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Richard Steele
Complete Works



Series Fourteen

The Complete Works of
SIR RICHARD STEELE

(1671-1729)



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The Delphi Classics Catalogue

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rich: Steele". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a colon after "Rich".

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Version 1

The Complete Works of
SIR RICHARD STEELE



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Complete Works of Sir Richard Steele



First published in the United Kingdom in 2024 by Delphi Classics.

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ISBN: 978 1 80170 172 3

Delphi Classics

is an imprint of

Delphi Publishing Ltd

Hastings, East Sussex

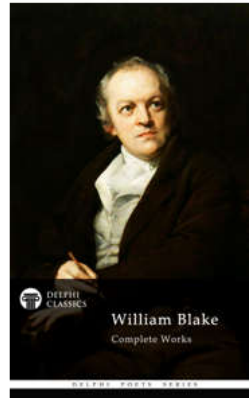
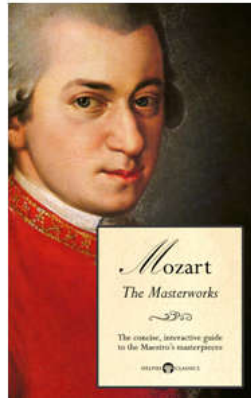
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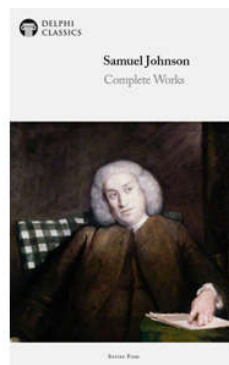
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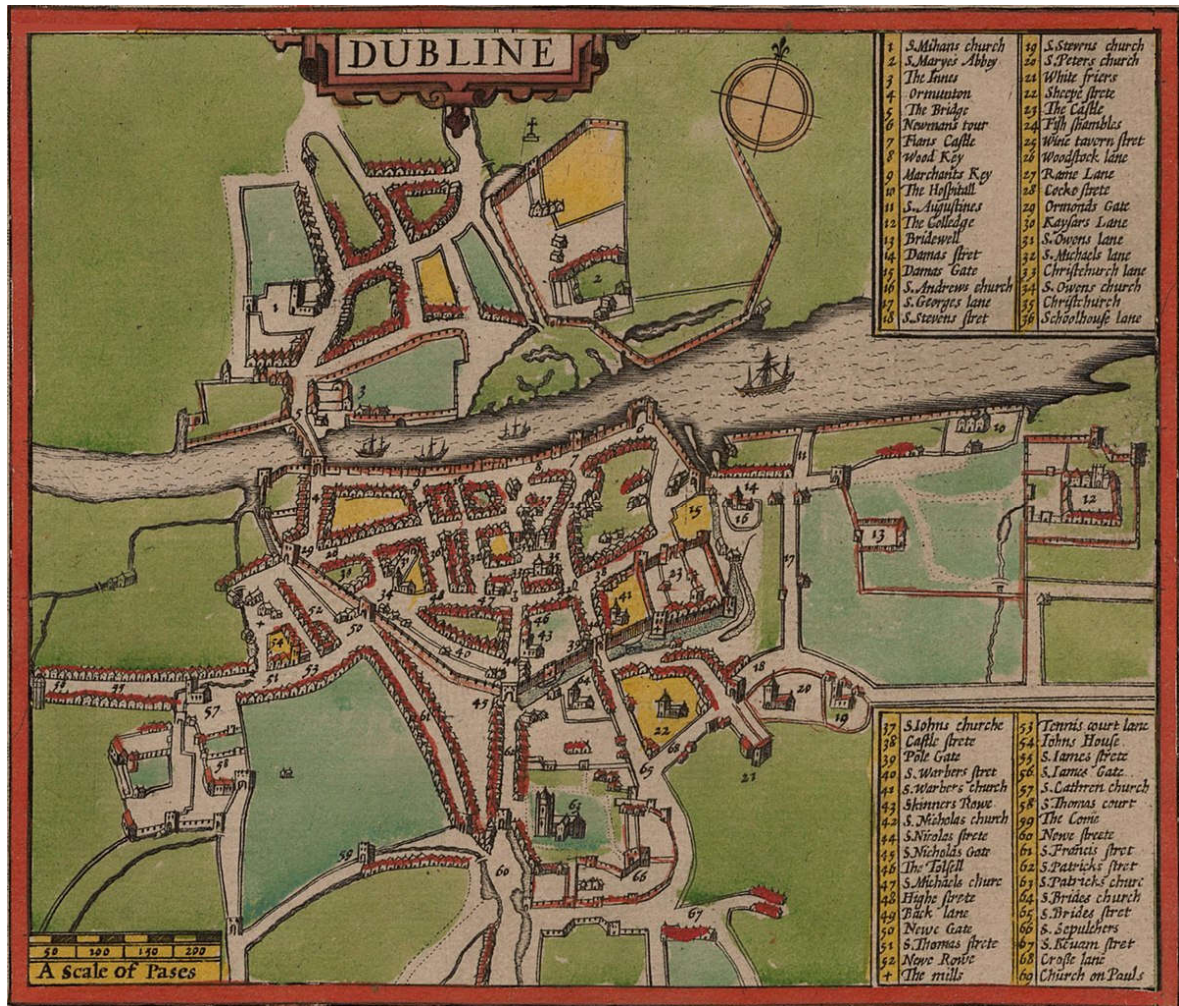


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The Prose



Map of Dublin, Ireland, 1610 — Sir Richard Steele was born in Dublin in 1671.



Sir Richard Steele by Godfrey Kneller, National Portrait Gallery, London, c. 1712

The Christian Hero (1701)



Richard Steele was born in Dublin in 1671 to Richard Steele, a wealthy attorney, and Elinor Symes, a celebrated beauty. He was the grandson of Sir William Steele, Lord Chancellor of Ireland. His father died when he was four and his mother a year later, so Steele was largely raised by his uncle and aunt, Henry Gascoigne (secretary to James Butler, 1st Duke of Ormonde), and Lady Katherine Mildmay. As a member of the Protestant gentry, he was educated at Charterhouse School in Smithfield, London, where he first met Joseph Addison, who would become a close friend and future collaborator. After starting at Christ Church, Oxford, Steele went on to Merton College, Oxford, before joining the Life Guards of the Household Cavalry to support King William's wars against France. Steele was commissioned in 1697 and rose to the rank of captain within two years.

His first prose work, *The Christian Hero*, was written in 1699 when Steele was on active duty near London as an Ensign of the Guards. The work was addressed to "Men of Wit and Gallantry," particularly to his fellow soldiers, and was dedicated to his colonel, Lord Cutts, one of Marlborough's most trusted generals. The text is structured as a moral essay and a manual of piety, which he wrote "with a design principally to fix upon his own Mind a strong Impression of Virtue and Religion."

The general theme of the tract is the superiority of the Christian religion over pagan philosophy. Steele places himself with the moralists that deprecated neo-Stoicism. The work sets about proving that the early Christians were the "most truly Gallant and Heroick that ever appeared to Mankind." In the first chapter, Steele reviews the lives of Cato, Caesar and Brutus, arguing how their philosophy was inferior in times of crisis. The second chapter provides an account of the heroic elements in the life of Christ, while the third eulogises the precepts and conduct of the early Christians, especially the teachings of Saint Paul. The fourth and final chapter analyses the value of religious motives to all men aspiring to greatness, culminating with a tribute to King William, presented here as a modern hero.

Steele was especially proud of this tract, of which he made more revisions than to any other of his other prose works. Twenty editions were published before the end of the eighteenth century, serving as testimony to its popularity with contemporary readers. Today, the tract is valued for its sincerity and grace of expression, featuring the first expressions of chief ideas later elaborated upon in *The Tatler* and *The Spectator*, outlining important tenets of moral theory.

T H E
Christian Hero:
A N
ARGUMENT
Proving that no
PRINCIPLES
BUT THOSE OF
R E L I G I O N
Are Sufficient to make a
G R E A T M A N.

—*Fragili quærens illidere dentem*
Offendet solido—Ho.

THE THIRD EDITION.

L O N D O N :
Printed for *Jacob Tonson*, within *Gray's-Inn Gate*,
next *Gray's-Inn-Lane*. 1710.

The first edition's title page

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Portrait of William III by Godfrey Kneller, c. 1690 — also widely known as William of Orange, William III was King of England, Ireland and Scotland from 1689 until his death in 1702.

TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE THE LORD CUTTS

COLONEL OF HIS MAJESTY'S COLD-STREAM REGIMENT OF GUARDS, &C.



MY LORD,

THE ADDRESS of the following Papers is so very much Due to your Lordship, that they are but a mere Report of what has past upon my Guard to my Commander, for they were Writ upon Duty, when the Mind was perfectly Disengag'd and at Leisure in the Silent Watch of the Night, to run over the Busy Dream of the Day; and the Vigilance which Obliges us to suppose an Enemy always near us, has Awaken'd a Sense that there is a Restless and Subtle one which constantly attends our Steps, and meditates our Ruin.

Thoughts of this Nature, a Man may with Freedom Acknowledge to Your Lordship, who have ever been so far from running into the Fashionable Vice of Exploding Religion, that your Early Valour first appear'd against the Profess'd Enemies of Christianity; and *Buda* had Transmitted you to late Posterity, but that you your self have Obliterated your Part in that Glorious Scene by the fresher Memory of you, at *Limerick* and *Namure*.

With one honest purpose of Life, and constant Service of one Interest, and one Cause, in what Country have you not Fought? in what Field have you not Bled? but I know I here Offend you, nor will you allow Warmth in Commendation to be like a Friend; but if, my Lord, to speak you Generous, Honest and Brave be not so, I do assure you 'tis the only thing I'll ever do in common with your Enemies.

I said your Enemies, but if there are any who have Ignorance or Malice enough to be such, their little Hates must be lost in the Distinction the better World allow you, and that Country (whose Discerning is refin'd by a Learned and Elegant University) has done you so great an Honour, in making you Unanimously their Representative in Parliament, that they who would Oppose your Reputation, do but confess they are Unacquainted with what passes in the World, and Strangers to the Residence of Knowledge and Virtue.

'Twas there you receiv'd those Rudiments of Honour, which have render'd your Life Conspicuous enough to make you appear a worthy Descendant of an Ancient and Distinguish'd Family, which has Serv'd the Crown in the most Eminent Stations, and been equally Favourites of their Country; 'twas there you Receiv'd those Impressions which Inspire that true Use of your Being, which so justly divides your Time, between Labour and Diversion, that the one does but Recreate for the other, and which give a generous Contempt of both, when they come in Competition with the Service of that Country which you Love, and that God whom you Worship.

Go on, my Lord, thus to Contemn, and thus to Enjoy Life; and if some great *English Day* does not call for that Sacrifice, which you are always ready to Offer, may you in a Mature Age go to Sleep with your Ancestors, in Expectation not of an Imaginary Fame, but a Real Immortality.

As for the Present I now make you, if you'll Accept it with your usual Goodness and Affection to me, I shall Entertain no further Hopes; for as your Favour is my Fortune, so your Approbation is my Fame,

I am,

MY LORD,

Your Lordship's

Tower-Guard,

March 23. 1701.

Most Obedient, most Faithful and most Humble Servant,

Richard Steele

PREFACE.



THE WORLD IS divided between two sorts of People, the Men of Wit and the Men of Business, and these have it wholly in their Power; but however Mighty the latter may esteem themselves, they have much the less share in the Government of Mankind, and till they can keep the others out of Company as well as Employment, they will have an almost Irresistible Dominion over us: For their Imagination is so very quick and lively, that in all they enjoy or possess, they have a Relish highly Superior to that of slower Men; which fine Sense of things they can communicate to others in so prevailing a manner, that they give and take away what Impressions they please; for while the Man of Wit speaks, he bestows upon his Hearers, by an apt Representation of his Thoughts, all the Happiness and Pleasure of being such as he is, and quickens our heavier Life into Joys we should never of our selves have tasted, so that we are for our own sakes his Slaves and Followers: But indeed they generally use this charming Force with the utmost Tyranny, and as 'tis too much in their Power, misplace our Love, our Hatred, our Desires and Aversions, on improper Objects; so that when we are left to our selves, we find Truth discolour'd to us, and they of Faculties above us have wrapt things, in their own nature of a dark and horrid Aspect, in so bright a Disguise, that they have stamp'd a kind of Praise and Gallantry on some Vices, and half persuaded us that a Whore may be still a Beauty, and an Adulterer no Villain.

These Ills are supported by the Arbitrary Sway of Legislative Ridicule, while by, I know not what Pedantry of good Breeding, Conversation is confin'd to Indifferent, Low, or perhaps Vitious Subjects ; and all that is Serious, Good or Great, almost Banished the World: For in Imitation of those we have mentioned, there daily arise so many Pretenders to do Mischief, that what seem'd at first but a Conspiracy, is now a general Insurrection against Virtue; and when they who really have Wit lead the way it is hardly to be prevented, but that they must be followed by a Crowd who would be such, and make what shift they can to appear so, by helping one Defect with another, and supplying want of Wit with want of Grace, and want of Reputation with want of Shame.

Thus are Men hurry'd away in the Prosecution of mean and sensual Desires, and instead of Employing their Passions in the service of Life, they spend their Life in the service of their Passions; yet tho' 'tis a Truth very little receiv'd, that Virtue is its own Reward, 'tis surely an undeniable one, that Vice is its own Punishment; for when we have giv'n our Appetites a loose Rein, we are immediately precipitated by 'em into unbounded and endless Wishes, while we repine at our Fortune, if its Narrowness curbs 'em, tho' the Gratification of 'em were a Kindness, like the Indulgence of a Man's Thirst in a Dropsy; but this Distemper of Mind is never to be remedied, till Men will more unreservedly attempt the Work, and will resolve to value themselves rather upon a strong Reason to allay their Passions, than a fine Imagination to raise 'em.

For if we best Judge of things when we are not actually engag'd or concern'd in 'em, every Man's own Experience must inform him, that both the Pleasures we follow; and the Sorrows we shun, are in Nature very different from what we conceive 'em, when we observe that past Enjoyments are Anxious, past Sufferings pleasing in the Reflection ; and since the Memory of the one makes us apprehend our Strength,

the other our Weakness, it is an Argument of a trivial Mind to prefer the Satisfactions that lead to Inquietude before Pains that lead to Tranquility.

But if that consists (as it certainly does) in the Mind's enjoyment of Truth, the most vexatious Circumstance of its Anguish, is that of being in Doubt; from which Men will find but a very short Relief, if they draw it from the Collections or Observations of sedentary Men, who have been call'd Wise for proposing Rules of active Life, which they cannot be supposed to understand: For between the Arrogant and Fanatiek Indolence of some, and the false and pleasurable Felicity of others (which are equally Chimæras) a Man is so utterly divided, that the Happiness of Philosophers appears as Fantastisk as the Misery of Lovers.

We shall not, 'tis hop'd, be understood by saying this, toImagine that there is a sufficient Force in the short following Essay, to stem the Universal and Destructive Torrent of Error and Pleasure; it is sufficient if we can stand without being carry'd away with it, and we shall very willingly resign the Glory of an Opposition, if we can enjoy the Safety of a Defence; and as it was at first attempted to disengage my own Mind from deceiving Appearances, so it can be publish'd for no other end, but to set others a thinking with the same Inclination: Which whoever will please to do, will make a much better Argument for his own private Use, than any body else can for Him: For ill Habits of the Mind, no more than those of the Body, are to be cur'd by the Patient's Approbation of the Medicine, except He'll resolve to take it; and if my Fellow-Soldiers (to whose Service more especially I would direct any Thoughts I were capable of) would form to themselves, (if any do not) a constant Reason of their Actions, they would find themselves better prepar'd for all the Vicissitudes they are to meet with, when instead of the Changeable Heat of mere Courage and Blood, they acted upon the firm Motives of Duty, Valour, and Constancy of Soul.

For (however they are dis-esteem'd by some Unthinking, not to say, Ungrateful Men) to Profess Arms, is to Profess being ready to Die for others; nor is it an Ordinary Struggle between Reason, Sense, and Passion, that can raise Men to a calm and ready Negligence of Life, and animate 'em to Assault without Fear, Pursue without Cruelty, and Stab without Hatred.

But Virtuous Principles must infallibly be not only better than any other We can Embrace, to Warm us to great Attempts, but also to make Our Days in their Ordinary Passage slide away Agreeably: For as nothing is more daring than Truth, so there is nothing more Chearful than Innocence; and indeed I need not have been beholden to the Experience of a various Life to have been convinc'd, that true Happiness is not to be found but where I at present place it; For I was long ago inform'd where only it was to be had, by the Reverend Dr. *Ellis*, my ever Honour'd Tutor; which Great Obligation I could not but Mention, tho' my Gratitude to Him is perhaps an Accusation of my self, who shall appear to have so little Profited by the Institution of so Solid and Excellent a Writer, tho' he is above the Temptation of (what is always in

his Power) being Famous.

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