

Chapter 12 OF THE MANNER AND HABITS AND CONDITIO...

After that I have spoken of the nature of beasts of venery and of chase which men should hunt, now I will tell you of the nature of the hounds which hunt and take them. And first of their noble conditions that be so great and marvellous in some hounds that there is no man can believe it, unless he were a good skilful hunter, and well knowing, and that he haunted them long, for a hound is a most reasonable beast, and best knowing of any beast that ever God made. And yet in some case I neither except man nor other thing, for men find it in so many stories and (see) so much nobleness in hounds, always from day to day, that as I have said there is no man that liveth, but must think it. Nevertheless natures of men and all beasts go ever more descending and decreasing both of life and of goodness and of strength and of all other things so wonderfully, as the Earl of Foix Phebus sayeth in his book, that when he seeth the hounds that be now hunting and thinketh of the hounds that he hath seen in the time that is passed, and also of the goodness and the truth, which was sometimes in the lords of this world, and other common men, and seeth what now is in them at this time, truly he saith that there is no comparison, and this knoweth well every man that hath any good reason. But now let God ordain thereof whatever His good will is. But to draw again to my matter, and tell the nobleness of the hounds, the which have been, some good tales I shall tell you the which I find in true writings. First of King Claudoneus¹⁰³ of France, the which sent once after his great court whereof were other kings which held of him land, among the which was the King Appollo of Lyonnys that brought with him to the court his wife and a greyhound that he had, that was both good and fair. The King Claudoneus of France had a seemly young man for his son, of twenty years of age, and as soon as he saw the Queen of Lyonnys he loved her and prayed her of (for her) love. The Queen was a good lady and loved well her lord, forsook him and would him not, and said (to) him that if he spake to her any more thereof that she would tell it to the King of France, and to her Lord. And after that the feast was passed, King Appollo of Lyonnys turned again, he and his wife to their country. And when they were so turned again, he and his wife, the King Claudoneus son of France was before him with a great fellowship of men

of arms for to ravish his wife from him. The King Appollo of Lyonys that was a wonderful good knight of his hounds (hands?) notwithstanding that he was unarmed, defended himself and his wife in the best wise that he could unto the time that he was wounded to the death, then he withdrew himself and his wife into a tower. And the King Claudoneus son, the which would not leave the lady, went in and took the lady, and would have defiled her, and then she said to him "Ye have slain my lord, and (now) ye would dishonour me, certes I would sooner be dead," then she drew herself to (from) a window and leapt into the river of Loire that ran under the tower and anon she was drowned. And after that within a little while, the King Appollo of Lyonys died of his wounds that he had received, and on the same day he was cast into the river. The greyhound that I have spoke of, the which was always with the king his master, when his lord was cast in the river leapt after him into the river, insomuch that with his teeth he drew his lord out of the river, and made a great pit with his claws in the best wise that he could, and with his muzzle. And so the greyhound always kept his lord about half a year in the pit, and kept his lord from all manner of beasts and fowls. And if any man ask whereof he lived I say that he lived on carrion and of other feeding such as he might come to. So it befell that the King Claudoneus of France rode to see the estate of his realm, and (it) befell that the king passed there where the greyhound was that kept his lord and master, and the greyhound arose against him, and began to yelp at him. The King Claudoneus of France the which was a good man and of good perception, anon when he saw the greyhound, knew that it was the greyhound that King Appollo of Lyonys had brought to his court, whereof he had great wonder, and he went himself there where the greyhound was and saw the pit, and then he made some of his men alight from their horses for to look what was therein, and therein they found the King Appollo's body all whole. And anon as the King Claudoneus of France saw him, he knew it was the King Appollo of Lyonys, whereof he was right sorry and sore aggrieved, and ordained a cry throughout all his realm, that whoso would tell him the truth of the deed he would give him whatsoever that he would ask. Then came a damsel that was in the tower when the King Appollo of Lyonys was dead, and thus she said to the King Claudoneus of France, "Sir," quoth she, "if you will grant me a boon that I shall ask and assure me to have it, before all your men, I shall show you him that hath done the deed," and the King swore to her before his men, and it so befell that the King Claudoneus son of France was beside his father. "Sir," she said, "here is your son the which hath done this deed. Now require I you as ye have sworn to me that ye give him to me, I will no other gift of you." The King Claudoneus of France turned him then towards his son and said

thus: "Thou cursed harlot, thou hast shamed and shent (disgraced) me and truly I shall shend (disgrace) you. And though I have no more children yet shall I not spare." Then he commanded to his men to make a great fire, and cast his son therein, and he turned him toward the damsel when the fire was great alight, and thus to her he said: "Damsel, now take ye him for I deliver him to you, as I promised and assured you." The damsel durst not come nigh, for by that time he was all burnt. This ensample have I brought forth for the nobleness of hounds and also of lords that have been in olden times. But I trow that few lords be now that would do so even and so open justice. A hound is true to his lord and his master, and of good love and true.

103 In G. de F. "Clodoveus," p. 82.

A hound is of great understanding and of great knowledge, a hound hath great strength and great goodness, a hound is a wise beast and a kind (one). A hound has a great memory and great smelling,¹⁰⁴ a hound has great diligence and great might, a hound is of great worthiness and of great subtlety, a hound is of great lightness and of great perseverance (?), a hound is of good obedience, for he will learn as a man all that a man will teach him. A hound is full of good sport; hounds are so good that there is scarcely a man that would not have of them, some for one craft, and some for another. Hounds are hardy, for a hound dare well keep his master's house, and his beasts, and also he will keep all his master's goods, and he would sooner die than anything be lost in his keeping. And yet to affirm the nobleness of hounds, I shall tell you a tale of a greyhound that was Auberie's of Moundydier, of which men may see the painting in the realm of France in many places. Aubery was a squire of the king's house of France, and upon a day that he was going from the court to his own house, and as he passed by the woods of Bondis, the which is nigh Paris, and led with him a well good and a fair greyhound that he had brought up. A man that hated him for great envy without any other reason, who was called Makarie, ran upon him within the wood and slew him without warning, for Auberie was not aware of him. And when the greyhound sought his master and found him he covered him with earth and with leaves with his claws and his muzzle in the best way that he could. And when he had been there three days and could no longer abide for hunger, he turned again to the king's court. There he found Makarie, who was a great gentleman, who had slain his master, and as soon as the greyhound perceived Makarie, he ran upon him, and would have maimed him, unless men had hindered him. The King of France, who was wise and a man of perception, asked what it was, and men told him the truth. The greyhound took from the boards what he could, and

brought to his master and put meat in his mouth, and the same wise the greyhound did three days or four. And then the King made men follow the greyhound, for to see where he bare the meat that he took in the court. And then they found Auberie dead and buried. And then the King, as I have said, made come many of the men of his court, and made them stroke the greyhound's side, and cherish him and made his men lead him by the collar towards the house, but he never stirred. And then the King commanded Makarie to take a small piece of flesh and give it to the greyhound. And as soon as the greyhound saw Makarie, he left the flesh, and would have run upon him. And when the King saw that, he had great suspicions about Makarie, and said (to) him that he must needs fight against the greyhound. And Makarie began to laugh, but anon the King made him do the deed, and one of the kinsmen of Auberie saw the great marvel of the greyhound and said that he would swear upon the sacrament as is the custom in such a case for the greyhound, and Makarie swore on the other side, and then they were led into our Lady's Isle at Paris and there fought the greyhound and Makarie. For which Makarie had a great two-handed staff, and they fought so that Makarie was discomfitted, and then the king commanded that the greyhound the which had Makarie under him should be taken up, and then the King made enquiry of the truth of Makarie, the which acknowledged he had slain Aubrey in treason, and therefore he was hanged and drawn.

104 G. de F., p. 84, says "sentement," good sense, feeling, or sympathy.

The bitches be jolly in their love commonly twice in a year, but they have no term of their heat, for every time of the year some be jolly. When they be a twelvemonth old, they become jolly, and be jolly while they await the hounds without any defence, twelve days or less,¹⁰⁵ and sometimes fifteen days, according as to whether they be of hot nature or of cold, the one more than another, or whether some be in better condition than others. And also men may well help them thereto, for if they give them much meat they abide longer in their heat than if they had but little. And also if they were cast in a river twice in a day they should be sooner out of their jollity. They bear their whelps nine weeks or more; the whelps be blind when they be whelped till they be nine days old and then they may well see and lap well when they be a month old, but they have great need of their dam to the time that they be two months old, and then they should be well fed with goat's milk or with cow's milk and crumbs of bread made small and put therein, especially in the morn and at night. Because that the night is more cold than the day. And also men should give them crumbs in flesh-broth, and in this wise men may nourish them till they be half a year old, and by that time they shall have cast their

hooks, and when they have cast their hooks, they should teach them to eat dry bread and lap water little by little, for a hound that is nourished with grease and fat broth when he casts his hooks, and if he hath always sops or tit-bits, he is a chis¹⁰⁶ (dainty) hound and of evil ward. And also they be not so well breathed than if they have eaten always bread and water. When the bitches be lined they lose their time, and also while they be great with whelps, and also while their whelps suck. If they are not lined, soon they will lose their time, for their teats remain great and grow full of wind until the time that they should have had their whelps. And so that they should not lose their time men spaye them, save these that men will keep open to bear whelps. And also a spayed bitch lasteth longer in her goodness than other two that be not spayed.¹⁰⁷ And if a bitch be with whelps the which be not of ward let the bitch fast all the whole day, and give her then with a little grease the juice of a herb men calleth titimal, the which the apothecaries knoweth well, and she shall cast her whelps. Nevertheless it is a great peril namely if the whelps be great and formed within the bitch. The greatest fault of hounds is that they live not long enough, most commonly they live but twelve years. And also men should let run no hounds of what condition that they be nor hunt them until the time that they were a twelve month old and past. And also they can hunt but nine years at the most.

¹⁰⁵ G. de F., p. 85, "Au moins," at least.

¹⁰⁶ "Chis," or "cheese," hound, probably dainty hound, a chooser, from "cheosan," Mid. Eng. "choose," to distinguish: also written "ches," "chees." (Stratmann.)

¹⁰⁷ Lasts longer good, i.e. lasts as long as two hounds that have not been spayed. G. de F. (p. 86) adds: "or at least one and a half."

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