

Unto the Mouth

From the Brain

With input from several fingers, a throat and some various naughty bits

An updated report --

External to the Archduchy:

It is reported that things have stabilized in Debonai. Naughty bits assure the brain that all is under control now and that the difficulties are receding.

Other naughty bits report that the situation in Hanal remains desperate. The Empress has thrown great force at the fortified city of Snannurkazz and her sky navy have tightened control of the region, as have Hanalian naval forces.

At the same time however, Legions of the Eternal Black are knocking away at the door of South Eastern Hanal at the behest of the Providenciary General for The Paranswarmian Inquisition. This simultaneous with other rebel kovs who are declaring the Princess to be authentic as ruler coming under siege from the Empress' forces.

End results are that the crops are being ignored in many areas, or the farmers are being overrun by legions moving hither and yon, their fields trashed. Winter comes early in the northlands, and the commons have no time to salt their meat or smoke it, or preserve enough food for their own winters, say nothing of supplying Hanal's many cities.

Privation is certainly nearly upon them. Our analysis indicates that while an appeal from the Church of Paranswarm will provide some food from Enclaves and some from Masque - it is not enough. The Council should expect that emissary's of the Temple of Darkness will soon attempt to buy our surplus and some method of transporting it. The Archduke should be aware and ready to handle this in the manner that he sees fit. As things stand hundreds of thousands may die before spring, and as many as a million or two more be reduced to refugee status, with no logical safe haven that can assist them.

As Brain we dare suggest that if food can be spared it is not only humanitarian, but may have long term benefits for the Archduchy, particularly as it seems to the Body that Hanal provides balance to Masque - even though both are of the Darkness, and as they are the two most populous nations in the northlands, that balance is worthwhile.

Internal:

Salt riots in the capital have calmed, it is obvious that the rumors of new salt supplies are helping. However, salt riots in a handful of provincial cities continue irregularly. Spice prices

have driven up beyond the means of most, which forecloses one possible alternative for some food preservation, at least for the middle class.

Rumors of the palace attack are already spreading, and it is viewed as the protection of Lord Glor'diadel that the palace survived such a powerful attack. Many are viewing it as an omen - and worship at the churches has taken on renewed fervor as a result, particularly near the market. A number of folk have said that they have seen the ghost of Sanela Longyard, a cloth seller in the market who died in the collapse of her stall during the battle. As she was exceptionally devout and always willing to help others in the small ways that she could, this is being taken as a sign that her piety (she was old) has been rewarded, and that the sightings of the ghost are a blessing sign to all those who have viewed her.

Fingers believe that it truly is her ghost, but whether a blessing or not, we do not claim to know.

The young Nolder, traveling now with a mixed escort, has been out into the lower city twice. Our concern that he might be attacked has receded. He walks among the common people openly, is attending services at several lower city parishes and is generous - but constrained - with the poor. What has more impressed the people however is that two men, one a young man who was crippled and unable to walk due to an accident as a caravan drover and the other an older man who had developed the tumor upon his head have spoken to the youngster about issues of love and life and faith and have been "healed." We are unable to determine the mechanism. He is clearly not any sort of priest (and priests can rarely cure the tumor in any event) and he did not use skin or other redactor's tools. Both were good men, both well liked, and both - due to their illnesses, unable to care for their families. Now, they are as men reborn - and both speak of him as being blessed of the Light to any who hear them.

I would note that while many more were touched and healed by the Princess during her visit, the tumor did not respond to her, but it has to him. We cannot judge, but perhaps the favor of the Light is with him. His youth, appearance (which can stun onlookers who are not fully of good will, we are told - though surely that is hyperbole) and gentleness have certainly conspired to impress those of the commons who have met him.

Finally, there is a move among the people to come up with a suitable gift for the Archduke on end-year. It was a tradition that often was fulfilled when his grandmother was a young woman, but not in the latter years of her life. It is the desire of the people to renew it, for they are truly excited by the Archduke. The council should be aware of this, as the gifts were rarely terribly imaginative - but the ruler's acceptance of them and joy in them always increased the public regard of the people.