

First published in The Occult Digest, August 1930



THE BLACK RAVEN

By C. F. Russell

IN THE May issue of the *Occult Digest*, under the title, VIENS, it was stated that of the Occult Orders on this planet the greater number are not going ahead, but are acting from or in a position made immovable by the obstacles which keep them apart from each other. Before they can help forward the Illumination of the world they must break down the barriers which separate one another at the same time as a body and as bodies attaining to a higher degree of Initiation. Last month, in the article styled MIKROKOSMOGONIA, the Way, both for bodies and the members thereof, was shown to be identical with the Wayfarer, whose Goal and Staff are the very same thing. The creation of a new instrument for the construction of the Temple of Solomon the King coincides only with destruction of individuality of the aspirant as the Veil is torn asunder and the white-robed one enters the Sanctum Sanctorum. This series of essays is concluded by an account of what any man or woman of the world must do to be saved.

The primal prerequisite is the Magical Link with the Masters. This is formally established by joining the church, a body of devout persons, professing a common creed, and having a communal aim, which may be expressed variously but is one and the same for each and every religion under the sun, namely, Union with God. Now the kind of Heaven one reaches is obviously determined by the spiritual dispensation granted to the particular church of which one becomes an integral part. A logical forecast of the finish is found in the promises made to the novice by the wardens in the licit pact signed by both parties to the bargain. The contract is binding, *caveat emptor!* The safest choice for the earnest but uninformed seeker of Light is that Lodge which pledges the least, or nothing at all, whose propagandism is all but inaudible, whose portal is encurtained by a dark, perhaps sinister, shroud. Inasmuch as all that remains of its head, or Chief Adept, is a little pile of dust which only waits the moment when it shall be burnt to ashes, the true House of God is not encompassed with a blaze of glory.

Invariably the quester finds and is received by that Order which is best equipped to assume the responsibility attached to his karma, just as water always seeks its level. Inevitably your karma either drags you down or else lifts you up to a plane where exists an Order whose specific function is to properly handle your case. Being accepted, your next duty is to obey. Unswerving obedience, with or without intellectual discernment, to the letter of the tenets taught you and the discipline dealt you is your only means of deliverance from the devils who will dart suddenly upon you the instant you place a foot upon the path to Freedom. Let your motto be "perinde ac cadaver". Remember that in disobeying your superior you merely commence a conflict between two wills in yourself, the one the vow girding you and your goal, the other a temporary temptation. If you are so weak as to waive your right to the royal throne in favor of the wicked wish to assert your asinine independence then you may confidently expect the schism to smash you and split you into pieces, each one a morsel in the mouths of the fiends merrily frolicking around you. If your teacher orders you to jump over a cliff, do so without question; you will find this course to be the line of least resistance in getting to the bottom of your difficulties.

If you are acting in good faith and not feigning, a fact easily ascertained from your reaction to the test of fidelity, you will very soon learn that your greatest enemy is yourself. For the Grade you then possess the formula of Initiation consists of what is usually termed an Infernal Rite, that of the Slain God or King, identical with the chief ceremony observed in all external religions, whose office is to mould the astral vehicle of the human race. Since many volumes have been compiled to illustrate and prove this point there is no need to enlarge upon it here. The Canon of the Mass is a distinguished extant example of this ritual; note also the plot of the dramas enacted by all the famous saviours of mankind. The essential principle is that you must conquer by love under will the magical being, your own self, known as the Sphinx, through mastery of Her four weapons, the Pantacle, the Sword, the Cup, and the Wand. "There are four gates to one palace, the floor of that palace is of silver and gold; lapis-lazuli and jasper are there; and all rare scents; jasmine and rose, and the emblems of death." Let the candidate "enter in turn or at once the four gates; let him stand on the floor of that palace; will he not sink?" Ah! there are four ecstasies which reward the successful knight. But the joy of triumph is no part of him who would open the Eye of Shiva, All these ecstasies must be refused, he must wrestle with the aroused and consecrated Kundalini, declaring his real purpose to solve the riddle of the Sphinx.

Further description of this process is wasting metaphors. There is no use offering advice concerning advanced tasks to those who have yet to undertake

the preliminary operations. Fatal misconceptions are thus bred in the minds of beginners, causing their imaginations to run riot. The Dhyana of an elementary type which results from taking the first steps, poisoned by the fruit of a little knowledge, inflates what is merely the ego; the aspirant gets a swelled-head and believes he has arrived at the end of his journey, to his subsequent dismay and bitter disillusionment. By far the best policy is that adopted by the greatest Initiators, who in all their dealings with their pupils maintain utter silence with regard to what lies beyond the immediate experience and present need of the worker. Thus are we quite logically and irresistibly brought to the final portion of the formula which confers Initiation.

In order to secure your heart's fondest desire, the longing of the scarlet heart girt with the emerald serpent, four things only are paramount. First, the magical link with the Masters; second, the oath of obedience with its fulfilment in the forging of the elemental weapons to conquer the Sphinx; third, the eucharistic use of these forces to render the Body of Light strong enough to penetrate all barriers; and fourth, the final mastery of all these powers dissolving yourself with the Sphinx in that fifth ecstasy, which is not ecstasy and has no expression, not even in the word which seals the accomplishment of the GREAT WORK — the word SILENCE!