

## *Early Representatives of the Rose Cross*

**T**HE EMBLEM of the Teutonic Knights was a black cross on a white mantle; that of the French Temple was a red cross on a white mantle; and the Spanish Order was formed a few years after the French Order. These three were independent, each under the protection of its own king or emperor. The French King, Philip le Bel, demanded that his Knights elect him as Commander of the Templars. This they refused to do, electing instead Jacques de Molay. In revenge upon them, Philip le Bel conspired with the Pope to suppress the Order. He summoned de Molay to Paris to discuss the idea of uniting the three military orders in one, then imprisoned him and other leaders, condemned them on charges of heresy, burned them at the stake, and confiscated as much of the treasure of the Order as he could lay his hands on.

While the kingdom of Jerusalem stood, and while it was guarded by the Knights of the Temple, the legends of the Holy Grail were popularly supposed to be descriptive of them; but when the French Order was destroyed and the English Order suppressed, the Grail Sanctuary was described as still existing in secret in the mountains between France and Spain; or in the mountains of Germany; or again, in the Orient or in the Caucasus.

### **Wolfram von Eschenbach**

Our interest in Wolfram von Eschenbach's *Parzival* lies precisely in the various items which seem to show heretical beliefs on the poet's part; and the stories of the Grail generally reflect the burning interest of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries in the real nature and meaning of the Christian communion. Celibacy was not yet enforced too strictly upon the clergy; so it is not in the least strange that the priestly knights of Wolfram's Grail



Franz Stassen (1869-1949).

*Communion of the Holy Grail*

Castle are married men, like the priests of the Greek and Eastern Churches.

Spain continued to be a source of enlightenment for Europe until after the Moors and Jews were driven out by Queen Isabella in the fifteenth century. Spain then became the narrowly Catholic nation which it has remained until this day. Some of the Moors returned to Damascus, others migrated to Africa. "Solomon's Table" was taken to a new Medina, City of the Table, in Arabia.

The thirteenth century, which was marked by the violent crusades against the Manicheans in the South of France, in which only the Spanish kings offered assistance, saw the real upsurge of the forces which culminated in the Reformation.

Wolfram von Eschenbach was born somewhere around 1170. His work follows upon the pattern of

Chretien de Troyes' Grail stories. He began writing his *Parzival* somewhere around 1197 or 1198, a decade or so after the downfall of the Kingdom of Jerusalem which took place in 1185.

Parzival or Parsifal is much the same character as the Percival of the English legends. Eschenbach, the village of Wolfram's birth, is located in the Duchy of Swabia, on the edge of Bavarian territory, and the poet speaks of "we Bavarians." There are other towns also named *Eschenbach*, but Wolfram describes, for example, Abenberg Castle, which stands east of the town of Eschenbach, near Ansbach. Other details as well pinpoint this particular village as Wolfram's home.

Wolfram appears with Tannhauser in Wagner's opera at the song festival held by Herman of Thuringia at Wartburg Castle, which is in central Germany. Tannhauser is credited by legend with having written the *Nibelungenlied*, suggesting that he was really a devotee of the old religion, which accounts for his attending the secret revels in the forest as told in Wagner's Tannhauser.

Wolfram ascribes the origins of the Grail story to a book found by a certain Kyot in the library at Toledo; which was written in the second century A.D. by one Flegetanis, son of a pagan and a Jew.

Wolfram's *Parsifal* was written, apparently, in the half century accompanying the wars against the South of France, where Manichaeism flourished. Wolfram cannot be called a contemporary of C.R.C. of course, for C.R.C.'s life in tradition begins not earlier than the latter half of this century in which the poem was written. He and Chretien both come a century earlier than C.R.C. But we learn from Wolfram that the true Grail story goes back to early Judeo-Egyptian Christianity, and that the story of the Grail is really written in the stars of heaven.

It is undoubtedly true that the Revival of Learning received a new stimulus in the fall of Constantinople to the Turks in 1453, when scholars arrived in Rome with their Greek and Latin books and their knowledge of Arabic and Greek science. It was Pico della Mirandola who introduced the Kabbala into Italy,

and from him it entered Germany by way of John Reuchlin, who played so great a part in the Reformation. This scholar took the Greek name of Capnion, which is the equivalent of his German name Reuchlin, which means smoke. It was a custom of the times to do this, like the fourfold interpreting of Dante's *Divine Comedy*, or the fourfold interpretation of the scriptures by the kabbalists. So also Gerard, whose name means Amiable, took the name of Desideratus Erasmus; while Schwartzserth—black earth—took the name of Melanchthon and became Luther's right-hand man and authoritative scholar of the German Reformation. Note here that Comenius, the Rosicrucian, led a Reformation in Bohemia a century earlier than Luther's in Germany proper.

Many European noble families show the Cross, Rose, and Star in their emblems; and from among such families came that individual, anonymous to this day, known only under the symbolic name of Christian Rosenkreuz.

### Albertus Magnus

There were Rosicrucians in the Church of Rome itself, and in the Synagogue, too, unknown as such to their fellow religionists. We see

the symbolism in Dante's *Divine Comedy*, as well as in Jean de Mueng's *Romance of the Rose*; and it is not beyond possibility that St. Thomas Aquinas (1226-1274) was a secret member of this group, for it was Aquinas who, adopting the revolutionary thinking of Peter Abelard, showed that Reason might be looked upon as the action of God's Wisdom in the human mind, and that Faith might be reconciled to Reason. In an age of mysticism he could not avoid being a mystic, like all other scientists of the time, and he recognized that when Reason seems to fail in its flight to the Infinite, then the authority of Revelation must be called in; and, as a loyal Roman Catholic, he took that authority to be the Pope, speaking *ex cathedra* from Rome. At least he seemed to do this. It is well known that he studied alchemy and astrology under Albertus Magnus, and that both men had a certain reputation as magicians.

Albertus Magnus was born in 1193, of a noble



Albertus Magnus (Albert the Great)

Oil on canvas (1475), Joos van Gent

family, in the Duchy of Neuburg on the Danube. He entered the Dominican Order. In 1244 Thomas Aquinas became his pupil. The two men, Master and Pupil, are credited with having constructed a brazen robot, which could speak and act as a man-servant. Aquinas later destroyed this robot in a fit of rage, for which his master rebuked him, but they did not bother to create another one. Is this merely an echo of the ancient Greek tale of the brazen man of Telos, or a genuine mechanical man? Albertus Magnus died at Cologne in 1280, aged eighty-seven.

### **Artephius and Alain de Lisle**

Two other alchemists of the thirteenth century, predecessors of C.R.C., were Artephius and Alain de Lisle. Artephius claimed to be more than a thousand years old, and some of his disciples thought he was in fact Apollonius of Tyana reappearing to instruct mankind. Apollonius of Tyana was a contemporary of Jesus of Nazareth, but outlived him, in the first century A.D. De Lisle was born early in the thirteenth century. Like other alchemists, he was supposed to have found the Elixir Vitae, the water of life or immortality. He died in 1298 as a friar at the abbey of Citeaux, aged 110, like Joseph of biblical fame. It is said of him that he wrote a commentary on the prophecies of Merlin.

### **Arnold de Veileneuve**

Definitely contemporary with C.R.C. was Arnold de Veileneuve, born 1245, astrologer and alchemist and accused sorcerer. A very peculiar recipe for the Elixir is attributed to him, which is obviously meant to mislead. Part of the medicine consisted, however, of such innocent things as ointment of the juice or marrow of cassia, and a plaster put over the heart made up of oriental saffron, red rose leaves, sandalwood, aloes, and amber, in oil of roses and white beeswax. To this were added some witches' brews of various sorts which need not be described here.

### **Pietro d'Apone**

Another contemporary of C.R.C. was Pietro

d'Apone, another physician, astrologer, alchemist, and supposed sorcerer. He was accused of keeping seven demons in seven crystal vials, who instructed and aided him in sorcery. Each demon presided over a particular aspect of knowledge: philosophy, alchemy, astrology, medicine, poetry, music, and painting—evidently a reference to the fallen Angels as described in the Book of Enoch, and also reminiscent of the seven planetary genii who preside over the departments of knowledge.

D'Apone spoke openly of his unorthodox views, and on returning to Italy after long residence in Paris and other cities, he was taken by the inquisition, condemned as a heretic and sorcerer, and tortured on the rack. He died in prison, but his bones were afterward dug up and burned in public.

### **Raymond Lull**

Still another contemporary of C.R.C. was Raymond Lull, a follower of the teachings of Geber, the famous alchemist of Damascus. He was born in Majorca in 1235. He travelled to Spain where he had great success at the court of St. James, and eventually became an alchemist. It is claimed that he had great success in making gold out of base metals in England, but actually was paid by King Edward of England for services

performed. His journey to England is put by some as having been taken in 1312, so that it would be Edward II who was his sponsor, rather than Edward I. He went as a missionary to the Moslems and was stoned, as a result of which he died, around 1316.

### **Paracelsus**

Among later representatives of the Rose Cross, Max Heindel mentioned Paracelsus, Comenius, Von Helmont, Jakob Boehme, Francis Bacon, Robert Fludd, William Shakespeare, the Comte de St. Germain, Mesmer, Goethe, and Wagner.

Paracelsus was born at Einsiden, near Zurich, in 1493—the year after Columbus discovered America. His name was Philippus Aureolus Theophrastus Bombastus von Hohenheim. He began to use the name Paracelsus while still in his



**Paracelsus**

*On the sword's pommel is the word "azoth," the Caballa is by his side.*

youth. He was trained in the arts of healing and medicine by his father, who was a physician. He traveled through most of the nations of Europe, and to Egypt and Tartary, studying alchemy and related arts and sciences. He has been called “the first Rosicrucian”; at any rate it was he who started the practice of requiring prescriptions for drugs. His distinguished life ended by murder in 1541, as suggested by the exhumation of his bones, which showed a fracture of the skull.

One of the legends about him was that he kept Spirits imprisoned in the hilt of his sword, and again, that he held the spirit “Azoth,” captive in a jewel, and this spirit obeyed his commands. Old pictures show him holding a jewel in his hand, inscribed with the word “Azoth.” [See picture on preceding page.] The symbology of this is obvious enough. The Azoth stone may have been a sryer’s stone, but in any case it symbolizes the spinal spirit fire with the “jewels” in the human head. “Azoth” represents A and Z, or Alpha and Omega in the Greek, the spiritual sum of all powers represented in the indwelling Christ. Christ Himself is the true Philosopher’s Stone, in a cosmic sense; and each man learns to build his own White Stone, which is the deathless body of the Adept, the Body of the Resurrection.

We may observe also, however, that he might well have had a vial in the handle of his sword which he kept filled with his “Universal Medicine,” the Panacea, which is the supreme medicine of Alchemy.

Jakob Boehme (1575-1624), who, like all of these Rosicrucians, is called a theosophist, had as his emblem a black cross with golden roses.

In England, Robert Fludd produced his Latin cross with its one central rose, standing on a three-stepped pyramid.

The eighteenth century is marked by the rise of Rosicrucianism in connection with Freemasonry. The year 1717 is generally given as the time when Masonry was first thrown open to non-Christians, and in the early nineteenth century the Count St. Germain seems to have had something to do with the Rose Cross Degree (18th degree) of Scottish Rite Masonry. Goethe wrote many poems for the Masons of Germany, but did not take part in their activities to any notable extent, and in fact called



*This Rosicrucian design is from the title page of Robert Fludd's Summum Bonum, The Highest Good, subtitled "True Magic, Cabala, Alchemy, of the True Brothers of the Rose Cross," Frankfort, 1629. Wisdom and Industry are clearly indicated. The seven circles of seven rose petals may well symbolize the seven worlds in the seventh Cosmic Plane of Universal Existence (see Diagram 16, page 178, in The Rosicrucian-Cosmo Conception). The Latin motto translates as "The rose gives the bees honey." The seven roses on the cross of the physical body, when blooming (functional), give the Ego the honey of wisdom gleaned from self-conscious experience in the spirit worlds. The weaving of spiders represents the elaboration of the etheric (soul) body by service.*

Masonry “childish.” However *Die Geheimnisse* (The Mysteries or The Secrets) has Masonic overtones, just as Mozart’s opera *The Magic Flute* is called a Masonic opera. Mozart also composed music especially for Masons. Richard Wagner used certain Masonic ideas in his Parsifal.

### Max Heindel

Not all of these representatives bore the title of “Messenger” of the Rose Cross, although Max Heindel says that several among them were such. He says that Mesmer was sent by the Brothers of the Rose Cross; that both Shakespeare and Francis Bacon were influenced by the same Teacher; but he himself was sent forth publicly as a Messenger because of a particular task he had to perform. He was to establish a school in which scientific spiritual unfoldment was to be taught to “the few” of the Piscean Age. The correlation of Science with Religion was an aim. The work of this School was to establish a spiritual science of initiation,

preparatory to the coming of a new Teacher in the Aquarian Age, when Initiation would be taught to “the many.”

He started the work of The Rosicrucian Fellowship, after taking his first Initiation in Germany in the spring of 1908, with lectures in Columbus, Ohio; Portland, Oregon; Seattle, Washington; and Los Angeles, California. At one of the meetings in Seattle students suggested to Max Heindel that an organization be formed. Thus was born The Rosicrucian Fellowship, in August of 1909, and the new organization then immediately undertook to publish Max Heindel’s book, *The Rosicrucian Cosmo-Conception*. The very first edition of the *Cosmo* bears in the cover the legend “Published by The Rosicrucian Fellowship.” This came off the presses in 1909.

In August 1910, he married his friend of earlier Theosophical days, Miss Augusta Foss, and in 1911 he purchased, as Trustee for The Rosicrucian Fellowship, the hilltop site known as Mt. Ecclesia, in Oceanside, California. There he established the permanent Headquarters for the entire International Organization. He had already created a nucleus of Probationers and Disciples in Seattle.

Now the esoteric work continued at Mt. Ecclesia, with monthly Student Lessons and Letters and monthly Probationer Letters going out regularly. In January of 1919 Max Heindel passed on to higher labors in the spiritual world, and in 1949, after a long and industrious life, August Foss Heindel joined him there.

Today The Rosicrucian Fellowship is still governed by a Board of Trustees (Directors), elected,



*Max Heindel stands, with shovel in hand, after the planting of the black cross on Founder’s Day, October 28, 1911. The composite Rosicrucian emblem as we now know it was determined in the following extraordinary way: “On June 3rd [1913], just a day before the opening of summer school, Max Heindel remarked to his wife that the Teacher had made the wish that Probationers’ meetings should be started at once, and asked her if she could have the emblem ready that night. A carpenter had cut out two crosses. Mrs. Heindel had painted one of them black with a white border on one side and the reverse side white with a black border. But Max Heindel said that what was needed was a pure white cross, together with seven red roses and some white roses. So she painted the extra cross pure white and picked three roses which she had found almost in bloom on one of the rose bushes....Mrs. Heindel placed the white cross upon a golden star which she had painted upon a blue curtain. Mr. Heindel proposed that the white roses be placed in the center of the wreath of red artificial roses, which were brought from Los Angeles...*

*[Nine people] were sitting in a circle at the unveiled emblem. After a short concentration, all of a sudden the three white roses began to move. One slipped down slowly, but, in falling, was caught by a leaf of the second rose. Then this second rose also moved, as if invisible fingers were moving it, until it remained hanging on the stem of a leaf of the last remaining rose. That left the most beautiful one of the white roses in the center of the wreath of red roses on the white cross. The two white roses which were removed did not drop onto the table but remained hanging a few inches down on the lower limb of the cross. The vibrations in the room became so high that some were spellbound. Max Heindel attempted to rise in order to speak but was so overcome that his voice failed him while tears streamed down his cheeks. All those present were assured that the thirteenth Brother, Christian Rosenkreutz, was present in his vital body. After a few words from Max Heindel, all disbanded in silence.”*

since 1956, by the Probationers at large. The work is prospering after many decades of hardship and trials, and students continue to seek the Light of the Rose Cross, with its spiritual illumination of modern scientific thought and its scientific unfoldment of spiritual understanding and powers. □

—Anne Barkhurst