

### *First Day: The Journey to the Castle*

He determines to attend the wedding and dresses ritually for it. That is, with the emblems of a Rosicrucian—a crossed red ribbon over a white linen coat and with four red roses in his hat. In other words, the center of the cross is over his heart, and the equilibration of the elements blossoms over his head.

He takes bread, salt and water—all emblems of life—and typically, and essentially for the aspirant to the higher mysteries, gives thanks to God. (The principle of thanksgiving is of incredible power at any level of expression.) He also vows that whatever is revealed to him he will use in the service of God and his fellow man. He then goes into the forest, with birds singing all around him, as in a dawn chorus.

All initiation systems have an especial commencement point. This is often associated with a tree or a grove of trees. In this case it is a green plain beyond the forest from which four ways diverge. It is marked by three tall cedar trees which offer “an excellent and desired shade.” One is indeed reminded of the Rosicrucian motto which appears at the end of the *Confessio*: Sub Umbra Alarum Tuum Jehova—Under the shadow of thy wings Jehovah. Under the trees is a tablet describing the nature of the four ways. In fact only three are practicable, for the fourth is passable only by the pure—that is, by those with incorruptible bodies.

The right choice is beyond the powers of intellect, and C.R. chooses the right way by apparent accident. This is significantly by the actions of a black raven—an emblem found in alchemy as a symbol for dissolution. It is a bird ever associated both with wisdom and with death. It is found in ancient Irish myth as the Morrighu, the great terrible goddess of the battlefield, who collects the souls of the slain. C.R. sees a white dove and begins to feed it with his bread, whereupon the black raven appears and chases the dove, which flies off towards the south. C.R. runs after them, to find himself automatically upon one of the ways and unable to return for his bread and belongings, by dint of a strong wind that blows from behind him. This is the breath of the Holy Spirit, whose other aspect is the guiding dove.

C.R. keeps to the path with the aid of a compass. This is an important symbolic direction-finding instrument. The lodestone (which is often meteoric in origin, and therefore literally from the heavens) is a natural object that automatically seeks the direction of the polar axis about which all the universe spins.

At sunset he comes to a stately portal. It is the first of three gates, and at each of these he receives a token. First in exchange for his water and his salt, and at the last gate he loses a part of his coat.