

and learn French and so add to his learning as to be able to help their side by his writing. Addison accepted the pension and set out on his travels. For four years he wandered about the Continent, adding to his store of knowledge of men and books, meeting many of the foremost men of letters of his day. But long before he returned home his friends had fallen from power and his pension was stopped. So back in London we find him cheerfully be taking himself to a poor lodging up three flights of stairs, hoping for something to turn up.

These were the days of the War of the Spanish Succession and of the brilliant victories of Marlborough of which you have read in the history of the time of Anne. Blenheim had been fought. All England was ringing with the praises of the great General in prose and verse. But the verse was poor, and it seemed to those in power that this great victory ought to be celebrated more worthily, so the Lord Treasurer looked about him for [467] some one who could sing of it in fitting fashion. The right person, however, seemed hard to find, and the laureate of the day, an honest gentleman named Nahum Tate, who could hardly be called a poet, was quite unable for the task. To help the Lord Treasurer out of his difficulty one of the great men who had already befriended Addison suggested him as a suitable writer. And so one morning Addison was surprised in his little garret by a visit from no less a person than the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

A shy boy at school, Addison had grown into a shy, retiring man, and no doubt he was not a little taken aback at a visit from so great a personage. The Chancellor, however, soon put him at his ease, told him what he had come about, and begged him to undertake the work. "In short, the Chancellor said so many obliging things, and in so graceful a manner, as gave Mr. Addison the utmost spirit and encouragement to begin that poem, which he afterwards published and entitled *The Campaign*."

The poem was a great success, and besides being paid for the work, Addison received a Government post, so once more life ran smoothly for him. He had now both money and leisure. His Government duties left him time to write, and in the next few years he published a delightful book of his travels, and an opera.