

CHAPTER VI

COMPARISON WITH THE SOURCES

We have by now become sufficiently familiar with Shakespeare's method of revealing character through the medium of courtesy. If we compare some of Shakespeare's characters with their originals in the sources from where he borrowed his plots. We would obtain further evidence in support of our main argument.

It has often been observed that Shakespeare's Hamlet is so different from Saxo's Amlet that he appears to be altogether a new person. The one great difference between the two Hamlets is that Saxo's character is raw, almost uncivilized; while Shakespeare's prince is a model of refinement. Shakespeare has similarly turned some of the

uncouth Romans into graceful courtiers. He has, for example, so idealised Brutus' character that he would fit in every detail with the Elizabethan ideal of a courtier. The ideal of courtesy, in fact, appears to be so ingrained in the dramatist's consciousness that it becomes an essential part of the characters as they are revealed in the play. The quality of courtesy is not grafted on to them; it is an inseparable part of their anatomy. Shakespeare not only refines the characters he borrows from the sources; he alters the incidents in the original stories to bring both characters and incidents into harmony with his conception of courtesy. This would be amply borne out if we closely compare some of the plays with their originals.

For a very good reason we may examine the source of As You Like It and find out how Shakespeare alters the characters and events of the original story to bring them into harmony with his ideal of courtesy. Lodge wrote his novel much in the same tradition as Shakespeare, combining in it the chivalric, the courtly, and the pastoral ideologies. His characters are noble people and he endows them with courtly refined speech and manners. Yet Lodge's

Rosader and Rosalyne are not the same people as Shakespeare's Orlando and Rosalind. Lodge brings into the story the pastoral element; so also does Shakespeare; yet the two Ardens are vastly different from each other.

Shakespeare does not only change some names, he deliberately alters some events and drops others altogether, to produce a quick dramatic effect and to elevate the characters to a higher level than in the original. He adopts the main outlines of Lodge's story; the plot is more or less the same. He retains most of the characters and adds others with a specific purpose.

By the end of Act I, Shakespeare gets everything ready to shift the scene to the forest of Arden. In doing so, he cuts the events of Lodge's sprawling narrative to the barest minimum. There is the nobleman leaving the legacy on his death to his three sons. The eldest and the youngest are at odds, the eldest ill-treating the youngest while the middle one, a scholar, is away at the university. The usurper and the banished king, with their respective daughters are also there. Both the

princesses love each other so much that they are like two halves of a pod of grain. The court-wrestler, the wrestling bout, the victory of the hero, the falling in love of the princess and the winner, and, finally, the banishment of banished king's daughter and, as a consequence the departure of both the princesses from court for the forest - these are the common characters and events upto the end of Act I. Now let us see what changes Shakespeare makes.

All the events in Lodge's story upto the point when the eldest brother, Saladyne, comes to an understanding with the court wrestler to have the youngest brother, Rosader, killed, Shakespeare condenses into a single scene (Act I, Sc. I). The events are materially the same, but the dramatist has brought about significant changes in handling his source material. The reason for the quarrel between the brothers is not the same. In the original the dying father was partial to the youngest son, giving him a larger share than the others. Saladyne is given an evil yet a somewhat introspective nature. He debates with himself on the pros and cons of his attitude to his brother. Lodge, however, leaves a small but

significant hint for Shakespeare with regard to courtesy. The father thinks that the youngest is the best son, "for if inward thoughts be discovered by outward shadows, Rosader will exceed you all in bounty and honour".¹ About the eldest, Lodge himself says, "Fire cannot be hid in the straw, nor the nature of man so concealed, but atlast it will have his course : nurture and art may do much, but that nature naturans which by propagation is ~~in~~grafted in the heart, will be atlast preforce predominant according to the old verse".²

These are slight hints but they are very significant for the dramatist in regard to courtesy. The youngest is given grace, the gift of the Gods, and his inward and outward are unified. But nurture is not therefore without its value as we shall later see. On the other hand, the eldest brother is by nature deceptive, a cozening knave, hiding fire in a straw. For Shakespeare therefore it is a straight contrast between the genuine and the dissembler in courtesy,

¹ Lodge's Rosalynde in G. Bullongh's (ed.) Narrative and Dramatic Sources of Shakespeare, p.161.

² Ibid., p.164.

and, without mincing matters he reveals them as such. If this is so, why not make the natural difference in their character rather than money and filial partiality the cause of their quarrel? So Shakespeare's Orlando receives only 'a poor thousand crowns', against Lodge's Rosader who receives the largest share. Hence Orlando's grievance is that he has not received the training due to a nobleman's son; his gifts must have their proper nurture; the gentleman ought to be brought up as a gentleman, and with this the play opens :

Orlando : As I remember, Adam, it was upon this fashion he bequeth'd me by will but a poor thousand crowns, and as thou say'st, charged my brother, on his blessing, to breed me well; and there begins my sadness. My brother, Jacques he keeps at school, and report speaks goldenly of his profit : for my part, he keeps me rustically at home, or, to speak more properly, stays me here at home unkept; for call you that keeping for a gentleman of my birth, that differs not from the stalling of an ox ? His horses are bred better; for, besides that they are fair with their feeding, they are taught

their manage, and to that end riders dearly hired : but I, his brother, gain nothing under him but growth; for the which his animals on his dunghills are as much bound to him as I. Besides this nothing that he so plentifully gives me, the something that nature gave me his countenance seems to take from me; he lets me feed with his hinds, bars me the place of a brother, and, as much as in him lies, mines my gentility with my education. This is it, Adam, that grieves me; and the spirit of my father, which I think is within me, begins to mutiny against this servitude : I will no longer endure it, though yet I know no wise remedy how to avoid it".

(As You Like It : I, i, 1-26)

So it is a question of gentility, 'a born gentleman's grievance against his lack of nurture; but the son of a gentleman will do nothing rash. He will restrain himself to find a 'wise remedy'. This restraint throughout is the best part of Orlando's character and becomes relevant to our argument by its conspicuous absence in Lodge's *Rosader*.

On the other hand this is the elder brother's grievance against Orlando, natura naturans :

" I hope I shall see an end of him; for my soul, yet I know not why, hates nothing more than he. Yet he is gentle; never school'd, and yet learned; full of noble device; of all sorts enchantingly beloved; and, indeed, so much in the heart of the world, and especially of my own people, who best knew him, that I am altogether misprised :"

(165-173)

It is envy, the polar contrary to courtesy, and the difference is sufficient for Shakespeare to reveal the good and the evil characters. He can do that by means of courtesy. Shakespeare therefore rejects many details that Lodge expansively treats of in the novel. When this natural reason for hatred is at hand, why go into the frequent quarrels between the brothers, the long meditations of Saladyne; Rosader's killing of the porter, the reconciliations brought about by the old family servant Adam, all of which Lodge narrates at length ? One quarrel and ~~one~~ reconciliation are enough; and let the quarrel be as free from violence as possible. With that let Evil decide to destroy

Good. This is what happens by the end of the first scene of the play.

In his encounter with Oliver, Orlando shows wit, valour and restraint. Unnurtured gentleman though he is, he knows his manners : "The courtesy of nations allows you my brother, in that you are the first-born; but the same tradition takes not away my blood, were there twenty brothers betwixt us". (46-50). He will willingly proffer the respect due to his elder brother with his rank but if that brother tries to beat him, he must resist.

" Come, come, elder brother, you are too young
in this"

(54-55)

This restraint and this quiet self-possession make Orlando a better person than the occasionally wild and turbulent Rosader. Orlando has put his hand on Oliver's throat obviously to prevent the latter from attacking him. Old Adam sweetly interposes to reconcile the brothers. But Orlando knows how to use the position to press his demands which are simple :

" therefore, allow me such exercises as may become a gentleman, or give me the poor allottery my father left me by testament; with that I will go buy my fortunes". (72-75). Under pressure, Oliver agrees to give him part of his share and Orlando lets him go. " I will no further offend you than becomes me for my good" (80-81). But Oliver cannot be expected to honour his word : he is planning 'to physic your rankness and yet give no thousand crowns neither". (86-88) Thus the enemy of grace has decided to wipe grace out. He plans to get the brother killed by the Court-wrestler, who has thrown a general challenge and against whom Oliver has listed himself. The wrestling is to take place the next day and Charles, the wrestler, happens just then to call on Oliver. The wrestler has come to warn the elder brother about the danger to the rash young man. Had not the wrestler himself been a wicked person swollen in his pride, this would have been an act of courtesy. His conversation with Oliver is full of expressions of mutual courtesy but such as wickedness often simulates in soft speech. They discuss court news and Oliver learns - and so does the audience - of a number of important things, particularly the news that many

young gentlemen flock everyday to the Senior Duke, who is staying in the Forest of Arden (in the old Robin Hood of England style) which gives us a some idea of the Usurper Duke's tyranny. Shakespeare turns the Kings in Lodge to Dukes and further makes them brothers. This brings about a parallel between two aggrieved brothers, the Senior Duke and Orlando on the one hand, and Duke Frederick and Oliver, the usurpers, on the other. The situation of the two princesses is about the same as in Lodge.

The wicked brother comes to an understanding with Charles. The wrestler must kill Orlando in the bout. In Lodge's story the wrestler is contacted by Saladyne first and offered a good sum for the murder. Oliver only throws a general hint in the play : "I thank thee for thy love to me, which thou shalt find I will most kindly requite :" (139-140) In 'Rosalynde', the eldest brother persuades Rosader that he must enter the lists for the sake of the good name of the dead father. Shakespeare elevates his hero by making him voluntarily enter the contest. His plan completed, Oliver expects his brother to die the next day. Thus ends Scene I, which not only gives us a vivid picture of the evils of court-life, but illustrates Shakespeare's

method of distinctly categorizing the genuine from the dissemblers, right at the beginning of the play. A line is drawn between Orlando and Oliver, and some of the changes that he makes here, as we have seen, are brought about to this end. He deliberately focuses attention on Orlando, even at the expense of Oliver.

Scene 2 leads us straight into the court, and there, of major importance, is the character of the heroine, Rosalind. Shakespeare not only reveals her and Celia, but besides introduces two new characters, not to be found in Lodge, and, so wields the events borrowed from the original that Frederick stands revealed as a wicked usurper. The idea underlying throughout the scene is to demarcate good from evil, and to this end, Shakespeare brings the courtesy of the good characters fully into action.

The event is the wrestling bout borrowed from Lodge. The novelist gives a long account of Rosalynde's beauty and virtue, deifying her in the traditional style of the chivalric romances, attributing to her all the virtues of the conventional heroine of the pastorals and describing her graces by using all the images that Renaissance learning could invent.

Shakespeare does not have the space to do all this nor has he the time for it. He seems to be in a hurry to lead us to Arden.

The two princesses are sitting on ~~a~~ the lawn in front of the ducal palace. Shakespeare uses courtesy, the gentle conversation of the princesses, to reveal their characters. So far all that we know about Rosalind is through the wrestler Charles. We have been told that she is beloved of all at Court, including the usurper Duke. Shakespeare seems to like his romantic heroines to be a little weighed down by melancholy in the beginning, before they come into their own. Thus, Portia in the Merchant of Venice is depressed because her destiny is tied down to the caskets; Olivia in Twelfth Night is sad for she is bereaved of her brother. Rosalind here is sad for her banished father. Celia tries to console her cousin and in the conversation (I,ii,1-30), couched in the gentlest language, the two princesses vie with each other in love, loyalty, wit, noble sacrifice, and gentility. In thirty lines Shakespeare unveils before us two young women, whom God has endowed with a full measure of 'grace', which they have learnt by their

nurture how to express in gentle speech. If we fail to mark their virtues in this expression of grace, which is courtesy, we completely miss their character. Rosalind's heaviness being thus lightened by Celia, let the princesses then have some sport for the indulgence of their gaiety. Love would not be quite proper. Then why not 'mock the good housewife Fortune at her wheel', because she distributes her favours so blindly - especially to fair women? One of the motives of Lodge's story is the working of Fortune versus Virtue : Shakespeare avails himself of this. Rosalind wisely says :

" Nay, now thou goest from Fortune's office to Nature's : Fortune reigns in gifts of the world, not in the lineaments of Nature".
(I, ii, 39-41)

Lest we forget, we are reminded that here are people on whom Nature has freely bestowed her gifts, but whom Fortune is persecuting. At this point bursts in the Court Fool Touchstone, an invention of Shakespeare, unrelated to Lodge's story. (We shall discuss later his importance in the play). The Fool straightway plunges into the debate on Fortune versus

Nature, and there follow fire-works of courtly wit with sparks flying about in all directions. All this to let us know as it were that the princesses are gifted by Nature with a fine wit. It is important to know that all these gifts of Nature are shared equally by the two princesses; Shakespeare does not make, as Lodge does, any distinctions. It is perhaps not his business to interfere with Nature. Or is it to give a lie to Frederick's excuse for banishing Rosalind, that by her 'virtue' she pushes Celia in the background?

Then enters another invention of Shakespeare, the courtier Le Beau. He exists in this scene only and is necessary as a link, dramatically important, between the good people, Rosalind, Celia and Orlando and the evil Duke, as we shall presently see. The French courtier is known to be a news monger but Celia greets him in the French¹ mode :

" Bon jour, Monsieur Le Beau ! What's the news ?

(I, ii, 94)

Obviously he has come to flatter the ladies and is fittingly ridiculed for the news he has brought.

¹ The scene for Lodge's Rosalynde is laid in France.

The court wrestler has killed, in the wrestling bout three young sons of an old man, who is now grieving over the loss, and is sympathised with by the people. (Lodge has a Franklein with two sons, who bears his grief with cool resignation. Rosader consoles him and the father appreciates his courtesy. But the details are too minor for the dramatist. Besides all that long story, though there is some courtesy in it, would be inconsistent with the present situation. Here a courtier bubbling with news goes to the princess to break it; it would be better if the father is grieving and if there are three sons instead of two, so that more sighs and pity could be extracted from the ladies. He is humoured light-heartedly by the ladies, as he deserves to be, but he helps to show up the better wit of the princesses). Further, the wrestling is now going to proceed at the place where the ladies are sitting. Another person has accepted the wrestler's challenge.

Let us get a few points clear in our mind from the original story before we proceed :

- (1) The usurper king in Lodge's story has invited the princesses and other beauties of the court

purposely to attract the people and the gallants, so that those who love gallantry may interest themselves in the bout, the others may gaze at the beauties and so satisfy themselves.

(2) Young Rosader before he actually goes to face the wrestler, looks at Rosalynde, gets so enamoured of her beauty that he falls into a 'memento' as Lodge calls it, from which the wrestler has to shake him up : Rosalynde herself gives him an 'amorous' look; that is, they have fallen in love before the wrestling begins.

(3) The king does nothing to dissuade the young hero from the risky adventure.

(4) When he emerges victorious from the bout and turns out to be a son of the dead renowned knight, the king and the courtiers become exceedingly happy and embrace him.

Shakespeare's Frederick does not invite the ladies to the wrestling bout, he is a much subtler villain than his counterpart in Lodge. Again to invite the ladies on such an occasion to attract and please the people would be too simple a way to cover wickedness and would, on the other hand, invite easy

criticism and exposure, apart from the fact that breaking of ribs is not a proper sport for ladies (130-131). The princesses in the play have to ask the Duke's permission to see the wrestling. And Frederick hints at the impropriety :

" You will take little delight in it, I can tell you : " (150)

and as he remembers that the veteran wrestler is fighting against a mere novice, he adds : 'there is much odds in the men'. (151)

He does not really pity the young man but the deaths of the other three young men and the crying father have already moved the people, and one more death may make matters worse; so

"In pity of the challenger's youth I would fain dissuade him, but he will not be entreated".
(151-2-3)

It is for a political reason that he wants the youth to be saved. So why not feign pity, why not even ask the ladies to try ?

" Speak to him ladies; see if you can move him".
(154)

Shakespeare thus gets the hero and the heroine together, in place of Lodge's Rosader staring publicly at Rosalynde's beauty and falling into a 'memento' and Rosalynde giving him an 'amorous' look. Shakespeare avoids this falling-in-live device. For him the hero's gentle looks and inborn courtesy will do the trick.

Le Beau is there to call the young man to the ladies and a perfectly courteous first meeting follows. Orlando attends 'them with all respect and duty' (158). His courtesy, humility and firmness are such as would win any one. It is Rosalind who leads the conversation:

Ros : "Young man, have you challenged Charles
the wrestler ?

Orl : No fair princess; he is the general
challenger : I come but in, as others do,
to try with him the strength of my youth".

(160-63)

Perhaps the answer clear and polite has already pleased Rosalind; so also the gentle looks, in studying which she misses her thread. But Celia takes it up and uses all the arguments to dissuade the young man for quite six lines, during which Rosalind recovers :

Ros : Do, young Sir; your reputation shall not
therefore be misprised : we will make it
our suit to the duke that the wrestling
might not go forward".

(172-74)

Orlando's humility, the admixture of restraint,
courteous firmness and a valiant indifference to his
present state of existence, as against the raw bustling
rowdy qualities of Lodge's Rosader are relevant to our
argument here :

Orl : I beseech you, punish me not with your
hard thoughts; wherein I confess me much
guilty, to deny so fair and excellent
ladies anything. But let your fair eyes
and gentle wishes go with me to my trial :
wherein if I be foiled, there is but one
shamed that was never gracious; if killed,
but one dead that is willing to be so :
I shall do my friends no wrong, for I have
none to lament me, the world no injury,
for in it I have nothing; only in the
world I fill a place, which may be better
supplied when I have made it empty".

(I, ii, 175-185)

This is natural grace flowing naturally into speech.
It has done the trick : the process of falling in love
as far as Rosalind is concerned, is over.

Ros : "The little strength that I have,
I would it were with you". (186)

Celia must join in :

Cel : "And mine, to eek out hers". (187)

The wrestling match yields the unexpected (for us the expected) result. Orlando throws out the court wrestler, and because the latter cannot die on the stage, is carried off it. Frederick cannot be too pleased with the result. Or has he detected any change in Rosalind ? If so, he has good reason to be mightily displeased. When Orlando tells him that he is the youngest son of Sir Rowland de Boys, it gives him enough reason, if he wanted one, to express his displeasure :

Duke Fred : "I would thou hadst been son to
some man else;
The world esteem'd thy father
honourable,
But I did find him still mine enemy;
Thou shouldst have better pleased
me with this deed,
Hadst thou descended from another
house.
But fare thee well; thou art a
gallant youth :
I would thou hadst told me of
another father".
(I,ii, 215-221)

Despite his embarrassment, the duke brings about a neat dismissal with considerable political finesse. The world esteemed Sir Rowland to be an honourable man. The good and the evil in Shakespeare's design must be separated and the evil must do its utmost to obstruct the good. Frederick is linking up certain things in his mind : murmurs of people pitying and sympathising with Rosalind must have reached his ears : reports of noble men of the realm daily going away to the exiled duke he has surely heard, and this gallant youth with his objectionable descent and possible connexion with Rosalind : all this would lead to hazardous consequences. To that end he becomes active in the next scene. But with his exit we have a complete picture of his simulating villainy.

In the meantime what of the princess and Orlando ?

Orlando's turning out to be Sir Rowland's son, gives Rosalind a further reason for loving him because her father loved Sir Rowland as his soul and all the world was of her father's mind. But it gives Celia also a reason to hate her father :

Cel : Were I my father, coz, would I do this ?

(I, ii, 222)

Father or not, for Shakespeare the good and the evil must be distinctly placed apart; On the one hand we have now, the Senior Duke, the good man's good son Orlando, Rosalind and Celia, and the whole world; on the other, we have, the usurper Duke and the good man's bad son Oliver. The sense of injustice done to Orlando by her father draws Celia to him :

Cel : Gentle cousin,
Let us go thank him and encourage him;
My father's rough and envious disposition
Sticks me at heart. (I, ii, 230-233)

But Rosalind feels, at the moment, a much stronger impulse : she takes a chain from her neck and offers it to Orlando :

Ros : Gentleman,
Wear this for me, one out of suits with
fortune,
That could give more, but that her hand
lacks means.
 (236-238)

Having once yielded to her impulse, she does not know whether to stop and talk, or to leave. It is for Orlando to do the talking, but he has become mute. So she starts to go, finds an excuse, comes back again and finally goes away.

For Orlando it is a stunning experience which has robbed him of his speech. He is quite overcome :

"Or Charles or something weaker masters thee". (250-251)

Not a very long affair - this falling in love, but it is now complete and is in every way romantic. Yet when we compare it with Lodge's method, we find that Shakespeare uses it in a way which lifts up both the parties to it. In this dazed condition he meets Le Beau. The latter justifies his existence in the scene, by sounding a warning to Orlando, thus constituting the link between good and evil, so necessary for the action of the play. Frederick has already let his mind be known to others about Orlando and Le Beau has come to warn him about the Duke's designs. Orlando thanks him for the courtesy but takes the warning lightly. He has not yet come out of the anesthetic of his recent experience : poor man, he does not even know who was the Duke's daughter of the two. Would the gentleman oblige him ? "Neither his daughter, if we judge by manners:" says Le Beau (I, ii, 262). Manners are the touchstone by which to judge characters in Shakespeare, we are reminded. The father and daughter are a mutual antithesis. The shorter one is the Duke's daughter, the other the daughter of the banished Duke. But the important news that Le Beau imparts here is that Frederick has lost his love for

his niece, and any time his malice against her might burst forth.

For Orlando, it is now misery everywhere, even if he goes home : "from tyrant duke unto a tyrant brother" (263); that is so;

"But heavenly Rosalind ! " (264)

This three worded apostrophe completes the picture of the heroine. Rosalind takes her place now in the gallery of other 'divine' women of Shakespeare. Again, in a single scene, Shakespeare has executed such a lot of business; the evils of court-life, the distinction of good from evil, the ~~Frederick's~~ wickedness, the characters of Rosalind, Celia, further deepening of our impression of Orlando, and the business of love. We can now easily see how much of a weapon the dramatist makes of courtesy in order to unfold these characters and events on the stage, and, how to that end, he alters the events and characters of the original story.

As a logical sequence to his political fears, ~~Frederick's~~ in the next scene banishes Rosalind. In vain does Rosalind ask with all politeness for a reason; in vain also does Celia plead for her cousin

as in Lodge. But Shakespeare here alters Lodge's story a little, in that, whereas Lodge makes the usurper banish his daughter also, Shakespeare makes Celia leave the court voluntarily with Rosalind and in doing so lifts up Celia's character. Celia's self-sacrifice is not the result only of her love for Rosalind but also of her love for virtue, for all that is good in man and manners, and of her hatred for all that is evil, even if that evil is her father himself. The princesses decide to leave the wicked court secretly and go to the forest of Arden 'to seek my uncle'. Rosalind, being taller of the two, is to be disguised as a young man with 'a swashing and a martial outside' and act as the elder brother to chaperon the younger sister. Lodge makes his Rosalynde page to Alinda : Shakespeare's princesses are equals and co-sharers in everything. But 'to have comfort in our travel', they decide, at Rosalind's suggestion, to take with them the court Fool, Touchstone. So except Orlando, all the good people are now on their way to Arden.

Orlando is sent thither in scene 3 of the next act. The Lodge story is followed but Shakespeare eschews much of the rowdy conduct of the hero. After

victory in the wrestling bout Rosader goes home with some admirers to find the house locked. He violently breaks open the door and entertains his friends riotously with food and drink, with the help of the loyal family servant Adam. Later Rosader kills a porter, and when the Sheriff interferes he beats him. Finally with Adam he escapes to Arden. Such a conduct would not become Shakespeare's hero. Murder and violence are not the reasons for Shakespeare's Orlando to go to Arden; his graces are the reasons. Adam prevents Orlando from entering his brother's house on his return home after the victory, because -

"Why are you virtuous ? Why do people love you ?
 And wherefore are you gentle, strong and valiant ?
 Why would you be so fond to overcome
 The bony priser of the humorous duke ?
 Your praise is come too swiftly home before you.
 Know you not, master, to some kind of men
 Their graces serve them but as enemies ?
 No more do yours : your virtues, gentle master,
 Are sanctified and holy traitors to you."

(II, iii, 5-13)

Therefore, enter not the house for 'within this roof the enemy of all your graces lives'. (17-18). It is Shakespeare's constant complaint in the plays that court-life has become graceless. It is therefore that the ideal of courtesy is forged and dramatised. The actions of Duke Frederick and Oliver illustrate

the wickedness of court life in the play. Oliver has now planned to burn Orlando alive in the house : so Adam, an old servant of eighty, so loyal and so feeling, persuades Orlando to leave the town and offers to go with him, despite his age. It is an act of genuine courtesy. He places at Orlando's disposal five hundred francs, the saving of a life-time of honest and hard work. With Adam and Orlando all the good people are now set in the direction of Arden.

Arden is Shakespeare's main concern in the play. In fact in the first Act, as we remarked earlier, he seems to be anxious to get there and has perhaps for that reason compressed Lodge's incidents into a little space. Now in the traditional pastoral romances, pastoral life is eulogised sometimes to the point of incredulity. Generally it is an antithesis to court life. But often it happens that to damn the bad, the good is billosed up to fantastic proportions. Because court life lacks grace, it does not mean that grace can be had in unlimited abundance in pastoral life. Shakespeare in As You Like It intends to correct the practice of over-praising pastoral life. To correct, he must needs criticize. And this criticism has led

some critics to read a satire in the dramatist's treatment of it in the play. Kenneth Muir¹ 'for one calls it a satire'. Bullough² says it is not a satire; Mark Van Doren³ calls it criticism. For Shakespeare, pastoral life at best, with its simple natural living, is a restorative for the unhealthy court life, not a school for courtesy which is the ideal of courtly conduct. It is like going to a hospital when we are ill, or going on a holiday to restore our fagged-out nerves after the heavy strain of the work-a-day world;⁴ but because we do so sometimes, it does not follow that the home is a place which breeds only disease, which the sooner we leave the better, and that there is nothing like an ideal of healthy domesticity. Shakespeare perhaps wants to correct the attitude of the pastoral poets to courtly life. This is what he does in As You Like It. The courtly people who resort to the forest, inevitably return to the court after the ills of courtly life have been corrected and sinners punished. This is what happens in Tempest, Cymbeline and The Winter's Tale as well. It is in relation to

¹ Kenneth Muir : Shakespeare's Sources : Vol.I, p.62.

² Geoffrey Bullough : Narrative and Dramatic Sources of Shakespeare : Vol. II, p.157.

³ Mark Van Doren : Introduction to the Play in Pocket Books, p.81.

⁴ "O, how full of briers is this working-day world". Rosalind. (I, iii, 11-12)

this criticism of the pastoral that the creation of Touchstone justifies itself.

Before Orlando, Rosalind, Celia and Touchstone reach the forest of Arden, we are already there to find the Senior Duke comparing the two patterns of life, the courtly and the country. The forest life that the exiled Duke leads is not exactly one of ideal happiness. It has its own ills, only they are different from those of court life. Custom has made it sweeter than the life of painted pomp at court. It is relatively more free than the envious court, and though in the forest they have to bear the rigours of wind and weather, the icy fangs of winter biting into the body, to the Duke these would be preferable to the flattery of the smooth-tongued courtiers. Adversity's uses are sweet but adversity is there. It is for us to draw our conclusions from these comparisons, after the Duke has had his say. Something is wrong with court life (envy, flattery, greed, all that is opposite of grace); to escape it, one may resort to the country but that will be no heaven only; there will be cruelty there also - to animals, and may be a Jacques to sentimentalise over it. But relatively, life will be better

it will be a good change, a good restful hospitalisation or a good brief holiday. And we may learn a few home truths here. This seems to be the substance of the Duke's view as also of Shakespeare's.

The exiled king in Lodge has no such moralising to offer. Lodge gives to Alinda (now Aliena) the traditional business of effecting the court-country contrast. The shepherd Coridon with admirable courtesy welcomes Aliena and the page Ganymede, and is curious to know what misfortune has driven a lady of such excellence to a dangerous forest. "Aliena (that was as courteous as she was faire) made this reply; shepherd, a friendlie demaund ought never to be offensive, and questions of courtesie carrie priviledged pardons in their forheads. Know therefore, to discover my fortunes were to renue my sorrows, and I should be discoursing my mishaps, but rake fier out of the cinders. Therefore let this suffice (gentle shepheard) my distresse is as great as my travell is dangerous, and I wander in this forrest to light on some cottage where I and my Page may dwell: for I meane to buy some fortune, and a flocke of sheepe, and so become a shepheardesse, meaning to live low, and content me

with a countrey life : for I have heard the swaynes say, that they drunke without suspition, and slept without care. Marry Mistres (quoth Coridon) if you meane so you came in good time, for my landlord intends to seel both the farme I till, and the flocke I keepe, and cheap you may have them for readie money : and for a shepheard's life (oh Mistresse) did you but live a while in their content, you would saye the Court were rather a place of sorroe, than of solace. Here (Mistresse) shall not Fortune thwart you, but in meane misfortunes, as the losse of a few sheepe, which, as it breedes no beggerie, so it can bee no extreame prejudice : the next yeare may mend al with a fresh increase. Envie stirres not us, wee covet not to climbe, our desires mount not above our degrees, nor our thoughts above our fortunes. Care cannot harbour in our cottages, nor doo our homely couches know broken slumbers : as we excede not in diet, so we have inough to satisfie : and Mistres I have so much Latin, "Satis est quod sufficit" (Sufficient is enough).

In short, it is a life of simple content. To accept with satisfaction what Nature gives and to ask for no more is the simple truth of a Shakespeare's life. The

rest is false idealisation : That a shepherd should write love poems and hang them on trees (as Montanus does in Lodge) or that a shepherd should quote Latin to a princess, as Corin does here, or that these shepherds should speak in Eclogues as Corin and Montanus do in Lodge's story, all this is false and exaggerated. This tendency of the pastoral writers, not Lodge alone, grossly to idealize country life, is justly criticised by Shakespeare and this seems to be his aim in As You Like It. Country life may be a proper asylum for the distressed courtier, embittered by the envy, malice, greed and other evils of court life; but, except for the simple virtues bestowed by Nature, it has little to do with the ideal of courtesy as such. Courtesy is an ideal for the courtier, not for the shepherd. It is significant that Shakespeare does not avail himself of all the opportunities his plays afford to show up the shepherd. The banished Prospero is sent to an enchanted island, not to an Arden with shepherds in it, the exiled old courtier in Cymbeline lives like a knight Hermit but has no shepherds around him; in The Winter's Tale shepherds are a simple butt of Autolycus's wit.

And what of Love among the shepherds ? Shakespeare adapts Lodge's Coridon and Montanus in the parallel persons of Corin and Silvius. Lodge's shepherd says :

" Oh sir (quoth he) the boy is in love. Why (quoth Ganimede) can sheapheards love ? I (quoth Montanus) and overlove, els shouldst not thou see mee so pensive. Love (I tell thee) is as precious in a shepheard's eye as in the lookes of a king, and we country swaynes intertain fancie with as great delight, as the proudest courtier doth affection. Opportunitie (that is the sweetest friend to Venus) harboureth in our cottages, and loyaltie (the chiefest fealtie that Cupid requires) is found more among shepheardes than higher degrees. Then ask not if such silly swaynes can love ?"¹

The right to love is indeed conferred on every one, even in Arden, from the shepherds, to the Fool, to the princess. Grace is given to each in his own degree and so the ability to love, but the dramatist rejects any suggestion that the shepherd can love

¹ G. Bullough, (ed.) : Op.cit., p.189.

better than the courtier. Against Lodge's serious and enlogistic treatment of Love and the pastoral ideals, Shakespeare sets the right value to both by a gay treatment of the one and a light-hearted criticism of the other, inciting thus the comic spirit in the play.

Shakespeare's Arden has freedom and gaiety. But the work of criticism is given in his own right to Touchstone. Jaques, another of Shakespeare's inventions, is there as an antithesis to every one in Arden, and also to Arden itself. Contrast has great artistic value in Shakespeare. In a sense, Jaques is a commentary on the degenerated intellectual courtier. To suck meloncholy out of everything is about all that he stands for in the play. It is Touchstone who forms a criticism of the pastoral ideals in the play, by his Fool's wit, wisdom and action. His mission begins as soon as he enters Arden :

" Ay, now am I in Arden; the more fool I;
when I was at home, I was on a better place, but
travellers must be content."

(II, iv, 15-17)

He goes about clubbing the pastoral peacods with his wit and courtly sophistication. Here are some of his grains :

" We that are true lovers run into strange capers; but as all is mortal in nature, so is all nature in love mortal in folly".

(II, iv, 53-55)

And true to his ideal, he fell in love with Audrey like a true lover running into a strange caper, wholly mortal in love and folly, both love and folly driving him : "Trip, Audrey ! trip Audrey ! " (V,i,62)

As for the shepherd's ideals and philosophy, this is what he has got out of the shepherd himself :

Corin : Sir, I am a true labourer : I earn that I eat, get that I wear; owe no man hate, envy no man's happiness; glad of other man's good, content with my harm; and the greatest of my pride is, to see my ewes gaze and my lambs suck".

(II, ii, 73-77)

His rival William is brow-beaten out of love itself like a noodle. But what Corin says above is the most that we can expect of pastoral philosophy. The rest in pastoral is false idealization of the real. To bring about this realization in us, Shakespeare seems

to have invented Touchstone and his Fool's wit and behaviour range accordingly in the play.

It becomes easy for us now to see that Shakespeare often effects a change in the original as a result of the ideal of courtesy before him. He changes certain events or drops others to bring the story in line with that ideal. Similarly, he elevates his characters by eliminating from their speech and conduct all that may smack of discourtesy. He distils pure courtesy, so to say, by removing the dross. To each character he gives a tether of courtesy within the radius of which its speech and conduct must range. Any one who trespasses it would be pulled up. The Senior Duke reprimanding Orlando for his discourtesy (II, vii, 91-119) is cited elsewhere in this essay. Paulina in The Winter's Tale is similarly reproved for her boldness in speech to Leontes (The Winter's Tale : III, ii, 215-217). It would appear that courtesy was part of the shaping spirit of the dramatist's imagination, the ideal always present with him.

In adapting Greene's romantic story for The Winter's Tale, Shakespeare brings about two major

alterations. Greene explains at length how Pandosto (Leontes) became jealous. The 'honest familiarity' between Bellaria (Hermione) and Egistus (Polixenes) is described in details, even to point where the two - the hostess and the royal guest - meet in the latter's bed-chamber. This may offer some justification for the King's jealousy and give it an appearance of reasonableness. In The Winter's Tale Leontes is intended to be already jealous when the play opens. This has displeased some critics. In Greene's story Bellaria dies, as does the king later on. Shakespeare in the exciting dramatic scene (V,3), brings about Hermione's resurrection and a happy reunion of friends, parents and children. Both these alterations are germane to our argument. As to Leontes' jealousy let us recollect the concept of 'degree'. Perfection of grace does not of necessity go with the highest degree of birth. Nature may give some one 'defect' even to the most nobly born. In Shakespeare's tragedies this single defect brings about the doom of the heroes; (though the great creating Mother seems to have become a bountiful donor to some of Shakespeare's women !) The defect is a natural defect and manifests itself

in the actions of the persons who suffer from it. In the case of Leontes, it is a defect which is the exact antithesis of courtesy, which even royal nurture cannot entirely correct. There is no need therefore to look for an excuse for his jealousy or to raise any question in respect of his conduct. We do not ask how Macbeth came to be over-ambitious or Hamlet so procrastinating or how Lear came to have the filial weakness. These defects in nature shape themselves into action as persons possessing them come in contact with life and so forge out their destinies. And in vain may we look for excuses for their behaviour. "How sometimes nature will betray its folly ! " (I, ii, 151), we may just wonder when everything is over. Shakespeare may have thought about Leontes in the way Camillo advises Polixenes, to accept "What's grown than question how 'tis born", for

" You may as well
 Forbid the sea for to obey the moon,
 As or by oath remove or counsel shake
 The fabric of his folly, whose foundation
 Is piled upon his faith, and will continue
 The standing of his body".

(I, ii, 231-236)

So Leontes is jealous when the curtain goes up for Scene 2 Act I. It is the revealing of the existence

of this jealousy in him that is of greater concern to the dramatist than the offering of any reason for it. Again, this is sex-jealousy, infinitely more potent in its evil than the ordinary variety, in rousing dangerous passions in the human heart. The sight of the most trivial gesture of innocent intimacy, of a chance physical touch, the hearing of a gay ripple of laughter or language of harmless endearment may excite a volcano of suspicion. This is what happens to Leontes. His pictures of padding palms and pinching fingers, wispering, leaning cheek to cheek, meeting noses, kissing with inside lip, etc. are ugly contortions of a morbid imagination, inflamed by sex-jealousy. But if we question Shakespeare how, he would say, 'make that thy question and go rot !' (I, ii, 322).

Yet Leontes, unlike Hamlet, Macbeth, Lear, has more than a single defect. In fact, though he is not one of the dissemblers, (and that, perhaps, is his saving grace), he is one of the wicked ones, one suspects, in line with Claudius, duke Frederick of As You Like It, Antonio of Tempest. To concentrate on his jealousy, Shakespeare has added other evil qualities. We wonder what mysterious doings he had

with the help of Camillo at the 'postern gate' (II, i, 52-55); his incestuous desire may be given the excuse that he did not know Perdita was his daughter. (V, i, 222) His other evil deeds in the play are corollaries to his jealousy. We can understand his plan to murder Polixenes, his defiance of the Oracle, etc., because jealousy begets anger, obstinacy, cruelty and what not. In any case, his jealousy alone is sufficient to set him off against courtesy. After we have conceded so much, what becomes pertinent to our argument is the way in which the dramatist has used courtesy to reveal Leontes on the stage and to further the action of the play. To give an excuse like Greene, for his jealousy and thus offer a justification for it would hinder Shakespeare's way of revealing characters by their courtesy or the absence of it, and would injure his very ideal of courtesy, in so far as Hermione is concerned.

The first scene, which initiates us into the main conflict of the play, friendship versus jealousy, while informing us of the great love between the two kings and their great friendship since their childhood, overflows with the courtesy of two courtiers. The

occasion itself is one which may call for an effusion of courtesy. The departure of a beloved royal guest offers opportunities for dealing out an abundance of regal grace and the two courtiers, representing the host and the guest, become rivals in showing their grace. This mutual exchange of courtesies arouse in us an anticipation of witnessing regal bounty flowing freely in the next scene, when we meet the host, the hostess and the guest. It is with this anticipation and due to it, that we become conscious of the difference in the three.

Leontes, Hermoine and Polixenes are sitting, with prince Mamillius playing by their side. Polixenes must now return to Bohemia, and he has decided to start next day. He must seek leave of the host. This is the courteous breath in which he pleads to be allowed to go and thank the host for the hospitality :

"Nine changes of the watery star hath been
The shepherd's note since we have left our throne,
Without a burden : time as long again
Would be filled up, my brother, with our thanks;
And yet we should, for perpetuity,
Go hence in debt; and, therefore, like a cipher,
Yet standing in rich place, I multiply
With one we-thank-you many thousand moe
That go before it."

(The Winter's Tale : I, ii, 1-9)

Ominous because it is fraught with dangerous suggestions; 'wait before you thank me, you may not have to thank at all before going : And so it turns out to be in the play. Leontes offers courtesy like a miser paying his war-time taxes, he has hardly a line to utter against ten of Polixenes, but each word he utters has a sinister implication.

Polixenes persists with his leave-taking...
 Fears of what might have happened in Bohemia during
 his absence are weighing on him..... 'Besides, I
 have stay'd to tire your royalty' (14-15):

Leontes : We'll part the time between's, then :
and in that
I'll no gainsaying.

To this insincere formal pressure, Polixenes answers with genuine courtesy flowing from within :

Polixenes : Press me not, beseech you, so,
 There is no tongue that moves, none
 none i'the world,
 So soon as yours, could win me; so it
 should now,
 Were there necessity in your request
 although
 'Twere needful I denied it. My affairs
 Do even drag me homeward: which to
 hinder,
 Were, in your love, a whip to me;
 my stay,
 To you a charge and trouble : to save
 both,
 Farewell, our brother." (15-27)

If Leontes were inwardly as genuine, he would have responded to this grace in full measure : alternately, if he were a dissembler, he would have affected the polite strain with more emphasis and show of feeling, particularly as he would like Polixenes to stay, like the guest and the queen more together, and so betray themselves. As it is, his dark thoughts have by now so possessed him that he is unable at this moment to utter even his reluctant half-sentences of formal courtesy, lest he would betray himself. He shoves the business on to the Queen :

Leontes : Tongue-tied, our Queen, speak you.
(27)

(27)

Hermione, whose innocent light-heartedness in this scene has charmed every one (except her husband) and the persecution of whose virtue is the central theme of the play, is now given an act of courtesy to perform. And how freely and confidently she performs it ! Incapable with her innocence of sizing up the dark jealousy of her husband, she has atleast descried his coldness to his guest, to which her own unaffected warmth is a dramatic foil :

Hermione : "I had thought, Sir, to have held my
 You had drawn oaths from him not to
 stay. You, Sir,
 Charge him too coldly."
 (28-30)

(28-30)

She succeeds in persuading Polixenes and the latter's yielding to her solicitation only adds fuel to the fire of Leontes' jealousy. But Shakespeare cleverly uses courtesy to reveal the queen's delightful light-heartedness and innoence and the thickening of the king's jealousy.

Polixenes having agreed to stay, the scene proceeds. Our attention is alternately drawn to

Leontes with his livid face, ruminating his jealous thoughts, and Hermione and Polixenes, playing cordial hostess and guest. Leontes watches his son playing near him only to mark the similarity in the features of father and son; his conversation with the prince adds irony to the situation. The queen and the guest on the other hand entertain each other with light, gay talk on the men's strength and weakness. There is little more than cordiality freely exchanged between them; but the sight of the pair and the chance hearing of their conversation, little by little, occupies and possesses Leontes' mind. At one stage, he even wants to be fair and open-minded. "This entertainment", he says,

" May a free face put on; derive a liberty
 From heartiness, from bounty's fertile bosom,
 And well become the agent; 't may, I grant;"
 (111-114)

but his myopic vision will not let him see clearly, and his dark mind conjures up myriad ugly pictures, until it becomes 'too hot' for him to bear his condition. He has 'tremor cordis' on him. Engrossed in his musings, he becomes insensible to his surroundings and, unawares, he is caught audibly ruminating by Polixenes and Hermione :

Polixenes : " What means Sicilia ?
 Hermione : He something seems unsettled.
 Polixenes : How, my lord ?
 What cheer ? how is't with you, best
 brother ?
 Hermione : You look
 As if you held a brow of much
 distraction :
 Are you moved, my lord ?"
 (146-150)

No; a polite excuse is found for his distraught musings. But the jealous ranklings go on. Even their company becomes unbearable to him. Why not give sin a long rope, unfaithfulness the freedom to expose itself ? So the courteous suggestion with a tinge of malicious irony :

Leontes : Hermione,
 How thou lovest us, show in our
 brother's welcome;
 Let what is dear in Sicily be cheap;
 Next to thyself and my young rover, he's
 Apparent to my heart.
 (173-177)

Hermione obeys. But does she have a sense of something wrong ? Her tone is halting, and the accent on 'you' and 'yours' in her response to the suggestion a little strained :

Hermione : " If you would seek us,
 We are yours i'the garden : shall's
 attend you there ?
 (177-178)

This gesture of courtesy, a courtly mannerism of speech, is only too readily misinterpreted by the jealous mind. When Camillo discovers how the king's mind has been working, he conceals the first shock and keeps up his courtly serenity. As the king's trusted man, he has often before 'cleansed' and corrected the king. He tries on this occasion to perform his loyal courtier's duty but, for once, he fails. That the queen is 'slippery' and Polixenes the person involved, is so passionately thrust on him, that half-stupefied, half out of love and loyalty to his apparently distressed master, he yields to the pressure and agrees to 'bring off' Polixenes, on condition that, when Polixenes is disposed of, the king should make up with the queen, even for the sake of the young prince, and thus prevent a scandal. But the promise, made without genuine volition, in absence of any conviction as to its righteousness dies out as soon as it is made and the next moment we find Camillo deciding to break it and to leave the court.

Polixenes chances upon him at the moment and Shakespeare, once again, brings courtesy into service, this time to stem the action. Polixenes is perplexed at Leontes' discourtesy; the sudden change in his manners :

Polixenes : "The king hath on him such a countenance
As he had lost some province, and a
Loved as he loves himself : even now
I met him
With customary compliment; when he,
Wafting his eyes to the contrary, and
falling
A lip of much contempt, speeds from
me and
So leaves me, to consider what is
breeding
That changes thus his manners".

(366-373)

It is this discourtesy that gives occasion for further conversation between Polixenes and Camillo and the subsequent arrangement for the former to fly homeward and the latter to accompany him.

Thus at every step in the play, so far, the dramatist has used courtesy, to open the play, to cast the character, to effect a contrast in characters and to stem the action. Courtesy is, as it were, a lump of wax lying beside him when he wrote the plays, which he could press or cut or mould to any shape, as an instrument to serve his dramatic purpose.

The other major change from the original in the play is the resurrection of Hermione. While on the one hand Shakespeare makes Leontes jealous from the beginning, giving no excuse for that green-eyed

passion in him, he raises up Hermione's character. He removes all the dress in the original about the queen frequently visiting the bed chamber of the guest, and consciously and deliberately reveals precisely those virtues in the queen, purity and innocence, which are least likely to rouse the husband's jealousy. We have already seen how he accomplishes this by means of her courtesy. To give an excuse for the king's jealousy is to bring some kind of a stigma on her, and to that degree to compromise the queen's character. It is usually held that Shakespeare brings about Hermione's 'resurrection' because he wants to accomplish a general reconciliation, which was his dominant mood when he wrote the last plays. There is substance in this view. But let us at the same time consider the problem of courtesy in relation to the queen. We have seen in a previous chapter¹ how the dramatist's high conception of women is of pivotal importance to his ideal of courtesy. It is in this noble mould that the women of the play, Hermione, Perdita and Paulina are cast. It is worthwhile asking how much 'grace' these women impart to the play. In fact, if anything can give an impression of wholeness to the play with its disparate parts and structural defects, it is the

¹ Chapter III ante.

cumulative effect of grace that these women severally contribute to the play. This grace spreads like an atmosphere over the play. The queen's death would have substantially taken away from this atmosphere. Courtesy everywhere in the plays of Shakespeare produces an atmosphere of grace and refinement, and it is remarkable how much of it is imparted by women. It is therefore that Shakespeare creates with such scrupulous tenderness and delicate skill his better women. A little harm to them would turn out to be a great harm to the ideal of courtesy.

As You Like It belongs to the period of Shakespeare's mature art; The Winter's Tale belongs to the far end of his career. We have seen in our comparison of these plays with their sources, how sensitive the dramatist is to the ideal of courtesy. But his awareness of the ideal would be found on examination, even in the earlier plays. The Comedy of Errors, for instance, belongs to the period of Shakespeare's apprenticeship to the art. Its source is a merry Roman comedy. Plautus' play is a dramatic narration of events brought about by confusion arising from the mistaken identity of the twins. Again, it has a plot

where characterisation has little need and scope. The mistaken identity of the twins is alone sufficient to bring about the events which make up the plot. Yet Shakespeare's play differs from Plautus' comedy, not only in its five-act structure of the plot and the multiplication of the confusion by the introduction into it of the servant-twins, but also in the alterations in the characters of its men and women, in the events, and the invention of new characters, because of his concept of courtesy. It is true that his hand is still uncertain and the subtlety and deftness in the use of courtesy, which characterise the later plays are relatively less at work here; yet the dramatist's awareness of the ideal of courtesy cannot be mistaken.

Plautus' main characters are middle class mercantile people with nothing courtly about them. Shakespeare borrows them as merchants but joins them to a Duke and in the very opening of the play we are led into a courtly atmosphere. Aegeon, the Syracusan merchant, father of the twins and the Duke are both Shakespeare's innovations and their conversation in Act I, Sc. 1 is courtly in tone. The Duke's interest in the merchant and sympathy for his woes as also his

offering the latter a chance of survival are acts of courtesy, despite the fact that the behaviour of Syracusan merchants has shut all pity from his heart; 'for we may pity, though not pardon thee'. The Duke's tone and feeling are gentle as well as dignified :

"Hopless Aegeon, whom the fates have mark't
To bear the extremity of dire mishap !
Now trust me, were it not against our laws,
Against my crown, my oath, my dignity, -
Which princes, would they, may not disannul, -
My soul should sue as advocate for thee".

(The Comedy of Errors :
I, i, 140-145)

The Duke begins and rounds off the play, and necessarily the drawing of his character is thin and sketchy; yet it is his pity, courtesy and dignity that reveal him. Shakespeare's usual method of revealing character by means of courtesy is here as in the later plays, though the use is relatively simple. In Antipholus of Ephesus we find the mere merchant in Plautus' story raised in his status by his association with the Duke. Further, unlike his equivalent in Plautus, though he appears as late as Act III, Sc. 1 in the play, he is rich, renowned and has much credit among the people of the town : Second Merchant

Second Merchant : How is the man esteem'd here in
the city ?

Angalo : Of very reverend reputation, Sir,
Of credit infinite, highly beloved,
Second to none that lives here in the
His word might bear my wealth at any
city
time.

(V,i, 4-8)

It looks as though Antonio is in the offing.
His wife, a wealthy woman married him upon the Duke's
'important letters'. Even on his own, he has a claim,
a soldierly claim, on the Duke to ask a favour :

Anti. E. : Justice, most gracious duke, O grant
me justice !
Even for the service that long since
I did thee,
When I bestrid thee in the wars, and
took
Deep scars to save thy life; even for
the blood
That then I lost for thee, now grant
me justice.

(V, i, 90-94)

Plautus' merchant becomes a soldier also in
Shakespeare; his affiliation with the Duke approximates
him to a courtier. He is cast, therefore, in a mould
of gentility. Shakespeare thus extends a merchant
class domestic theme to the court, and raises the
status of Antipholus of Ephesus much above his original
in Plautus.

With courtly affiliations must come in courtesy and wherever possible Shakespeare makes use of it in the play. It extends to the innominate merchant who comes with the Syracusan Antipholus and Dromio to Ephesus. While returning Antipholus' money which had been in his keep, he warns the strangers :

F. Mer. : Therefore give out you are of
 Epidamnum,
 Lest that your goods too soon be
 confiscate.
 This very day a Syracusan merchant
 Is apprehended for arrival here;
 And, not being able to buy out his life,
 According to the statute of the town,
 Dies ere the weary sun set in the West."
 There is your money that I had to keep."
 (I, ii, 1-8)

This courtesy and honesty will serve to further the plot. The plot requires that Dromio S. must leave the stage. The money serves the purpose as Antipholus S. is a kind master and Dromio S. a trusted servant :

Anti S.: Go bear it to the Centaur, where we host,
 And stay there Dromio, till I come to thee.
 Within this hour it will be dinner-time:
 Till that, I'll view the manners of the
 town,
 Peruse the traders, gaze upon the buildings,
 And then return, and sleep within mine inn;
 For with long travel I am stiff and weary.
 Get thee away.

Dromio S. : Many a man would take you at your word,
 And go indeed, having so good a mean.
 (Exit)

Both the Dromios in the play serve the purpose of
 court-jesters.

Anti S. : A trusty villain, sir; that very oft,
 When I am dull with care and melancholy,
 Lightens my humour with his merry jests.

But the merchant's courtesy must be returned with
 courtesy.

What, will you walk with me about the town,
 And then go to my inn and dine with me ?

The merchant is equal to the occasion in his response :

Mer : I am invited, Sir, to certain merchants,
 Of whom I hope to make much benefit;
 I crave your pardon. Soon at five o'clock,
 Please you, I'll meet with you upon the mart,
 And afterwards consort you till bed-time :
 My present business calls me from you now.

And a courteous farewell :

Ant. S. : Farewell till then : I will go lose
 myself,
 And wander up and down to view the city.

Mer : Sir, I commend you to your own content,
 (Exit)

(9-32)

This expression of mutual courtesy has no parallel in
 Plautus. It gives an impression of polite breeding in



the characters, culturally improves them over their originals, and imparts to the play an atmosphere of refinement which we miss altogether in Plautus.

Another important deviation that Shakespeare effects from the Plautine comedy is in the treatment that he accords to the women of the play. The wife in The Menaechmi is a plain shrew, and a butt of ridicule, 'a brabbling foole and madbraine scold', whom even her father has to reprove for being masterful and obstinate. Shakespeare's Adriana has her dignity and 'her own point of view'.¹ She is jealous, but this jealousy springs from her love for her husband.² To correct her Shakespeare invents her sister, Luciana, through whom also he introduces into the play the subject of love, which is alien to the original. She also makes a bride for the other twin

¹ G. Bullough : Narrative and Dramatic Sources of Shakespeare, Vol. I, p.8.

² Luc : Who would be jealous, then, of such a one?
No evil lost is wail'd when it is gone.

Adr : Ah, but I think him better than I say,
And yet would herein other's eyes were worse.
Far from her nest the lapwing cries away;
My heart prays for him, though my tongue
do curse.

(IV, ii, 23-28)

But as we already know woman's function in the plays is to exert a refining influence. Luciana, even in the funny situation when Antipholus of Syracuse falls in love with her (III,2) endeavours to fulfil the same function with commonsense and worldly wisdom. She reprimands her supposed brother for letting, 'Even in the springs of love thy love-springs rot'? (III,ii,3) Her advice to her mistaken brother, to wear his falseness in a becoming manner, is realistic, even for the sake of her sister, for,

" Alas, poor women ! make us but believe,
Being compact of credit, that you love us;
Though others have the arm show us the sleeve;
(III, ii, 21-22)

In comedy values are often inverted. Curiously it is Antipholus of Syracuse who defines the mission of women when he expresses his love for Luciana :

" Teach me, dear creature, how to think and speak;
Lay open to my earth-gross conceit,
Smother'd in errors, feeble, shallow, weak,
The folded meaning of your words' deceit.
Against my soul's pure truth why labour 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".
(33-34)

The germs of the ideal of the angelic functions of woman, which is to find a full expression in the later

plays, and on which, as we have noticed, courtesy so closely depends, are here. Shakespeare is sensitive about the virtuous status of women and therefore he assigns a subordinate, almost insignificant part to the courtesan, who in the Plautine comedy, plays a centrally important part. Courtesans were a fashion in Elizabethan drama,¹ and, in some contemporary plays, hold the strings of action; yet Shakespeare to save from injury his ideal of womanhood, and so the ideal of refinement, relegates the courtesan to a position almost of nonentity. Antipholus of Ephesus is, likewise, absolved of the 'lewd dealings and vile thievery' of the original; his only reason for visiting the courtesan is that he has been shut out of his home by his wife. This is how the courtesan is described :

"I know a wench of excellent discourse,
Pretty and witty; wild, and yet, too gentle:
There will we dine. This woman that I mean,
My wife - but, I protest, without desert -
Hath often times upbraided me withal :
To her will we to dinner."

(III, i, 109-114)

Even the chain he will give her is only to spite
his wife :

Since mine own doors refuse to entertain me,
I'll knock elsewhere, to see if they'll disdain me.
(120-121)

¹ Vide Chapter VII post.

We may not interpret this as nothing 'but mere words' : We have seen Shakespeare's welcomes in another chapter,¹ and, though the dramatist's hand is neither steady nor subtle here, the use of courtesy, limited as it is by the very nature of the story, is sufficient indication of the his awareness of the ideal of courtesy, even at this early stage of his career.

When later in the scene, Antipholus E. prepares to break open his doors, Balthazar offers him a courteous suggestion, full of wisdom and consideration for everyone concerned :

" Have patience, Sir; O, let it not be so !
 Herein you war against your reputation,
 And, draw within the compass of suspect
 Th' unviolated honour of your wife.
 Once this, - your long experience of her wisdom,
 Her sober virtue, years and modesty,
 Plead on her part some cause to you unknown;
 And doubt not, Sir, but she will well excuse
 Why at this time the doors are made against you".
 (III, i, 85-93)

Shakespeare draws anew the wife's picture here, so different from Plautus' Mulier, and perhaps, Balthazar's portrait is a little overdrawn here in his courtesy, considering the small part he has to play in the story : yet, these little touches of courtesy,

¹ Chapter V ante.

with the elevated status of the men and women, the new inventions mentioned above, the introduction of love, the high concept of womanhood, the vicinity of the court, all together impart to the play an atmosphere of gentility unknown to the Plautine comedy. These are deliberate changes made by the dramatist to match with his ideal of courtesy and indicate how conscious he was of the ideal even during the period of his apprenticeship.

Our comparison of these plays with their sources amply reveals Shakespeare's method of refining his source-material. He refines the characters, incidents and the general tone of the original. The ideal of refined conduct is always present to his mind, and with that he accomplishes the refining process. It helps him transform some characters altogether, reject others, drop out some incidents, introduce new ones and create new characters. This is his general practice. In Twelfth Night, for instance, the dramatist transforms Barnaby Riche's sensual beast of a captain into a refined and courteous sea-captain. Similarly he rejects from the original story, events like Silvio's desertion of Juliana and

the widow's pregnancy. For Shakespeare the plot depends more on the character than vice-versa. He insists on certain refinement in his characters and accordingly alters, modifies or stretches his plots. The ideal is the ideal of courtly behaviour, of inward grace flowing out into refined speech and conduct.