

Leeds Studies in English

Article:

Richard Beadle, 'Occupation and Idleness', *Leeds Studies in English*, n.s. 32 (2001), 7-47

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Leeds Studies in English
School of English
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<http://www.leeds.ac.uk/lse>

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'.¹ It has a 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*.² 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.³ 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.⁴

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.⁵ 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

at New College, Oxford, whence annually the warden and two fellows came in visitation of the school.⁶ 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.⁷ 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.⁸ In such circumstances a more generalised presentation of its two principal figures, assimilating *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.⁹ Doctrine's appeal to the audience to

Sette youre children unto scole,
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.¹⁰ 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.¹¹ 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 Scorer* (1514), or in a later prodigal son play such as *The Disobedient Child* (c. 1560).¹²

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).¹³ In its comic aspect,

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.¹⁴ As Doctrine says:

For and thou the in temptacion fele,
Occupie the in clenness,
For the feend on no man may stele
Save in tho that he fynte in ydelness; (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.¹⁵

The opposition of Occupation to Idleness (as a branch of Sloth) is a relatively late development.¹⁶ Idleness here is presented very much in a secular aspect, as a workshy 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 clenness' (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*.¹⁷

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'¹⁸ and the second (203ff.) consisting of a heartfelt expression of devotion to 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.¹⁹

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.²⁰

NOTES

¹ F.L. Utley, 'Dialogues, Debates and Catechisms', in *A Manual of the Writings in Middle English*, ed. by A.E. Hartung vol. 3 (New Haven, 1972), pp. 743-44; N. Davis, 'Two unprinted dialogues in later Middle English and their language', *Revue des Langues Vivantes* 35 (1969), 461-72; *Non-Cycle Plays and the Winchester Dialogues*, ed. by N. Davis, Leeds Texts and Monographs: Medieval Drama Facsimiles 5 (Leeds: School of English, University of Leeds, 1979), which includes a facsimile (pp. 161-78) and a transcript (pp. 192-208) of *Occupation and Idleness*.

² T.W. Craik, *The Tudor Interlude* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1958) remains the most succinct, accurate and informative guide to the genre; see also F.P. Wilson, *The English Drama 1485-1585* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969), pp. 1-46, and D.M. Bevington, *From Mankind to Marlowe* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1962).

³ There are descriptions of the manuscript in N.R. Ker & A.J. Piper, *Medieval Manuscripts in British Libraries*, vol. 4 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), pp. 623-25, and Davis, *Non-Cycle Plays and the Winchester Dialogues*, pp. 135-37. *Lucidus and Dubius* immediately precedes *Occupation and Idleness* in the manuscript; see Davis, *op. cit.*, and further, B.S. Lee, 'Lucidus and Dubius: a fifteenth-century theological debate and its sources', *Medium Ævum* 45 (1976), 79-96.

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.

⁵ D.W. Blewitt, 'Records of drama at Winchester and Eton', *Theatre Notebook* 38 (1984), 88-95, 135-43 (at, e.g., p. 89 for a play 'in aula' in 1410/11). A photograph of the great hall at Winchester is Plate 13 in I. Lancashire, *Dramatic Texts and Records of Britain to 1558: a chronological topography* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984). Meg Twycross has recently described the theatrical circumstances of the great hall setting in 'The theatricality of medieval English plays', in *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval English Theatre*, ed. by Richard Beadle (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), pp. 66-83, with illustrations.

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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⁷ See R. Hutton, *The Stations of the Sun: a history of the ritual year in Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), p. 371, and references there.

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.

¹⁰ For a brief summary of the origin and development of this curriculum see L.E. Boyle, 'The Fourth Lateran Council and manuals of popular theology', in *The Popular Literature of Medieval England*, ed. by T.J. Heffernan (Knoxville, 1985), pp. 30-43.

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', *Mediaeval 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).

¹³ S. Wenzel, *The Sin of Sloth: Acedia in Medieval Thought and Literature* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1960).

¹⁴ Wilson, *English Drama 1485-1585*, pp. 59-66; P. Happé, "'The Vice" and the popular theatre', in *Poetry and Drama 1500-1700: essays in honour of Harold F. Brooks*, ed. by A. Coleman & A. Hammond (London: Methuen, 1981), pp. 13-31.

¹⁵ See especially the poem *Cleanness* in M. Andrew & R. Waldron, *The Poems of the Pearl Manuscript* (London: Edward Arnold, 1978), esp. p. 21.

¹⁶ M.W. Bloomfield, *The Seven Deadly Sins* (East Lansing: Michigan State College Press, 1952), p. 96.

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.

¹⁸ See for examples, *Historical Poems of the XIVth and XVth Centuries*, ed. by R.H. Robbins (New York: Columbia University Press, 1959), pp. 127-52.

¹⁹ J.E. Bernard, *The Prosody of the Tudor Interlude* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1939).

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.

O C C U P A T I O N A N D I D L E N E S S

OCCUPACION: The myghty maker that made al thyng
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 equyté 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 sotelté in colde ne in hete,
But sewe resoun and trewthe,
Lete ese and favour fro the fle
And take counseyle and equyté;
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,

- Wyndis ne wederis we may nat spare;
With grete grevalise Y go my levyng to gete,
Ofte wery and wetshode Y suffre mochel care 35
To sessioun or syses 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. 40
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 Y go
On grounde. 45
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,
Whi sey ye nat welcome now? 50
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 spent, in fay, 55
Oure bothis thyrst at wyne.
- A, syr, God yeve you good morowe.
Lo, siris, this good man wyl be my borowe
And Y had nede.
Nay, good sir, laugh me nat to scorne. 60
Y trowe ye have youre knowlych for-lorne
For my symple wede.
- Ye, this wede wil serve me wel and fyne.
Ofte thou hast be wette sith thou were myne,
Bothe at the ale and atte the wyne 65
In the hye strete.

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While Y have aught Y wyl spende;
Whan 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;
Whan Y am ful Y wyl wynke.
Now, be my trouthe, as Y thynke,
Y am a sly clerke.
Therfor Y tel you expresse, 75
My name is called Ydelnesse.
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 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 felawship let Y,
And but fewe mette Y
But they wyth me trusse
And gone.
Ey, what is that yonder gadelynge 95
That stonidith yondere al stradelynge?
Y wyl wite for al his babelynge
What he is anone.

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- 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. 115
- 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 furies of grete richesse.
 Of this man Y take wyttesse – 130
 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; 135
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, 140
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, 145
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, 150
That no thyng 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. 155
- 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, 160
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, 165

- 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. 170
- 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, 175
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, 180
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, 185
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. 190
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, 195
Aske me, syr, Y the pray,
For we two have loved many a day
Thes yeeris foure or fyve.

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Tyl this be spente everydel,
Fal happe, falle hel, 200
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 205
Fro the thretnynge 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, 210
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. 215

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, 220
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? 225
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; 230
Til Y some tydyngis of hym here,
Here Y thynke to rest.

- YDELNES: Aha! God spede Y am come.
Y have right wel wette my throte.
A, ware, a litel stonde a rome, 235
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 – 240
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 245
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, 250
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. 255
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 260
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 265

Occupation and Idleness

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. 270

OCUPACIOUN: A, sire, foule mote the befall
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, 275
And yit Y dede lye.
But now Y telle the in game,
Ydelnes is my name.

OCCUPACIOUN: Y swere be Seynt Jame,
Thou art a wyli pye. 280

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 begynne,
For Y wyl go pley me 285
And rialy aray me.

OCCUPACIOUN: Herk, sonne, thou say me,
Wylt thou worship wyne?

YDELNES: Worship? Hou sholde Y come therto?

OCCUPACIOUN: With manere and manhod, sonne, lo, 290
And be never thyn owen fo.
To my wordis thou herk.

YDELNES: Who techith that manere, Y pray the?

OCCUPACIOUN: Treuly, sonne, as Y say the,
Doctrine, that worthi clerk. 295

YDELNES: Doctryne, what man is he?

OCUPACION: A maister of dyvyneté

Richard Beadle

Of the unyversyté,
To teche the to wex wyse.
YDELNES: A, a, wylt thou so? 300
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. 305
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. 310
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. 315
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? 320
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, 325
Begynnyst thou now for to chyde.

Occupation and Idleness

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

DOCTRINE: Doctryne men clepen me;
To teche kunnyng Y am fayn. 330

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? 335

OCCUPACION: Treuly, my name is Occupacion.

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

For al that to good occupacion long
God is plesed and so am Y, 340
But occupacion 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, 345
Y, Doctrine, to the wyll take hede,

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

YDELNES: Herke, siris, ye shall here,
For now two shrewis ben mette. 350

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. 355

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

Y wil the teche a worde or two.

YDELNES: Whom? Me, syr? Y know the nat,
Ne never Y kepe, be heven kyng. 360

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

OCCUPACION: Sir, in the name of heven kyng,
Yeve hym som informacion
Hou he may gete his levynge 365
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, 370
To occupie hym in clennes,
For and he in good occupacion be founde
The feend temptith hym moche the les.

Every man hath enmyes thre,
The devel, the world, and his owen flesh. 375
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 380
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. 385

The flesh of glotonye fayled noght;
Lechery was in Sodom and Gomor and other mo,

Occupation and Idleness

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

For and thou the in temptacion fele, 390
Occupie the in clennes,
For the feend on no man may stele
Save in tho that he fynte in ydelnes;
In hem wil he hide.

For al the vices that ther be 395
Ydelnes is the worste, Y telle the.

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

DOCTRINE: Of ydelnes comyth this – 400
Thefis and strumpettis, so have Y rest.
Ayen this defaute, ywys,
Occupacion Y holde the best.

But the most defaute nowadays 405
On the peple that Y fynde,
Men techen hire children wanton playes,
And nat as they sholde in kynde.

Some shal beshrewe fader and moder
And be ful wantoun, as ye may se.
Such poyntis and many other 410
Makith many children never to the.

Sette youre children unto scole,
Ye that ben good men of fame;
Mayntene hem nat to play the fole,
But lete hem lerne some good, for shame. 415

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

- Sone shal he begge be kynde,
That were reпре. 420
Forwhi and his good be lore
And wylt nat laboure for no more,
But in ydelnes 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 ydelnesse.
- OCCUPACION: Ydelnes is nat ferre, as thynkith me, 430
And so Y tolde one ryght now.
DOCTRINE: Ydelnes, where is he?
OCCUPACIOUN: Yonder, syr, as ye may se,
And scorneth both me and yow.
- DOCTRINE: Ydelnes, come nere 435
And lerne of me som curtesie.
YDELNES: Y shrew me and Y come ther
While thou art so angry.
- DOCTRINE: Thou shalt come hider mawgry thyn hed 440
And lerne some good in thi youthe.
Thou wylt be like to begge thi brede
But thou drawe 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.

Occupation and Idleness

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.

455

Syr, saw ye me mokke hym to scorne?

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 ydelnes

460

He drawith hym morow and eve,

And Y bidde hym efte expres

Al that foly for to leve.

DOCTRINE: Sonne, to what levyng were thou borne?

YDELNES: With mylke and floure Y began, Y wene.

465

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.

470

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 aby.

OCCUPACION: In good fey, ye sey wel,

475

Every man to labour in his kunnyng.

This matere Y trow wel Y fele:

Ellis can we have but hard levyng.

And ydelnes in household wende

Me semyth it moche the worse.

480

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 understonde 485
Thou shalt be chastised with a rod
Bothe even and morowe.
- YDELNES: A, syr, he that the hider broght
Y pray God yeve hym sorowe.
- DOCTRINE: Sey on, crosse Crist me spede, 490
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 hevye 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 swete 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 510
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 515
Bothe in cyté, 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

520

To occupye erly or late:

Prestis to pray and preche also

In penaunse and masse to shewe,

Dukis, erlis, baronnes, and knyghtis therto

To mayntene the lond in vertu,

525

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 trewth is dryve abakke

530

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.

535

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 lete the never the.

540

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,

545

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 550
As don thes worthi clerkis.

DOCTRINE: *Summe Trinitati* Y wyl begynne,
That with his myght wrought 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, 560
Shal restore that place ayen?

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

OCCUPACION: Alle halowes, what be they?
Y pray you declare hem openly. 565

DOCTRINE: Angelis, patriarkis, and prophetis to sey,
Martiris and confessoris trewly,

Virgines and other of clene lyf
That deide in pure chastité,
That leved here without stryf 570
In clenness and humylité;

Viri religiosi the patriarkis called,
Atque gloriosi in hire levynge;
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

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

The postelis were in erthe goynge 580
And Jesu Cristis lawes redde.
'*Estote fortes*', seide Jesu oure kyng
'Loke no tribulacion make you ferde'.

OCCUPACION: Y pray you telle me in this place 585
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, 590
For hir blissed name *in eternum manet*.
YDELNES: Heere ye, siris, al this breth?
A draught of ale Y had lever.

OCCUPACION: This were a worthy company
That the apostel loved day and nyght. 595
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 600
But *pro Dei amore* thei suffred wo.

O quam gloriosa hire deth is,
And hire blod shedyng dede us moche good.
The blood shedyng wolde bryng us to blys
If that we ben mylde of mood. 605

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

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

Virgines in hire clennes 610
Mekely in erthe here leved.
Thes be kleped al halowes, ywys,
That we before meved.

And al holi chirchis pardoun
Relevith men out of synne, 615
Of thes 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 620
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. 625

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, 630
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? 635

DOCTRINE: Fro heven blis thei may nat wynne;
To aske mercy thei were redy.

Occupation and Idleness

OCCUPACION: What is mercy? That wold Y know;

Y pray you do me to understonde.

DOCTRINE: Mercy is the best seed sow, 640

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, 645

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 650

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 655

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 660

If thei repente hire evel levying.

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. 665

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
Never at ones in oo place come, 695
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 700
And curse the tyme that thei were bore.

Therefore the grete day clepe Y,
For tho that shal be dampned in that rowte
Shul wepe more water with here ye
Than is in alle the world rounde aboute. 705

Thei shal never after sese wepyng,
The water fro hire ey shal renne.
Therfor thynke on this day of rekenyng,
And ever after hate thou synne,
And in haste thi lyf amende. 710
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; 715
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. 720
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. 725

OCCUPACION: What, sonne, what pley is this?

YDELNES: Be God, it is never the worse.

OCCUPACION: Y wyl telle thi maister, ywis.

YDELNES: Therefore have thou Goddis curse.

- OCUPACION: Doctrine, sir, take hede 730
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. 735
Fast sit down, thou shalt nat chese.
- YDELNES: A, sire, here be many botterflyes
Bothe white and broun.
For cokkis blood
Take me thyn hode 740
And Y wyl smyte hem doun.
- DOCTRYNE: 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, 745
And myself wyl helpe therto.
Come forth, my feire childe.
- YDELNES: Come no nere, Y charge the now,
For and thou do, Y make a vow,
Y wyl stryke the to the hert. 750
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. 755
Wylt thou me spille?
- DOCTRINE: Have here one, two and thre.
Ydelnes, now thynke on me
And holde thi tunge stille.
- YDELNES: And Y lyve Y wil be awreke 760
Some of your hedis wyl Y breke,

Occupation and Idleness

- For ye have made me wrothe.
DOCTRINE: How seist thou? That lete me se.
YDELNES: Nay, for God, it is he;
In recorde of al this compané, 765
Y dede beshrewe you bothe.
- DOCTRINE: Fy on the, harlot, with thi glosynge.
Thou shalt have more, be heven kyng,
To teche the wexe trewe.
YDELNES: A, mercy, maister, Y cry mercy. 770
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 775
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. 780
- We know non houre of oure deyinge.
Therefore in prayeris ever shul we be;
For with oure Paternoster we shold worship heven kyng
And his blisshed moder with an Ave.
- YDELNES: Y sey now mercy, with herte and speche, 785
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 790
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, 795
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, 800
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. 805

DOCTRINE: The dedis of mercy dost thou nat fulfyllen
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, 810
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, 815
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, 820
Fro foly and fantasy turned to grace
With so mylde steven.

Occupation and Idleness

CLENNES: Mayster, Y pray you for charité
That ye wolde telle me
What powere hath Oure Lady in heven. 825

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 830
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 835
Tanquam fumi virgula?'

Et sicut aurora consurgens,
Never sunne shynynge so bryght,
With all delites of swetnes 840
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,* 845

Que genuit 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,* 850
Veni de Libano in flessch 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. 855
Whoso honoure 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 860
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. 865

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 870
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, 875
Kepe you ever oute of all dispeyre
And graunte you his blissinge 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 . . . '.

- 602 'O how glorious . . . !
629 'The righteous shall be radiant . . . !
633 ' . . . righteousness remaineth for ever . . . !
642 ' . . . through a tree death died . . . !
644 ' . . . through a tree likewise . . . !
650 ' . . . the promised oil . . . !
690 opon] Added interlineally in MS.
692 shal] Preceded in MS by 'wys' deleted
766 Y] Conjectural; MS 'He', probably an aurally induced error.
779 'Watch, therefore . . . !
780 'For ye know not what hour . . . !
829 'And God chose her'.
829 *praelegit*] Conjectural, for MS '*perelegit*', where the wrong abbreviation mark was used.
830 'Like a lily . . . !
831 'So is my love amongst the daughters'.
835f. 'Who is this . . . who descends . . . !
837 'Like pillars of smoke'.
838 'And as the dawn arising'.
845 'Here is the queen of virgins'.
846 'Who gave birth to the king . . . !
847 'Whom angels nourished . . . !
850 ' . . . Come, my love'.
851 'Come from Lebanon . . . !
852 'Come and you will be crowned . . . !

GLOSSARY

- abyē 474 *pay for it*
 afferde 354 *frightened*
 agast 241 *alarmed*
 almasdede 344 *charity*
 aray 125 *clothing*
 aske 196 *warn*
 aspere 29 *ask*
 ataste 81 *try*
 ateynte, make me 86 *condemn me*
 aves 856 *Ave Marias*
 awreke 760 *avenged*
 ayé 534 *again*
- bak 481 *false*
 balis 3 *misfortunes*
 beleve 501 *creed*
 bent 178 *intending (to go)*
 beset 179 *invest*
 beshrewe 408 *curse*
 ble 207 *face*
 blyve 202 *content*
 borowe 58 *security*
 boy 443, 448 *miscreant*
 bound 520 *obliged*
 brennynge 207 *burning*
 brent 587 *burned*
 but 671 *about, regarding*
- cheve 503 *prosper*
 clennes 371 *purity of life*
 clepe(n) 158, 329 *call*
 clowte 251 *fabric*
 cokkis 739 *God's*
 crofte 220 *field*
- desese 857 *trouble*
 disseverance 671 *distinction*
 dome 697 *judgement*
 domysman 875 *judge*
 doutful 875 *awesome*
 drawe 442 *withdraw*
- efte 462 *again*
 emperyse 209 *emperess*
 enbateyl 377 *assail*
 everydel 199 *entirely*
 expres(se) 75, 425 *openly, clearly*
- fay 55, 120 *faith*
 fell (n.) 851 *skin*
 felle (v.) 545 *bring down*
 fere, in 30, 451 *together*
 fese, at 112 *forthwith*
 fette 665 *obtain*
 fille 558 *fell*
 foon 208 *enemies*
 foot 259 *place*
 for 62 *because of*
 for-lorne 61 *forgotten*
 forbeten 588 *beaten to death*
 forwhi 421 *wherefor*
 fressh 377 *vigorously*
 fynte 393 *finds*
- gadelynge 95 *fellow*
 galantly 88 *elegantly*
 gette 91 *strut*
 glosynge 767 *twisting of words*
 good 721 *'please'*
 grevalise 34 *difficulty*

- happe 200 *bad luck*
harlot 767 *miscreant*
heded 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*
kunynge 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*
sterte 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*
- wode 316 *mad*
wonte 716 *accustomed*
wote 682 *knows*
wringlynge 5 *disorder*
wynke 72 *sleep*
wynne 636 *be parted*
- yfounde, wel 100 *greetings*