiltshire in the same year as Richard Steele. A distinguished classical scholar, he studied at Oxford and was made a Fellow of Magdalen College. From 1699 to 1703 he travelled on the continent and his *Dialogues Upon the Usefulness of Ancient Medals* (published posthumously) were probably written about this time. In 1705 he published 'The Campaign',

a poem in heroic couplets. He held several positions of state and was an MP from 1708 until his death. Addison became a prominent member of the Kit Kat Club and formed close friendships with Steele, Swift, Congreve and other writers. Between 1709 and 1711 he contributed a number of papers to the *Tatler*, and launched the *Spectator* with Steele in 1711. His neo-classical tragedy *Cato* was produced with much success in 1713. He founded a political newspaper, the *Freeholder*, in 1715. The following year he was appointed a lord commissioner of trade and also married the Countess of Warwick. He retired from office in 1718 and died a year later. He was buried at Westminster Abbey.

ANGUS ROSS is Emeritus Professor of English at the University of Sussex. He writes on eighteenth-century and other literature, and has edited Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*, Tobias Smollett's *The Expedition of Humphry Clinker* and Samuel Richardson's *Clarissa* for Penguin Classics, as well as a number of other texts and anthologies.

Richard Steele and Joseph Addison

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*To*  
*John Ross and Agnes Simpson*





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