





# *The Life and Times of Sir Thomas Elyot, Englishman*

By Pearl Hogrefe

Sir Thomas Elyot, contemporary of Sir Thomas More, Colet, and Erasmus, belongs in the group of classical humanists of the English Renaissance whose goal was the betterment of man through the sharing of learning and the creation of ideal political states.

In this biographical study of Elyot, Professor Hogrefe begins chronologically with examinations in depth of early records about Elyot's father, and of wills drawn by members of the families with whom the Elyots were connected.

Miss Hogrefe also analyzes Elyot's legal training at an Inn of Court and his classical education. Elyot's public career—his work for the government as clerk of the assize, clerk of the king's Council, sheriff, member of commissions of the peace, and ambassador—is related to the reign of Henry VIII during the time when the king's chief official was Wolsey, then More, and finally Cromwell. Apparent throughout are the conflicting loyalties Elyot felt in supporting his king and his own conservative religious doctrines. In spite of Elyot's persistent efforts to sway his king subtly and philosophically, Miss Hogrefe concludes, Elyot exerted little or no political influence.

His contribution in literary legacies is another matter—that Elyot was highly regarded as scholar and author in his century seems evident from the fact that his works served as convenient sources for other writers. Miss Hogrefe details for the first time in a full-scale biography, the relation between Elyot's writing, his life, and the immediate events of his time. In her skillful hands there emerges a picture of a reticent, persistent man of integrity who, through his major writings, "caught and reflected a many-sided life of England."

Author Pearl Hogrefe is Professor of English at Iowa State University and an authority on the English Renaissance. She has published widely in the journals of her field and her books include *The Sir Thomas More Circle*.

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