From the Selected Works of Gloriana St. Clair

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Five Dogs of London

Gloriana St. Clair
The Five Dogs of London (1456)

Colle, primus canis, londonie, quinque in munere occisi fuerunt. Anno dominim Me ccccv lvjto

_When lordschype fayleth, gode felowschipe awayleth,_
My master ys cruell and can no curtestye
Ffor whos offence here am y pyghte.
Hyt is no reson that y schulde dye
Ffor hys trespace, & he go quyte.

Grubbe, 2us canis:

_Offte beryth the sone the faderis gylte._
None so gylteles as y compleyne:
Ffor ones that y barkyd a-gynes the mone,
With myghty force here was y sleyne.
My tym was come; my defenys ys done.

Lugtype, 3us canis:

_The tonge breketh bone, 3it in hym is none._
Ffor fawte of curasse my throte was cutte.
Y cryed for helpe--y was not herde.
Y wolde my master hadde provide my butte;
Thys hadde y for hym to my rewarde.

Slugge, 4us canis:

_Off folowyne adventurous, the lugement is leperdous._
Wat planet compellyd me, or what signe,
To serue that man that all men hate?
Y wolde hys hede were here for myne,
Ffor he hathe caused all the debate.

Turne-bole, 5us canis:

_Felix quem faciunt aliena pericula cautum._
The blasynge starne with his late constellacion,
Ys pleynly determyned weyis batayle;
To soche a remedye y holde hyt geson,
And yn rancur with-owte remedy ys none avayle.

Maysterys, taketh for no grewe thewgh that we be dede;
Ffor they wylle walke be your fleke, In dyspyte of your hede.
Poem’s intention was to embarrass King Edward, a Lancaster. 1456 is in the War of the Roses, in which the White Rose of Lancaster is fighting with the Red Rose of York over the throne. Dogs are servants of York betrayed by their master. Bale’s Chronicle says “Item the 19th day of September in the night time were set upon the Standard in Fleet street before the duke of York being there then lodged in the Bishop of Salisbury’s place, certain dog’s heads with Scripture in their mouths, like a ballad. The dogs were slain vengefully the same night [Gloriana’s translation].”

Translation of the poem:

Colle, first dog of London, five occasionally seen in service in the year 1456

When sovereignty fails, good behavior helps
My master is cruel and has no honorable behavior.
For whose offence, I am here exposed.
It is no reason that I should die
For his transgression, and he go free.

Grubbe, 2nd dog

Often the son bears the father’s guilt.
None so guiltless as I complain
For once I barked against money.
With great force, I was slain here.
My time was come; my defence is done.

Lugtype, 3rd dog

The tongue breaks the bone, yet none is in him.
For want of body armor, my throat was cut
I cried for help; I was not heard.
I would my master had provided my deliverance.
Thus I had for him my reward.

Slugge, 4th dog

Often hazards follow, the sentence is in jeopardy.
What planet compelled me or what sign
To serve that man that all men hate?
I would his head were here for mine,
For he has caused all the debate.

Turn-bole 5th dog
Happy are those who learn caution from the danger of others.
The blazing star with its late constellation
Is plainly determined to do battle in the manner
To such a remedy, I hold it barren
And in rancour, without remedy is no profit.

Masters, take no harm though we be dead
For they will walk by hour hurdle, in spite of your attention.