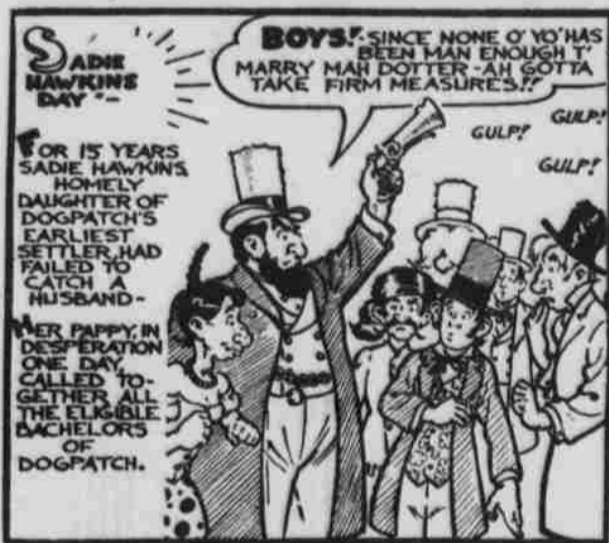


Sadie Hawkins' Day



L' Etoile Rouge de Nlocnil

(An Allegory)

BY SAMUEL SIMPSON

And it so happened that within the City of Nlocnil, in the Land of Aksarben, there dwelt eight wise men. These wise men had read much; and diligently studied the past of mankind, and they felt forsaken, and sad of heart. They deplored mankind's misfortunes and prayed daily for his deliverance from evil.

And it came to pass that a star appeared to them; and when this star beckoned to them they vowed to follow.

And they spoke to one another and said: "This star must surely be a sign."

"It will lead us to the Fount of Mercy."

"It will lead us to the Deliverer of Mankind."

"Surely we are the chosen of the Master."

"Truth has been revealed unto us."

"We are the appointed ones."

"We have seen the clear white star."

"We will follow faithfully where it leads."

And they were resolved. Truth had been revealed unto them. And it was to be their task to lead their people into the paths of righteousness.

And it came to pass that into the city of Nlocnil where they dwelt, in the Land of Aksarben, word came to them that, from a distant land, another wise man, who followed a star was to come among them for a short time. And they were sore distressed. And they spoke unto one another and said:

"Is this man who cometh not accursed by the Master?"

"We follow the true star."

"Surely this man is damned of God, for is he not of the church of Emor?"

"And did he not take to wife a woman of the blood of the Shiwej?"

"We must warn our people e're they are misled into the ways of sin."

And one of their number, wise, even among the wiest spoke unto them and said:

"All that you have said is true my brethren. This man certainly follows a false star; for has not this true star been revealed to us, and is our Star not different from his? How could he bring ought but evil to our people? And yet I say unto you, we must

be shrewd. We must not reveal his falseness too soon to our people; least they forget, by the time he cometh among us, all that we shall have revealed of his heresy. Or even lest there be those among our people who seeing not his evil, as we do, should arise to defend him thus casting doubt upon the truth we shall have revealed."

Thus spoke this wiest of the wise men unto his brethren.

And it was resolved among them, that not until the third day before this man was to the city of Nlocnil where they dwelt, in the Land of Aksarben, were they to reveal his falseness and heresy to their ple. This would give their people two whole days to contemplate his infamy before he came amongst them. All that they would reveal of his heresies would be fresh in their minds. Their hearts would be properly inflamed; and in the heat of their wrath few, if any, would listen to whatever evil voice there might be raised in his behalf.

And it came to pass that on the third day before this man was to enter the City of Nlocnil, in the Land of Aksarben these eight wise men spoke unto their people and said:

"Lo, a wicked one cometh amongst ye."

"It is wrong that he should be allowed to do so, but we cannot prevent it."

"It is still our duty to warn you of his evil."

"Haken ye not unto his words; for, lo, we say unto his words are accursed."

"He has come to turn you from our Star."

"He is a false prophet and a heretic."

"All this has been revealed unto us by the Master."

"Therefore turn unto him only thy deaf ear."

And it came to pass that when this heretic came into the City of Nlocnil, in the Land of Aksarben, to speak unto the people of Nlocnil his listeners were forewarned. And yet, strange to relate, he seemed not to utter heresy. He spoke unto the people unabashed, and some there were who said:

"Lo, can this be he of whom we have been warned."

Verily this cannot be that fiend in human form, for his manner seemeth kindly, and in truth his words have about them the essence of wisdom."

But the judicious warning given by the Eight Wise Men was not in vain; for there were more who said:

"Lo, he speaketh with the tongue of the viper, but deceiveth us not. Blessed indeed are we who being forewarned are proof against the blandishments of his reason, and are deaf unto his utterances."

And thus it came to pass that the City of Nlocnil, in the Land of Aksarben, was saved by the Eight Wise men. It's people were not moved by the words of this foreign prophet. He came, spoke, and departed in a day.

And the Eight Wise Men continued to follow the Star that shone so clearly, white and glistening, for them, in their firmament; never dreaming that it was drenched with blood. And their loyal disciples praised their wisdom and followed them rejoicing, never knowing that the Eight Wise Men were color-blind.

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