

plunders and clownish fools. In these ways Jyly set a new trend of writing drama which influenced the contemporary writers of his age including Shakespeare. No doubt Jyly is the foremost inspiration for Shakespeare's Comedies.

### Christopher Marlowe:

Christopher Marlowe is a man born with fierce imagination and deep thought. He has a natural talent as a lyric poet than a dramatist. He is the predecessor of Shakespeare who wrote his famous plays like

1. Dr. Faustus
2. Tamburlaine the Great.
3. The Jew of Malta
4. Edward II

In fact, these plays made him an eminent writer of his time. Through these plays he introduced blank verse to the romantic drama of the Elizabethan Stage. He sets a model of a type of drama and chronicle play for his immediate successors. Shakespeare who has been an acquaintance and a collaborator with Marlowe surely had an immense influence over him. Even the blank verse used in the early plays of Shakespeare owes much to Marlow. Shakespeare's narrative poem 'Venus and Adonis' is modelled on Marlowe's 'Hero and Leander'. His Richard II and III are based on Marlowe's chronicle play Edward II. Even his 'The Merchant of Venice' is written based on Marlowe's 'The Jew of Malta'.

Of all the university wits two of them had a direct influence upon Shakespeare. They are John Lyly and Christopher Marlowe.

### John Lyly:

Even though he has produced drama he is well known for his prose romance 'Euphues'. Likewise he has written about 8 comedies of which three remains an outstanding creation

1. Campaspe
2. Endymion
3. Cyallathea.

In fact, all these comedies were meant for performance at court. More than the plot, situation and characterisation the interest of the play lies mainly on language which uses wit, point, ingenuity and graceful dialogue. When the public stage demanded the humour filled with coarseness and horse play, Lyly gave his humour an intellectual touch. Lyly expresses his skill in clever repartee, frequent use of puns, conceits and other sorts of verbal craftsmanship had a greatest influence upon Shakespeare who is getting ready for the Elizabethan stage. Taking Lyly as a role model Shakespeare wrote his early comedies, 'Love's Labour's Lost' and 'A Midsummer Night's Dream'. Likewise, Shakespeare learned the skill of combining the courtly main plot with that of the episodes revolving round rustic

## 4 Shakespeare's Predecessors:

The predecessors of Shakespeare were the University wits. University wits were the group of writers who were the scholars from the two renowned universities Oxford and Cambridge. These playwrights were responsible for laying foundation for the free form of drama called Romantic drama, which Shakespeare made it himself later. These scholars were the men of academic training, personally in touch with new learning. They were equally talented like the humanists who defend classical type of drama. But these university wits differ from the scholars who adhered classical drama. They exhibit a difference by catering to the need of the public stage. The need of the public and the production of a class of drama wrote by these men prepared the Elizabethan theatre that made popular by Shakespeare later. The university wits are

1. John Lyly (1554-1606)
2. Thomas Kyd (1557-95)
3. George Peele (1558-97)
4. Thomas Lodge (1558-1625)
5. Robert Greene (1560-1592)
6. Christopher Marlowe (1564-93)
7. Thomas Nash (1567-1601)