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Occupation and Idleness

Richard Beadle

*Occupation and Idleness* is a mid-fifteenth century interlude whose genuine identity as a play has for too long been concealed under the misnomer 'dialogue'. It has great deal in common with (but also some differences from) the type of short, portable, small-cast plays, designed for indoor performance, that attracted the early printers from the 1490s onwards, and, generically-speaking, it is probably fair to describe *Occupation and Idleness* as a Tudor Interlude *avant la lettre*. The unique surviving copy is in Winchester College MS 33, where it is to be found in the company of several standard Middle English religious texts, including extracts from the *South English Legendary*, the prose *Gospel of Nicodemus* and the *Abbey of the Holy Ghost*. It also has a companion piece in the Winchester manuscript in the shape of *Lucidus and Dubius*, which may with more justice be described as a semi-dramatic dialogue. To judge by its bibliographical complexion, the handwriting, and the scribal language, the manuscript seems likely to have been copied around the middle of the fifteenth century. Precisely how long it has been at Winchester is not known, but it was certainly in the library in 1634, and may have been at the college as early as c. 1529, if not earlier.

We cannot say definitively that the manuscript was at Winchester at or immediately after the time that it was compiled, or that *Occupation and Idleness* – which was performed in a 'halle' (272) – was seen in the great hall of the college; but the school certainly had a strong dramatic tradition extending through the fifteenth century into the sixteenth, including records of plays given in the hall. Whether or not the play formed part of a repertoire performed in the college hall at Winchester, it is without doubt an edifying and instructive piece which would be eminently suited to a place where boys and youths were being educated. The reform of Idleness, 'a child in yowthe' (791) is effected by Doctrine, 'A maister of dyvyneté / Of the unyversyté' (297-98). As Ian Lancashire has pointed out, this motif may be connected with circumstances at Winchester, which was established together with a sister foundation
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at New College, Oxford, whence annually the warden and two fellows came in
visitation of the school. It is also possible that the play may originally have had an
occasion, since much is made, in Doctrine's edifying discourses in the latter part of the
plays, of 'al halowen', or All Saints, and 'Al Halowen day' is specifically invoked
(563ff., 624). As many parish, household and corporate accounts of the time show,
feasts, ceremonies and entertainments on the feast of All Souls became increasingly
elaborate during the fifteenth century, and a diverting but penitentially directed
interlude such as Occupation and Idleness would not have been out of place on such an
occasion. It is also worth noting that an extended allusion to the Assumption of the
Virgin, with Latin quotations from the account of the episode in the Legenda aurea and
the liturgy of the feast, is pointedly introduced towards the end of the play (825ff.),
but again there is no way of knowing for certain whether this might imply some
connection with the college's dedication to the Virgin.

As against the circumstantial evidence linking Occupation and Idleness
specifically with the college at Winchester, it might be advanced that Idleness is not
presented as a schoolboy as such. Nor is Occupation, his foil, a schoolmaster; rather,
he appears as a worthy yeoman farmer, albeit somewhat slow on the uptake. On the
other hand, the surviving dramatic records of the college do seem to indicate that its
plays were on occasion open to a wider audience of people from the neighbourhood.
In such circumstances a more generalised presentation of its two principal figures,
assembling Idleness to aspects of the traditional didactic figure of Sloth, and
emphasising Occupation's emblematic quality as a virtuous labourer, would have
given the play wider appeal, and a circulation beyond the collegiate setting. Doctrine's
appeal to the audience to

Sette youre children unto scolie,
Ye that ben good men of fame; (411-12)

would be particularly relevant in such a context, and the responsibility of adults to
attend to the education of children is repeatedly emphasised (506-09, 790-97). If, like a
number of interludes, Occupation and Idleness is directly concerned with the correct
upbringing of the young, it cannot however be said to possess the moral ferocity of
later plays such as Lusty Juventus (c. 1550) and Nice Wanton (1547-53), written in a
more charged religious and political atmosphere, which fetch their conviction of the
innate corruption of the young from texts such as the 30th chapter of the apocryphal
book of Ecclesiasticus ('De liberorum disciplina'). Doctrine seeks to reform Idleness
by benign means, in the first instance, putting him to book-learning (468-69, 483-
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84), and whilst they boy pretends to be thus engaged, Doctrine responds at some length to Occupation's request to

Tell us us some of Goddis werkis,
That the comoun peple may knowe
As done thes worthi clerkis. (549-51)

Doctrine's teaching reflects the mainstream preoccupations of all elementary religious instruction in the period, which applies to all Christian of whatever age, sex or degree. He later resumes in this vein, having obtained Idleness's undivided attention (albeit by main force, 745ff.), and continues to embellish his discourse with conventional scriptural and liturgical allusions in Latin. The play's more immediate concern with the education of the young is thus assimilated to the broader responsibility of all Christians to be in possession of the essentials of their belief. The macaronic mode in which Doctrine conveys this teaching is distinctive, and sometimes reminiscent of Langland's manner in passages in Piers Plowman where a sense of spiritual authority is called for. The wider perspective that develops in the latter part of Occupation and Idleness thus has more in common with the universal concerns of the earlier morality plays (as opposed to the more topical focus of many of the later interludes), and suggests that, even if the play had an immediate occasion, its audience and auspices were not necessarily intended to be limited.

As is the way of most morality plays and interludes, however, the dramatic life and conflict in Occupation and Idleness is generated by a morally deficient but theatrically engaging agent in the shape of Idleness, who gulls Occupation, defies Doctrine, and diverts the audience. Idleness is presented as a feckless youth, given to profligacy, drunkenness, and fleshly vices, but who nonetheless possesses an air of bouyant bonhomie, which he brings to bear directly on the audience from the moment of his entrance, and sustains with a series of mischievous asides. He stands at the head of a line of superficially plausible juvenile layabouts, ne'er-do-wells and prodigals who figure in a number of later interludes, and his close relatives may be found in Youth (1513-14) and Hick Scorner (1514), or in a later prodigal son play such as The Disobedient Child (c. 1560).

Though Idleness is a comic character, and his behaviour belongs mostly to the realm of mischievousness, the fact that he is rooted in evil proper is quietly emphasised. Idleness is amply documented in contemporary pastoral and preaching literature as one of the many branches or 'species' of the deadly sin of Sloth, and this affiliation is mentioned at several points (80, 442, 460, 793). In its comic aspect,
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Idleness's role includes several features which come to be associated with the Vice figure of the later interludes. He has something of the verbal dexterity, quibbling and back-chat characteristic of the Vice, notably the deliberate misprision of another's meaning (e.g. 464-65). Attention is drawn to his blunt dagger (751), no doubt to be identified as the absurd wooden weapon that was the Vice's essential stage property, the 'dagger of lath' alluded to by Shakespeare, Jonson and other later writers who looked back to the older interludes. Like the later Vices, Idleness treats individual members (or victims) in the audience with embarrassing familiarity (54ff, 456, 721); he is oddly dressed (62,125); he preens himself and perhaps dances (88); he impersonates a virtue ('Besynes', 109-10). However, unlike many of the Vices he does not prove incorrigible, and his conversion at the end is accompanied by a change of name and costume (812-13), otherwise a typical interlude motif. Nor is he presented as a servant or agent of the devil, though the devil's aptness to make work for idle hands is not overlooked. As Doctrine says:

For and thou the in temptacion fele,
Occupie the in clennes,
For the feend on no man may stele
Save in tho that he fynte in ydelles; (390-94)

This adumbrates Idleness's eventual transformation into 'Cleanness', perhaps puzzling at first to the modern eye, but familiar to the audience as a highly-developed and polysemous moral concept, the subject of numerous exempla in sermons and related texts.

The opposition of Occupation to Idleness (as a branch of Sloth) is a relatively late development. Idleness here is presented very much in a secular aspect, as a work-shy layabout, but lively, witty and gregarious. He is only tenuously related to the sluggish and supine image of sloth as imagined (for example) by Langland ([Piers Plowman, B-version, Passus V]), whose ultimate origin in the depressive 'spiritual dryness' of acedia is only vestigially present in Idleness's reluctance get up in the mornings to attend church services (77). He is conceived to a great extent in terms of an economic analysis of moral and social relationships, where honest labour, backed up by education, is the principal mitigation of man's sinful state, and the guarantor of communal welfare. Every man, says Doctrine, is bound to 'occupie hym in clennes' (371), and 'sette [his] children unto scole' (412). Unless, by these means, he comes to possess land, rents, coin and cattle, he will soon be reduced to social evils such as beggary, theft and prostitution (400-01, 416ff.). For this reason Occupation appears as
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virtuous agrarian labourer-cum-husbandman, a spiritualised conception with strong iconographic resonances, evident in the ploughman figures central to *Piers Plowman* and the General Prologue to the *Canterbury Tales*, or the spade-carrying farmer Mankind, in his uncorrupted state, in the contemporary morality play *Mankind*.

Like Idleness, Occupation addresses the audience, but at greater length, in two substantial speeches, the first (1-48) rehearsing many of the commonplaces of contemporary vernacular verses directed at the 'abuses of the age' and the second (203ff.) consisting of a heartfelt expression of devotion the crucified Christ, the Virgin, and the Eucharist. Both speeches are cast in extended stanzas, heavily ornamented with alliteration and rounded off with a 'bob-and-wheel', a variety of the high style favoured elsewhere in the northern cycles and in East Anglian plays such as the *Castle of Perseverance* and parts of the N-Town collection. Effective transitions are made from Occupation's plangent and (in the first case) somewhat apocalyptic tone to the streetwise chat of Idleness, for which the appropriately demotic tail-rhyme stanza is adopted (49ff., 233ff.). Doctrine's style, as we have observed, is different again, consisting of measured, expository quatrains and octets, with resonant Latin phrases woven into verses, though likewise interrupted by Idleness's outbreaks of tail-rhyme. This adaptation of metre to character and action is found in other plays of the time (notably the moralities *Mankind* and *Wisdom*), and it continues later in the Tudor interludes proper.

In the text of *Occupation and Idleness* given below, the spelling of the manuscript has been retained, except that the obsolete letters thorn and yogh have been replaced by their modern equivalents, and u/v and i/j are treated as in modern English. Punctuation and capital letters have been introduced according to modern usage. Stage-directions, however, have not been added.
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NOTES


4 Davis, Non-Cycle Plays and the Winchester Dialogues, p. 136, draws attention to the watermarks in the paper, which tend to support a date in the later 1440s or 1450s, and Ker & Piper, p. 625, note that a later hand appearing on a flyleaf of MS 33 is very similar, if not identical to one found in the college's Liber Albus, c. 1529.


6 Dramatic Texts and Records, p. 283. Lancashire is of the view that Occupation and Idleness is 'undoubtedly a school play'. Lucidus and Dubius (based on parts of the Elucidarium attributed to 'Honorius of Autun') presents a pertinacious youth interrogating a learned master about a range of basic points in Christian belief, and would be equally at home in a school environment.
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8 Blewitt, 'Records of drama at Winchester', pp. 92-93.

9 As will be evident from the textual notes, the text of *Occupation and Idleness* is in a relatively sound state of preservation, but nevertheless contains a few scribal errors, and is not a holograph. Together with the fact that the linguistic forms implied by the rhymes occasionally deviate from those habitual to the scribe, this suggests that there are likely to have been other copies of the play in circulation; cf. Davis, 'Two unprinted dialogues', p. 469.


11 The Latin quotations appear elsewhere in a variety of places. For example, those in lines 578, 629, 633 and 779-80 are ultimately biblical (Matt. 3:2, Matt. 5:14, Sap. 3:2, 2Cor. 9:9, Matt. 24:42), whilst those in lines 586-88 seem to originate in Bede's homily for the first Sunday after Trinity (*Patrologia Latina*, 94. col. 482). The lyrical imagery towards the end of the play, extolling the Virgin, is based on the Song of Songs, but its immediate source is likely to have been the account of her later life in the *Legenda aurea*, and the liturgy of the feast of the Assumption; see R. Fulton, "Quae est ista quae ascendit sicut aurora consurgens?": the Song of Songs as the *Historia* for the Office of the Assumption", *Medieval Studies* 60 (1998), 55-122. The allusions to the tree of life and the oil of mercy (642-51) are from legend of the Cross incorporated in the apocryphal *Gospel of Nicodemus*; see F.E. Halliday, *The Legend of the Rood* (London: Duckworth, 1955), pp. 44-46, and E.C. Quinn, *The Quest of Seth* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962), pp. 9, 25-27, 35-46.

12 *Two Tudor Interludes: The Interlude of Youth; Hick Scorner*, ed. by I. Lancashire (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1980).


17 *The Macro Plays*, ed. by M. Eccles, EETS, OS 262 (1969), *Mankind*, lines 328-29,
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376-77, 409-10, 541-44.


20 I am grateful to the Master and Fellows of Winchester College for permission to reproduce the text of Occupation and Idleness, and to their former librarian, Paul Yeats-Edwards, for providing me with facilities to examine the manuscript.
OCCUPATION AND IDLENESS

OCCUPACION: The myghty maker that made al thynge
He medle his mercy ever in oure mende,
Oure balis he abate and to blys us brynge,
As he was oure founder and we come of his kende;
For al the welthe of the world is turned to wranglynge 5
And frendship is ful faynte now for to fynde,
Ayen equyte and right the peple be janglynge
And ful fewe there be that hereof have mynde.
The cause is this:
For now regneth tresoun 10
There that shold be resoun;
But ye beware in sesoun
Ye laboure al amys.

For we may se a grete example every day
Of hunger and deth before oure ye; 15
Fro the prikkyng of pestelence ascape we ne may,
Fro wyndis and wederis that comyth fro the sky.
Therefor lete right regne and forsake symony,
Rewle you be resoun and laboure for youre mete,
In trewe occupacioun selle thou and by, 20
Deseyve no man with sotelte in colde ne in hete,
But sewe resoun and trewthe,
Lete ese and favour fro the fle
And take counseyle and equyte;
Ellis lese ye heven so fre, 25
And me semyth that were rewthe,
And eke grete shame.
Now if ther be eny here
That my name wolde aspere,
Y telle you, sovereynes al in fere, 30
Occupacioun, that is my name.

Y besy ful besely in colde and in hete,
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Wyndis ne wederis we may nat spare; 35
With grete grevalise Y go my levynge to gete,
Ofte wery and wetshode Y suffre mochel care
To sessioun or syxes if that Y fare,
Because Y have a litel gadered to-hepe.
In suche ple no skyle Y kan, thus am Y in care;
There Y stonde and studye as mad as eny shepe
For woo.
For Y had lever ben at plough,
To God Y make a vow,
Thresshe in a berne, ripe and mow,
And therefore Y hote Occupacion where so ever
On grounde.
Here Y thynke to abyde
To reste me a litel tyde
In pees bothe saf and sounde.

IDELNES: A, reste you mery, Y make a vow, 50
Whi sey ye nat welcome now?
Be God, ther ben many of yow
That Y knowe wel and fyne.
This worthy man, though Y it say,
He hath know me many a day,
For he and Y spente, in fay,
Oure bothis thryst at wyne.

A, syr, God yeve you good morowe. 55
Lo, siris, this good man wyl be my borowe
And Y had nede.
Nay, good sir, laugh me nat to scorne.
Y trowe ye have youre knowlych for-lorne
For my symple wede.

Ye, this wede wil serve me wel and fyne. 60
Ofte thou hast be wette sith thou were myne,
Bothe at the ale and atte the wyne
In the hye strete.
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While Y have aught Y wyl spende;
When Y have non God wyl sende.
Thus every company Y wyl amende
And gadere felawship to-hepe. 70

For Y have good mete and drynke;
When Y am ful Y wyl wynke.
Now, be my trouthe, as Y thynke,
Y am a sly clerke.
Therfor Y tel you expresse,
My name is called Ydelenesse.
Y kepe nat to arise to matynes ne messe
Ne to non other werke.

For to no laboure Y kaste me,
But ever to slowthe the Y fast me, 80
And if ye wyl ataste me,
Ye shul fynde me queynte.
Queyntly go Y, lo,
As prety as a py, lo.
What sey ye therto 85
Who koude make me ateynte?

Beholde now this gracious face,
Hou galantly Y take my trace.
There is now non such in this place,
Sholde Y nat do thus? 90
Lo, how joly gette Y,
And non felaship let Y,
And but fewe mette Y
But they wyth me trusse
And gone.
Ey, what is that yonder gadelynge
That stondith yondere al stradelynge?
Y wyl wite for al his babelynge
What he is anone.
Al haile, good man, and wel yfounde. 100

OCCUPACIOUN: A welcome, yonge man, on this grounde.

YDELNESSE: Whi, sire, tel me this stounde,

Know ye nat me?

OCCUPACIOUN: Of the, sonne, what is thy name?

YDELNES: Lo, now ariseth game. 105

Y am like to take blame
But Y the better ware be.

Y muste change my name, ywis,
And telle hym Besynesse my name is;
Ye, for God, thus it is. 110
This is a prety while.
And whan Y am with hym at fese
Y wyl take myn owen ese.
To slepe ynough he shal nat chese;
Y thynke hym to begile.

Syr, Y wonder ye have foryete me, ywys,
And Y have served you er this,
For Besynes my name is.
Sir, know ye that name?

OCCUPACIOUN: Besynesse, ye, in good fay. 120
He hath served me many a day.

YDELNES: Now, in good fay, leve me ye may –
Y am the same.

OCCUPACIOUN: Art thou Besynesse? Y trow nay,
Me semyth be thi symple aray. 125

YDELNES: Syr, sholde Y were my best every day?
Y have ten or twelf
Of good gownes in my presse,
And furres of grete richesse.
Of this man Y take wyntnesse –
Ye may aske hym yourself.

OCCUPACIOUN: Than what labour kan ye best now?
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YDELNES: Thresshe in your berne or go to plow,
Ripe, mowe, and eke sowe,
And other husbandrye;
Go to market, bey and selle,
And kepe an household Y kan welle;
With shepe and swyne Y kan melle.
Whereto sholde Y lye?

OCCUPACIOUN: Wilt thou be with me al this yere,
And thou shalt be my partenere?
YDELNES: Ye, be my trowthe, with good chere;
But Y have no money in store.
OCCUPACIOUN: Yeve me thi trowthe in this stounde,
And have here ten pounde.
Look thou governe it wel on this grounde;
And thou have nede, com fech more.

YDELNES: Yis, hardely, syr, have ye no dowte
Now have Y nede to loke abowte,
Bothe within and withowte,
That no thynge be amys.
Y have here in this purse
Ten pounde of golde, it is no worse.
To the kokis wil Y me trusse
Anon, so have Y blys.

Yit, good syr, tel me in same,
What shal Y clepe youre name?
OCCUPACIOUN: Sir, Y sey be Seynt Jame,
My name is Occupacioun.
YDELNES: Occupacioun, be my fay,
Is a good name and a worthy,
To be commendid honestly
In felde and eke in toun.

But, syr, go ye home or over the se,
Your household and your meyné,
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And than in haste come hider and se;  
Tary nat to longe!

OCCUPACIOUN: Farewel, than, in Goddis name.

YDELNES: Now in feithe, he were to blame  
That wold do the eny wronge.

Walke on – God lete the nevere the.  
Thou art ful madde to truste me,  
For this gold shalt thou never se,  
So God me amende,

For in Bredestrete, samfayle,  
It shall be spent in good vytayle.  
Of wyne and ale Y wyl nat fayle –  
Thider now am Y bent.

For and Y wolde beset this gold here  
On sheepe or lambe, thei be dere,

And also a badde yeere  
Sone wolde hem stroye.

If Y besette it in kow or veel,  
Paraventure some theef myght hem steel.

Nay, nay, therewith wyl Y nat deel,  
Such marchauntise Y defye.

Yf Y wolde belde eny hous then  
Myght come some fire and it bren,  
That makith many away to ren  
And take the tounnes ende.

Nay, nay, Y wyl nat so, in fay,  
But to the taverne wyl Y go my way,  
And to the cokes, parmafay,  
Thider wyl Y wende.

But and Occupacioun come by the way,  
Aske me, syr, Y the pray,  
For we two have loved many a day  
Thes yeeris foure or fyve.
Tyl this be spente everydel,
Fal happe, falle hel,
Y wyl no lenger with hym mel –
Y go hennys wel blyve.

OCCUPACIOUN: The roy reverent that on the rode was rente
He save you, my sovereynes semly in se,
That was blyndfelled and bofettid and his blood spente
Fro the thretnyng of thraldom to make us all fre;
And the brennynge blossom that bright is of ble
With hire feturis so fortunate voyde us of oure foon,
Excellent emperyse of high dygneté,
Conclude here conclusiones as ye wel kan,
Thurgh youre sonnes myght;
For treuly Y wyl every day,
Whither so ever Y take my way.
In holy chirche if that Y may
Of thi sonne have a sight.

Than to my labour wyl Y go,
Tylle and travayle in moche wo
My lyflode to gete.
We may nat spare wynde ne rayne,
But go to plow in crofte and playne,
And ofte we laboure ayen mayne
In dry and in wete.

And Y pray you telle me and ye kan,
Sey eny you Besynes my man
Syn Y was laste here?
For he is so longe oute
With my golde walked aboute,
Be my trouthe Y am in doute
He is in some daungere.
Y note what is best;
Til Y some tydyngis of hym here,
Here Y thynke to rest.
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YDELNES: Aha! God spede Y am come.
    Y have right wel wette my throte.
    A, ware, a litel stonde a rome,
    For Y am verry kuppe-shote.

    A, my Brayne gynneth to rowte
    An turneth as rounde as eny balle.
    Be my trouthe Y am in grete doute;
    Me semyth the sky wyl on me falle –
    Y am ille agast.
    Y come from the cokis now,
    And to God Y make a vow
    There have Y wel broke my fast.

    Y have ete and drunke of the best
    Til me thought the dry wey slither;
    And my maistris golde, so have Y rest,
    It is spente all togyder
    On good mete and drynk.
    For be God and Oure Lady bothe,
    Y bought therwith neyther clowte ne clothe;
    For be my partenere never so wrothe,
    A while wyl Y go wynke.

OCUPACIOUN: Abyde, a worde with you.
YDELNES: A, welcome, Y make a vow.
    Y have sought you wyde ynow
    Thes two dayes or thre.
OCUPACIOUN: Soughtist thou me? Y pray the where?
YDELNES: Be God, no foot there ye were.
OCUPACIOUN: Such a messanger evel he fare
    So to seek me.

    Me semyth thou comyst late fro the nale.
YDELNES: Be God, that is a trewe tale.
    Ther have Y wel fare.
OCUPACIOUN: Now be God, Y stonde in doute
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That thou hast spendid my money oute;
Than am Y in grete care.

YDELNES: Sir, that money is a-go,
They there had be such two.
Therefore myn herte is sore.

OCUPACIOUN: A, sire, foule mote the befalle
That ever Y mette the in this halle.
My golde thou hast lore.

What, thou seidest Besynes thi name hight?
YDELNES: So Y dede, be this lyght,
And yit Y dede lye.
But now Y telle the in game,
Ydelenes is my name.

OCUPACIOUN: Y swere be Seynt Jame,
Thou art a wyli pye.

Sonne, and thou wylt to me herke
Y wyl teche the some other werke.

YDELNES: What, woldist thou make me a clerke?
That wyl Y nat beginne,
For Y wyl go pley me
And rialy aray me.

OCUPACIOUN: Herk, sonne, thou say me,
Wylt thou worship wynne?

YDELNES: Worship? Hou sholde Y come therto?
OCUPACIOUN: With manere and manhod, sonne, lo,
And be never thyn owen fo.
To my wordis thou herk.

YDELNES: Who techith that manere, Y pray the?
OCUPACIOUN: Treuly, sonne, as Y say the,
Doctrine, that worthi clerk.

YDELNES: Doctryne, what man is he?
OCUPACIOUN: A maister of dyvyneté
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Of the unyversyté,
To teche the to wex wyse.

YDELNES: A, a, wylt thou so?
    Nay, Y wyl nat with the go;
    Y have aspied the to wyse.

OCUPACION: Sonne, leve thi fantasy
    And turne to grace, Y say the.

YDELNES: Y nel, Y make to God a vow.
    Y wyl ete as good as thow.
    Go sette to gras thi hors or thi kow,
    Or ellis, syr, go play the.

OCCUPACIOUN: Who shal fynde the mete and drynke al day?

YDELNES: Be my fay, Jonet and Gyll.

OCCUPACION: What wilt thou do, kan thou me say,
    Whan Jonet and Gill ys away?

YDELNES: Than be it as be may,
    Therefore care Y nell.

Y shrew hym that therefore cares.
Some for labour wexith wode,
And they have nat an hole hode.
Y know non that better fares.

[Tunc venit Doctrina]

DOCTRINA: What, siris, what pley is this
    That ye make in this place?
    Y am come to mende al mys
    Bi the helpe of Goddis grace.

YDELNES: A, that man hath an angry face.

OCCUPACION: Pees, thou fool, and stonde asyde.

YDELNES: Y pray God yeve the evel grace,
    Begynnyst thou now for to chyde.
Occupation and Idleness

OCUPACIÓN: Sir, welcome mote ye be,
And of youre name Y you prayn.

DOCTRINE: Doctryne men clepen me;
To teche kunnynge Y am fayn.

OCUPACIOUN: Doctrine, syr, ye be welcome.
Y have besied me ful sadde
For to study and stire wysdom.
Now of youre company Y am ful gladde.

DOCTRINE: What is youre name, gentil brother?

OCCUPACION: Treuly, my name is Occupacion.

DOCTRINE: Welcome be ye above all other
With you to have communycacyoun,

For al that to good ocupacion long
God is plesed and so am Y,
But ocupacion that tuchith to wronge
Doth men no good, but vylany;

For and thou wilt the occupy
In bodely workis or almasdede,
In penaunce or prayeris wilfully,
Y, Doctrine, to the wyll take hede,

For Doctrine techith openly and clere
Vertuous lyf amonge us to sette.

YDELNES: Herke, siris, ye shull here,
For now two shrewis ben mette.

Be my trouthe Y wil me hide
Like a mows in yonder yerde,
For of hym that gapith wide
Yn feithe Y am evel aferde.
Y wyl be go.

DOCTRINE: Be my feith thou shalt abide,
And ere thou passe fro me this tyde
Richard Beadle

Y wil the teche a worde or two.

YDELNES: Whom? Me, syr? Y know the nat,
Ne never Y kepe, be heven kynge.

DOCTRINE: Sonne, Y wyl teche the somwhat
For to gete thy levynge.

OCCUPACION: Sir, in the name of heven kyng,
Yeve hym som informacion
Hou he may gete his levyng
In the wey of his salvacion;
That is al my desire.

DOCTRINE: Treuly, brother Occupacion,
That wil Y do without eny hire,

For every good man is bounde,
To occupie hym in clennes,
For and he in good ocupacion be founde
The feend temptith hym moche the les.

Every man hath enmyes thre,
The devel, the world, and his owen flessh.
Which thei ben Y wyl telle the,
And hou than they enbateyl hem fressh.

In pride and wreth the feend temptith man,
And in envye that is so badde.
Thes thre synnes in heven began
Sone after Lucifer was made.

The world temptith man to slouthe and covetyse,
That Adam and Eve first up broght
Whan thei wolde be as wyse
As was Oure Lorde that hem wroght.

The flessh of glotonye fayled noght;
Lechery was in Sodom and Gomor and other mo,
Occupation and Idleness

For these wyte wel in oure thougt
Ful moche harme there hath be do.

For and thou the in temptacion fele,
Occupie the in clennes,
For the feend on no man may stele
Save in tho that he fynte in ydelves;
In hem wil he hide.
For al the vices that ther be
Ydelves is the worste, Y telle the.

YDELNES: Out! Whider may Y fie?
This angry man wyl bete me
And Y lenger abyde.

DOCTRINE: Of ydelves comyth this –
Thefis and strumpettis, so have Y rest.
Ayen this defaute, ywys,
Occupacion Y holde the best.

But the most defaute nowadayes
On the peple that Y fynde,
Men techen hire children wanton playes,
And nat as they sholde in kynde.

Some shal beshrew fader and moder
And be ful wantoun, as ye may se.
Such poyntis and many other
Makith many children never to the.

Sette youre children unto scole,
Ye that ben good men of fame;
Mayntene hem nat to pley the fole,
But lette hem lerne some good, for shame.

For he that hath neither londe ne rente,
Koyne ne catel hym to fynde,
Of large spense but he repente
Richard Beadle

Some shall he begge be kynde,
That were reprefe. 420
Forwhi and his good be lore
And wylt nat laboure for no more,
But in ydeline sett hym sore,
Than must he wexe a thefe –
Y lye nat expresse. 425
Beware, draw you to good,
And laboure for youre lyfis food,
And pray to hym that deyde on rood,
And beware of ydelenesse.

OCCUPACION: Ydeline is nat ferre, as thynkith me,
And so Y tolde one ryght now. 430
DOCTRINE: Ydeline, where is he?
OCCUPACIOUN: Yonder, syr, as ye may se,
And scorneth both me and yow.

DOCTRINE: Ydeline, come nere
And lerne of me som curtesie. 435
YDELNES: Y shrew me and Y come ther
While thou art so angry.

DOCTRINE: Thou shalt come hider mawgry thyn hed
And lerne some good in thi youthe. 440
Thou wylt be like to begge thi brede
But thou draue the fro slouthe.
Y sey, boy, aryse.
YDELNES: Y pray the, syr, go thi way;
Me lyst nat with the to play. 445
DOCTRINE: Y wyl the teche, in good fay,
Now for to wexe wyse.

Therfor, boy, Y sey stonde stille
And some vertu that thou lere.
YDELNES: Go forthe and do me non ylle. 450
Y wolde ye were in the diche both in fere.
DOCTRINE: Y sey, boy, scorne thou me now?
OCCUPACION: He dothe as evel as he kan.
YDELNES: He lieth, Y make God a vow
In recorde of this worthy man.

Syr, saw ye me mokke hym to scome?
Nay, he lieth in his face.
DOCTRINE: Y trow, boy, thi thryft be lorne.
To goodnes thou hast no grace.

OCCUPACION: Syr, ever to sleuthe and ydelves
He drawith hym morow and eve,
And Y bidde hym ette expres
Al that folly for to leve.

DOCTRINE: Sonne, to what leuyng were thou borne?
YDELNES: With mylke and floure Y began, Y wene.
DOCTRINE: What! This boy dryveth me to scorne.
YDELNES: Nay, God forbede, lete that bene.

DOCTRINE: Have, sette honde on this book,
And to thi lore that thou lowte.
YDELNES: A, se, syr, how Y look.
Nerehande Y kan it thurghowte.
A, se here sitt a pye.
DOCTRINE: But thou the better to thi book lowte,
Be my fay thou shalt abye.

OCCUPACION: In good fey, ye sey wel,
Every man to labour in his kunynge.
This matere Y trow wel Y fele:
Ellis can we have but hard leuyng.

And ydelves in household wende
Me semyth it moche the worse.
YDELNES: Ye be ever my bak frende;
Therfor have ye Goddis kurse.
DOCTRINE: Sonne, have this book in thi hande
And lerne, in the name of God,
Ellys Y do the to understande
Thou shalt be chastised with a rod
Bothe even and morowe.

485

YDELNES: A, syr, he that the hider broght
Y pray God yeve hym sorowe.

490

DOCTRINE: Sey on, crosse Crist me spede,
And in thi mynde that it kepe.

YDELNES: Be my treuthe, Y stonde in drede
Hou Y shal brynge it to-hepe.

First lete me reste a litel while,
Myn eyen be hevy as eny lede.

495

OCCUPACION: Sir, this boy wyl you begyle;
In the name of God take hede,
And lerne hym som lore.

YDELNES: A, sir, the devel be thi spede.
Thou art ayen me ever more.

500

DOCTRINE: Sonne, lerned thou never thi beleve,
Thi Paternoster, Ave, and Crede?

YDELNES: Nay, syr, so mote Y cheve,
Therto toke Y never hede.
Y not what it is.

505

DOCTRINE: Now, be sweete Seynt Jame,
Thi fader is the more to blame,
And thi frendis al in same
That shold have taught the er this.

OCCUPACION: Me semyth it were an almasdede
To make hym leve this lewde rote.

YDELNES: Y wyl nat do be thi rede.
Olde fole, thou begynnest to dote,
Thi berde begynnyth to hore.
Some for wery fallith doun
Bothe in cyte, burgh, and toun,
Occupation and Idleness

And rise paraventure no more.

DOCTRINE: Treuly, ther levyth no man in ground,  
Be he never so hye of state,  
But he be strongly bound  
To occupye erly or late:

Prestis to pray and preche also  
In penausne and masse to shewe,  
Dukis, erlis, baronnes, and knyghtis therto  
To mayntene the lond in vertu,  
And to fight therfore if nede be  
And stonde be every trew cause ywis,  
And take no mede of me ne the,  
But to maynten hem there right is.

But now trewthe is dryve abakke  
And symony is set up as a sire.  
Ther mede is maister ther is no lakke  
Of frendship nother in session ne shire.

But wolde God resoun regned ayé.  
Than wolde ye gadre al vertues to-hepe.  
OCCUPACIOUN: To the wordis that ye shew me  
Every man is bounde to take kepe.

DOCTRINE: Lo, sonne, thou mayst se  
To occupacion thou art bounde.  
YDELNES: A, sir, God lette the never the.  
Thou woldist make me weré  
As is eny hounde,  
And that Y hate.  
For aught that thou kan telle me  
Shal noon of yow felle me,  
Nother be strengthe compel me,  
Erly ne late.
OCCUPACION: Doctrine, syr, Y pray you
Tel us some of Goddis werkis,
That the comoun peple may knowe
As don thes worthi clerkis.

550

DOCTRINE: *Summe Trinitati* Y wyl begynne,
That with his myght wroght al thyng;
Novem ordines without synne
Angelorum to hym obeyng,

555

Ad Dei iudicia for to abide
Misteria complenda ful of lyght.
Yit fille many one that tide
Fro the place that mankende shal restore ful ryght.

OCCUPACION: What maner men, Y wolde wyte,
Shal restore that place ayen?

560

DOCTRINE: Hire names ben in legende wryte,
And are cleped al halowen certeyn.

565

OCCUPACION: Alle halowes, what be they?
Y pray you declare hem openly.

DOCTRINE: Angelis, patriarchis, and prophetis to say,
Martiris and confessoris trewly,

Virgines and other of clene lyf
That deide in pure chastite,
That leved here without stryf
In clennes and humylite;

570

Viri religiosi the patriarchis called,
Atque gloriosi in hire levyng;
Thei tolde what wolde befalle
Of dyverse prophetis, and Cristis comynge.

575

John the Baptist seide in his steven
To al that *veram penitenciam* wold chesen,
Occupation and Idleness

'Penitenciam agite that ye nat lesen,
Quia apropinquabit the kyngdom of heven'.

The postelis were in erthe goynge
And Jesu Cristis lawes redde.
'Estate fortes', seide Jesu oure kyng
'Loke no tribulacion make you ferde'.

OCCUPACION: Y pray you telle me in this place
Hou apostlis suffred tribulacion.

DOCTRINE: Some ferro perempti heded was,
Some flammis exusti brent in toun,

*Flagellis verberati* some forbeten,
*Hii sunt triumphatores*, Goddis frendis an heth.
Here good dedis shal never be foryeten,
For hir blissed name *in eternum manet*.

YDELNES: Heere ye, siris, al this breth?
A draght of ale Y had lever.

OCCUPACION: This were a worthy company
That the apostel loved day and nyght.

DOCTRINE: *Vos estis lux mundi*,
To al the world thei shal yeve lyght.

OCCUPACION: The martiris had a glorious lyf
That for Goddis love wold dey so.

DOCTRINE: A, sir, *hii sunt sancti* that never dred knyf
But *pro Dei amore* thei suffred wo.

*O quam gloriosa* hire deth is,
And hire blod shedynge dede us moche good.
The blood shedynge wolde brynge us to blys
If that we ben mylde of mood.

Thes blissed confessouris leved clenly
And taught aboute the worde of Crist.
Richard Beadle

Therefore thei sitte in the grete glory
Where that al joy and myrthe is most.

Virgines in hire clennes
Mekely in erthe here leved.
Thees be kleped al halowes, ywys,
That we before meved.

And al holi chirchis pardoun
Relevith men out of synne,
Of thees seyntis that is come,
That is tresore the holy chirche withynne.

At Cristis owen blode Y wyl begynne,
His postelis, his marteris, and afterwarde
His officeris that ben out of synne
Ledde hire lyf here ful harde;

And the clennes of the maydenes alle
Make us good weies into heven.
Al Halowen day hire day men calle,
And worship hem with myld steven.

OCCUPACION: A, syr, of men that levyth a day now
Shul they in that number be?
DOCTRINE: Ye, syr, and wyl ye se how?
Fulgebunt iusti, and thus sey we.

Rightwys men may nat fayle, ywis,
To han heven for hire travayl.
Rightfulnes so hie a vertu is
That iusticia manet may nat fayl.

OCCUPACION: And how do they that have do synne,
And amende hem here ere they dey?
DOCTRINE: Fro heven blis thei may nat wynne;
To aske mercy thei were redy.
OCCUPACION: What is mercy? That wold Y know; Y pray you do me to understonde.

DOCTRINE: Mercy is the best seed sow, For above al workis he shal stonde.

For as *per lignum moriebatur mors* certayn Thurgh a tree oure deth first aroos,
And *per lignum quoque* there agayn By a tree oure lyf was chose,

And broght oure blys fro deth and stryf;
For even as Adam by a tre dede falle,
To turne oure deth to everlastyng lyf
On a tre God deyde for us alle.

Ther was *oleum promissionis* shewde That fro Cristis body ran.
Take hede, thou man, and be nat lewde,
For al our grace ther first began.

Goddis body therto was al to-rente
And made ful of holis that ever shal renne
To the blode of mercy that never shal stente
In the salvacion of synful men.

For his passion til domys day
His body shal never leve rennyng,
And of his blode of mercy every man gete may
If thei repente hire evel levyng.

Ther shal noon be warned that blode of blys;
Every man therof may gete.
This is the licoure of mercy that every day, ywys,
In holy chirche thou may it fette.

OCCUPACION: Y thanke Jesu my savyoure
With al my herte and my speche,
So fre of that worthy lycoure
As wel to pore as to ryche.

DOCTRINE: Nay, sir, ye fayle ther. 670
Ther is no disseverance but brother and brother.
God boght alle like dere
And payde as moche for one as for other.

Ther is no pore, God seith before,
But tho that be in sinne and out of vertu. 675
Thei thou have markis in store
Ther he shal be as ryche as thou.

The riches of heven is non in gold,
It is in vertu and clene lyf,
As to the before is tolde, 680
That shold be used in man and wyf.

At domys day God wote
Who shal be riche, who shal be pore,
For that day wyl be so hote
That be gold men wyl sette no store. 685

OCCUPACION: Sir, that is come to my mende,
Whi clepe ye that the grete day?
DOCTRINE: For many skile that Y fynde.
Y wil declare hem if Y may.

Than shal sitte the grettest justise opon 690
That ever sate in eny place.
Al other justisis before hym shal stonde,
And al the lordis that ever was.

So many at ones as we ther shal se 695
Never at ones in oo place come,
For all that were and ever shal be
In heven, erthe, and helle comyth to dome.
Occupation and Idleness

That day wyl be the grettest wepynge
That ever was sey in eny place before.
Many thousandis hire hondis shal wrynge
And curse the tyme that thei were bore.

Therefore the grete day clepe Y,
For tho that shal be damned in that rowte
Shul wepe more water with here ye
Than is in alle the world rounde aboute.

Thei shal never after sese wepyng,
The water fro hire ey shal renne.
Therefor thynke on this day of rekenyng,
And ever after hate thou synne,
And in haste thi lyf amende.

OCCUPACION: Wyl Y never worke begynne
But Y thynke on the ende.

YDELNES: Be my trouthe, no more wil Y,
For Y have no wil to be a clerke.
Of my book Y am wery;
Y was nat wonte to no suche werke.

This book is nat worth a resshe;
Ten suche are nat worthe a beene.
Be my fay Y wyl hym wesshe
And make him feyre and clene.
Good yeve me a litel water
That Y may wesshe my book,
For they my maister chide and chater,
And theigh Ocupacion hereof smatere,
Y wyl no more hereon look.

OCCUPACION: What, sonne, what pley is this?
YDELNES: Be God, it is never the worse.
OCCUPACION: Y wyl telle thi maister, ywis.
YDELNES: Therfore have thou Goddis curse.
Richard Beadle

OCUPACION: Doctrine, sir, take hede
Hou your clerk shent his book.

YDELNES: A, syr, the devel be thi spede.
Who badde the hider look?

DOCTRINE: A, lewde losell, what japes ben thes?
Thou takest the to fantasies.
Fast sit doun, thou shalt nat chese.

YDELNES: A, sire, here be many botterflyes
Bothe white and broun.
For cokkis blood
Take me thyn hode
And Y wyl smyte hem doun.

DOCTRINE: A, a, thou dost wel and fyne.
Y wyl the tame, be Seynt Austyne,
Be thou never so wylde.
Ocupacion, ley hond on hym, have do,
And myself wyl helpe thereto.
Come forth, my feire childe.

YDELNES: Come no nere, Y charge the now,
For and thou do, Y make a vow,
Y wyl strikke the to the hert.
Wolde God my dagger were grounde.

DOCTRINE: Sette honde on hym anon this stounde;
Lete him nat sterte.

OCUPACION: Come forthe thou shalt, magré thy teeth.

YDELNES: Out upon the, stronge theef.
Wylt thou me spille?

DOCTRINE: Have here one, two and thre.
Ydelenes, now thynke on me
And holde thi tunge stille.

YDELNES: And Y lyve Y wil be awreke
Some of your hedis wyl Y breke,
Occupation and Idleness

For ye have made me wrothe.

DOCTRINE: How seist thou? That let me se.

YDELNES: Nay, for God, it is he;
In recorde of al this compané, 765
Y dede beshrewè you bothe.

DOCTRINE: Fy on the, harlot, with thi glosynge.
Thou shalt have more, be heven kynge,
To teche the weye trewe.

YDELNES: A, mercy, maister, Y cry mercy.
Foryeve me this and redely
Your lore wyl Y shewe.

DOCTRINE: In good feith, thou shalt have mo
But thou leve thi ydelnes,
And but thou study and labour also 770
In al the workis of clennes.

For God taught his disciplis all,
To the and to other teche wyl Y,
Vigilate ergo, grete and small,
Nescitis qua hora that ye shul dey.

We know non houre of oure deyinge.
Therefore in prayeris ever shul we be;
For with oure Paternoster we shold worship heven kynge
And his blissed moder with an Ave.

YDELNES: Y sey now mercy, with herte and speche,
For ever to you wyl Y obedient be,
And Y wyl do as ye me teche
In al the workis of honesté.
Paternoster Y wil begynne.

OCUPACION: Lo, how litel maistry it is
To brynge in a childe in yowthe.
Frendis, take hede to this,
And ever draw you fro slowthe.

And thus had he had no techynge
He wold have cursed his frendis al,
And now he may in tyme comynge
Be a good man, and so he shall.

DOCTRYNE: Art thou sory for thi mys,
The which to the Y wyl reherce?
YDELNES: Ye, syr, that Y am, ywys,
Therof Y cry God and you merce.

DOCTRINE: The ten comaundementis thou brake ever more,
Thi fyve wyttis thou kepte hem ille.
YDELNES: Treuly that Y repente sore.
Y wil amende with al my wylle.

DOCTRINE: The dedis of mercy dost thou nat fulfylle
To poor seek presoners also.
YDELNES: Y wyl amende it with good wylle
And Y may have lyf therto.

DOCTRINE: Now thou forsakest thyn ydelnes,
And hereafter wilt drede shame,
Here Y caste on the a clothe of clennes,
And Clennes shal be thi name.

CLENNES: Worthi mayster, Y thanke the,
And you, Ocupacion, also,
Of this man that is so fre,
And to you wil Y ever drawe to.

OCCUPACION: Now am Y glad with al my hert
That ever Y mette with the in this place,
So feire thou art now convert,
Fro foly and fantasy turned to grace
With so mylde steven.
CLENNES: Mayster, Y pray you for charité

That ye wolde telle me

What powere hath Oure Lady in heven.

DOCTRINE: Above al the wommen that ever were

God chese Mary unto this,

In hire body hym to bere,

Et praelegit eam Deus.

Sicut lilium amonge thornes growyng

Sic amica mea inter filias;

So is his moder most shynynge,

Passinge al the wommen that ever was.

Witnes at hire assumpcion,

Whan the angel seide 'Que est ista

Que descendit fro deserte adoun

Tanquam fumi virgula?'

Et sicut aurora consurgens,

Never sunne shynynge so bryght,

With all delites of swetnes

Ther they saw that glorious syght.

But at the ascension of Crist aloon,

Whan she to heven was come,

God seide to his angel anoon,

'Hec est regina virginum,'

Que genuít regem in hire body so clene,

Cui famulantur angely every day;

This same body that ye here sene,

Within the blissed sides Y lay.'

God seide to hire, 'Amica veni,

Veni de Libano in flessh and fell.

Veni coronaberis in heven most hy
As quene of heven and emperes of hell.'

And lady of al the world she is,  
Hire power is of grete astate.  
Whoso honour hire with aves  
Al his desese she wyl abate,  

So he be clene and out of synne,  
Or in wille for to amende,  
In every worke that he wyl begynne  
Oure dere Lady wyl be his frende.

And but he stonde in that degré  
Y wolde nat yeve for his prayeris a pere.  
CLENNES: Y thanke my Lorde in Tryneté  
That ever Y mette with you here.

OCUPACION: Thanke we hym of myghtis moste,  
Fader and Sonne in Tryneté  
Abatere of the feendis boste,  
Holy my hert Y yelde to the.

CLENNES: He us brynge to good ende  
That deyde for us on Good Fryday,  
And Mary his moder be oure frende  
Unto thi Sonne as ye best may.

DOCTRINE: He that is registred for the ryght eyre,  
That doutful domysman that sittith in trone,  
Kepe you ever oute of all dispeyre  
And graunte you his blissynge everychone.  
Amen.
Occupation and Idleness

NOTES

72 wynke] Conjectural. MS 'swynke' cannot be right, as Idleness has no intention of working (78-79).

146 Look] Conjectural, for MS 'And'; the 'And's which begin lines 145 and 147 could have induced an error.

309 Who] MS 'Whi'.

318f. 'Then Doctrine comes'.

337-38 The sense seems not quite continuous, but no obvious emendation suggests itself.

377 than] MS 'thon'.

421 his] Conjectural. MS 'thi'; lines 416-25 are otherwise in the third person throughout.

430 ferre] Altered from 'euert' in MS.

478 can] MS 'ca' (damaged).

490 crosse] Preceded by 'god' deleted in MS.

536-38 The MS omits to attribute these lines to Occupation, and the character designations at lines 536 and 538 are supplied here.

552 'With the supreme Trinity . . .'.

554f. 'Nine orders . . . of angels'.

556 'To the judgement of God . . .'.

557 'Filled with (divine) mystery . . .'.

572 'Religious men . . .'.

573 'And also exalted . . .'.

577 '. . . true penitence . . .'.

578 'Repent ye . . .'.

579 'Because there shall come . . .'.

kyngdom] MS 'kyngdon'.

582 'Be strong . . .'.

586 '. . . slain by the sword . . .'.

587 '. . . consumed by fire . . .'.

588 'Scourged with whips . . .'.

589 'These are the victors . . .'.

591 '. . . continues forever'.

596 'Ye are the light of the world'.

600 '. . . these are the saints . . .'.

601 '. . . for the love of God . . .'.

43
'O how glorious . . .'.
'The righteous shall be radiant . . .'.
'. . . righteousness remaineth for ever . . .'.
'. . . through a tree death died . . .'.
'. . . through a tree likewise . . .'.
'. . . the promised oil . . .'.
opon Added interlinearly in MS.
shal Preceded in MS by 'wys' deleted
Y Conjectural; MS 'He', probably an aurally induced error.
'Watch, therefore . . .'.
'For ye know not what hour . . .'.
'And God chose her'.
paelegit Conjectural, for MS 'perelegit', where the wrong abbreviation mark was used.
'Like a lily . . .'.
'So is my love amongst the daughters'.
'Who is this . . . who descends . . .'.
'Like pillars of smoke'.
'And as the dawn arising'.
'Here is the queen of virgins'.
'Who gave birth to the king . . .'.
'Whom angels nourished . . .'.
'. . . Come, my love'.
'Come from Lebanon . . .'.
'Come and you will be crowned . . .'.

Richard Beadle

44
Occupation and Idleness

GLOSSARY

abye 474 pay for it
desese 857 trouble
afferde 354 frightened
disserverance 671 distinction
agast 241 alarmed
dome 697 judgement
almasdede 344 charity
domysman 875 judge
aray 125 clothing
doutful 875 awesome
aske 196 warn
drawe 442 withdraw
aspere 29 ask
efte 462 again
ataste 81 try
emperyse 209 empress
ateynye, make me 86 condemn me
enbatayl 377 assail
aves 856 Ave Marias
everydel 199 entirely
awreke 760 avenged
expres(se) 75, 425 openly, clearly
ayé 534 again

bak 481 false
fay 55, 120 faith
balis 3 misfortunes
fell (n.) 851 skin
beleve 501 creed
felle (v.) 545 bring down
bent 178 intending (to go)
fere, in 30, 451 together
beset 179 invest
fese, at 112 forthwith
beshrewe 408 curse
fette 665 obtain
ble 207 face
fille 558 fell
blyye 202 content
foon 208 enemies
borowe 58 security
foot 259 place
boy 443, 448 miscreant
for 62 because of
bound 520 obliged
for-lorne 61 forgotten
brennynge 207 burning
forbeten 588 beaten to death
brent 587 burned
forwhi 421 wherefor
but 671 about, regarding
fressh 377 vigorously
cheve 503 prosper
fynte 393 finds
clennes 371 purity of life
gadelynge 95 fellow
clepe(n) 158, 329 call
galantly 88 elegantly
clowte 251 fabric
gette 91 strut
cokkis 739 God's
glosynge 767 twisting of words
crofte 220 field
good 721 'please'
grevalise 34 difficulty
happe 200 bad luck
harlot 767 miscreant
heeded 586 beheaded
hel 200 good luck
heth, an 589 on high
hore 514 go white
hote 44 am called

japes 734 tricks

kaste 79 incline
kepe 77 care, 360 intend to
kunynye 330 wisdom
kuppe-shote 236 drunk

lesen 578 lose
let 93 forego
leve 122 believe
lever, had 41, 593 would prefer
lewde 511, 652 ignorant
long 339 may belong
lore (n.) 469 learning
lore, lorne (v.) 273, 421, 458 lost
losell 734 knave
lowte 469, 474 attend
loved 197 been friends
lyflode 218 living
manere 290 good conduct
mawgry, magré 439, 754 despite
mayne 221 force
mede 528 reward
medle 2 mingle
mel(le) 138 deal, 201 associate
merce 801 mercy
meyné 165 company

nale 262 ale(house)

nel(l) 305,314 will not
not(e) 230, 505 do not know

parmafay 193 by my faith
postelis 580, 620 apostles
presse 128 wardrobe
prikkyng 16 affliction
py 84 magpie

queynte 82 clever

recorde 455 presence
rede 512 advice
registered 874 certified
relevith 615 releases
rent 203 torn apart
reprefe 420 shameful
resshe 717 rush
reverent 203 worthy of reverence
rewthe 26 a pity
ripe 43, 135 reap
rode, rood 203, 428 cross
rote 511 way of life
rowte (v.) 237 spin
rowte (n.) 703 company
roy 203 king

sadde 332 intently
samfayle 175 without fail
se 204 seat
sesoun, in 13 promptly
sessioun 36 law court
sewe 22 follow
sey 223 saw, 699 seen
shent 731 damaged
shrew (vb.) 315 curse
shrewis (n.) 350 ill-disposed persons
Occupation and Idleness

slither 246 slippery
smatere 724 should drone on
spense 418 expenditure
spente 55 satisfied
stente 656 cease
sterete 753 move
steven 576 discourse, 625 voice
stire 333 encourage
stounde 102, 144 place, 752 moment
stradelynge 96 standing awkwardly
symony 19, 531 trade in spiritual things
symple 62, 125 plain
syses 36 assizes

take 740 give
the (vb.) 171, 411 thrive
they, thei, theigh 269, 676, 724 though
tho 393 those
thraldom 206 servitude
thryft 458 well-being
to-hepe 37, 70 together
to-rente 654 torn to pieces
trace, take my 88 move, ? dance
trow(e) 61, 124 believe
trusse 94 join

voyde 208 rid

warned 662 denied
wede 62 clothing
wende 479 enter
wery 515 exhaustion
wex 299 become
while 111 trick
wite 97 discover