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The Courtier in Shakespeare's Plays: A Study of the Renaissance Ideals of Courtly Conduct and Discipline in the Plays

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THE COURTIER IN SHAKESPEARE'S PLAYS: A STUDY OF
THE RENAISSANCE IDEALS OF COURTLY CONDUCT
AND DISCIPLINE IN THE PLAYS

BY
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PREFACE

The aim of this thesis is to show definite passages in Shakespeare's plays which reflect the Renaissance ideals of courtly conduct and discipline in the character of the courtier. This project, it would seem, has not been definitively treated in any work save Albert Eichler's article, "Shakespeares Begriff des Gentleman", which appeared in the Germanisch-Romanische Monatsschrift in 1921 (83: 358-70). Mr. Eichler's purpose differs from this in that he did not attempt to demonstrate the Renaissance ideals of conduct and discipline, but rather subjected Shakespeare's concept of the gentleman to close scrutiny.

The course of the present study is limited to the courtier as a representative in both a negative and positive aspect of the currents of sixteenth-century life in the dramas as well as in actual life. The most important Italian and English courtesy books of the sixteenth century, surveys of the Elizabethan period, and all the dramas of Shakespeare have been examined. The material has been carefully sifted and any irrelevant matter has been excluded. The accumulation of data points to the fact that the dramatist did
present a courtier type in his plays who either conformed to, or, as in some cases, disregarded the norms of courtly conduct. It has also been necessary to include the speeches of royal personages where it seemed that they represented either in their conversation or actions those standards of the courtier set forth by Castiglione.

The bibliography of this thesis lists only those works which specifically treated: the courtier, the period, and Shakespeare. Although numerous other valuable books were consulted, they have not been mentioned and the list of references includes only relevant material.
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CHAPTER I

THE IDEAL COURTIER

The Renaissance spirit found peace and security in Italy; soon it magnificently bore its bounty of beauty and decadence, creation and destruction across Germany and France, at last touching the soul of England. In Italy this spirit was pure Renaissance, but in England, so insular in character, it was a rarified Renaissance accompanied by shifts and variations in the social and political life. This movement stimulated a new attitude toward man's intellectual life, endeavoring at the same time to mould his different faculties according to the ideal of universality; and with a changing conception of beauty, it challenged the old standards of asceticism. This humanistic creed acknowledged the presence of earthly elements in man's being; stressed the facts that man differed from all other creatures on account of his endowed reason and that he alone knew his moral worth and dignity (27:8).

Lewis Einstein has admirably surveyed this scene of fifteenth- and sixteenth-century England. He enumerates certain dominant characteristics of the period: a sensitivity to impression; daring thought which led to action and
action which led to thought; a self-consciousness of the importance of man which culminated in a common desire to achieve fame; a deeper appreciation of nature and the pleasures derived from gardening; and a distinct change in the attitude toward women which had its rise in Italy where women sponsored courts of intellect and surrounded themselves with scholars, artists, musicians, and poets (17:258-67).

During the Renaissance men became imbued with Italianism, patriotic exultation, a heightened conception of art, a spirit of independence, and an increased reverence for the classical age. They despised the Middle Ages, and directed a movement against the simplicity, the energy, the mysticism, the freshness, and originality of that period because they failed to realize that the evolving culture of that period was stifled by the rich exuberance of the Renaissance. They looked beyond the previous century to the days of classical Rome and Greece, and there they found their models and inspiration.

The influence of these tendencies coupled with the rise of colonization and commercialization, of turbulence and chivalry, of sensationalism and Platonic philosophy, of skepticism and fanaticism, of love and adventure (79:672), all
are manifested in Renaissance literature. E.E. Stoll skillfully points out that literature usually reflects the taste of the time rather than the time itself, and often the two are widely different.

We like what we are not, or we are not what we think we are. Literature is, of course, not life, neither history nor material for history, but a scroll whereon are traced, are characterized the unfettered thoughts of writer and reader, a life within life, fancy somewhat at odds with fact (71:39).

The Tudor period, tainted with immorality, license, and greed, was marked by parallel movements which assumed contradictory forms.

The growth of luxury and the introduction of foreign refinements aided the pursuit of pleasure as circumstances, which if they did not directly make for immorality, were yet associated therewith (17:242).

The intellectual coterie of the nobility patronized poetry and drama with consistent enthusiasm and generosity. Miss Ruth Kelso asserts that "Elizabethan men of letters, in imitation of their Italian contemporaries", habitually applied their ingenuity to the invention of fantastic devices for their patrons and for themselves (26:xvii-xviii).

The organization of the English state vested supreme power in the person of the sovereign which was tempered by
wisdom and directed toward the welfare of the people (16:82). The ruler possessed the power to dispose of his or her subjects' lives, although the Renaissance developed a new spirit of individual independence. The most illustrious figures of the period followed the dictates of the ruler, and entered upon a career of diplomacy and statecraft. The courtiers, however, studied the character of the prince and sought to be near him because intimacy with him conferred a power and a lustre to their activities in an age when ambition ran high, and other avenues of distinction were non-existent or restricted (17:37).

This characteristic of real life was carried over into literature; it helped to evolve the vogue of the history play, which derived its material from political and imperial ambition either in contemporary conditions or in the records of previous reigns. Shakespeare treats many of the characteristic political views of the Elizabethans, for example, that of the glory and inviolability of sovereignty, even of de facto sovereignty, "also that of the power and honesty of the courtiers and wickedness of the flatterers", above all that of the "feeling for the glory and greatness of the commonwealth" (13:12). This tide of patriotic feeling and vigorous
nationality had for centuries been slowly growing in strength, "intelligence and manliness" was at its height, and the members of all classes were possessed of a hearty English enthusiasm and deep, national pride (23:vol.1, 149). In *Tudor Ideals* Lewis Einstein states,

The national characteristics of the English in the sixteenth century, were traits exhibited by a vigorous and gifted race who, after a long intellectual somnolence, were suddenly aroused and quickened by a succession of such forces as have always stirred mankind. Adventure, ambition, and patriotic feeling were impulses, a free horizon and boundless opportunity the condition, and a fresh outlook with its vision of new worlds, the atmospheres (17:108).

Queen Elizabeth upheld the precedents established by Henry VII and Henry VIII, and, through an indomitable will plus a powerful personality, made her reign immortal in English history and literature. It was an age of opportunity for all English people, whom Smith in *De Republica Anglorum of Gentlemen*, 1551, divided into six classes: king, gentlemen, citizens, burgesses, yeomen, and the lower classes (75:6). Industrious scholarship or bravery in battle often advanced men from one class to another. For the most part sharp class distinctions were maintained, as illustrated by Montjoy's speech in *King Henry V*,.
To sort our nobles from our common men.
For many of our princes — woe the while! —
Lie drowned and soak'd in mercenary blood;
So do our vulgar drench their peasant limbs
In blood of princes; . . . (40:IV,7, 77-81)

The Renaissance found a warm welcome in the English court which, high above the roots of national life, graciously received novelties and unconsciously performed a function of usefulness in the state (17:112). The new concepts which it encouraged were: a desire for education, a craving for sensuous beauty, a realization of the importance of literature and arms. These were developed by the best energies of the nation who gravitated around the queen (17:325-37).

Elizabeth's court was royal in every detail; the buildings, furnishings, and costumes were extravagantly rich. Her personal chamber was hung in magnificent tapestries, while the floor was covered with hay, matting, and a few carpets. The apparel worn by the queen, the lords and ladies, and other attendants was luxurious. (There are several exaggerated accounts of Elizabeth's love of extreme clothes and a deep pride in her physical beauty). The queen inherited her insatiate admiration of fine clothes and precious trinkets, of music and dancing, of riding and hunting from her Tudor
ancestors (33:79).

Her household was highly organized and systematized. The three main departments were the out-of-doors, controlled by the Master of the Horse; the downstairs, directed by the Lord Steward; and the upstairs, the most important section, guided by the Lord Chamberlain. These were again divided into numerous other departments, each intrinsically important and carefully supervised.

As has been previously emphasized, the court was a place where high prizes might be won. In E.K. Chambers' treatment of the Elizabethan court in Shakespeare's England, he aptly states that

To the lads of England it offered in anticipation a romantic adventure, and in retrospect too often a memory of sordid intrigue (33:vol.1,81).

The moral standard of the court was a debatable question. In many cases those who wrote about it were distinctly separated from its sphere of activity, consequently the pictures were biased and inaccurate. Georg Brandes depicts the court of Elizabeth as an improvement on those of her predecessors (4:88).

The prominent English gallants who graeed the court were: Sir Philip Sidney, Sir Walter Raleigh, the Earls of Bedford
and Wiltshire, Sir Francis Bryan, Sir Thomas Wyatt, Sir
Philip Hoby; and the favoured included: the Earl of Arundel,
Sir William Pickering, Lord Robert Dudley, the Earl of
Southampton, and Essex (16:90 and 33:vol.1,81).

One of the most noted foreign nobles of the period was
Gondomar, the Spanish envoy, Don Diego Sarmiento de Acūna.
He managed men in an able manner; awed by his rare firmness
of decision; won victories by exemplary suppleness; at all
times knew when to speak and when to maintain silence; and
understood how to further the Spanish king's aims by the most
intelligent means (4:89).

The ability to please the ruler became the avenue for
preferment. Court life was not conducive to character
elevation, consequently, the courtier tended to become an
indifferent tool to whatever did not lead to royal favor. He
was without independent standing and was compelled to show
pliability and debasement, in the end sometimes forgetting
his self-respect. Since Elizabeth often gave freely to her
favorites, lawyers, courtiers, and others joined in mad
attempts to obtain a part of the royal spoils - spoils gained
from commerce, war, and the Church. This affected the par-
ticipant's standards of living, making them too extravagant
and unbridled. In order to add to their fortunes, many nobles engaged in trade and trafficked at court (26:40-42).

On the other hand serious efforts were being made to train the upper classes for state duties. Elizabeth herself knew Greek, Latin, modern languages, theology, and music. The nobles patronized the arts; English men wanted to shine in letters; and education spread rapidly, spurred on by Italian humanism and diligent scholarship. No longer was a knowledge of hunting, hawking, and heraldry considered the sole essentials in a gentleman's education (16:110-14 and 25:53). The elder Sidney advised his son to study assiduously, to be careful of his tongue, to drink seldom yet enough not to betray the effects; while the younger Sidney counseled his brother to cultivate mathematics, Latin, history, to practice oratory and poetry for ornament, to learn music for his personal solace, and to acquire dexterity in the use of the sword and the dagger (25:54).

The principle recreational activity at court consisted in the revels, plays, or masques created by Spenser, Lyly, Peele, Lodge, Jonson, Beaumont, Fletcher, and Shakespeare.

The writers for courtly circles like Lyly professed to regard the actions of royalty as being only of divine concern.
Shakespeare expressed this idea of the sacredness of royalty without giving reason to suppose that it was foreign to his political convictions (16:18).

These entertainments were less lavish in the early years of the queen's reign because of a ruined exchequer. As time went on, elaborate plays were given at court, but as George Pierce Baker states,

... the strength of the Elizabethan drama as contrasted with that of the time of James, or, more accurately, the drama of 1608-1642, is that it reflects the interests and ideals of the great body of the people rather than of the Court or any literary coterie (3:19).

The study of these dramatists definitely reveals the temper of the age. It is clear, for instance, that the Elizabethans were not ashamed of their moral intentions.

From Sidney to Jonson it is agreed that the "very end of Poesie" is the delightful teaching of morality; to make men love the good and eschew the evil. And Sidney, the adored representative of his time, expresses its characteristic idealism and its high seriousness when in a famous passage he asserts the ultimate moral purpose of all learning: "This purifying of wit, this enriching of memory, enrolling of judgement, and enlarging of conceit, which we commonly call learning, under what name soever it come forth, and draw us to as high a perfection as our degenerate souls made worse by their clayey lodging, can be capable of" (87:457).

Life in Shakespeare's England was an adventurous and colorful affair; its prospects delighted and its realizations
disillusioned, but the literary productions of the age are an adequate proof that the Renaissance in England cultivated man's mind as well as his manners.

The literature produced during the sixteenth century was human in character, high in thought, and chivalrous in feeling. Feudal days were not yet forgotten; however, jousts had become contests in intellectual vigor rather than physical strength. The interests of the period were concerned with man as an individual, as a unit of society, as a supporter of the state, and as an ornament of the court. This humanistic interest gave rise to a cult of courtesy which found expression in courtesy books. Miss Kelso in her excellent study, *The Doctrine of the English Gentleman in the Sixteenth Century*, has an extensive list of such Italian and English treatises. Two of the most important and certainly the most influential Italian works are *Il Libro del Cortegiano* by Baldassare Castiglione and the *Galateo* by Giovanni Della Casa.

Any account of court life in England in the sixteenth century would be incomplete without careful attention being given to these volumes which gave a clear expression of the underlying principles of the courtier's art, and which "advocated a new ideal of social conduct" (16:61).
Sir Thomas Hoby hastened the effect of this new ideal of social conduct on the English nobility by translating Castiglione's work in 1561, some fifty years after its composition. *Il Libro del Cortegiano* was based on discussions which took place at the Court of Urbino in 1507. The four discursive books of this work asked and answered for Renaissance gentlemen the questions: What sort of an individual was the ideal courtier? What was his heritage? What did he know and how did he act? What were his purposes in life?

Count Lewis set these standards for his courtier:

> I will have this our Courtier therefore to bee a gentleman borne and of a good house. For it is a great deale less dispraise for him that is not borne a gentleman to faile in the actes of vertue, than for a gentleman. If he swerve from the steps of his ancestors, hee staineth the name of his familie. . . . The Courtier therefore, beside noblenesse of birth, I will have him to bee fortunate in this behalfe, and by nature to have not onely a wit, and a comely shape of person and countenance, but also a certaine grace, and (as they say) a hewe that shall make him at the first sight acceptable and loving unto who so behold him (9:31-32 and 33).

This was the keynote of the courtier's life - to be pleasing to all.

The group at Urbino did not wholly acknowledge that noble birth was a prerequisite for a courtier, but they did agree that a courtier should be of good shape, well-
proportioned, strong, agile, and intelligent.

And such a countenance as this is, will I have our Courtier to have, and not so soft and womanish as many procure to have, that doe not onely courle the haire and picke the browes, but also pampre themselves in everie point like the most wanton and dishonest woman in the world: and a man would think them in goeing, in standing, and in all gestures so tender and faint, that their members were readie to flee one from another and their words they pronounce so drawingly, that a man would weene that they were at that instant yeelding up the ghost and higher in degree that men are they talk withall, the more they use such fashions (9:39).

The physical exercises in which a gentleman might indulge were: riding, swimming, leaping, running, vaulting, casting the stone, and tennis; but he scorned the proletarian sports of tumbling, climbing, and wrestling.

In addition to sound physical development, the courtier needed adequate mental training. To be a good scholar required the practicing of "good things", persistent diligence in imitating the "maister", and if it were possible even "chaunging himselfe into him" (9:45).

The social graces recommended to the courtier included: conversation, writing, dancing, music, and painting. Castiglione emphasized the first two,

Likewise (when he shall see time) to have the understanding to speake with dignitie and vehemencie and to raise those affections which our minded have in them, and to inflame or
stirre them according to the matter: sometime with a
simplicitie of such meeknesse of minde, that a man would
weene nature herselfe spake to make them tender and (as it
were) dronken with sweetness: and with such conveyance of
easinesse, that who so heareth him, may conceive a good
opinion of himselfe, and thinke that he also with verie little
adoe, might attaine to that perfection, but when hee commeth
to the proofe, shall finde himselfe farre wide ........

I would have our Courtier to sneake and write in that
sorte, and not onely choose gorgeous and fine wordes out of
every part of Italie, but also I would judge him worthie
praise to use some of those termes both French and Spanish,
which by our custome have beene admitted (9:57).

Later in the discourse he states that the "good use of speech"
resulted from the possession of wit, learning, practice, and
good judgement in the selection of words. Likewise, the
courtier was to avoid the seductions of curiosity and to
adapt his conversation to the disposition of his audience
(9:59).

This ideal man was to speak the truth in a sweet,
merry manner, with conceits and jests in order to delight his
hearers; to hide his musical and artistic abilities, yet to
know the principles of painting and sculpture; and to be at
all times, honest, well-meaning, good, wise, virile, and
temperate. He was to avoid drunkenness, gluttony, riotous
living, and rude behaviour.

And therefore in mine opinion, as musicke, sportes, pastimes
and other pleasant fashions, are (as a man woulde say) the floure of Courtlinesse, even so is the training and helping forword of the Prince to goodnesse, and fearing him from evil, the finite of it (9:260-61).

Then Castiglione formulated the purpose of the courtier in life:

Wherefore agreeing to his opinions, and beside the rest, as touching noblenesse of birth, wit and disposition of person, and grace of countenance, I say unto you that to get him worthie prayse and a good estimation with all men, and favour with such great men as he shall attend upon, me thinke it is behoveful he have the understanding to frame all his life and to set forth his good qualities generally in company with all men without purchasing himself eny ... Therefore it behoveth our Courtier in all his doings to be charie and heedfull, and what he so saith or doth to accompany it with wisedom, and not onely to set his delite to have in himselfe partes and excellent qualities, but also to order the tenor of his life after such a trade, that the whole may be answerable unto these partes and see the selfe same to bee alwaies and in everything such, that it disagree not from itselfe, but make one bodie of these good qualities, so that every deede of his may bee compact and framed of all vertues, as the Stoikes say the duetie of a wise man is: al though notwithstanding alwaies one vertue is the principall, but all are so knit and linked one to another, that they tende to one ende, and all may be applyed and serve to every purpose (9:94).

He forbade him to be sad, melancholy, or solemn before his prince; to be ill-tongued about his superiors; to be saucy or contentious; to lie or flatter; to boast or ask favors from his prince (9:106-07 and 111).
Castiglione recommended black as the most suitable color for ordinary attire, but admitted that "upon armor it is more meete to have sightly and merrie colors, and also garments for pleasure cut pompous and rich" (9:116). The apparel of the courtier was expected to conform in style, color, and material to the mode.

But to speake that I thinke is most requisite as touching apparell, I will have the Courtier in all his garments handsome and cleanly, and take a certaine delight in modest precisenes, but not for all that after a womanish or light manner, neyther more in one poynte then in another, as wee see many so curious about their haire, that they forget all the reste (9:117).

Il Cortegiano as a dissertation on manners prescribes the correct methods to use in doing many things. It even goes so far as to instruct the lover in the proper procedure to follow in order that he might be loved by his lady. He was to be content with whatever tokens of looks that she bestowed upon him.

For if beautie, manners, wit, goodness, knowledge, sober moode, and so many other vertuous conditions which wee have given the woman, be the cause of the Courtier's love toward her, the end also of this love must needes be vertuous, and if noblenesse of birth, skilfulnesse in martiaall feats, in letters, in musicke, gentlenesse, being both in speech and behaviour indowed with so many graces, be the meanes where-withall the Courtier compasseth the woman's love, the ende of that love must needes be of the same condition that the
meanes are by the which hee cometh to it (9:241-42).

The essence of Castiglione's conception of the courtier was that of an individual of noble birth, comely behaviour, pleasantness, and practice in many exercises, both physical and mental. The gentlemen of the Renaissance modeled their lives and their conduct after Castiglione's design; they followed his instructions and heeded his admonitions.

Della Casa obtained some of his ideas from this dictator of etiquette for his Galateo, the most important successor to Il Libro del Cortegiano. He was also influenced by Aristotle's Nichomachean Ethics, Plutarch's Moral Treatises, Theophrastus' Characters, and Sannazaro's Arcadia. The English were introduced to this work in 1576 when Robert Peterson published his translation of The Galateo of Maister John Della Casa, Archbishop of Benevento or rather, A Treatise of the Manners and Behaviours, it behoveth a man to use and eschew, in his familiar Conversation. A Worke very necessary and profitable for all Gentlemen or Other.

The Tudor nobles learned of the current fashions at the courts of Urbino, Mantua, and Ferrara, although the author tried to elucidate the ideals of manners which were no longer
limited to courts and courtiers, but which were common to cultivated civilians (13:xix). He attempted to develop a norm for social conduct which he thought was to be found in the desire to please; thus he was interested only in the superficial aspects of life based on the efforts:

... to please others; to win their good graces and one's own ultimate success; to be sweetly reasonable in conforming to custom; to perform every act with an eye to its effect upon those about us, - on the basis of ideas as elementary yet appealing as these, he formulates in detail the precepts of conduct for daily human intercourse in a refined society (13:11-15).

He believed that good manners and fashions were those things which delighted and did not offend the senses, minds, or conceits with which man lived (13:98-99). He made his ideas practicable by showing how to convert ideals into reality; man was not only required to do things, but he was also required to do them well and with good grace, disposing of them in the proper order (13:102). He warned the courtier to refrain from any act which might offend the senses, be unpleasant to the imagination, or affect the doer or onlooker as a loathsome deed (13:17). He, likewise, forbade gentlemen to sing if they had unpleasant voices, to cough or sneeze, to spit or yawn, to sleep or read before
company, to pare their nails or shuffle their feet. At the table the courtier was expected to observe the niceties of table etiquette, and to sit erectly during his meal. Since Della Casa was a firm follower of convention, he urged the young gentlemen not to rebel against common custom in these matters. He advised them to wear well-made and closely fitting garments cut on the popular pattern from the traditional material (13:28-29). He insisted that in conversation the noble should employ only apt and proper words, carefully avoiding any which hinted at jesting, obscenity, cursing, flattery, and boasting (13:44 and 77). He considered selfishness, pride, temper, clownishness, and boldness intolerable because

Eache man desireth to bee well thought of, Albeit there bee no valour or goodness in him (13:31).

followed

If the courtier followed these mandates, he was sure to obtain respect and admiration.

These are the most important Italian courtesy books of the sixteenth century, but other works of value to the Renaissance courtier were: Lawrence Humphrey's The Nobles or of Nobilitie, 1563; Sir John Battista Nenna's Nennio or a treatise of nobility; John Lyly's Euphues, 1580, and Euphues
and His England, 1581; Peter de la Primaudaye's *The French Academie*, 1586, which is a discourse on manners, precepts, and doctrines relative to nobility; and Annibale Romei's *The Courtier's Academie*, 1598, in which beauty, human love, honor, combat, nobility, riches, and the precedence of letters or arms were discussed. This list is not intended to be exhaustive, but is included for the purpose of showing the prevalence of courtesy, travel, and philosophical works after 1528. The rapid increase of such works during the sixteenth century was accelerated; it continued to pour forth upon the reading public, courtesy books throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The practice is still going un under a somewhat different guise today.

The contagious spirit of the Renaissance swept from Italy across the sea to England, infusing into that insular nation the current ideals and customs, bringing with it as a necessary accompaniment, the popular courtesy book.

Sir Thomas Hoby had introduced the Tudor nobles to *The Book of the Courtier* in 1568. This work stimulated the English writers to expound their concept of manners, education, and exercises which formed the outward guise of gentlemen. The English version was inferior to the Italian in that it
did not stress the art of pleasing, but skill in statecraft.

The most popular courtesy books published during the sixteenth century in England were: Thomas Elyot's *The Governour*, 1531; Thomas Wilson's *The Arte of Rhetorique*, 1553; and Roger Ascham's *The Scholemaster*, 1570.

Thomas Elyot's treatise presented the virtues and ideals essential in a ruler or governor. It was not particularly concerned with the courtier's standard of living, but it did enumerate the inclusive virtues of justice, fidelity, loyalty, fortitude, care, patience, magnanimity, temperance, abstinence, continence, constancy, moderation, sobriety, sapience, prudence, majesty, humanity, benevolence, beneficence, liberality, and friendship.

*The Arte of Rhetorique* was a study of the principles of composition. There are a few casual remarks about the court or contemporary conditions; Wilson deplored the habit,

"Woe judge by Apparell, by Armour, or by harnesse, what a man is of stature or bignesse (77:127)."

*The Scholemaster* was a sort of text for the instruction of children in writing and speaking Latin, but it contains several illuminating passages about the Court and the actions
of the noble class. He warns the members of the Court group,

Take hede therfore, ye great ones in ye Court, vea though ye be the greatest of all, take hede what ye do, take hede how ye live. For as you great ones use to do, so all meane men love to do. You be indeed, makers or marrers, of all mens maners within the Realme (2:220).

He argued that if the nobles served God gladly for the sake of their consciences, they would carry the Court with them and correct any disorders in religion (2:220).

Ascham's ideas on suitable exercises for the nobility were similar to those expounded by Castiglione and Della Casa.

Therefore, to ride cumlie: to run faire at the tilte or ring: to place at all weapones: to shoot faire in bow; or surelie in con: to vault lustely: to runne: to leape: to wrestle: to swimme: To dance cumlie: to sing, and playe of instruementes cunningly: to Hawke: to hunte: to playe at tennes, & all pastimes generally, which he joyned in labor, used in open place, and on the day light, containing either some fitte exercise for warre, or some pleasant pastime for peace, be not onelie cumlie and decent, but also verie necessarie, for a Courtelie Gentleman to use (2:217).

The only discrepancies immediately apparent between his list of recommended sports and the Italian lists are that he includes wrestling as a fitting entertainment for a noble, and that he does not qualify the social graces of singing and playing.
In Spenser's works there are numerous allusions to the heritage and conduct of nobility. This is especially true of *The Faerie Queene*, 1590-1596, in which he states that courtesy is on a par with the great virtues of holiness, temperance, and justice. His ideas on this subject echoed those of Della Casa, who ranked courtesy with justice and fortitude, and those of Mulcaster, who placed a courteous, civil, and well-disposed mind in a superior class.

Professor Judson traces the Italian influence which is apparent in the poet's work, and concludes that Sir Calidore corresponds to Castiglione's ideal. He comes from gentle stock; has a charming manner; he is uniformly courteous to his superiors and inferiors; he is ready to aid the suffering; he is magnanimous to his rivals in love or war; he is frank and thoughtful, filled with vigor and courage. The knight possesses the accomplishments of skill in arms and wrestling, fleetness in running, success as a hunter, grace as a dancer, and ability as a composer of love songs, yet like the courtier advocated by Gonzaga, he is modest (84: 123-26).

The general purpose of *The Faerie Queene* was "to fashion a gentleman or noble person in virtuous and gentle
discipline". The poet was inspired by a grand self-culture which employed the means of godliness, self-mastery, chastity, fraternity, justice, courtesy, constancy to form a complete character (14:13). Spenser defined courtesy as,
a spontaneous benevolence toward others rather than a code of manners, and hence can be found beautifully manifested far from court and even in the obscurest retirement (84:136).

Ir. Judson concludes from this that Elizabeth's court was not the finest expression of courtesy in Spenser's eyes (84:133).

From this brief survey of Italian and English courtesy books, it is evident that the ideals of the two nations differed in regard to objectives. The court was conceived in a dissimilar light. In Italy the courtier was a man fitted to conquer in war, to counsel his prince, or to live at court where he sought to achieve personal perfection. The Italian writers distinguish between the courtier, whose purpose in life was serious or frivolous attendance on the prince, and the other men at court, who served the sovereign in an official or political capacity such as the counsellors, secretaries, ambassadors, or magistrates. In England the courtiers strove to surpass in statecraft (26:51). The English writers did not emphasize the need for military pride
and progress; in fact they warned against too much attention to arms, which they did not consider a necessary part of the gentleman's accomplishments. They believed that,

In time of need he must be ready to defend his country against foreign invasion or internal uprising. Shooting the long bow, hunting, fencing, swimming, and riding the great horse, though urged primarily as becoming and healthful exercises for gentlemen, were urged also as necessary or helpful training for war . . . The addition of learning, education in the liberal arts, to the requirements of a gentleman was the most conspicuous contribution of the Renascence to the development of the modern ideal (26:48).

The cultivation of man's mind and manners was the principle aim of the doctrine of the Elizabethan gentleman.

The perfect man of the Renaissance strove for excellence in every branch of human activity, both intellectual and physical, trying at the same time to be a statesman and an athlete, poet and scientist, philosopher and courtier (16:68).

Miss Ruth Kelso has examined the doctrine of the gentleman in the sixteenth century, defining him, reviewing the theory of the favored class, the suitable occupations for nobles to engage in, the established moral code for a gentleman, education, exercises, and recreation. She believes that the Elizabethan gentleman took his virtues, his statecraft, and pedagogy from the Greeks and Romans; he drew his manners in peace and his conduct in war from chivalry; he
inherited his fundamental notion of his favored position in the state from medieval politicians; and he accepted as his religion, Christianity (26:13).

The complex movements which brought about the change from feudal knight to gentleman may be briefly suggested here. The effect of the Tudor policy was the concentration of political power in the sovereign, thus making the court the real center of the nation. Political conditions conspired with the unwarlike character of all the Tudors to shift the emphasis from military to civil service; the knight became a gentleman, a man essentially drawn to the pursuits of peace. Another element was the dispersion of education throughout the people, which was augmented by the increased production of printed books. The new commercial and economic activity extended the distribution of wealth to the middle class (26:14-17).

The three significant developments of the sixteenth century were: the shifting of emphasis in civil employments, the addition of learning as an essential, and the beginning of the democratization of the gentleman (13:17).

The best summary of the period is reprinted from Samuel Daniel's The Collection of the History of England:
A time not of that viriliti as the former, but more subtile, and let out into wider notions, and bolder discoveries of what lay hidden before. A time wherein began a greater improvement of the Sovereignty and more came to be affected by wit then the sword: Equal and just encounters, of State and State in forces, and of Prince, and price in sufficiencie. The opening of a new world, which strangely ordered the manner of this, enhancing both the rate of all things, by the induction of Infinite Treasure, & opened a wider way to corruption, whereby Princes got much without their swords: Protections and Confederations to counterpoysse, & prevent overgrowing powers, came to bee maintained with larger pensions, Leidger Ambassadors first impoyed abroad for intelligences. Common Banks erected, to returne and furnish moneys for these businesses. Besides strange alterations in the State Ecclesiasticall: religion brought forth to bee an Actor in the great Designs of Ambition and Faction (26:16-17).

Gentle birth was an absolute requirement for social prestige. There was a growing tendency, however, to lay more stress upon personal worth in acquiring and maintaining nobility, and less upon birth which was desirable for its initial advantage rather than for its assumption of personal superiority.

The English gentleman of the sixteenth century was intensely interested in practical politics; he thought that the first consideration of the noble was duty to the state, but he was not interested in political theories or in speculations on the nature of the state (26:39). Queen Elizabeth fostered the idea that the nobility were the
natural governors. Her attitude was an influential factor in determining a man's vocation.

The suitability of any occupation was decided by weighing its utility to the state, its disinterestedness and lack of personal material gain, its liberal and not servile character, and its demand for mental ability and dexterity. The favorite occupations were arms and scholarship; civil pursuits and law were commendable; medicine and divinity allowed; and agriculture and trade winked at (26:42). In England the business of life absorbed the attention of the courtier. The moral standards were ranked above the aesthetic; and the serious nature of the English man was manifested in the ambassador, the counsellor, the secretary, the provincial governor, and the magistrate (26:53 and 84).

The education of the Elizabethan noble was dictated by his profession, however, he usually studied the classical writers, languages, mathematics, economics, politics, history, law, physics, philosophy, and divinity (26:126). For a time, logic, history, and poetry were under a cloud; theology and law were ignored; mathematics was used only in war; and heraldry was employed in map-making (26:126-29).

Since the Renaissance ideal of education combined a
training of the mind with a discipline of the body, the courtier was not alone a scholar, but an accomplished athlete as well. Miss Kelso estimates that, Physical strength, skill at certain exercises, and grace were therefore counted essential in the gentlemanly ideal, as they had been in the chivalric (26:149).

Certain exercises were excellent for the health: running, walking, swimming, and tennis. The practice of wrestling was placed in a somewhat dubious position because of its popularity among the lower classes. The young gentleman was also trained in the manly arts of equestrianship, shooting, hawking, hunting, and angling. Roger Ascham wrote a book of instructions for shooting entitled, Toxophilus The Schole of shootynge conteyneyd in two booke. To all Gentleman and yomen of Englande, pleasaunte pastime to rede, and profitable for their use to folowe, both in war and peace, in which he stated that shooting was one of the most appropriate sports for a nobleman, and he gave minute directions for princes and students.

A favorite game for indoor amusement was chess, another was backgammon. These supplemented the social recreation provided by conversation, music, dancing, and court masques.
The ideal gentleman was an individual notable for his versatility. He was fitted to serve in war because he possessed to a superlative degree the qualities of courage, endurance, patience, generosity, foresight, adaptability, and a thorough knowledge of military science. He was fitted to serve in peace because of his ability and power to administer the law, fortified by his justice, liberality, courtesy, prudence, understanding of himself, and capability to govern others (26:163).

Miss Kelso sums up his character and his manners in this brief statement,

As a courtier he covers the soldier's brute strength and roughness and the scholar's aloofness and awkwardness with a grace of speech and action, mastery of himself in every situation that may arise, an interest in every aspect of life, a readiness of wit and fund of general knowledge that make of him good company. He is the ornament as well as the prop of states, and is himself the one best argument for aristocracy (26:163).

The Italian and English courtesy books were of inestimable value in assisting the courtier to conform to the Renaissance ideals of courtly conduct and discipline because they definitely expressed the underlying principles of the courtier's art, and advocated a new theory of social conduct (16:61). The courtier, who was a diplomat and adviser to his
prince, a literary man and scholar, or a soldier, learned from such works that excellency in arms or letters was essential if he were to merit the glories of success and distinction (16:89-90).

The noble mind was trained with mental exercises, and the noble body with physical exercises which were adequate for aristocratic development. Yet after all his courtly education, the unstable courtier sometimes learned at court, to flatter and lie, to push forward and shove back; to the meaner men and unknown in the Court, to seem somewhat solemn, big, and dangerous of look, talk, and answer; to think well of himself, to be lusty in condemning others, to have some trim grace in gibing mock, and in greater presence to bear a brave look, to be warlike though he never looked enemy in the face of war; yet save warlike sign must be used, either a slovenly lock, or an overstaring frounced head as though out of every hair's top should suddenly steal out a good big oath when need requireth (73:vol.1,399).

Despite this unfavorable picture of the courtier, he was a colorful figure at Elizabeth's court, both in conduct and apparel. The fashions demanded magnificent and elaborate clothes made of the traditional material of nobility, velvet. Italian cut-work, French hats and gold-spangled hat-bands, embossed girdles, laced satin doublets, taffety lines embroidered with pearls and drawn out with tissue, Spanish leather boots, silver spurs, rich ruffles were all sponsored
as essentials or accessories of the courtier's dress. Thornbury described graphically the appearance of an Elizabethan gallant. The gentleman wore a cloak and doublet of scented velvet; the cloak was lined in a contrasting color, the outside was covered with diapers of lace; his hose were silk, his shoes were stamped and slashed, and ornamented with roses of ribbon; his ruff was stiffly pleated; his hat was made of either felt or beaver, adorned with feathers or looped up with a brooch of jewels. To complete the costume, the noble wore a rapier, poniard, and sheath gilt. His sword belt was richly ornamented (72: vol.1,231). The ideal Elizabethan courtier's manners matched his dress; he was courteous and graceful, wise and virtuous. It was from this picturesque figure that Shakespeare received inspiration for the characters of Romeo, Hamlet, Proteus, and his other creations.

But how did the real Elizabethan courtiers follow the precepts of Castiglione, Della Casa, Wilson, and Ascham?

The perfect example of sixteenth-century ideals of courtly conduct and discipline in the English court was Elizabeth's favorite, Sir Philip Sidney, who combined the characteristics of a gallant soldier, a statesman, a poet, a
novelist, and a courtier.

And even Sir Philip Sidney himself, England's mirror of perfection, perhaps the nearest approach to Castiglione's ideal that the English Renaissance produced, was more of a statesman than a soldier. His chief interest, as Fulke Greville's life of him shows, was the policy of governments, and his fame in Europe was made when, as a mere youth, he traveled to see the courts of princes, or was sent on relatively unimportant embassies, and astonished all with his wisdom (26:47).

Another gentleman imbued with the Renaissance philosophy of conduct was Sir Walter Raleigh, who was a soldier, a warrior, a historian, a poet, and a courtier. His gallant acts are frequently related and his ill-fated death lamented in accounts of Elizabeth's reign.

Perhaps Shakespeare reproduced the luxurious existence of such courtiers in this passage from The Taming of the Shrew, in which a lord plans to delude a man into thinking he is a member of the aristocracy.

Balm his foul head in warm distilled waters
And burn sweet wood to make the lodging sweet:
Procure me music ready when he wakes,
To make a dulcet and heavenly sound;
And if he chance to speak, be ready straight
And with a low submissive reverence,
Say 'What is it your honour will command?'
Let one attend him with a silver basin
Full of rose-water and bestrewed with flowers;
Another bear the ewer, the third a diaper,
And say 'Will it please your lordship cool your hands?'
Someone be ready with a costly suit
And ask him what apparel he will wear;
Another tell him of his hounds and horse,
And that his lady mourns at his disease:
Persuade him that he hath been lunatic;
And when he says he is, say that he dreams,
For he is nothing but a mighty lord.
This do and do it kindly, gentle sirs:
It will be pastime passing excellent,
If it be husbanded with modesty (61: Introd., I, 44-68).

Shakespeare's friend, Henry Wriothesley, third earl of Southampton, was acclaimed the handsomest of Elizabeth's courtiers. Birth, beauty, wealth, and wit sat crowned in him (28:146). He had a pronounced disposition to gallantry; his vast possessions, good education, and love of literature inspired his patronage to men of letters. It was through the earl and other friends that Shakespeare had personal relations with the men and women at Court (28:78-87). A painting of Wriothesley represents him wearing,

a doublet of white satin, a broad collar edged with lace, half covers a painted forget of red leather, embroidered with silver thread; the white trunks and knee breeches are laced with gold; the sword-belt, embroidered in red and gold, is decorated at intervals with white silk bows; the hilt of the rapier is overlaid with gold; purple garters embroidered in silver thread, fasten the white stockings below the knee. Light body armor, richly damascened, lies on the ground to the right of the figure; and a white-plumed helmet stands to
the left on a table covered with a cloth of purple velvet embroidered in gold (28:149).

The earl of Southampton cultivated his literary tastes under the tutelage of John Florio, and his professors at Cambridge. When he went to court, he entered into the sports and dissipations, the artistic and literary pursuits of his fellow courtiers. He played at tennis, joined in the jousts and tournaments, and gambled at primero (28:392).

Shakespeare also knew the prominent Viscount of Rochester, Earl of Somerset, who spent huge sums on his apparel, and took pride in his smooth-shaven face, bare neck, curled and perfumed locks, and his lavish attire (4:498).

Sidney, Raleigh, Wriothesley, and Rochester were a few of the stars that shone in Elizabeth's court. There were many others like them, who either lived up to the requirements of courtly conduct or who failed to conform to its rules. They were the real figures of the abstract concepts of courtly conduct and discipline that inspired Shakespeare's allusions to the gentlemen.
CHAPTER II

THE COURTIER IN SHAKESPEARE'S PLAYS

Does the courtier have a place in Shakespeare's plays? This is the question which must be answered in order to arrive at either a negative or a positive conclusion. It may safely be estimated, after a consideration of the ideal courtier, after a painstaking examination of Shakespeare's dramas, that, as a reflection of the period, he presents, to a degree in his characters, the realization of the Renaissance ideals of courtly conduct and discipline. The expression of these ideals is not always limited to the courtier or gentleman alone; frequently, the kings or princes in their conversation or actions make concrete the abstract principles that dominated the sixteenth-century theories of conduct. Therefore, it had been necessary to include the pertinent remarks made by royal personages in order to show where Shakespeare pictured the tendencies of his age.

If the courtier is an element of the plays, it may be asked what sort of a role does he assume? Is his delineation in strict conformity with Italian and English standards or
does he occasionally lapse into weaknesses? Is he ever satirized by the dramatist?

Shakespeare's courtier is not always ideal. Sometimes he fails to further the interests of his prince, and, like Iago, sacrifices his prince in an endeavor to advance his own personal fortunes. At times the courtier disregards Castiglione's and Della Casa's precepts against flattering and boasting his way into favor. He does not, as the English courtesy writers suggest, seek honors in learning, civil service, or arms. All Shakespeare's courtiers, however, are not moulded on these worldly lines. There are instances of ideal courtiers such as Antonio or Hamlet; and if his gentleman are not perfect in every respect, they do illustrate in part the typical ideals and standards of courtly conduct and discipline. For this reason, the study of the courtier within the province of Shakespeare's dramas is worthy of consideration.

That Shakespeare had a definite concept of the English gentleman is the theory of Albert Eichler, who, after a scholarly research, found that the dramatist mentions the word 'gentleman' over four hundred and fifty times; that he discriminates between kings, princes, dukes, marquesses, earls,
barons, and knights. Shakespeare, like several of his contemporaries, presents the virtues of gentility: disposition, valour, liberality, love of children, kindness, fearlessness, a high ethical standard, a respect for inheritance, equanimity, modesty, and patience. He cleverly and discreetly hints at the commerce carried on at court. Dr. Eichler clarifies the English and German ideas of nobility. He claims that Shakespeare's gentleman has the free personality, exact ethics, social worth, and honorable discourse which the English had inherited from Castiglione and the other Italian authors; that he understood the ordinary customs of the court because he was known in the court circle; that he had imbibed Renaissance culture; and understood the fundamental requirements of dignity in a gentleman. Although many of his courtiers err, they are, throughout the action of the plays, virile, possible, and therefore real (83:359-68).

Throughout Shakespeare's dramatic world wander kings and peasants, saints and sinners, angels and fools, men and monsters (86:456) as well as the courtier group.

Edward Dowden in his biography of the dramatist states that the terror and sadness, the abandonment of earthly joy, the wistfulness and pathos of spiritual desire, the
skepticism, the irony, and the banned sensuality of the Middle Ages were replaced during the Renaissance by a deeper and truer sanctity, a recurrence to natural facts, a broad conscience, and humanly inspired intellect (14:9-11). The validity of this dogmatic statement may be questioned, but the fact is acknowledged that the golden days of the Renaissance sponsored and cherished a preference for the luxuries of life, in environment and character.

The surroundings of the courtier were lavish at home and at court. London noblemen, in Shakespeare's age, lived in Drury Lane or Aldersgate (73:vol.1,12). Perhaps the accouterments of their residences resembled this picture,

First, as you know, my house within the city
Is richly furnished with plate and gold;
Basins and ewers to lave her dainty hands;
My hangings all of Tyrian tapestry;
In ivory coffers I have stuffed my crowns;
In cypress chests my arras counterpoints,
Costly apparel, tents, and canopies,
Fine linen, Turkey cushions boss'd with pearl,
Valance of Venice gold in needle work,
Fewter and brass and all things that belong
To house or housekeeping (61:II,1,348-57).

When an Elizabethan gentleman was bored or sought company, he left his quarters and promenaded in the famous St. Paul's to meet fashionable society, or he went to an
ordinary to learn timely gossip and interesting news.

The well-bred courtier, on entering the room, saluted those of his acquaintance who were in winter gathered round the fire; in summer round the window, first throwing his cloak to his page, and hanging up his hat and sword (73: vol. I, 125).

Shakespeare probably had a similar man in mind when he wrote,

A gentleman well bred and of good name,
That fully render'd me these news for true
(43: I, 1, 26-27).

The most appropriate place to seek the courtier was at the Court. In this congenial atmosphere, his talents were best displayed, his manners most charming, and his intrigues most interesting. There he developed and utilized the Renaissance ideals of courtly conduct and discipline. Elizabeth's court was a glamorous one; her cultured lords and beautiful ladies moved smoothly, if not serenely, pursuing their intellectual and stimulating careers.

The spirit of the Italian Renaissance was welcomed at the Tudor Court. The sixteenth-century concept of life enhanced the position of the courtier, who strove for the rewards offered there. The debasement of the parasitical gentleman disillusioned youth, however, and inspired the
0 how wretched
Is that poor man that hangs on princes' favors! (44:III,2,366-67).

Shakespeare satirized such a situation in the following dialogue:

Count. Come on, sir; I shall now put you to the height of your breeding.

Clown. I will show myself highly fed and lowly taught: I know my business is but to the court.

Count. To the court! why, what place make you special, when you put off that with such contempt? But to the Court!

Clown. Truly, madam, if God have lent a man any manners, he may easily put it off at court: he that cannot make a leg, put off's cap, kiss his hand and say nothing, has neither leg, hands, lip, nor cap; and indeed such a fellow, to say precisely, were not for the court; (34:II,2,1-14).

A pleasanter picture is that of Elizabeth's nobles who had absorbed the humanism and culture of Italy, France, and Spain.

Our court, you know, is haunted
With a refined traveller of Spain;
A man in all the world's new fashion planted,
That hath a mint of phrases in his brain;
One whom the music of his own vain tongue
Doth ravish like enchanting harmony;
A man of complements, whom right and wrong
Have chose as umpire of their mutiny:
This child of fancy that Armada hight,
For interim to our studies shall relate
In high-born words the worth of many a knight
From tawny Spain last in the world's debate
(48:1,1,163-74).

Love's Labour's Lost embodies a keen observation of
contemporary life in certain classes of society: the disci-
plining of young men in academic life, the current conventions
of conversation and dress favored in high circles (28:52). It
is a satirical extravaganza embodying Shakespeare's criticism upon
contemporary fashions and foibles in speech, in manners, and
in literature (14:55).

The dramatist facetiously refers to the prevalent
continental itineraries of the English noblemen:

Lovell. The reformation of our travell'd gallants,
That fill the court with quarrels, talk and tailors.

Chamberlain. I am glad 'tis there now I would pray our
monsieurs,
To think an English gallant may be wise,
And never see the Louvre.

Lovell. They must be either,
For so run the conditions, leave those remnants
Of fool and feather that they got in France,
With all their honorable points of ignorance
Pertaining thereunto, as fights and fire works,
Abusing better men than they can be,
Out of a foreign wisdom, renouncing clean
The faith they have in tennis, and tall stockings,
Short blister'd breeches, and those types of travel,
And understand again like honest men (44:1,3,19-33).
Shakespeare's natural affinities were with the court and the nobility; the wealthy and influential patrons of the stage. His idea of government was that of benevolent despotism assisted by public-spirited nobleman; his attitude toward society was that of an aristocrat.

But he would not be the many sided genius that the world honors if he had accepted the restrictions of any one set of men, if he had rested content with a single point of view (74:43).

He was like his fellow men of letters: Sir Thomas More, Edmund Spenser, Francis Bacon and Ben Jonson who did not hesitate to criticize a base court or its attaches:

Here do you keep a hundred knights and squires;
When so disorder'd, so debas'd and bold,
That this our court, infected with their manners,
Shows like a riotous inn: epicurism and lust
Make it more like a tavern or a brothel
Than a graced palace (47:1, 4, 262-67).

This passage is reminiscent of the abuse heaped upon the Italianate Englishman for his introduction not only of the virtues, but also the vices of the Renaissance. Criticism of this canker in English life is frequently found in the poetry and drama of the age; Roger Ascham derides such a dual personality in The Scholemaster, and deplores the effect of
this type which he feared would overwhelm the English nobles.

The popular practice of intriguing against a fellow courtier or deposing him from a favorite position was furthered by the advantages offered in Queen Elizabeth's palace.

The emperor's court is like the house of Fame
The palace full of tongues, of eyes, and ears (65:II,2,128-27).

All human conduct was not ideal during the sixteenth century if Dr. Johnson's evaluation of Shakespeare's drama as a mirror of life is correct. And if this theory is accepted, it must be remembered that a mirror reflects many things, the pleasant and the unpleasant, the good and the bad, the cultured and the vulgar. Shakespeare depicted the Renaissance ideals of the courtier just as he pictured the deeds of the ignoble gentleman.

The sixteenth-century standards of manners were derived from numerous Italian and English courtesy books which circulated through the upper classes. The rules laid down by Castiglione and Della Casa, were reiterated by Elyot, Wilson, and Ascham; they were illustrated by the nobles who served to demonstrate with nice propriety the established
commandments of courtly conduct.

The courtiers, endowed by birth and training to assume their position, tried to follow the ideals of life, scorning their companions who sought not to advise the sovereign, but to advance personal fortune. Their laments over the laxity of ethical principles led to such statements as these:

Now, afore God, 'tis shame such wrongs are borne
In him, a royal prince, and many moe
Of noble blood in this declining land.
The king is not himself, but basely led
By flatterers; and what they will inform,
Merely in hate, 'gainst any of us all,
That will the king severely prosecute
'gainst us, our lives, our children and our heirs (56:II,2,238-45).

And in a passage such as this the disastrous result is vividly described:

But howseoo'er, no simple man that sees
This jarring discord of nobility,
This shouldering of each other in the court,
This factious bandying of their favorites,
But that it doth presage some ill event,
'Tis much when sceptres are in childrenIs hands;
But more when envy breeds unkind division;
There comes the ruin, there begins confusion (45:IV,1,187-94).

Through the medium of King Henry V's inquiries,
Shakespeare lists the requirements for a courtier:

show men dutiful?
Why, so didst thou: seem they grave and learned?
Why, so didst thou: come they of noble family?
Why, so didst thou: seem they religious?
Why, so didst thou: or are they spare in diet?
Free from gross passion or of mirth or anger,
Constant in spirit, not swerving with the blood,
Garnish'd and deck'd in modest complement,
Not working with the eye without the ear,
And but impugned judgement trusting neither?

King Henry V represents Shakespeare's favorite hero as modest, dutiful, devout, brave, gentle, affable, merciful, charitable, unaffected, - a man of lofty ideals (23:V,1,247).

As has been already stated, the divisions of English society fell into five groups: gentlemen (kings, princes, dukes, marquesses, earls, viscounts, and barons), citizens, yeomen, artificers, and laborers (26:19). Of the five classes, the gentlemen were most fortunate because they possessed superiority in birth, education, manners, apparel, recreation, and environment. Therefore there was a sharp distinction between classes.

...yet reverence,
That angel of the world, doth make distinction
Of place 'tween high and low (38:IV,2,246048).
Sixteenth-century noblemen assumed that some were born to rule, and others to be ruled; that differences must be maintained between the aristocrats and the mob. This cleavage was effected by birth, education, occupation, manners, dress, and morals. Pandosto asks,

... do you know what a man is?
Is not birth, beauty, good shape, discourse, Manhood, learning, gentleness, virtue,
Youth, liberality, and such like, the spice and salt that season a man? (66:1,2,273-78).

In that brief enquiry, Shakespeare has summarized the theories of the period. He has stated the theses of the long courtesy books in his enumeration of the seasoning that flavored the gentleman.

Shakespeare has been termed an aristocrat, an antagonist to the common people. In his plays courtiers feel superior to those of a lesser station.

I will not choose what many men desire,
Because I will not jump with common spirits
And rank me with the barbarous multitudes
( 60:II,9,31-33).

The dramatist may or may not have had fixed opinions on class divisions. Implications of these ideas are inherent in this passage:
... Degree being vizarded,
The unworthiest shows as fairly in the mask.
The heavens themselves, the planets and this center
Observe degree, priority and place.
Insistence, courses, proportion, season, form,
Office and custom, in the line of order;

O, when degree is shaked,
Which is the ladder to all high designs,
Then enterprise is sick! How could communities,
Degrees in schools and brotherhood in cities,
Peaceful commerce from dividable shares,
The primogenitive of age, crowns, sceptres,
laurels,
But by degree, stand in an authentic place?

(66:1,3,83-86; and 101-06).

He goes still farther and asserts:

All our abilities, gifts, natures, shapes,
Selves and generals of grace exact
Achievements, plots, orders, preventions,
Excitements to the field, or speech for truce,
Success or loss, what is or is not serves
As stuff for these two to make paradoxes

(66:1,3,179-84).

C.F. Tucker Brooke evaluates Troilus and Cressida as
one of Shakespeare's
subtlest studies of the effect of environment on character
and as his most definitive realization of the social forces
operative in England at the end of Queen Elizabeth's reign
(80:572).

He believes that the dramatist's purpose was the portrayal
of the late sixteenth century, using as a basis the Essex
variety of decadent chivalry and the disagreements between the Cavalier and Puritan groups (80:576). The preceding quotations would seem to corroborate Mr. Brooke's theory.

It has already been said that the primary requisite for the courtier was that he be born of a good house in order that he might pattern his life after the careers of his ancestors. Because of this superiority of heritage, members of the gentle class regarded themselves as the makers of manners, Kate, and the liberty that follows our places stops the mouth of all find-faults (40:V, 293-95).

In Henry V, the speaker in the above quotation, are incorporated all the qualities that compose an ideal courtier. He is so practical, sportsmanlike, moral and pious; so manly and stalwart and yet free and easy; so self-assertive and yet modest and humble; so fierce against his enemies, and yet merciful towards women and the weak; so serious and yet simple and humorous; and so bluff and downright, and yet hearty and genuine, in the avowal of his love (71:76).

The nobly-born courtier felt a responsibility to uphold his family's reputation. When he failed to remember the importance of perpetuating the good name of his ancestors, he was chided:
... O who shall believe
But you misuse the reverence of your place,
Employ the countenance and grace of heaven,
As a false favorite doth his prince's name
in deeds dishonorable (43:IV,2,22-26).

Bassanio echoes this thought when he pleads not to
allow dishonour to approach the sovereign who is consecrated
to justice, continence, and nobility (65:I,1,13-15).

Shakespeare attributed to the true-born gentleman, who
stood upon the honour of his birth, the characteristics
of courage and honesty (42:II,4,27-38); piety and justice,
manners and observance (64:IV,1,15-20). Laertes was a
typical figure of the gentle class, and the dramatist calls
him an absolute gentleman with many virtues (39:V,2,107-14).
Prospero was unparalleled in dignity and arts, and he acted
upon the advice of a courtesy writer and devoted his life
to scholarship (62:I,2,72-106). Benedick also came from a
noble strain; he was a character of approved valour and
confirmed honesty (53:II,1,392-403). Malcolm lamented his
lack of the "king becoming graces":

justice, verity, temperance, stableness,
bounty, perseverance, mercy, lowliness,
devotion, patience, courage, fortitude
(49:IV,3,91-94).
Ford satirically commends Falstaff for his noble traits, (51:1,2, 229-31). Olivia could not bring herself to marry a gentleman, although he possessed a good reputation, experience, learning, and valor (67:1,1,277-82).

Ulysses admonishes men about these advantages:

... O, let not virtue seek
Remuneration for the thing it was;
For beauty, wit,
High birth, vigour of bone, desert in service,
Love, friendship, charity are subjects all
To envious and calumniating time,
One touch of nature makes the whole world kin

In The Two Gentlemen of Verona, the Duke frankly admits the responsibility he feels toward his ancestors and future generations of his family, and he commends Valentine as a well-derived gentleman (68:V,4, 136-46).

Perhaps Shakespeare stressed the importance of gentle birth because he owed to the noble and royal patrons of the theatre much of his culture, his repute, and his insight into the aristocratic habit of mind (4:109). He learned from the most exemplary members of this group to admire a man who preferred honor to ease, who knew valour but not fear, who sought worthy praise but feared not his peril, and who loved his mistress with an admirable fidelity (66:1,3,265-72).
He compared the attributes of Brutus and Caesar,

Brutus is noble, wise, valiant and honest;
Caesar was mighty, bold, royal and loving
(41:III,1,126-27).

Another important factor in a courtier's development was his training in letters, the arms, and the arts. If knighthood was to mean "essentially devotion, courage, charity and courtesy" (26:70), a young nobleman was required to learn the specific and detailed rules in order to suitably assume his proper position. The education of English gentlemen during the sixteenth century might be received either at home or abroad. The nobleman was expected to be familiar with Greek, Latin, and the other languages, as well as music and mathematics (61:II,1,78-84). Roger Ascham expressed contempt for those who were unacquainted with foreign languages. Shakespeare agrees in scorning them,

he hath neither Latin, French, nor Italian, and you will come into court and swear that I have a poor pennyworth in English. He is a proper man's picture, but, alas, who can converse with a dumb show? (60:I,2,75-80).

The young men also studied science, as in the case of Gerimom in Pericles, who analyzed the "blest infusions"
that were contained in metal, stone, and vegetative matter


One of the most serious problems that confronted sixteenth-century parents was the prevailing fashion for young men to sojourn some time in Italy in order to acquire the finishing touches of culture. All did not advocate Italian tours, but many held that they were a valuable asset to a noble gentleman. A conclusion of this nature is arrived at in The Two Gentlemen of Verona.

Panthino. He wond'red that your lordship Would suffer him to spend his youth at home, While other men of slender reputation, Put forth their sons to seek preferment out, Some to the wars, to try their fortune there; Some to discover islands far away; Some to the studious universities. For any or all of these exercises He said that Proteus your son was meet, And did request me to importune you To let him spend his time no more at home, Which would be no great impeachment to his age, In having known no travel in his youth.

Antonio. Nor need'st thou much importune me to that Whereon this month I have been hammering. I have consider'd well his loss of time And how he cannot be a perfect man, Not being tried and tutor'd in the world. Experience is by industry achiev'd, And perfected by the swift course of time. Then tell me, whither were I best to send him?

Panthino. I think our lordship is not ignorant How his companion, youthful Valentine, Attends the Emperor in his royal court.
Antonio. I know it well.

Panthino. 'T were good, I think, your lordship sent him thither.

There shall he practice tilts and tournaments,
Hear sweet discourse, converse with noblemen,
And be in eye of every exercise
Worthy his youth and nobleness of birth (68:1,3,4-33).

Roger Ascham in The Scholemaster presents a less favorable aspect of the question when he disdainfully derides the Italianate Englishman for unworthiness and vice, and counsels parents to retain their sons in England.

To joyne learnyng with cumlie exercises, Conto Baldesaer Castigliore in his booke, Cortegiano, doth trimlie teache: which booke, advisielie read, and diligentlie folowed, but one yeare at home in England, would do a yong gentleman more good, I wisse, than three yeares travell abrode spent in Italie (2:218).

If the father decided to send the youth to Italy, he probably observed Ascham's warning and put him under the tutelage of a wise and honest chaperon (2:225). He maintained that the English gentleman furnished an admirable example of courtly conduct and discipline, and that parents could encourage their sons to observe these qualities (2:218).

That Shakespeare did not fully agree with Ascham may be assumed from his remark that "Home-keeping youth have ever homely wits" (67:1,1,2). Shakespeare reiterated the current
idea that Italy was the source of culture:

Tranio, since for the great desire I had
To see fair Padua, nursery of arts,
I am arrived for fruitful Lombardy,
The pleasant garden of great Italy;
And by my father's love and leave am arm'd
With his good-will and thy good company,
My trusty servant, well approved in all,
Here let us breathe and haply institute
A course of learning and ingenious studies.
Pisa renown'd for grave citizens
Gave me my being and my father first,
A merchant of great traffic through the world
(61:11,1-12).

Whether the youth studied in England or Italy, he learned to do certain things with grace and charm. The indoor or social exercises in which the courtier was trained resolve themselves into art, music, dancing, poetry, and conversation. Art had not received much attention in England before Shakespeare's age; Elyot was the first advocate of it as an essential part of the gentleman's equipment. Shakespeare praised the less popular form of art, painting,

... Painting is welcome.
The painting is almost the natural man;
For service dishonor trafficks with man's nature,
He is but outside: these pencill'd figures are
Even such as they give out (64:1,1,156-60).
Dancing, so widespread during the Renaissance, so often mentioned in the court poetry and drama, was a prescribed accomplishment for the courtier. The English dancing school taught him lavaltos, corontas, and other steps (40:III,5,32-35). Dancing and masques consumed much of the gentleman's leisure time (52:V,1,30-38). On music, either instrumental or vocal, depended the success of these two arts:

Beatrice. The fault will be in the music, cousin, if you be not woo'd in good time. If the Prince be too important, tell him there is measure in everything and so dance out the answer. For, hear me, Hero: wooing, wedding, and repenting, is as a Scotch jig, a measure, and a cinque pace; the first suit is hot and hasty, like a Scotch jig, and full as fantastical; the wedding, mannerly-modest, as a measure, full of state and ancien try; and then comes repentance and, with his bad legs, falls into the cinque pace faster and faster, till he sink in his grave (53:II,1,72-83).

The ideal courtier knew and appreciated music for his own personal enjoyment and pleasure. Shakespeare, who deemed musical talent a distinct social asset (55:IV, pro.,7-9), presents this point of view in Twelfth Night:

If music be the food of love, play on; Give me excess of it, that surfeiting, The appetite may sicken and so die (67:1,1,1-3).
The courtier, in addition to musical ability, was to possess a knowledge of poetry and the necessary skill to compose a sonnet to his lady at her request. But Shakespeare apparently did not approve of the courtier's poetical taste; (poetry, as an art, had been eclipsed for a time), if York's censure of the cajolery of poetry in Richard II is authentic:

... of whose taste the wise are fond,
Lascivious matres, to whose venom sound
The open ear of youth doth always listen;
Report of fashions in proud Italy,
Whose manner still our tardy apish nation
Limps after in base imitation (56:II,1,17-23).

In The Two Gentlemen of Verona, Speed insolently mocks the salient aims of a courtier's life:

Harry, by these special marks: first, you have learned, like Sir Proteus, to wreath your arms, like a malcontent; to relish a love-song, like a robin red-breast; to walk alone, like one that had the pestilence; to sigh, like a school boy that had lost his A B C; to weep, like a young wench that has buried her grandam; to fast, like one that takes diet; to watch, like one that fears robbing; to speak puling, like a beggar at Hallowmas. You were wont, when you laughed, to crow like a cock; when you walked, to walk like one of the lions; when you fasted, it was presently after dinner; when you looked sadly, it was for wont of money; and now you are metamorphosed with a mistress, that, when I look on you, I can hardly think you my master (68:II,1,16-31).
The arts were really groups of ideas and acquisitions of skills that existed in the minds and muscles and nerves of the Elizabethan courtier. Another general social and recreational art, which the courtier assiduously cultivated, cherished, and exerted all his energies toward attaining, was a brilliant conversational ability. Castiglione and Della Casa had established a standard of the subjects fit to be discussed, and of the conversational method which exacted an intelligent and eloquent expression of thoughts by means of a smooth flow of apt words. Wilson comments in The Arte of Rhetorique:

Whom wee do most reverence, and that compt half a God among men? Even such a one assuredly that can plainly, distinctly, plentifully and aptly, utter both words and matter, and his talke can use such composition, that he may appere to keep a uniformitie and ( as I might saide ) a number in the uttering of his sentence (77:161).

Shakespeare, the observer, has crystallized the trends of contemporary evaluations of conversation in sundry comments scattered throughout the plays, for example, in Love's Labour's Lost:

Rosaline. Another of these students of that time was there with him, if I have heard a truth. Biron they call him; but a merrier man,
Within the limit of becoming mirth,
I never spent an hour talk withal;
His eye lights occasion for his wit;
For every object that the eye doth catch
The other turns to a mirth-moving jest,
Which his fair tongue, conceit's exposition,
Delivers in such apt and gracious words
That aged ears play truant at his tales
And younger hearings are quite ravished;
So sweet and valuable is his discourse (48:II,1,64-76).

Othello apologizingly explains, "Rude am I in speech,"
(54:I,3,75) but Falstaff defends outspokenness,
My lord, I will not undergo this snare without reply.
You call honourable boldness impudent sauciness: if a man
will make courtesy and say nothing he is virtuous: no, my
lord, my humble duty remembered, I will not be your suitor.
I say unto you, I do desire deliverances from these officers,
being upon hasty employment in the king's affairs
(43:II,1,133-40).

In contrast to these opinions is this refined dialogue
in King Henry IV, which would have pleased Castiglione or
Della Casa in its polished phrases,
Lord Bardolph. Sweet Earl, divorce not wisdom from your
honour.
Morton. The lives of all your loving complices
Lean on your health; the which, if you give o'er
To stormy passion, must perforce decay.
(You cast the event of war, my noble lord,
And summ'd the account of chance, before you said,
"Let us make head." It was your presurmise,
That, in the dole of blows, your son might drop.
You knew he walk'd o'er perils, on an edge,
More likely to fall in than to get o'er;
You were advis'd his flesh was capable
Of wounds and scars, and that his forward spirit
Would lift him most trade of danger rang'd;
Yet did you say, "Go forth!" and none of this,
Though strongly apprehended, could restrain
The stiff-borne action. What hath then befallen,
Or what hath this bold enterprise brought forth,
More than that being which was like to be?)
(43:1,1,161-79).

Frequently the courtier's speech was colored by a
narration of his exploits and experiences in the exercise
of arms. Westmoreland in King Henry IV utters a stirring
speech,

Wherefore do you so ill translate yourself
Out of speech of peace that bears such a grace,
Into the harsh and boisterous tongue of war;
Turning your books to graves, your ink to blood,
Your pens to lances and your tongue divine
To a loud trumpet and a point of war?(43:IV,1,
47-52).

The contents of the preceding passage are typical of
the time; for, although warfare was continued through the
sixteenth century, there was an undercurrent of opposition
to fighting. Despite the pacifistic tendency of the age,
men insisted on defending their honour, and if it were
jeopardised by peace, then they threw themselves heartily
into battle. This fact is brought out in King John when he
and King Philip greet one another with sentiments of peace
In the first part of *King Henry VI*, the lords present both sides of the question. On the one hand, military encounters are termed "outrageous broils"; and on the other, peace is scorned as "effeminate".

Lord regent, I do greet your excellence
With letters of commission from the king.
For know my lords, the states of Christendom,
Moved with remorse of these outrageous broils,
Have earnestly implored a general peace
Betwixt our nation and the aspiring French;
And here at hand the Dauphin and his train
Approacheth, to confer about some matter.

Is all our travail turn'd to this effect?
After the slaughter of so many peers,
So many captains, gentlemen and soldiers,
And sold their bodies for their country's benefit,
Shall we at last conclude effeminate peace?

The courtier, whether peaceful or martial, was expected to be dexterous in the manipulation of arms (*43:IV,5,49-80*). He studied zealously the arts of defence and the use of rapiers (*39:IV,7,96-101*). It sometimes happened that a gentleman sought redress, and was questioned about his motives,

In God's name and the king's, say who thou art
And why thou comest knightly clad in arms,
Against what man thou comest, and what thy quarrel:
Speak truly, on thy knighthood and thy oath;
As so defend thee heaven and thy valour!

(*55:1,3,10-14*).
The symbol of the sword as a standard of honour is also mentioned in this quotation from the same play,

... and by that sword I swear
Which gently laid my knighthood on my shoulder,
I'll answer thee in any fair degree,
Or chivalrous design of knightly trial
(55:I,1,79-81).

Men who pursued arms were trusted because they were witty, courteous, liberal, and full of spirit (45:(III), I,1,42-43).

The martial and physical exercises of the courtier were conventions from which few nobles deviated. They adhered to the current fashion in clothes as a necessary adjunct to their participation in these sports. They dressed from head to toe in elaborate apparel, which was sometimes criticized as a motley of European styles.

Barbers were employed to cut the courtier's hair and beard; and frequently to perfume him. Pedro and Claudio humorously refer to the barber's art of renovating a man (53:III,2,41-67). That the courtier used scents may be assumed from several remarks about musk and civet (36:III, 2,67), or the caustic judgement passed in Timon of Athens:

Thou dost affect my manners and dost use them.
Try flatterers yet wear silk, drink wine, lie soft,
Hug their diseased perfumes (64:IV,3,199 and 206-07).

The fashionable attire of the Elizabethan courtier was condemned by Ascham and other historians of the age, who scoffed at the inharmonious costumes, although some were magnificent even in their disharmony. Shakespeare alludes to this in The Merchant of Venice, and his pertinent remarks were echoed in the records of the period:

how oddly he is suited! I think he bought his doublet in Italy, his round hose in France, his bonnet in Germany and his behaviour everywhere (60:1,2,80-83).

Italian and English courtesy books ordered a courtier to wear his garments in a graceful manner or to be prepared to suffer biting sarcasm for failure to comply with custom.

His garments are rich but he wears them not handsomely (63:IV,4,772).

In Much Ado About Nothing, a relevant discussion takes place in which the various items of dress and fashions are weighed:

Conrade. I wonder at it.
Borachio. That shows thou art unconfirmed. Thou knowest that the fashion of a doublet, or a hat, or a cloak, is nothing to a man.

Conrade. Yes, it is apparel.

Borachio. I mean, the fashion.

Conrade. Yes, the fashion of fashions.

Borachio. Tush! I may as well say the fool's the fool. But seest thou not what a deformed thief this fashion is?

Watchman (aside). I know that Deformed; a' has been a vile thief this seven year; a' goes up and down like a gentleman: I remember his name.

Borachio. Didst thou not hear somebody?

Conrade. No; 'twas the vane on the house.

Borachio. Seest thou not, I say, what a deformed thief this fashion is? how giddily a' turns about all the hot bloods between fourteen and five-and-thirty? sometimes fashioning them like Pharaoh's soldier in the reechy painting, sometimes like the shaven Hercules, in the smirch'd worm-eaten tapestry, where his cod-piece seems as massy as his club?

Conrade. All this I see; and see that the fashion wears out more apparel than the man. But art not thou thyself giddy with the fashion too, that thou hast shifted out of thy tale into telling me of the fashion? (53:III,3,125-52)

The Renaissance courtier prided himself on his conformity to the changing modes and prevailing manners.

Even in the presence of the crowned king.
Thus did I keep my person fresh and new;
My presence like a rake pontifical,
Ne'er seen nut wonder'd at: and so my state,
Seldom but sumptuous, showed like a feast
And won by rareness such solemnity (42:III,2,54-59).

Falstaff, the incomparable, in a light-hearted mood
enumerates the articles of dress:

I am eight times thrust through the doublet, four through the base; my bucklers cut through and through my sword backed like a hand-saw - ecce signum (42:II,4,184-87).

The doublet, the most elegant and elaborate part of the courtier's dress, was made of the traditional velvet (63:I,2,155-56), the symbol of noble birth according to the courtly writers. There were several grades of velvet:

And thou art the velvet: thou art good velvet; thou'rt a three piled piece, I warrant thee: I had as lief be a list of the English kersey as be piled as thou art piled, for French velvet (50:I,2,31-35).

Taffeta and satin were also in high favor. The Clown in Twelfth Night remarks,

the taffeta make thy doublet of changeable taffeta, for thy mind is a very opal (67:II,4,74-76).

The latter fashionable fabric appears in King Henry IV,

I looked a' should have sent me two and twenty yards of satin, as I am a true knight (43:I,2,51-53).

The rich doublet offered a contrast to yellow stockings on cross-gartered legs (67:II,5,282-84) or with high shoes.
In *King Henry IV* (the second part), the prince takes an inventory of his clothes and finds peach-coloured hose, but a paucity of shirts and linen (43:II,2,10-29). Rich raiment was worn at court functions and for exercise in arms there were also definite garments. When a knight went riding, he wore over his suit a "bases", which was an embroidered mantle reaching from the middle of the body below the knees.

The completely garbed noble resembled this man, who conformed to the fashions set by the works of courtesy writers, and who may have been inspired by some of the dramatist's friends:

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All furnish'd, all in arms;
All plumed like estridges that with the wind
Bated, like eagles having lately bathed;
Glittering in golden coats, like images;
As full of spirit as the month of May,
And gorgeous as the sun at midsummer;
Wanton as youthful goats, wild as young bulls.
I saw young Harry, with his beaver on,
His cuisses on his thighs, gallantly arm'd,
Rise from the ground like feathered Mercury,
And vaulted with such ease into his seat,
As if an angel dropp'd from the clouds
To turn and wind a fiery Pegasus
And witch the world with noble horsemanship
(42:IV,1,97-110).
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The ideal noble, who graced the Elizabethan court, was
endowed with an excellent wit, a firm memory, and a sweet nature. Shakespeare sums him up in *Hamlet*:

> The courtier's, soldier's, scholar's eye, tongue, sword,  
> The expectancy and rose of the fair state,  
> The glass of fashion and the mold of form,  
> The observed of all observers (39:III,1,160-63).

This much travelled courtier was familiar with Greek, Latin, French, Italian, Spanish; he was well-versed in philosophy, logic, and mathematics; he was cognizant of the accepted theories of navigation and military art; he was eminent for his sobriety and his chastity, for his temperance in diet, and for his frequent fasting. His companions were books, and his friends were men of learning in the arts or in arms. This pious, just, generous, and consummately perfect man added chivalry to his brilliant career and impressed his mourners with a heavenly death-bed speech (73:vol.1,403-05). In him were realized the abstract principles and virtues which were the established norms of conduct. His purpose in life and his duty to his prince were: to teach goodness, to encourage continency, to stimulate courage, to enact justice, to suggest temperance under the veil of pleasure. The prince's capitol was composed of diligence, gentle
behaviour, kindness, and liberality. He, by right of his position, was never surpassed by his nobles.

... for learn this, Silius; Better to leave undone, than by our deed Acquire too high a fame when him we serve's away (35,III,1,13-15).

Supercedence of the prince caused envy and envy frequently resulted in expulsion. The discerning and ambitious courtier proceeded along the lines suggested by Castiglione:

The ende therefore of a perfect Courtier (whereof hitherto nothing hath beene spoken) I believe is to purchase him, by meane of the qualities which these lorde's have given him, in such wise the good will and favour of the Prince he is in service withall, that he may breake his minde to him, and alwaies enforce him frankely of the truth in every matter meete for him to understand, without fear or perill to displease him. And when hee knoweth his mind is bent to commit any thing unseemly for him, to be bold to stand with him in it, and to take courage after an honest sorte at the favor which he hath gotten him through his good qualities, to disswade him from every ill purpose, and to set him in the way of vertue. And so shall the Courtier, if he have the goodnesse in him that these Lordes have given him accompanied with a readinesse of wit, pleasantnesse, wisedom, knowledge in letters, and so many other things, understand how to behave himself readily in all occurrents to drive into his Princes heade what honour and profit shall ensue to him and to his by justice, liberallitie, valiantnesse of courage, meeknesse, and by other vertues that belong to a good prince, and contrariwise what slander, and dammage cometh of the vices contrarie to them (9:261).

The courtier strove to serve his prince, and set forth
his objective in *Pericles*,

*Pericles.* My actions are as noble as my thoughts,
That never relish'd of abase descent.
I come unto your court for honour's cause,
And not to be a rebel to her state;
And he that otherwise accounts of me,
This sword shall prove he's honour's enemy (55:II,50-64).

In *All's Well That Ends Well*, the courtier receives counsel:

*Countess.* Be thou blest, Bertram, and succeed thy father
In manners, as in shape: thy blood and virtue
Contend for empire in thee, and thy goodness
Share with thy birthright! Love all, trust a few,
Do wrong to none; be able for thine enemy
Rather in power than in use, and keep thy friends
Under thy own life's key: be check'd for silence,
But never tax'd for speech (34:1,1,69-77).

The ideal courtier not only carried out the guiding principles of outward conduct, but he also observed stringent ethical and moral standards, which were plainly evident in his philosophy of conduct. Stuart Sherman, in a commendable manner summarizes the essence of Elizabethan humanism as:

the understanding and the definition of the sphere of properly human activity. The philosophical mind of Shakespeare's age began the work of reflection by cleaving the universe along three levels. On the lowest level is the natural world, which is the plane of instinct, appetite, animality, lust, the animal passions or affections; on this
level the regulation is by necessary or natural law. On the middle level is the human world, which is regulated and, in a sense, created by the will and knowledge of men; working upon the natural world but governed by reason, the special human faculty, and illuminated more or less from the level above. On the third level is the supernatural world, which is the plane of spiritual beings, and the home of eternal ideas (68:458).

Shakespeare's courtiers are actuated by a philosophy which recognizes man's value and dignity. They condemned materialism and deplored epicureanism, which obliterated all semblances of dignity. Timon after his disillusionment says,

... madness is the glory of this life,  
As this pomp shows to a little oil and root.  
We make ourselves fools, to disport ourselves;  
And spend our flatteries, to drink those men  
Upon whose age we void it up again, 
With poisonous spite and envy. 
Who lives that's not depraved or depraves? 
Who dies, that bears not one spurn to their graves 
Of their friends gift? 
I should fear those that dance before me now 
Would one day stamp upon me: 't has been done; 
Men shut their doors against a setting sun  
(64:1,2,139-50).

In contrast to Timon's dismal conclusion of erring human life, is the belief that grace and virtue are contained in the ways of nature (58:III,3,12-22).

In England the court sponsored the Renaissance conception of the meaning of philosophy as moral conduct in
action. This was paramount in the courtier's firm resolution to please every one. He carried out his intentions by observing a strict court etiquette formulated by Castiglione and Della Casa; and employing the Aristotelian virtues of liberality, justice, and courtesy plus the Christian virtues of faith, hope, charity, and humility, in order to perfect himself and serve the state.

He felt as Hotspur did:

... O gentlemen, the time of life is short! To spend that shortness basely were too long, If life did ride upon a deal's point, Still ending at the arrival of an hour. An if we live, we live to tread on kings; If die, brave death, when princes die with us! Now for our consciences, the arms are fair; When the intent of hearing them is just. (425V,3,82-89).

The courtiers trusted the Grecian and Christian philosophies, but under no consideration did they wish to be Stoic outcasts. Rather they planned to discuss logic, to practice rhetoric in ordinary conversation, to exhilarate their minds and senses with poetry and music, for they felt, "No profit grows where no pleasure ta'en" (61:1,1,39).

The humanistic influence of the Renaissance widened the spiritual and intellectual horizon of man; it made him self-
conscious; it aroused his interest in self-advancement. This steady current flows through Shakespeare's plays. Ernest Bates asserts, however, that Shakespeare's age was more naturalistic than humanistic; that Montaigne's philosophy was more popular than Hooker's (79:672).

King Richard II's system of thought was unique. He evolved the notion of his brain as a female and his soul a father; the union resulted in thoughts of which divine and carnal were intermingled. Thoughts tending to ambition were destructive; thoughts tending to content were self-illusory (56:V,5,1-66). His concepts were negative and lack the positive spirit of Hamlet's declaration:

What a piece of work is a man! how noble in reason! how infinite in faculty! in form and moving how express and admirable! in action how like an angel! in apprehension how like a god! the beauty of the world! the paragon of animals! (39:II,2,314-19).

This reveals the inherent tendency of the Renaissance to hold man a lofty being by virtue of his reason.

Another undercurrent of the time was a placid and sensible acceptance of fact. Proteus sums up the philosophy:

Cease to lament for that thou canst not keep, And study help for that which thou lament'st.
Time is the nurse and breeder of all good. Here if thou stay, thou canst not see thy love; Besides, thy staying will abridge thy life. Hope is a lover's staff; walk hence with that And manage it against despairing thoughts. Thy letters may be here, though thou art hence; Which, being writ to me, shall be deliver'd Even in the milk-white bosom of thy love. The time serves now not to expostulate: (68:III,1,241-51).

Hope was aided and abetted by sleep. Macbeth beautifully describes its office in these lines:

... the innocent sleep,
Sleep that knits up the ravell'd sleeve of care,
The death of each day's life, some labour's both,
Balm of hurt minds, great nature's second course,

Beauty occupied men's thoughts and shaped their actions. The re-birth of culture awakened the lassitude of the medieval mind and quickened the aesthetic sense. The sixteenth-century gentleman appreciated the very spirit of beauty, especially if it animated a human form.

The hand that made you fair both made you good: the goodness that is cheap in beauty makes beauty brief in goodness; but grace being the soul of your complexion, shall keep the body of it ever fair (50:III,1,183-87).

Achilles said that man never realized his own beauty which was appreciated only by others. Ulysses believed that no one
was absolutely lord of anything. The beauty hidden in truth was hard to find. Biron soliloquizes on man's difficulty in overcoming the dazzling light of truth which either eludes or blinds him (48:1,1,72-93).

The world is made up of paradoxes, of opposites. Beauty and goodness were opposed by the ugliness of evil and superstition, which the enlightened age of the Renaissance had not rooted from the dark corners of the human mind. Liberty, if overabundant, became restraint; likewise goodness, if misconstrued, changed into evil.

Gloucester found evil portents in the eclipses of the sun and moon; he predicted the losses of friendship and love, revolution in cities, discord in rural districts, treason in court, and division of families (47:1,2,112-27).

Iago is perhaps the epitome of evil. He actuates all base motives and habits which the ordinary man represses. He expresses his disdain for a good life and his regard for an evil career in this moralistic passage:

Virtue! a fig! 'tis in ourselves that we are thus or thus. Our bodies are our gardens, to the which our wills are gardeners; so that if we will plant nettles, or sow lettuce, set hyssop and weed up thyme, supply it with one gender of herbs, or distract it with many, either to have it sterile with idleness, or manured with industry, why, the power and
corrigible authority of this lies in our wills. If the balance of our lives had not one scale of reason to poise another of sensuality the blood and baseness of our natures would conduct us to most preposterous conclusions: but we have reason to cool our raging motions, our carnal strip, our unbitted lusts, whereof I take this that you call love to be a sect or scion (54:1,3,322-37).

He is diametrically opposed to the virtue-loving Ulysses and Valentine, but he is an illustration that "men's judgements are a parcel of their fortunes". He tried to better his position by any means, worthy or unworthy; his attitude would have shocked the fastidious Italians who prophesied that "virtue is its own reward".

Castiglione admonished courtiers to be humble and modest, to be chary of boasting, and Shakespeare satirizes the proud and vain man who lauds himself and his deeds (66:II,3,164-68).

Instead he favours meekness, love, charity, obedience, and true duty as the philosophical tenets in a courtier's creed(57:II,2,107008), which leads toward contentment and happiness particularly if sought by youth, beauty, wisdom, and courage (34:II,1,181-85).

Another characteristic of the humanitarian spirit was the highly praised virtue of mercy. It was regarded as a
symbol of nobility in an age which left a record of horror in direct contrast to a memory of brotherhood and mercy unequaled since the decadence of the ancient world. In England the art of helping was regarded as a national asset.

The pomp, the learning, the craftsmanship of the age, united in a result which seems to our modern view trivial but which even in a utilitarian sense possessed social and educational value. The blending of all classes in common diversions was to have its effect as a civilizing influence by raising the mass, teaching it to appreciate other values, and keeping alive those bonds of sympathy which united the different elements of one nation (17:30).

Isabella in Measure for Measure emphatically affirms the feeling of universal brotherhood in regard to the gentle concept of life:

... Well, believe this,
No ceremony that to the great one 'longs,
Not the king's crown, nor the deputed sword,
The marshal's truncheon, nor the judge's robe,
Become them with one half so good a grace
As mercy does (50:II,2,58-63).

King Edward in Richard III feels that satisfaction which rewards a day spent in doing deeds of charity, making peace from enmity, and love from hate (57:II,1,48-60).

The practice of mercy rewarded a nobleman with an excellent reputation, and the desire for honour motivated many good deeds. Brutus loved honour more than he feared
death (41:1,2,88-89); Cassào bewailed the loss of an immortal part of man, his reputation (54:II,3,263-64). This very fervid desire to acquire and maintain a high reputation originated in the requirement of noble birth which necessitated a good life to perpetuate the noble name. Mowbray evaluated reputation as

The purest treasure mortal times afford (56:I, 1,177);

and he even went so far as to declare,

Mine honour is my life; both grow in one:
Take honour from me, and my life is done (56:I,1,182-83).

This idealistic respect for honour is characterized by King Henry V,

... By Jove, I am not covetous for gold,
Nor care I who doth feed upon my cast;
It yearns me not if men my garments wear;
Such outward things dwell not in my desires:
But if it be a sin to covet honour,
I am the most offending soul alive (40:IV,3,24-29).

The Renaissance theory of fame was not honour for honour's sake; rather it was saturated with a growing sense of commercialism.
Good alone is good without a name (34:11,3,136).

Fame was to be the reward of fidelity in this unusual academy which was established during the course of the action in Love's Labour's Lost:

King. Let fame, that all hunt after in their lives,
Live register'd upon our brazen tombs
And then grace'd us in the disgrace of death;
When in spite of the cormorant devouring Time,
The endeavor of this present breath may buy
That honour which shall bate his scythe's keen edge
And make us heirs of all eternity.
Therefore, brave conquerors, - for so you are,
That war against your own affections
And the huge army of the world's desires,-
Our late edict shall stringly stand in force.
Navarre shall be the wonder of the world
Our court shall be a little Academe,
Still and contemplative in living art.
You three, Biron, Dumaine, and Longaville,
Have sworn for three years term to live with me
My fellow-scholars, and to keep those statutes
That are recorded in this schedule here.
Your oaths are passed and now subscribe your names,
That his own hand may strike his honour down
That violates the smallest branch herein.
If you are arm'd to do as sworn to do,
Subscribe to your deep oaths, and keep it too
(48:1,1,1-23).

The courtier, if he conformed with the conventional rules for conduct and discipline, sought to facilitate his exercises by the prospect of fame. He was willing to live according to a strict philosophy of life; he acquiesced to
the demand that courtiers please, but he insisted on his profit in the bargain, an intangible yet invaluable price, fame.

Taking the norms of Castiglione as absolute norms of conduct, discipline, and philosophy, Shakespeare's courtier complies with his ideas:

I would have our Courtier therefore to finde him out an speciall and hartie friend, if it were possible, of that sorte wee have spoken of. Then according to their deserts and honestie, love, honour and observe all other men, and alwaies doe his best to fellowshippe himselfe with other men of estimation that are noble and known to bee good, more than with the unnable and of small reputation, so he bee also beloved and honoured of them. And this shall come to passe, if he bee gentle, lowly, free-hearted, easie to bee spoken to, sweete in companie, humble and diligent to serve, and to have an eye to his friendes profit and estimation, as well absent as present, bearing with their naturall defaults that are to be borne withall, without breaking with them upon a small ground, and correcting himselfe such as lovingly shall bee tolde him, never preferring himselfe before other men in seeking the highest and chiefe roomes of estimation, neither in doing as some that a man would weene despised the worlde, and with a noysome sharpnesse will tell every man his dutie, and beside that they are full of contention in every tryflying matter, and out of tune, they controll whatsoever they do not themselves, and alwaies seeke cause to complaines of their friends, which is a most hatefull thing (9:121).

Occasionally Shakespeare's characters bewail the infidelity of friends, but these indignities are forgotten before the picture of the harmonious relations between
Antonio and Bassanio, or Valentine and Proteus. In one instance, a man offers to sacrifice his life for his friend, and in the other, one is almost cheated of his love yet he forgives his companion. Bassanio regards Antonio as,

The dearest friend to me, the kindest man,
The best-condition'd and unwearied spirit
In doing courtesies, and one in whom
The ancient Roman honour more appears
Than any that draws breath in Italy (60:III,2,298-97).

Antonio illustrates his magnanimity when he speaks to Bassanio,

Give me your hand, Bassanio: fare you well.
Grieve not that I have fallen to this for you;
For herein Fortune shows herself more kind
Than is her custom: it is still her use
To let the wretched man outlive his wealth,
To view with hollow eye and wrinkled brow
An age of poverty; from which lingering penance
Of such misery doth she cut me off.
Commend me to your honourable wife:
Tell her the process of Antonio's end;
Say how I loved you, speak me fair in death;
And when the tale is told, bid her be judge
Whether Bassanio had not once a love.
Penet but you that you shall lose your friend,
And he repents not that he pays your debt;
For if the Jew do cut but deep enough
I'll pay it presently with all my heart
(60:IV,1,265-81).

The amicable relations between Valentine and Proteus are of
a different type. Before love separates them, their conversation reflects their mutual admiration.

Valentine. Cease to persuade, my loving Proteus:
Home-keeping youth have ever homely wits.
Were't not affection chains they tender days
To the sweet glances of thy honour'd love,
I would rather entreat thy company
To see the wonders of the world abroad
Thou, living dully slugardized at home,
Wear out thy youth with shapeless idleness.
But since thou lovest, love still and thrive therein,
Even as I would when I to love begin.

Proteus. Will thou be gone? Sweet Valentine, adieu!
Think on thy Proteus, when thou haply seest
Some rare note-worthy object in thy travel:
Wish me partaker in thy happiness.
When thou dost meet good hap; and in thy danger,
If ever danger do environ thee,
Commend thy grievance to my holy prayers,
For I will be thy beadsman, Valentine.

Valentine. And on a love-book pray for my success?


The affection for a woman almost separates the pair. A bitter attitude succeeds the friendly, and Valentine scornfully derides Proteus:

Thou common friend, that's without faith or love,
For such is a friend now: treacherous man!
Thou hast beguiled my hopes; nought but mine eye
Could have persuaded me: now I dare not say
I have one friend alive; thou wouldst disprove me.
Who should be trusted, when one's right hand
Is perjured to bosom? Proteus,
I am sorry I must never trust thee more,
But count the world a stranger for thy sake.
The private wound is deepest; O time most accurst,
Mongst all foes that a friend should be the worst.
   My shame and guilt confound me.
Forgive me, Valentine: if hearty sorrow
Be a sufficient ransom for offense
I tender't here; I do as truly suffer
As e'er I did commit.

Then I am paid;
And once again I do receive thee honest.
Who by repentance is not satisfied
Is nor of heaven nor earth, for these are pleased.
By penitence the Eternal's wrath appeased:
And, that my love may appeare plain and free,
All that was mine in Silvia I give to thee

(68:V,4,62-83).

The investigating sixteenth-century mind probed into
man's consciousness trying to answer the question, What is
Love? Armado defines it:

Love is a familiar; love is a devil: there is no evil angel
but Love (48:I,2,177-78).

Valentine responds, including the emotional effect:

Love's a mighty lord
And hath so humbled me as I confess
There is no woe to his correction
Not to his service no such joy on earth
Now no discourse, except it be of love;
Now can I break my fast, dine, sup and sleep,
Upon the very naked name of love (68:II,4,136-42).

Riron characterizes the emotion as a wayward boy, Don Cupid,
who is the anointed sovereign of sighs and groans (48:III, 1:181-84).

Shakespeare elevated his subject matter, and serenely enjoyed the follies and love entanglements of his characters (2:252). His attitude is especially evident in The Two Gentlemen of Verona and Love's Labour's Lost, which unlike his more serious dramas, motivated by a deeper passion of love such as Othello or Romeo and Júliet, treat love lightly. Proteus and Valentine are both attracted to the same woman. Proteus details his feelings in which love succeeds love, and his affection for Valentine slackens as his admiration for the lady increases.

The characters in Shakespeare's plays are engrossed in love but not to the same degree that Castiglione's courtier was. Biron illustrates the force of love to alter men's designs when he reviews the original plan of the academy; the vows, which the men have not kept: to fast, to study, and to see no woman. They blame women for its failure. The fair sex is accredited as the origin of the Promethean fire, love. Biron speaks of the enormity of the situation:

Never durst poet touch a pen to write
Until his ink were tempered with Love's sighs;
O, then his lines would ravish savage ears
And plant in tyrants mild humility.
From women's eyes this doctrine I derive:
They sparkle still the right Promethean fire;
They are the books, the arts, the academes,
That show: contain and nourish all the world:
Else none at all in aught proves excellent,
Then fools, you wear these women to forswear,
Or keeping what is sworn, you will prove fools,
For wisdom's sake, a word that all men love,
Or for love's sake, a word that loves all men,
Or for men's sake, the authors of these women,
Or women's sake, by whom we men are men,
Let us once lose our oaths to find ourselves
Or else we lose ourselves to keep our oaths.
It is religion to be forsworn,
For charity itself fulfills the law,
And who can sever love from charity? (48:IV,3, 346-65).

The correct technique of loving received more attention
in Italy than in England. The ideal courtier was instructed
to follow certain conventions when he was seeking his
mistress' favor.

There were a variety of correct modes of addressing
the woman. He praised her, comparing her virtues with his
deficiencies; he used extravagant metaphors to demonstrate
the ardor of his passion; he forsook wealth for women, and
sometimes appealed to a woman's vanity by ranking her above
a rival.

Romeo's tender speeches are landmarks in literary
History. His sweet Juliet’s beauty made him effeminate and softened his valour (58:III,1,118-23). He impresses Juliet with his compliments:

Romeo. By love, who first did prompt me to inquire; he lent me counsel and I lent her eyes. I am no pilot; yet, wert thou as far As that vast shore wash’d with the farthest sea, I should adventure for such merchandise.

Juliet. Thou know’st the mask of night is on my face, Else would a maiden blush benaint my cheek For that which thou hast heard me speak tonight. Fain would I dwell on form, fain, fain deny What I have spoke; but farewell compliment! (58:II, 2, 80-89).

Juliet’s affair lacks the pathos of Cordelia’s romance, who when cast off by her father is saved by the chivalry of France:

France. Fairest Cordelia, thou art most rich, being poor; Most choice, forsaken; and most loved, despised! Thee and thy virtues here I seize upon: Be it lawful I take up what’s cast away. Gods, gods! ’tis strange that from their cold’st neglect My love should kindle to inflamed respect. Thy dowerless daughter, king, thrown to my chance, Is queen of us, of ours, and our fair France: Not all the dukes of waterish Burgundy Can buy this unprized precious maid from me, Bid them farewell, Cordelia, though unkind: Thou losest here a better where to find (47:I,1,253-64).

Ferdinand’s love for Miranda is fairly placid. He
displays wisdom and sophistication, the results of his experience, when he addresses her as "worth what's dearest in the world", and assures her that he has never loved any woman "with so full soul". She is "so perfect and so peerless", and is formed from the best of every creature (62:III,1,37-48).

The dramatist casts reflections on the courtier's intention when he allows Parolles to say that a gentleman loved a woman yet loved her not (34:V,3,238-47). But when a man wanted a woman's love, he employed the "love-broker", the report of valour (67:III,3,35-41).

Castiglione's concept of love was almost a religion which worshipped feminine perfection. Sir Walter Raleigh preceded modern psychology with his theory that love was a necessary outlet for a courtier's vanity.

But no one in England who set forth the complete gentleman includes the art of loving among his accomplishments (24:84).

Such a condition was unknown in Italy.

The English courtier, represented by Spenser, was skilled in arms, athletic prowess, gracious speech, dancing, and the composition of love songs. The poet presumably
had in mind the versatile, extensively trained Renaissance gentleman as exemplified in Sidney and Raleigh (84:127).

Gremio advised the young suitor to read books of love to his lady, but Antipholus of Syracuse in The Comedy of Errors, believed in individual expression.

Sweet mistress,- what your name is else, I know not,
Nor by what wonder you do hit of mine,-
Less in your knowledge and your grace you show not
Than our earth's wonder, more than earth divine.
Teach me, dear creature, how to think and speak;
Lay open to my earthly-gross conceit,
Smother'd in errors, feeble, shallow, weak,
The folded meaning of your word's deceit.
Against my soul's pure truth, why labor you
To make it wander in an unknown field?
Are you a god? would you create me new?
Transform me then, and to your power I'll yield
(59:III,2,28-40).

An unfaithful lover was held in defame yet encouraged to hide his infidelity from his wife. A truly ideal courtier would never deceive any one (59:III,2,1-8).

A typically Renaissance idea, which bears the mark of the sixteenth century, is that love rose in the liver (53:IV,1,224-35); this liverish product erased the constancy of friendship and melted faith in the blood (53:II,1,178-89). The fervor of the passion stimulated an unusual literary
style which resulted in this form of love-letter:

By heaven, that thou art fair, is most infallible; true, that art beauteous, truth in itself, that thou art lovely. More fairer than fair, beautiful than beauteous, truer than truth itself, have commiseration on thy heroidal vassal! The magnanimous and most illustrate king Cophetua set eye upon the pernicious and indubitable beggar Zenelophon; and he it was that might rightly say, *Veni, vidi, vici*; which to annothanize in the vulgar, - *basid* and obscure vulgar! *videlicet*, He came, saw and overcame: he came, one; saw, two; overcame, three; Who came? the king: Why did he come? to see: why did he see? to overcome: to whom came he? to the beggar: what saw he? the beggar: who overcame he? the beggar. The conclusion is victory: on whose side? the king's. The captive is enriched: on whose side? the beggar's. The catastrophe is a nuptial: on whose side? the king's: no, on both in one, or one in both. I am the king; for so stands the comparison: thou the beggar, for so witnesseth thy lowliness. Shall I command thy love? I may: shall I enforce thy love? I could: shall I entreat thy love? I will, What shalt thou exchange for rags? robes; for titles? titles; for thyself? me. Thus, expecting thy reply, I profane my lips on thy foot; my eyes on thy picture, and my heart on thy every part. Thine, in the dearest design of industry.

Don Adriano De Armado (48:IV,1,60-89).

It affected the conventional conduct of courtiers and widened the intellectual scope of women. Isabella d'Este, a charming figure of the period, redeemed feminine mistakes by virtue of her exceptional character, highly developed intellect, and social grace. She was the human ideal of womanhood, and possessed the essential qualities of noble birth, lack of affectation and curiosity, goodness, grace,
attractive cleverness, and an active wit; she was not
touched by the sins of haughty envy, slander, wantonness,
or contentiousness; she was the realization of Castiglione's
hope. Juliet and Desdemona resemble her in their high
principles and gracious manners (9:188-90).

Shakespeare's plays contain certain references to
feminine virtues. He, like Gonzaga, believed that if a
woman came from gentle stock and noble kind (55:V,1,67-69),
she would be likely to possess beauty, wisdom, and modesty
(35:II,3,246-48), but if she forgot her noble origin, honour,
and virtue she would defile nobility (45:II,1,194-95; (II)).
Lady Blanche and Juliet are almost perfect specimens of the
feminine complement to the ideal courtier.

Women had not achieved equality with men; Valentine's
analysis of women's ways is enlightening:

A woman sometimes scorns what best contents her.
Send her another; never give her o'er;
For scorn at first makes after love the more.
If she do frown, 'tis not in hate of you,
But rather to beget more love in you:
If she do chide, 'tis not to have you gone;
For why, the fools are mad, if left alone.
Take no repulse, whatever she doth say;
For 'get you gone', she doth not mean 'away'!
Flatter and praise, commend, extol their graces;
Though ne'er so black, say they have angel's
takes.
That man hath a tongue, I say is no man, 
If he with his tongue cannot win a woman
(68:III,1,93-105).

Certain of Shakespeare's courtiers disregarded the rules of good etiquette; on the other hand, many reflected the ideals of courtly conduct and discipline. The noble gentleman, endowed by birth and training to take his place at court, tried to be charming and interesting at all times.

Young Englishmen, like Roger Ascham, sometimes received their education in the fundamentals of courtly deportment in the homes of friendly lords. There is a reference to this practice in Richard II when Percy offers his tender, raw, young services to Bolingbroke.

After an inexperienced nobleman acquired the necessary knowledge and training, he might ultimately gain an advisory position, such as that filled by Northumberland (56:III,3,114-32).

Shakespeare watched the trend of this movement, and influenced by current standards, he too lists detailed instructions for courtly conduct. His ideas follow Castiglione's advice to observe the prince:

... Therefore omit him not; blunt not his love,
Nor lose the good advantage of his grace
By seeming cold or careless of his will;
For he is gracious, if he be observed:
He hath a tear for pity and a hand
Open as day for melting charity;
Yet notwithstanding, being incensed, his flint,
As humorous as winter and as sudden
As flows congealed in the spring of day.
His temper, therefore, must be well observed:
Chide him for faults, and do it reverently,
When you perceive his blood inclined to mirth;
But, being moody, give him line and scope,
Till that his passions, like a whale on ground,
Confound themselves with working. Learn this,
And thou shalt prove a shelter to thy friends,
A hoop of gold to bind thy brothers in,
That the united vessel of their blood,
Mingled with the venom of suggestion
As, force perforce, the age will pour it in—
Shall never leak, though it do work as strong
As a conitum or rash gunpowder (43:IV,4,27-48).

The ideal nobleman at court bore himself like a
gentleman, living a virtuous and well-governed life (58:I, 5,67-76). The Tempest is rich in allusions to royal
activities. The play is written in an autumnal tone, a
mellow light, and melancholy mood. The intellectual
faculties of the hero are concerned not only with life, but
also with death. Prospero is an example of a nobleman who
sought the wealth contained in simplicity. This scholar-
prince was contented with food and water, the necessary
garments, and his books (62:I,2,159-68). Stuart Sherman's
character study is exceptionally clear cut:

For Prospero, the peculiarly luminous mirror of Shakespeare's "mind and manner", the solemn pageants of the phenomenal world have lost their imposing and substantial character, have something for him of the nature of the cloud-wrack and dream-stuff; and he reflects, in his sessions of solitary thought, with a certain philosophic compassion upon the emotions and pursuits of mortals who follow, hot-footed and eager, the flying feet of time (88:459).

The courtiers who conformed with every rule of conduct and discipline warranted the praise, "How smooth and even they do bear themselves" (45:II,2,3), because their actions and thoughts were coordinated and moved harmoniously. They avoided harsh rage, defects in manners, want of government, conceit, haughtiness, and opinionated disdain; but assiduously embraced anything that smacked of greatness, courage, or refinement (42:III,1,180-90).

The courtier's personality and manners attracted his companions. He was treated like Antipholus of Syracuse who was mistaken for Antipholus of Ephesus:

There's not a man I meet but doth salute me,  
As if I were their well-acquainted friend;  
And every one doth call me by my name.  
Some tender money to me; some invite me,  
Some other give me thanks for kindnesses;  
Some offer me commodities to buy;  
Even now a tailor call'd me in his shop
And show'd me silks that he had bought for me
And therewithal all took measure of my body
(59:IV,3,1-9).

The courtier employed all the arts and wiles of his profession when addressing his lord:

Clarence. Doth the king call?
Warwick. What would your majesty? (How fares your grace?)
(43:IV,5,49-50).

The gentleman emphasized the kindness and love he felt toward him (45:(III),III,3,49-57), interlarding his speech with praise and admiration.

The ignoble courtier, however, was not sincere in his relations with his prince; instead he slyly plotted against him (46:III,4,56-70). He is responsible for this very uncomplimentary opinion of courtiers:

By the Lord, thou art a traitor to say so, thou would'st make an absolute courtier; and the firm fixture of thy foot would give an excellent notion to thy gait in a semi-circled farthingale. I see what thou wert, if Fortune thy foe were not, Nature thy friend (51:III,3,64-69).

Such a base attendant lacked the quality of mercy, "the attitude of God himself", which became the "throned monarch better than his throne" (60:IV,1,188-95).
In place of virtue he used flattery, a "false faced soothing" (37:1,9,43-44) and sometimes merited inclusion in a sweeping condemnation in which scholars, lawyers, courtiers and gentlemen were termed "false caterpillars" (45:(II), IV,4,36-37).

Timon bitterly exclaims about the type which is the exact antithesis to Castiglione's ideal:

... Most smiling, smooth, detested parasites, Courteous destroyers, affable wolves, meek bears You fools of fortune, trencher-friends, time's flies, Cap-and-knee slaves, vapours, and minute jacks! (64:III,6,104-07).

Pericles synthesizes the creed of an unworthy courtier when he says, "How courtesy would seem to cover sin," (55:I,1,121).

Sir Thomas Overbury in his Characters, (1614), describes this blot on the Renaissance in a satirical yet definitive manner:

A courtier to all men's thinking is a man, and to most men the finest; all things else are defined by the understanding, but this by the senses: but his surest mark is, that he is to be found only about princes. He smells; and putteth away much of his judgement about the situation of his clothes. He knows no man that is not generally known. His
wit, like the marigold, openeth with the sun, and therefore he riseth not before ten of the clock. He puts more confidence in his words than meaning, and more in his pronunciation than in his words. Occasion is his Cupid, and he hath but one receipt of making love. He follows no thing but inconstancy, admires nothing but beauty, honours nothing but fortune, loves nothing. The sustenance of his discourse is news, and his censure like a shot, depends upon the charging. He is not if he be out of court; but fishlike breathes destruction, if out of his own element. Neither his motion nor aspect are regular, but he moves by the upper spheres, and is the reflection of higher substances.

If you find him not here, you shall in Paul's, with a nick-tooth in his hat, a cape-cloak and a long stocking (76:196-97).

Overbury's comments are corroborated by Jacques in As You Like It:

O worthy fool! One that hath been a courtier, And says, if ladies be but young and fair, They have the gift to know it: and in his brain, Which is as dry as the remainder biscuit After a voyage, he hath strange places cram'd With observations, the which he vents In mangled forms (36:II,7,36-42).

Romeo is a contrast to this type; he assumes noble proportions in the nurse's description:

Your love says, like an honest gentleman, and a courteous, and a kind, and a handsome, and I warrant, a virtuous (58:II,5,57-59).

In contrast to the desirable martial virtues displayed
in the character of Caesar, is the bold picture of this lord's deficiencies:

Came there a certain lord, neat and trimly dress'd, Fresh as a bridegroom, and his chin new reap'd, Show'd like a stubble-land at harvest-home: He was perfumed like a milliner, And 'twixt his finger and his thumb he held A pouncet-box, which ever and anon He gave his nose and took't away again; Who therewith angry when it next come there, Took it in a snuff: and still he smiled and talk'd; And as the soldiers bore dead bodies by, He call'd them untaught knaves, unmannerly, To bring a slovenly unhandsome corpse Betwixt the wind and his nobility (42:1,3,30-45).

The preceding passage is a sound description of the type of man whom the court writers endeavored to eradicate from society.

The courtier, sometimes on account of economic pressure, was forced to collect all that he could. His future was unpredictable. Lords cast off their followers in the fullness of time (43:IV,4,67-78), after they had been squeezed of service and stripped of knowledge (39:IV, 2,15-21).

The environment provided by the luxurious appointments of the court affected the gentleman and stamped a distinct
mark upon him:

Shepherd. Are you a courtier, an't like you, sir?

Autoclycus. Whether it like me or no, I am a courtier.

Seest thou not the air of the court in these enfoldings? Hath not my gait in it the measure of the court? Received not thy nose court odor from me? Reflect I

Not on thy baseness court-contempt? Think'st thou, for that I insinuate, or touse from thee thy business, I therefore am no courtier? I am courtier cap-a-pie, and one that will either push on or pluck back thy business there; whereupon I commended thee to open thy affair (63:IV,4,752-63).

An aristocratic physiognomy showed when the courtier was true and loyal, upright and just, or when his humility became insolence, his affable manner became peremptory, his mildness evolved into pride (45:(II),III,1,4-12).

A still sadder spectacle is that described by Henry VIII, and it may have originated in some Tudor gentleman:

The gentleman is learn'd, and a most rare speaker;

To nature none more bound; his training such That he may furnish and instruct great teachers, And never seek out and for himself. Yet see, When these so noble benefits shall prove Not well dispos'd, the mind growing once corrupt, They turn'd to vicious forms, ten times more ugly Than ever they were fair. This man so complete, Who was enroll'd 'mongst wonders, and when we, Almost with ravish'd listening, could not find His hour of speech a minute; he, my lady,
Hath into monstrous habits put the graces
That once were his, and is become as black
As if besmear'd in hell (44:1,2,111-24).

Ulysses commends Hector as an immature yet true
knight who was dignified, just, manly, faithful, and pure,
kind in peace but vindictive in war; a figure worthy of the
Renaissance concept of the courtier (66:IV,5,96-112).

Pericles admits himself that he is a gentleman of Tyre,
educated in the arts and arms (55:II,3,81-85); Mortimer
stresses the intellectual attainments of a "worthy gentleman"
one who is well-read, affable, valiant, humorous, and patient
(42:III,1,165-76). The manly exercises included in a
youth's education developed his brain until he aroused the
enthusiastic admiration of his companions:

Hear him but reason in divinity,
And all-admiring with an inward wish
You would desire the king were made a prelate;
Hear him debate of commonwealth affairs,
You would say, it hath been all in all his study:
List his discourse of war, and you shall hear
A fearful battle render'd you in music:
Turn him to any cause of policy,
The Gordian knot of it he will unloose (45:I;
1,38-46).

The widened political, social, religious, and
intellectual scope of man's life gave rise to a spirit of
democracy. The aristocratic class and the lower classes were not on terms of equality, but each felt privileged to criticize the other. The inferior groups, stimulated by the revolution of thought, dared to condemn the upper classes for their lack of consideration. They blamed them for famine, usury, and restrictive statutes. The feeling of dissatisfaction culminated years later in the supremacy of the middle class in England (37:1, 81-89). The ideal courtier, outside the pale, however, was never guilty of unkindness, but endeavoured to develop to the highest degree the quality of mercy.

The dishonest, vain, and bold were jeered at (66:II,3, 130-136), while the ceremonious courtier stood out as a paragon,

... Courtiers as free, as debonair, unarm'd,
As bending angels; that's their fame in peace:
But when they would seem soldiers, they have galls
Good arms, strong joints, true swords, and Jove's accord (66:1,3,235-38).

Antenor in Troilus and Cressida mingled all the excellencies of shrewd wit, sound judgement, and proper manners (66:1, 206-09).

Parolles amusingly narrates the perfect courtier's
activities:

I am so full of businesses. I cannot answer thee acutely. I will return perfect courtier; in the which, my instruction shall serve to naturalize thee, so thou wilt be capable of a courtier's counsel and understand what advice shall thrust upon thee; else thou diest in thine unthankfulness, and thine ignorance makes thee away: farewell. When thou hast leisure, say thy prayers; when thou hast none, remember thy friends; (34:1,1,22-29).

But this description neglects the obeisances and reverence due a sovereign.

Beatrice, presaging femininism by her independent spirit, deplores the state in which manhood is melted into courtesy, valour into compliment, and men are merely show (53:IV,1,315-24). The gentleman to whom she referred belonged to the group of parasitical flatterers who besieged every prince's court. Shakespeare, fresh from his contacts with Elizabeth and her nobles, may have been so impressed by their contemptible actions that he caustically exposed this derogatory type. The shallow individuals of the same frame of mind were scoffed at by Gonzaga and the noble personages at Urbino. In Italy flattery was shunned; in England,

They do abuse the king that flatter him:
For flattery is the bellows blows up sin (55:1,2,38-39).

A flatterer, so base, so dishonest, without manhood or fellowship (42:1,2,154-57) may have felt with Falstaff,

I was as virtuously given as a gentleman need be (42:III,3,194-95).

Gloucester meditated as he watched cunning cheats surpass him in rank and fame, and he bitterly pictures the ignoble courtier (57:I,3,47-50).

There is a sort of universal tendency in every age, whether it be self-satisfied or humble, to believe that glory rests in the past. In King Henry VI, Talbot ruminates,

When first this order was ordain'd my lords, Knights of the garter were of noble birth, Valiant and virtuous, full of haughty courage, Such as were grown to credit by the wars; Not fearing death, nor shrinking for distress But always resolute in most extremes He then that is not furnish'd in this sort Both but usurp the sacred name of knight, Profaning this most honourable order, And should if I were worthy to be judge, Be quite degraded, like a hedge-born swain That doth presume to boast of gentle blood (45:IV,1,33-44).
A synthesis of the elements of a courtier's life would include the essentials already mentioned: verity, justice, temperance, stableness, bounty, perseverance, mercy, lowliness, devotion, patience, courage, and fortitude, all enumerated by Malcolm (42:IV,3,91-94).

The impeccable courtier lives in the drama, The Two Gentlemen of Verona:

Yet hath Sir Proteus, for that's his name, Made use and fair advantage of his days; His years but young, but his experience old; His head unmellow'd, but his judgement ripe; And in a word, for far behind his worth Comes all the praises that I now bestow. He is complete in feature and in mind With all good grace to grace a gentleman (68:II,4,67-74).

Perfection assumes imperfection in society, so the figure of the apish common courtier swaggers across Shakespeare's stage. When he passes could Antony say of him that which he said of Caesar?

His life was gentle, and the elements So mix'd in him that Nature might stand up, And say to all the world 'This was a man!'

Henry VI fits into this category. As he surveys his own life and manners the king knows within himself that he was
courteous: thoughtfully granting demands, pitying those suffering with wounds, and showing mildness and mercy, but turning away from avarice (45:(III),IV,8,38-50).

Cloten resembles King Henry in his commendatory self-appraisal; perhaps conscious of the tenets of Castiglione's doctrine, he complacently lauded his figure, his youth, his struggle, his birth, his education, and his service. Cloten maintains that it is not vain-glory for a "man and his glass to confer in his chamber" (38:IV,1,7-16). Gloucester, another nobleman, believes that looking-glasses and tailors are complementary adjuncts of fashion (57:I, 2, 256-58).

Jacques in As You Like It cynically presents the courtier:

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Jacques. Good my lord, bid him welcome. This is the motley-minded gentleman that I have so often met in the forest: he hath been a courtier, he swears.

Touchstone. If any man doubt that, let him put me to my purgation. I have trod a measure; I have flattered a lady; I have been politic with my friend, smooth with mine enemy; I have undone three tailors; I have had four quarrels, and like to have fought one.

Jacques. And how was that ta'en up?

Touchstone. Faith, we met, and found the quarrel was upon the seventh cause?

Jacques. How seventh cause?

Touchstone. Upon a lie seven times removed... as thus,
sir. I did dislike the cut of a certain courtier’s beard; he sent me word, if I said his beard was not cut well, he was in the mind it was: this is called the "retort courteous". If I sent him word again, it was not well-cut, he would send me word, he cut it to please himself: this is called the "quip modest". If again, it was not well-cut, he disabled my judgement; this is called the "reply churlish". If again, it was not cut well, he would answer, I spake not true: this is called the "reproof valiant": if again, it was not well-cut, he would say, I lie: this is called the "counter-check quarrelsome": and so on to the "lie circumstantial" and the "lie direct" (36:V,4, 40-54 and 71-86).

The courtly and patrician men: Caesar, Antonio, Bassanio, Henry IV, and Proteus stand beside the incomparable Romeo, the great Italian ever yearning for perfection, Shakespeare’s enduring pattern of the lover.

Shakespeare, always the astute psychologist, might watch the progress of a romance in one year; in another create a vivid and memorable character, Macbeth, a potential courtier, a man of power and glory, a man with a real sense of values. until the witches aroused his ambition, envy, and malice.

Two courtiers remain for consideration, Laertes and Hamlet. Osric describes Laertes as,

... an absolute gentleman, full of most excellent differences, of very soft society and great showing:
indeed to speak feelingly of him, he is the card or calendar of gentility, for you shall find in him the continent of what part a gentleman would see (39:V, 2, 110-16).

Apparently he had followed Polonius' advice to his son:

... And these few precepts in thy memory
See thou character. Give thy thoughts no tongue,
Nor any unproportion'd thought his act.
Be thou familiar, but by no means vulgar.
The friends thou hast, and their adoption tried,
Grapple them to thy soul with hoops of steel;
But do not dull thy palm with entertainment
Of each new-hatch'd, unfledg'd comrade. Beware
Of entrance to a quarrel; but being in,
Bear't that the opposed may beware of thee.
Give every man thine ear, but few thy voice;
Take each man's censure, but reserve thy judgement.
Costly thy habit as thy purse can buy,
But not express'd in fancy; rich, no gaudy;
For the apparel oft proclaims the man,
And they in France of the best rank and station
Are most select and generous in that.
Neither a borrower nor a lender be;
For loan oft loses both itself and friend,
And borrowing dulls the edge of husbandry.
This above all: to thine own self be true,
And it must follow, as the night the day,
Thou canst not then be false to any man (39:I,3,58-80).

Looming above all the other noblemen is Hamlet, the embodiment of nobility in thought and deed, (until his mental derangement), the highest example in English drama of the Italian ideal set forth in Il Cortegiano. Hamlet is the gracious host as he welcomes the actors,
Gentlemen, you are welcome to Elsinore. Your hands, come then: the appurtenance of welcome is fashion and ceremony. Let me comply with you in the garb, lest my extent to the players which I tell you, must show fairly outward, should more appear like entertainment than yours. You are welcome but my uncle-father and aunt-mother are deceiv'd (39:II,2,287-94).

According to Bradley, Hamlet broods over his mother's second marriage.

From what was he paralyzed? - From the ideal of courtiership; and especially from that phase of it which regarded woman as the inspiration and mainstay of courtliness (9:xiv).

Hamlet, the strong, courageous, comely courtier-prince, perceived beauty and goodness as one and indissoluble. Not only was he a patron of art and music, a skilled fencer, an apt scholar, a ready wit, a brilliant conversationalist, but also a faithful friend. Hamlet's manner of speech, his all embracing vocabulary, his freedom and dignity of utterance, his recklessness, and nonchalance fulfill Castiglione's ideal; Hamlet, the idealist and humanist is true, the fine crystallization into words of a great mind, a perfect courtier, who might have lived in the supreme heyday of Elizabethan culture.
CONCLUSION

Shakespeare is the product of the Renaissance. He has erected to that cultured age an immortal monument in his dramas and poetry. He has transmitted into words his vivid impressions of life, universalizing them in his works. He portrays with unyielding truth the characters and status of contemporary England. He lifted this mediocre theme, however, to the empyrean heights of great literature because of his lofty spirit, high ideals, and powerful beauty.

Though like his princely hero, he does not fail to "remember the poor creature, small beer," life and humanity are for him invariably possessed of a nobler meaning than can be discerned by the self-deluded realist, Iago, or many soullessly objective authors of Jacobean comedy. Thus, Shakespeare's plays always infer, behind the material phenomena of existence, - the suckling of fools and chronicling of small beer, - moral and imaginative issues which determine the dramatic standards of value and inspire the answer to every problem presented (5:394).

His most despicable courtier, Iago, does not sink to the level of the fawning Gaveston in Edward II, nor does his heartiest noble, Falstaff, completely overlook the natural law. His most amusing delineations of the -107-
satinized courtier are never so mercilessly exposing as those in *The Duchess of Malfi*.

The aristocratic characters are surrounded with a halo of prestige, and are respectfully reverenced by their inferiors (69:34).

The purpose of Polonius in *Hamlet*, quite apart from his share in the action, is principally to create an atmosphere of the Court. If we imagine this figure to be removed the whole aspect of the Danish Court is changed. He is the Lord Chamberlain who by constantly taking up a respectful attitude toward the members of the royal house gives them their proper background, and by his fawning on them even in familiar conversation sets off and draws attention to their dignity. This obsequiousness and devotion to the Court are perfectly genuine in him. His part in the play is principally to represent a true servant of the Crown. The best proof that this is Shakespeare's own intention is again furnished by Polonius' self-characterization; he says of himself

"I hold my duty as I hold my soul
Both to my God and to my gracious king."

This impression is confirmed by the reflection of his character in the minds of the King and Queen (69:66). Henry IV develops the ideal of kingly service, capacity, justice, and patriotic fervor (5:336). Most of the other sovereigns resemble him in possessing to some degree the assets of royal lineage excepting Richard II who is the only artificial monarch (5:327).
Shakespeare's greatest characters are intellectually keen and distinctly individual. E.E. Stoll is convinced that the dramatist was true to the spirit of the Renaissance because his heroes cherish fame and worship glory as do the heroes of French, Spanish, and Italian dramas and romances (71:472).

In this analysis of Shakespeare's treatment of the courtier as an exemplification of the Renaissance ideals of courtly conduct and discipline, the effort has been made to isolate the ideals suggested and sponsored by Castiglione, Della Casa, Wilson, and Ascham; to establish instances in Shakespeare's dramas where these standards are either observed or neglected; to estimate Shakespeare's respect for Renaissance ideals.

The Italian principles have been too often reiterated to need repetition here. The quotations from the plays were selected and presented as evidence of Shakespeare's interest in the courtier's heritage, requirements, training, dress, philosophy of conduct, and attitude toward friendship and love. Several courtiers were subjected to particular study in order to illustrate in them the influence of the sixteenth-century standards on Shakespeare
in his portrayal of a courtier's character and personality.

From this study two conclusions may be drawn: First, that Shakespeare is influenced by the contemporary norms of courtly conduct and discipline, and that he inspired the characters of his courtiers with some of the existing ideals of manners, and at the same time with their human weaknesses. Second, although Shakespeare presents the imperfect as well as the perfect courtier, his sympathies rest only in the man who makes every endeavor to follow the high ideals and strict rules of courtly conduct. His philosophy of conduct exacted the highest mode of life from men. This is apparent in his ideal courtiers, who appear even more worthy, more virile, when compared to the parasitical gentlemen.

Mr. Tolman's appreciation of Shakespeare sums up the situation in a concise manner:

Man so delighted him, and woman did, that he transcended at times the limitations of his own class, and felt his way to a very clear expression of some of the choicest ideas that we associate with the conception of democracy. No one has expressed more effectively than Shakespeare the great truths that rank and honor should be the reward of proved merit; that the settled opinion of the entire people is probably right; that birth is of small importance in comparison with worth; and that faithful love, irrespective of rank, is
the greatest thing in the world. Shakespeare has not expressed all the truth about human nature and society, for all time; but who else has expressed so much? Take him for all in all, we shall hardly look upon his like again (73:$$).
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The thesis, "The Courtier in Shakespeare's Plays: A Study of the Renaissance ideals of Courtly Conduct and Discipline in the Plays," written by Margaret Mary Toole, has been accepted by the Graduate School of Loyola University with reference to form, and by the readers whose names appear below with reference to content. It is, therefore, accepted as a partial fulfillment of the requirements of the degree conferred.

Morton D. Zabel               May, 1932