Doğu Yıldızı Örgütü Ritüeli

Doğu Yıldızı Örgütü (Order of the Eastern Star), öncelikle Amerika Birleşik Devletleri'nde, sınırlı ölçüde diğer bazı ülkelerde. kadınlara özgü bir "masonik" kurumdur.



Buna paramasonik (Masonluğa benzer) demeyişimizin gerekçesi, A.B.D.'ndeki masonik örgütlerin büyük çoğunluğunun (belki de %99'unun) salt erkekler için olup, kadınlar için ya da kadın-erkek karışık (karma) nitelikli mason kuruluşlarının ancak tek tük oluşu, buna karşılık salt kadınlar için de 5 dereceli ve tam anlamıyla ezoterik nitelikli bir örgüt oluşturulmuş bulunmasıdır.

Amerika Birleşik Devletleri'nde beyazların ve siyahların masonik örgütleri birbirinden ayrıdır. Bu durum, Doğu Yıldızı Örgütü için de aynen geçerlidir.

Bu örgütün az buz olduğu sanılmasın… Amerika Birleşik Devletleri'ndeki masonların toplam sayısı olsa olsa 1,5 Milyon dolayındadır. Doğu Yıldızı Örgütü üyelerinin sayısı ise bunun üçte biri kadardır. Bir kez de bu nedenle "masonik" olarak nitelendirilmelidir.

Burada bu örgütün sadece ilk derecesinin 1973 tarihli ritüelini vereceğiz; elbette özgün dilde, İngilizce olarak…

Kaynak: https://www.stichtingargus.nl/vrijmetselarij/s/oes_r1973.html

(Kusura bakmayın, bunu Türkçeye çevirmeye girişemedim. Belki bir başka zaman; istenecek olursa…)

Bilinmesi gereken bir diğer nokta var: Doğu Yıldızı Örgütü masonlarca kendi başlarına bırakılmamıştır. Şapitr (Chapter) denilen her locada iki başkan vardır. Biri unvanı "Patron" olan bir masondur; diğeri "Matron" olarak anılan bir hanımdır. Ritüel metinlerinde W.P. kısaltması "Değerli (Worthy) Patron", W.M. "Değerli Matron" anlamındadır.

Opening of the Chapter

When ready for the opening ceremony the Officers, with the exception of the Worthy Patron, the Associate Patron, the Associate Conductress, and the Organist retire to the anteroom. The Associate Patron, the Associate Conductress and the Organist assume their stations.
The Worthy Patron ascends the dais, gives one blow of the gavel, and addresses those in the Chapter room.
W.P.: All who are not members of the Order of the Eastern Star will retire.
W.P.: Sister Associate Conductress.
A.C.: Worthy Patron.
The officers rise and respond whenever addressed, and remain standing until seated by an order from the East.
W.P.: You will invite the Worthy Matron and other Officers to enter the Chapter room.
The Associate Conductress retires and addresses the officers: By order of the Worthy Patron I invite the Worthy Matron, and other officers to enter the Chapter room.
She returns with the officers. As they enter, the Chapter is called up. Music may be furnished as desired during the opening ceremony. The officers enter in two files led by the Conductress and Associate Conductress and take positions as follows:

ASSO. COND *CONDUCTRESS*
TREASURER *SECRETARY*
CHAPLAIN *MARSHAL*
ELECTA *ADAH*
MARTHA *RUTH*
ESTHER *A.M.* *W.M.* *WARDER*

The Chapter is at liberty to elaborate the figures as it may desire, provided, the above position is assumed by the officers at the close of the march; and provided, further, that the line may be formed either inside the chairs or outside, as seems most convenient.
W.P.: Sister Conductress, you will escort the Worthy Matron to the East.
The Conductress turns to the right, marching west and north, turning square corners, approaches the Worthy Matron, who turns to face her. The Conductress bows and offers her right arm to the Worthy Matron She may escort her through the Labyrinth to the East, or she may escort her north and east along the north marching line of the Chapter room, then south to a point in front of the station of the Worthy Matron, depending upon whether the line of officers is formed inside or outside the chairs.
The Conductress bows to the Worthy Matron, and she returns the bow. The Worthy Patron assists the Worthy Matron to the dais and presents to her the gavel. At the same time the Conductress returns directly to her former position at the head of the south line.
W.M.: The Officers will take their respective stations and prepare for the active duties of the Chapter.

Opening Ceremony

The Worthy Matron seats the Chapter.
W.M.: Warder.
War.: Worthy Matron.
W.M.: You will see that the doors to our Chapter are secure and inform the Sentinel that we are about to engage in the ceremony of opening our Chapter and direct to permit no interruption while we are thus engaged.
The Warder closes all other doors and advances to the Sentinel's door.
War.: Sentinel, we are about to engage in the ceremony of opening our Chapter and you are directed to permit no interruption while we are thus engaged.
Sen.: There will be no interruption, Warder.
The Warder closes the door and addresses the Worthy Matron
War.: The doors are secure and there will be no interruption, Worthy Matron.
W.M.: It is well. Sisters, Brothers and Visitors of … Chapter, No. …, the hour has arrived for us to resume our labors.
To open our Chapter in a manner becoming the solemnity of the work and to secure the best results, I require your attention and assistance. Sister Associate Matron.
A.M.: Worthy Matron.
W.M.: You will ascertain if all present are members of the Order.
If the Associate Matron is able of her own knowledge to vouch for all present, she responds at once to the Worthy Matron If she is unable to do so, she addresses the Conductress and the Associate Conductress.
A.M.: Sisters Conductress and Associate Conductress, ascertain and report if all present are members of the Order.
The Conductress and Associate Conductress use the customary means of proving the Chapter, beginning at the east, returning on the south and north, meeting at the west, back of Esther. If a visitor for whom they cannot vouch is present, the following report will be made to the Associate Matron' "Sister Associate Matron, I find a visitor in the south (or north), for whom I cannot vouch"
If the Associate Matron has sat in Chapter with the visitor, she says. "Sister Conductress, I vouch for the Sister or Brother" If she cannot vouch for the visitor she asks: "Is there a member present who can vouch for the visitor?" If the visitor is properly vouched for, the Associate Matron says' "Sister Conductress (or Associate Conductress), the Sister (or Brother) in the south (or north) is vouched for" If there is no one present who can vouch for the visitor, the Associate Matron reports the fact to the Worthy Matron, who immediately appoints an Examining Committee to retire with the visitor to the preparation room. The Worthy Matron requests the Marshal to escort the visitor to meet the Committee at the preparation room door. The visitor and Committee retire and the Marshal returns to her station. The proving of the Chapter continues, as the visitor and Committee do not return until after the Chapter is opened.
The proving is completed and the Associate Conductress reports to the Conductress

Asso. Cond.: Sister Conductress, I find all in the North are members of the Order.
Cond.: Sister Associate Matron, I find all present are members of the Order of the Eastern Star.
The Associate Matron reports to the Worthy Matron
A.M.: Worthy Matron, all present are members of the Order.
W.M.: It is well.
The Conductress and the Associate Conductress return to their stations.
The Worthy Matron, with two blows of the gavel, calls up the officers, who remain standing during the opening ceremony. Adah, Ruth, Esther and Chaplain stand at the right of their respective chairs Martha, Electa, and Marshal stand at the left of their respective chairs.
W.M.: Sister Associate Matron.
A.M.: Worthy Matron.
W.M.: What number of Officers constitutes a Chapter and what titles do they bear?
A.M.: A complete Chapter requires eighteen and their titles are: Worthy Matron, Worthy Patron, Associate Matron, Associate Patron, Secretary, Treasurer, Conductress, Associate Conductress, Chaplain, Marshal, Organist, Adah, Ruth, Esther, Martha, Electa, Warder and Sentinel.
W.M.: Where is the station of the Sentinel?
A.M.: Outside the closed door, Worthy Matron.
W.M.: What is her duty and explain the badge of her office.
A.M.: To protect the Chapter against the intrusion of improper persons. Her badge is the Crossed-Swords within the Star, an emblem of protection, admonishing that upon watchful care depends our security against interruption.
W.M.: Where is the station of the Warder?
A.M.: At the entrance to the Chapter room, Worthy Matron.
W.M.: … Warder.
War.: Worthy Matron.
W.M.: What is your duty and explain the badge of your office.
War.: To act in conjunction with the Sentinel and to permit no one to enter or to leave the Chapter without permission of the presiding officer. My badge is the Dove within the Star, an emblem of peace, admonishing me that I should labor for the peace and harmony of the Chapter.
W.M.: Where is the Station of the Chaplain?
War.: In front of and at the right of the Worthy Matron.
W.M.: … Chaplain.
Chap.: Worthy Matron.
W.M.: What is your duty and explain the badge of your office.
Chap.: To lead the Chapter in its devotions at the Altar, to invoke the blessing of our Heavenly Father upon our work and to perform such other duties as are appropriate to my office. My badge is the open Bible within the Star, an emblem of the Word of God, admonishing me to walk uprightly that my life may be void of offense toward God and man.
W.M.: Where is the station of the Marshal?

Chap.: In front of and at the left of the Worthy Patron.
W.M.: … Marshal.
Mar.: Worthy Matron.
W.M.: What is your duty and explain the badge of your office.
Mar.: To superintend and marshal all processions, to assist in all ceremonies, and to perform such other duties as pertain to my office. My badge is the Crossed-Batons within the Star, an emblem of direction, admonishing me that courtesy and promptness are essential in the performance of my duties.
W.M.: Where is the station of the Organist?
Mar.: At the instrument, Worthy Matron.
W.M.: … Organist.
Org.: Worthy Matron.
W.M.: What is your duty and explain the badge of your office.
Org.: To provide appropriate music that our ceremonies may be as impressive and effective as possible. My badge is the Lyre within the Star, an emblem of music and poetry, admonishing me that by uniting harmony with our ritualistic work the impressions may be more lasting.
W.M.: Where is the station of the Associate Conductress?
Org.: In the North, Worthy Matron.
W.M.: Sister Associate Conductress.
A.C.: Worthy Matron.
W.M.: What is your duty and explain the badge of your office.
A.C.: To receive and to prepare candidates for the ceremony of initiation and to assist the Conductress in the active duties of the Chapter. My badge is the Baton within the Star, an emblem of leadership, admonishing me that good discipline is essential to the success of our Order.
W.M.: Where is the station of the Conductress?
A.C.: In the South, Worthy Matron.
W.M.: Sister Conductress.
Cond.: Worthy Matron.
W.M.: What is your duty and explain the badge of your office.
Cond.: To assist the Associate Matron, to attend at the Altar, to conduct candidates through the ceremony of initiation, to present, introduce and escort members and visitors, and to obey your instructions. My badge is the Scroll and Baton within the Star, an emblem of prepared plans and their fulfillment, admonishing me that it depends greatly upon the manner of conducting candidates through the ceremony of initiation if we are to make the first impressions permanent and as we desire they should be.
W.M.: Where is the station of the Treasurer?
Cond.: In the North-east, Worthy Matron.
W.M.: … Treasurer.
Treas.: Worthy Matron.
W.M.: What is your duty and explain the badge of your office.

Treas.: To receive all money from the Secretary, giving my receipt therefor, and to pay it out upon proper authority. My badge is the Crossed-Keys within the Star, an emblem of security, admonishing me to the strictest fidelity in the performance of my important duty, that the Chapter may not be embarrassed in its efforts to relieve the distressed and to meet its necessary expenses.

W.M.: Where is the station of the Secretary?

Treas.: In the South-east, Worthy Matron.

W.M.: … Secretary.

Secy.: Worthy Matron.

W.M.: What is your duty and explain the badge of your office.

Secy.: To make proper record of the proceedings of the Chapter and to conduct its correspondence, to receive all money belonging to the Chapter and to pay it to the Treasurer, taking her receipt therefor. My badge is the Crossed-Pens within the Star, an emblem of intelligence, admonishing me to be faithful to my trust that the good deeds of my companions may not go unrecorded.

W.M.: Where is the station of Adah?

Secy.: At the first point of the Star, Worthy Matron.

W.M.: Sister Adah.

Adah: Worthy Matron.

W.M.: What is your duty and explain the badge of your office.

Adah: To make known to all proper inquirers the light, knowledge, and beauty of the Blue ray, which represents the sky when all clouds have vanished and symbolizes Fidelity. My badge is the Sword and Veil within the Triangle, an emblem of the heroic conduct of Jephthah's Daughter.

W.M.: Have you a sign?

Adah: I have; it is given as though: *Taking the veil in the hands at the lower corners, raising it as high as the forehead, dropping and raising it as before and then dropping and raising it again, as before; then throwing it over the head to the back of the neck, holding the ends firmly in the hands* representing the refusal of Jephthah's daughter to have her face covered when she is about to be executed.

W.M.: Sisters and Brothers, on seeing this sign given, how should you respond?

The members respond with the Pass of Adah: Alas, my daughter.

Signs are held until Passes have been given.

W.M.: Where is the station of Ruth?

Adah: At the second point of the Star, Worthy Matron.

W.M.: Sister Ruth.

Ruth: Worthy Matron.

W.M.: What is your duty and explain the badge of your office.

Ruth: To make known to all proper inquirers the light, knowledge, and beauty of the Yellow ray, whose golden hue symbolizes Constancy. My badge is the Sheaf within the Triangle, an emblem of plenty, which represents the reward of patient industry gained by the humble gleaner, Ruth.

W.M.: Have you a sign?
Ruth: I have; it is given by *Letting the hands hang perpendicularly at the sides, then raising them and holding them out horizontally forward, the elbows pressing against the sides of the body, as if showing the barley straws. Then bringing the hands nearly side by side on the breast a little way under the chin, letting the heads of barley fall over the shoulders and finally casting the eyes upward,* representing Ruth, holding out two handfuls of Barley to Boaz, and appealing mutely to God.
W.M.: Sisters and Brothers, on seeing this sign given how should you respond?
The members respond with the Pass of Ruth: Who is this?
W.M.: Where is the station of Esther?
Ruth: At the third point of the Star, Worthy Matron.
W.M.: Sister Esther.
Esther: Worthy Matron.
W.M.: What is your duty and explain the badge of your office.
Esther: To make known to all proper inquirers the light, knowledge and beauty of the White ray, which symbolizes Light, Purity, and Joy. My badge is the Crown and Scepter within the Triangle, an emblem of royalty and power. In the exercise of authority we should be governed by justice and unselfish loyalty to the welfare of others. It was by the practice of these virtues that Esther was able to save her people from extermination.
W.M.: Have you a sign?
Esther: I have; it is given with *Raising the right hand. the palm downward. a little over the head. as if touching a crown there, then throwing the hand forward, as if touching a scepter held by the person opposite; keeping the hand level with the eyes and finally carrying the hand to the left breast,* representing Queen Esther's appearance before King Ahasuertts as explained in the history of the degree.
W.M.: Sisters and Brothers, on seeing this sign given, how should you respond?
The members respond with the Pass of Esther: What wilt thou?
W.M.: Where is the station of Martha?
Esther: At the fourth point of the Star, Worthy Matron.
W.M.: Sister Martha.
Martha: Worthy Matron.
W.M.: What is your duty and explain the badge of your office.
Martha: To make known to all proper inquirers the light, knowledge, and beauty of the Green ray, an emblem of nature's life and beauty, symbolizing Hope and Immortality. My badge is the Broken Column within the Triangle, an emblem of the death of a person cut off in the vigor of life, and should remind us of the sisterly grief of Martha.
W.M.: Have you a sign?
Martha: I have; it is given by *Joining the hands together at the tips of the thumbs and fingers, forming the figure of a triangle, then raising the triangle thus formed directly above the eyes and finally raising the eyes. looking through the triangle,* representing Martha appealing to Christ, after the death of her brother Lazarus.
W.M.: Sisters and Brothers, on seeing this sign given how should you respond?

The members respond with the Pass of Martha: Believest thou this?
W.M.: Where is the station of Electa?
Martha: At the fifth point of the Star, Worthy Matron.
W.M.: Sister Electa.
Electa: Worthy Matron.
W.M.: What is your duty and explain the badge of your office.
Electa: To make known to all proper inquirers the light, knowledge, and beauty of the Red ray, a symbol of that Fervency which should actuate all who are engaged in the service of truth as exemplified in the life of Electa. My badge is the Cup within the Triangle, an emblem of charity and hospitality, and reminds us that however bitter may be the cup which our Heavenly Father gives us, it will in the end overflow with blessings, rich, abounding, and eternal.
W.M.: Have you a sign?
Electa: I have; it is given by *Crossing the arms over the breast, the left arm over the right, the ends of the fingers on the shoulders, then casting the eyes upward,* representing Electa clasping the crucifix to her bosom. depicting her love for the Savior.
W.M.: Sisters and Brothers, on seeing this sign given how should you respond?
The members respond with the Pass of Electa: Love one another.
W.M.: It is well; and when a member of the Order hails us with any one of these signs we will recall the merits of the heroine whose sign is given and respond with proper attention.
W.M.: Where is the station of the Associate Patron?
Electa: At the left of the Associate Matron, Worthy Matron.
W.M.: Brother Associate Patron.
A.P.: Worthy Matron.
W.M.: What is your duty and explain the badge of your office.
A.P.: To perform all the duties of the Worthy Patron in the absence of that officer and to render him whatever assistance may be required in the performance of his duties. My badge is the Star within the Star, an emblem of Divine Guidance.
W.M.: Where is the station of the Associate Matron?
A.P.: In the West, Worthy Matron.
W.M.: Sister Associate Matron.
A.M.: Worthy Matron.
W.M.: What is your duty and explain the badge of your office.
A.M.: To assist the Worthy Matron and to preside over the Chapter during her absence. My badge is the effulgent Sun within the Star, an emblem of light, admonishing me that the principles of our Order should shine with undiminished lustre through our lives.
W.M.: Where is the station of the Worthy Patron?
A.M.: At your Left, Worthy Matron.
W.M.: What is his duty and explain the badge of his office.

A.M.: To preside during the conferring of the degrees and at other times when requested to do so by the Worthy Matron, to act as her advisor, to see that the officers are proficient in their work, and to exercise a general supervision over the affairs of the Chapter. His badge is the Square and Compasses within the Star, an emblem of his relationship to the Masonic Fraternity and to the Order of the Eastern Star.
W.M.: Where is the station of the Worthy Matron?
A.M.: In the East, Worthy Matron.
W.M.: What is her duty and explain the badge of her office.
A.M.: To preside at the meetings of the Chapter, to see that its business is properly conducted, and to secure obedience to the Laws and Regulations of the Order. Her badge is the Gavel within the Star, an emblem of authority, admonishing her that the government of this Chapter and its prosperity depend greatly upon her judgment and discretion. Her responsibilities to God for the faithful performance of her duties should ever prompt her to do her work in the spirit of faith and prayer.
W.M.: It is in that spirit that I desire to open this Chapter and to perform whatever duties may devolve upon me.
W.M.: Sister Conductress, you will attend at the Altar.
The worthy Matron calls up the Chapter. Officers, with the exception of the Conductress and the Chaplain, remain in their stations during the ceremony.
The Conductress approaches the Altar between Ruth and Esther, makes a slight bow to the Worthy Matron, opens the Bible and gives the Salutation Sign to the open Bible. She steps back into the circle of Star officers between Ruth and Esther and faces the Altar.
W.M.: That we may have the needed grace to do our work well, let us unite in prayer.
Soft music may be played during the march to the Altar. The Chaplain approaching the Altar between Martha and Esther, should kneel and offers the following prayer.

Prayer

Bless, O Lord, we beseech Thee, our humble labors in the promotion of truth and love, unity and peace. Dispel whatever spirit of discord may here arise. Enrich our hearts with that most excellent gift of charity, so that our acts may be full of the spirit of kindness and forbearance one toward another.
Give us strength to continue in every good work and faith to believe that we shall leap if we faint not, and at last may we enjoy the blessedness which Thou hast prepared for those that love Thee. Amen.
The response is given by all the members
Response: So may it ever be.
The Chaplain steps back into the circle of Star officers between Esther and Martha and faces the Altar.
When the Chaplain is in position, all members face the East
W.M.: Let us unite in singing our Opening Ode.

SINGING
W.M.: I now declare … Chapter, No. …, Order of the Eastern Star, duly opened for the transaction of business.
The Worthy Matron strikes one blow of the gavel on the word business
W.M.: Warder, you will so inform the Sentinel.
*The warder in due order ** ** * * opens the door.*
War.: … Sentinel, … Chapter No…., Order of the Eastern Star, is duly opened for the transaction of business.
The Warder closes the door.
War.: Worthy Matron, your order has been obeyed.
The Conductress and the Chaplain return to their stations.

Presentation of Flag
If the Flag of the Country is presented, it should be presented at this time and should be placed in the East, at the right of the presiding officer.
The Worthy Matron seats the Chapter.

Initiation Ceremony

The Initiation Ceremony is the same for men as for women and both may receive the degrees at the same time. The Officers should carefully change the words, adapting them to the initiation of a woman or a man or women and men, as circumstances require Music, vocal or instrumental, and a brief ceremony / may be introduced during the time the Associate Conductress is giving her lecture outside the door. If flowers or ribbons are to be used these should be placed at the Marshal's station before the ceremony begins Star point officers may use gestures when giving their lectures, if desired, limited however to gestures included in their respective signs. Special lighting effects, an electric signet, and ceiling lights are permissible. The room lights, when necessary, may be lowered to display these.
W.M.: Sister Associate Conductress.
A.C.: Worthy Matron.
W.M.: You will retire and ascertain if there are candidates in waiting to receive the degrees.
The Associate Conductress advances to a position in front of the Associate Matron and the Associate Patron, facet the East, gives the Salutation Sign, and (the Warder having given the usual raps and opened the door) retires.
Ascertaining the name of the candidate the Associate Conductress (the warder having reported the alarm to the Worthy Matron and upon her order answered the raps and opened the door to admit the Associate Conductress) advances to a position in front of the Associate Matron and the Associate Patron, and gives the Salutation Sign
A.C.: Worthy Matron, I find in waiting … who is desirous of being initiated into our Order.
W.M.: Secretary.
Secy.: Worthy Matron.
W.M.: Has this candidate been elected to receive the degrees of the Order?

Secy: She has, Worthy Matron.

W.M.: Sister Associate Conductress, you will retire and prepare the candidate for the ceremony of initiation.

The Associate Conductress gives the Salutation Sign and, after the Worthy Matron responds, retires as before. The Associate Conductress informs the candidate that hats and gloves must not be worn in the Chapter room while the Chapter is in session. She then escorts her to the preparation room.

A.C.: My friend, you are doubtless a seeker after light, or you would not have applied for membership in an organization which has for its inspiration the Star in the East.

You, like the three Wise Men, have been led by that light. Life is a labyrinth through which we would wander blindly were it not for an All Seeing Eye that watches over us and an All Powerful Hand that guides us on our way. This Order is founded on a belief in the existence of a Supreme Being that rules the Universe for good, and no one can become a member of the Order who does not hold this belief.

Therefore, before I can guide you to the Chapter room, you must give me a brief and truthful answer to the following question: Do you believe in the existence of a Supreme Being?

The candidate answers.

Without this assurance from you, our ceremony would be but empty words and meaningless forms and even our binding obligation would lose its force but, with this assurance, I welcome you and we may safely ask to be admitted.

When you have entered our portals, listen closely to all that you hear for your initiation is a symbol of the road of life. The lessons which you receive are given to assist you in building your own individual character.

Fear not, your faith in God is the key that unlocks our door to you. Trust your guide and she will lead you safely through.

*The Associate Conductress gives five raps upon the door, ** ** **

Cond.: Worthy Matron, there is an alarm at the door of the preparation room.

W.M.: Sister Conductress, you will ascertain the cause of the alarm.

The Conductress goes to the door, answers the alarm and opens the door.

Cond.: Who knocks at the door of our Chapter?

A.C.: The Associate Conductress with a candidate who desires to be initiated into our Order.

Cond.: Is she properly prepared?

A.C.: She is.

Cond.: Sister Associate Conductress, you will wait until further orders are received from the Worthy Matron.

The Conductress closes the door, advances to a position in front of the Associate Matron and Associate Patron, and faces the East

Cond.: Worthy Matron, the alarm was caused by the Associate Conductress with a candidate who desires to receive the degrees of our Order.

W.M.: Is the candidate properly prepared?

Cond.: She is.

W.M.: You will admit them.

The Conductress returns to the door and opens it wide.

Cond.: It is the order of the Worthy Matron that you be admitted to our Chapter.

The lights may be dimmed before the door is opened to admit the candidate, turning them on full after the Obligation

The Conductress offers her left arm to the candidate. If there are two, the Associate Conductress offers her right arm to the other candidate If there are more than two, they form couples between the Conductress and the Associate Conductress and their candidates. The Associate Conductress assists when needed to form couples and at other times when the number of candidates makes her assistance desirable.

The candidate is led inside the door and caused to face the North. The Associate Conductress closes the preparation room door and returns to the line. The Conductress then steps in front of the candidate (or candidates) and gives her lecture.

Cond.: You have doubtless well considered the step you have taken in seeking admission to this Order, dedicated to Charity, Truth, and Loving-kindness. You came here of your own free choice. Complain not, therefore, at any trial. A seal is here set upon your lips.

Let it warn you to be ever silent and secret as to all that is made known to you here. Be not weary in well-doing. Woe unto those who seek to take upon themselves burdens which they cannot bear. Woe unto the faithless and insincere who assume obligations lightly and forthwith forget them. "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths."

This time the Conductress offers her right arm to the candidate. If there are two, the Associate Conductress offers her left arm to the other candidate. If there are more than two, they form couples as before.

In movements about the Chapter room, officers and members observe square corners unless directed otherwise.

The Conductress marches east along the north marching line to a point beyond Electa's station, turns right and marches south to the south marching line, turns right and marches west to a point beyond Esther's station, turns right and marches to the north marching line, turns left and marches west two steps, turns left and marches south to a point beyond the Associate Matron's station, turns right to form a line facing the Associate Matron and the Associate Patron. The line when formed should center on the Associate Matron.

If there is only one candidate, the Conductress may turn left at Esther's chair to a position in front of the Associate Matron.

During the march there may be vocal or instrumental music. The Worthy Patron or the Associate Patron, may recite the following verses of Scripture.

W.P.: "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal."

"Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not"

"Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth"

"And now abideth Caith, hope and charity, but the greatest of these is charity"

Having arrived at the West, the candidate is introduced to the Associate Matron.

Cond.: Sister Associate Matron.

A.M.: Sister Conductress.
Cond.: I have the honor of introducing …, who will be presented by you to the Worthy Matron.
A.M.: My friend, you are heartily welcome and I sincerely hope that your coming into our Order will afford us mutual benefit and happiness.
Sister Conductress, you will cause the candidate to face the East.
The Conductress with the candidate, turns left and marches to the south marching line, turns left and marches east two steps, turns left and marches north to a point beyond Esther's station, turns right to face the East for introduction The line when formed should center on Esther's station.
A.M.: Worthy Matron, I have the honor to present whose petition has been approved by this Chapter and who now desires to be initiated into our Order.
The Worthy Matron rises and addresses the candidate.
W.M.: It is with pleasure that I welcome you into this Chapter. Your relationship to members of the Masonic Fraternity and the recommendations presented in your behalf assure us that you merit the honor we confer and are worthy of the important trust with which we are about to invest you. The Order of the Eastern Star exists for the purpose of giving practical effect to one of the beneficent purposes of Freemasonry, which is to provide for the welfare of the wives, daughters, mothers, widows, and sisters of Master Masons.
Here we may share with our Masonic brothers in promulgating the principles of Brotherly Love, Relief, and Truth.
Here we may aid, comfort, and protect each other in our journey through the labyrinth of human life and, by cheerful companionship and social enjoyments, lighten the burdens of active duty.
By means of secret signs and other work of the Order, we are able to make ourselves known to each other wherever we may meet.
We are governed by the Laws and Regulations of the Grand Chapter and by a code of By-laws framed by ourselves. These we are bound to obey so long as we remain members of the Order, and in this obedience we shall expect you to share.
The Worthy Matron addresses the Worthy Patron: Worthy Patron, it is with pleasure that I introduce to you this candidate, who is prepared to assume the Obligation of the Order.
I, therefore, invite you to preside.
The Worthy Patron takes the gavel, places it on the pedestal, and addresses the candidate.
W.P.: The Obligation you are about to take is a solemn pledge which you must give to this Chapter before you can participate in the privileges of our Order. By it you bind yourself to the most solemn secrecy respecting the work of the Order and to the performance of those acts of kindness and forbearance, which are essential to our welfare and prosperity.
With this knowledge of its requirements, are you willing to proceed?
Cand.: I am.
W.P.: Sister Conductress, you will cause the candidate to be in proper position at the Altar to receive the Obligation.

During the march there may be vocal or instrumental music
When the Conductress reaches the Altar she causes the candidate to kneel and places the Bible in her hands. The Conductress gives the instruction audibly, using paragraph (1) of The Secret Work.
When there are two or more candidates the Associate Conductress exemplifies the proper position of the hands and assists in placing the Bibles in the candidates' hands.
Cond.: Worthy Patron, the candidate is in proper position.
The Worthy Patron calls up the Chapter and takes his position on the east side of the Altar and causes the candidate to repeat after him the obligation of the Order.
Obligation
I, …, hereby pledge the sacred honor of a woman (or a Master Mason) to the faithful performance of the conditions of the following obligation: I will keep and protect the absolute secrecy to which I now agree, promising never to reveal unlawfully any of the ceremonies, signs or passes of the Order of the Eastern Star.
I will not be present nor assist in giving these degrees to any man not vouched for as being a Master Mason, nor any woman not vouched for as being of a Christian disposition, regardless of race or creed. The common bond among members being a fundamental faith in the Fatherhood of God, and the Brotherhood of Man.
I will obey the Constitution and laws and regulations of the Supreme Grand Chapter, the Grand Chapter, and the By-Laws of the Subordinate Chapter of which I may be a member.
I will help any Brother or Sister of these degrees who is in need (if they apply to me as such and are found worthy), as far as their needs may require and my ability permit.
Furthermore, I will not speak disrespectfully of a worthy Brother or Sister of these degrees, but will give them due and timely notice of their default that they may ward off approaching danger. In the presence of Almighty God, and before these witnesses, I do make this solemn pledge.
The Conductress takes the Bible from the Candidate, and ask the Candidate to kiss it.
Soft music may be played during the Obligation.
W.P.: Arise, my sister, we accept the pledge you have given and share with you in this solemn Obligation.
The Conductress takes the Bible from the sister (or brother). If there are two, or more, the Associate Conductress assists in taking the Bibles from the new members.
When the Worthy Patron says "Arise my sister," or "Arise my brother," he extends his right hand and assists each sister and brother to arise, being careful not to reach across the open Bible, but stepping around the side of the Altar as maybe necessary.
The lights are turned up at this time.
W.P.: You are now received into our Order and will be conducted to the several points of the Star where you will receive instruction in those sublime virtues exemplified in the lives of Adah, Ruth, Esther, Martha, and Electa, the heroines of our Order.
The Worthy Patron returns to the East and seats the Chapter.

The Conductress with the sister leaves the Labyrinth keeping the Altar on the right, passes out of the Labyrinth between Electa and Adah, leaving Adah on the right, and continues around the outside of the Star to Adah for instruction.

During the march there may be vocal or instrumental music. The Worthy Patron or the Associate Patron may recite the following Scripture

W.P.: "Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding."

"She is more precious than rubies and all the things thou canst desire are not to be compared unto her."

"Her ways are ways of pleasantness and all her paths are peace

Cond.: Sister Adah.

Adah rises and takes her position at the right of her chair. After each lecture the Star Officer remains standing until the Conductress and the sister have passed her, then is seated.

Adah: Sister Conductress.

Cond.: I present this Sister … who, having assumed our Obligation, will receive from you such lessons respecting fidelity to convictions of right and duty, as may properly be drawn from the history of Jephthah's daughter.

Adah: Jephthah was the ninth judge and one of the mightiest men in Israel. Being called upon, in the extremity of his country's trials, to go at the head of its armies, he prepared his household for a campaign that would perhaps cost him his life; and then "Jephthah vowed a vow unto the Lord and said, 'If Thou shalt deliver the children of Ammon into mine hands, then it shall be, that whatsoever cometh forth of the doors of my house to meet me, when I return in peace shall surely be the Lord's and I will offer it up for a burnt offering.'"

Jephthah went forth to battle, the victory was gained, and the victorious warrior returned to Mizpeh. The door of his house opened and, "behold! his daughter came out to meet him with timbrels and with dances, and she was his only child."

Jephthah, when he saw her, rent his clothes and, in the anguish of his heart, cried aloud, "Alas, my daughter! thou hast brought me very low, for I have opened my mouth unto the Lord and I cannot go back." Adah replied, "My father, if thou hast opened thy mouth unto the Lord, do to me according to that which hath proceeded out of thy mouth."

She asked that she might go among the mountains for two months and there prepare her mind for the solemn surrender of her life to preserve her father's honor.

When the two months had expired she was seen, followed by her friends, wending her way down the mountain's side to the altar where her father, with an almost broken heart, was prepared to fulfill his vow.

She approached her father with a kiss of affection and bade him farewell. Taking hold of the veil she wore, he threw it over her face and drew his sword. But she unveiled herself and said she need not have her face covered for she was not afraid to die. Her father replied that he could not strike the blow while she looked upon him and again cast it over her. She threw it off the second time and said she would look upward that his arm might not be unnerved by her gaze.

A third time, however, he insisted and the third time she as resolutely cast it off; this time, holding the ends of it firmly in her hands and casting her eyes upward, she invited the fatal blow. Thus was consummated a deed which has rendered the name of Jephthah's Daughter famous in the annals of Scripture.

The sign of this degree is given as though — Taking the veil in the hands at the lower corners, raising it as high as the forehead, dropping and raising it as before and then dropping and raising it again, as before; then throwing it over the head to the back of the neck, holding the ends firmly in the hands, representing the refusal of Jephthah's daughter to have her face covered when she is about to be executed.

The pass is: 'Alas, my daughter'.

The color appropriate to this degree is blue, which symbolizes Fidelity and teaches us to be faithful to all moral obligations.

The emblem is the Sword and Veil united.

By the sword Adah was slain. The veil alludes to her determination to die in the light, suffering no stain to rest upon her memory.

Sister Conductress, you will present this Sister at the second point of the Star for further instruction.

The sister is conducted around Adah's chair, leaving the chair to the right, then across the Star, leaving the Altar to the left, around Martha's chair, passing to Ruth for instruction After each lecture, the Labyrinth is followed in a similar manner, always leaving the chairs to the right and the Altar to the left From Ruth around Electa to Esther. from Esther around Adah to Martha, from Martha around Ruth to Electa, from Electa around Esther and, around the outside of the Labyrinth of the Star to the Worthy Patron.

During the march there may be vocal or instrumental music The Worthy Patron or the Associate Patron may recite the following verses of Scripture.

W.P.: 'And Jephthah came to Mupeh unto his house, and behold, his daughter came out to meet him with timbrels and with dances: and she was his only child, beside her he had neither son nor daughter."

"And it came to pass, when he saw her, that he rent his clothes, and said, Alas, my daughter' thou hast brought me very low, and thou art one of them that trouble me, for I have opened my mouth unto the Lord, and I cannot go back."

Cond.: Sister Ruth.

Ruth rises and takes her position at the right of her chair.

Ruth: Sister Conductress.

Cond.: I present this Sister to be instructed in the duty of obedience to the demands of honor and justice in all conditions of life, as illustrated in the history of Ruth.

Ruth: About eleven hundred years before the Christian era, Elimelech and his wife Naomi, with their two sons, were driven by famine from Bethlehem to the land of Moab. The sons married women of Moab, named Ruth and Orpah. After a few years Elimelech and his sons died, leaving Naomi, Ruth and Orpah in mourning. Naomi, aged and dependent, resolved to return to the land of her nativity. She urged Ruth and Orpah to remain with their kindred and friends rather than follow her in poverty to a land of strangers.

But Ruth believed it to be her duty to remain with Naomi and assist in her maintenance, saying: "Entreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee; for whither thou goest, I will go and where thou lodgest I will lodge; thy people shall be my people and thy God my God."

They arrived in Bethlehem, destitute, weary and worn, and Ruth was compelled to seek through menial labor the means of support for herself and the aged Naomi. Faithful to the duties which adverse fortune had thrown upon her, she became a gleaner in the fields of Boaz, who said to his servant that was set over his reapers: "Whose damsel is this?"

Upon being informed of her history, her devotion to Naomi and present circumstances, he advanced to where she was resting and addressed her kindly with words of encouragement. Ruth raised her hands to show him how small were her gleanings and that she had not taken from the sheaves, placed them meekly upon her breast as proof of her willingness to submit to whatever lot she might be called upon to endure, and cast her eyes upward as appealing to God.

Boaz ordered his reapers to drop handfuls of barley that she might gather a supply and invited her to eat and drink of the provisions which he had provided. Ruth was encouraged and at evening returned, laden with the fruits of her toil, to gladden the heart of Naomi.

My Sister, be faithful to the duties of your station, ever leaching that honor and justice which Ruth portrayed in the touching and beautiful incidents of her life.

The sign of this degree is given by letting the hands hang perpendicularly at the sides, then raising them and holding them out horizontally forward, the elbows pressing against the sides of the body, as if showing the barley straws. Then bringing the hands nearly side by side on the breast a little way under the chin, letting the heads of barley fall over the shoulders and finally casting the eyes upward, representing Ruth, holding out two handfuls of Barley to Boaz, and appealing mutely to God.

The pass is 'Who is this?'

The color appropriate to this degree is yellow. Its golden hue symbolizes Constancy and teaches faithful obedience to the demands of honor and justice.

The Sheaf is an emblem of plenty and from its collection of minute parts teaches that by patient industry, gathering here a little and there a little, we may provide for the infirmities of age.

Sister Conductress, you will present this Sister at the third point of the Star for further instruction.

The sister is conducted around Ruth's chair, leaving the chair to the right, then across the Star, leaving the Altar to the left, around Electa's chair to Esther for instruction.

During the march there may be vocal or instrumental music. The Worthy Patron or the Associate Patron may recite the following verses of Scripture

W.P.: "And behold, Boaz came from Bethlehem, and said unto the reapers, The Lord be with you. And they answered him, The Lord bless thee"

Then said Boaz unto his servant that was set over the reapers, Whose damsel is this"'

And the servant, that was set over the reapers, answered and said, it is the Moabitish damsel that came back with Naomi out of the country of Moab.

Cond.: Sister Esther.

Esther rises and takes her position at the right of her chair.

Esther: Sister Conductress.

Cond.: I present this Sister to be instructed in the commendable virtue of fidelity to kindred and friends, as exemplified in the history of Esther.

Esther: Esther was a Jewish damsel living about five hundred years before the Christian era. The Jews were then held in captivity within the Persian empire. After the divorce of Queen Vashti, the king caused search to be made throughout the empire for the most beautiful woman to be her successor. The choice fell upon Esther who, amid national rejoicing and royal magnificence, became the queen of Persia.

The knowledge of her descent from the captive race was carefully concealed from the king and his court. In due time the enemies of the Jews, being powerful and numerous, persuaded the king to issue a royal edict commanding that on a given day the entire Hebrew race should be destroyed.

Queen Esther, when informed of the cruel edict, resolved to risk the loss of royal favor and life itself to save her people from death. It was a law of the palace that no one, not even the queen, should enter the king's presence unsummoned, under penalty of death, unless the king should extend the golden scepter as a signal of pardon.

Esther, attired in her queenly apparel, with heroic purpose sought the presence of the king. It was the day of the grand council of governors, princes and officers of Persia. The royal guards held all avenues of approach to the council chamber. The king sat upon his throne of gold and ivory, surrounded by the highest officials of his empire. The queen approached. The guards and palace officials were stricken with terror at the unbidden advance of the queen. The king's countenance flushed with anger when he beheld her intrusion.

Queen Esther, fixing her eyes, now eloquent with her soul's heroic purpose, upon the king, firmly advanced to the foot of the throne, at once reminding him of his former pledges by touching her crown and robe in which he had desired her to appear when claiming his promise. She secured pardon by laying her hand upon the golden scepter which he extended to her saying, "What wilt thou, Queen Esther, and what is thy request? It shall be even given thee to the half of the kingdom." Esther's perilous adventure was successful.

The king relented from his cruel purpose and spared the chosen people.

The sign of this degree is given by raising the right hand. the palm downward. a little over the head. as if touching a crown there, then throwing the hand forward, as if touching a scepter held by the person opposite; keeping the hand level with the eyes and finally carrying the hand to the left breast, representing Queen Esther's appearance before King Ahasuertts as explained in the history of the degree.

The pass is 'What wilt thou?'

The color appropriate to this degree is white, a symbol of Light, Purity, and Joy which teaches us that a pure and upright life is above the tongue of reproach.

The Crown and Scepter united is an emblem of royalty and power.

Sister Conductress, you will present this Sister at the fourth point of the Star for further instruction.

The sister is conducted around Esther's chair, leaving the chair to the right, across the Star, leaving the Altar to the left, around Adah's chair, across the Star, around Martha's chair to Martha for instruction.

During the march there may be vocal or instrumental music. The worthy Patron or the Associate Patron may recite the following verses of Scripture:

W.P.: "And it was so, when the king saw Esther the queen standing in the court, that she obtained favor in his sight and the king held out to Esther the golden scepter that was in his hand So Esther drew near, and touched the lop of the scepter.

"Then said the king unto her, what wilt thou, Queen Esther? and what is thy request? it shall be even given thee to the half of the kingdom.

Cond.: Sister Martha.

Martha rises and takes her position at the left of her chair.

Martha: Sister Conductress.

Cond.: I present this Sister to be instructed in the sublime virtues of a trustful faith in the hour of trial and the hope of immortal life, as illustrated in the history of Martha.

Martha: The history of Martha is that of a young woman oppressed with grief at the loss of an only brother.

The family, consisting of Martha and Mary and their brother Lazarus, were residents of Bethany. They were known among the people of the country as followers of Christ. During the absence of Jesus, Lazarus was taken ill and in a short time died. At the close of the fourth day intelligence reached them that Jesus was returning to Bethany. Martha hastened to meet Him, raising her hands imploringly toward His face, and looking upward with suppressed emotion, cried aloud: "Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died. But I know that even now, whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee."

"Jesus saith unto her, thy brother shall rise again."

"Martha saith unto him, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day."

"Jesus saith unto her, I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?" Here is the record of her unfaltering trust; here the record of her hope, inspired by the teachings of Jesus, that beyond the grave, the loved ones gone before are waiting to welcome us to our eternal home.

In the measureless realm of time how brief is our earthly life; yet how momentous and eternal its issues! Life's experiences, coming thick and fast, are the soul's appointed means of growth.

Today we build our castles, tomorrow fickle fortune snatches from hope the promised joy. Today prosperity or the presence of loved ones fills our cup with joy, tomorrow adversity or sore bereavement casts us into the valley of sorrow.

My Sister, may you have the trustful faith of Martha. It will lighten the burden of sorrow and incline you to the voice of duty.

The sign of this degree is given by joining the hands together at the tips of the thumbs and fingers, forming the figure of a triangle, then raising the triangle thus formed directly above the eyes and finally raising the eyes. looking through the triangle, representing Martha appealing to Christ, after the death of her brother Lazarus.
The pass is 'Believest thou this?'
The color appropriate to this degree is green, an emblem of nature's life and beauty and a symbol of Martha's trustful Faith and Hope of Immortality.
The Broken Column is an expressive emblem of the uncertainty of human life.
Sister Conductress, you will present this Sister at the fifth point of the Star for further instruction.
The sister is conducted across the Star, leaving the Altar to the left, around Ruth's chair, across the Star, around Electa's chair to Electa for instruction.
During the march there may be vocal or instrumental music. The Worthy Patron or the Associate Patron may recite the following verses of Scripture.
W.P.: "Then said Martha unto Jesus, Lord, if thou hadst been here my brother had not died."
"But I know, that even now, whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee"
"Jesus saith unto her, Thy brother shall rise again
"Martha saith into Him, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day"
"Jesus saith unto her, I am the resurrection and the life he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die."
Cond.: Sister Electa.
Electa rises and takes her position at the left of her chair.
Electa: Sister Conductress.
Cond.: I present this Sister to be instructed in the commendable virtue of heroic endurance of the wrongs of persecution, when demanded in defense of Truth, as illustrated in the lesson of Electa.
Electa: The second epistle of John is addressed to "the elect lady and her children."
Tradition delineates her as a lady who lived in the days of St. John the Evangelist. Her charity, benevolence, and generous hospitality to the poor entitled her to great distinction. Having been reared a Pagan and afterwards becoming a convert to the Christian religion, she was subjected to severe trials and the most bitter persecution. An edict was issued by the Roman Emperor that all followers of the Christ should renounce their faith under penalty of death. She was visited by a band of soldiers, one of whom handed her the cross with the command that she trample it under foot.
Electa, looking him steadily in the face, received the cross—precious emblem of her Saviour's death—pressed it with ardor to her bosom, and cast her eyes upward as a testimony of her love and loyalty to her Christian faith. As Electa, I represent this historical heroine and commend to you the sublime virtue she exemplified through her life, "that we love one another." You may not be called upon to suffer in the same degree from the hand of persecution, but there is always need of loyalty to Truth, and alas, there is too often persecution.

My Sister, be loyal to your convictions of truth and murmur not at another's loyalty. Let truth be spoken and let it shine through your life. If persecution comes, bear it with heroic endurance and despair not of the final triumph of Truth.

The sign of this degree is given by crossing the arms over the breast, the left arm over the right, the ends of the fingers on the shoulders, then casting the eyes upward, representing Electa clasping the crucifix to her bosom. depicting her love for the Savior.

The pass is 'Love one another.'

The color appropriate to this degree is red, a symbol of that fervency which should actuate all who are engaged in the service of Truth.

The Cup is an emblem of charity and hospitality and teaches us to extend generous aid to the victims of poverty and distress.

Sister Conductress, you will present this Sister to the Worthy Patron.

The sister is conducted across the Star, leaving the Altar to the left, around Esther's chair, leaving the Labyrinth between Adah and Electa. then to the right once around the outside of the Star closing the circle in front of Adah's station. They advance east, then north to a position in front of the Worthy Patron.

During the march there may be vocal or instrumental music. The Worthy Patron or the Associate Patron may recite the following verses of Scripture.

W.P.: "Grace be with you, mercy, and peace, from God the Father"

"And now I beseech thee, lady, not as though I wrote a new commandment unto thee, but that which we had from the beginning, that we love one another."

"And this is love, that we walk after His commandments."

"By this we know that we walk in the truth Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us."

"That we should be called the children of God That our joy may be full"

"Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God, and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God."

"Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us."

"Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another."

Cond.: Worthy Patron, I present this Sister, who has passed through the Labyrinth of our Star and has been instructed in those sublime virtues exemplified by the heroines of our Order.

W.P.: My Sister, you have been presented at the five points of our Emblematic Star and we trust that the lessons there portrayed have made a deep and lasting impression that will be reflected throughout your life and will be an inspiration to all mankind. The work of our Order is worthy of our earnest labor and we shall rejoice to find you excelling in zeal our most devoted members. You will now give attention to the address of the Worthy Matron.

W.M.: My Sister, the members of the Order of the Eastern Star are related by the dearest ties to the members of the Masonic Fraternity; however, the Order is no part of that Ancient Institution.

Here the wives, daughters, mothers, widows, and sisters of Master Masons may become willing helpers in the service of humanity. Woman's heart beats responsive to the same inspiration that prompts man to noble deeds. She hears the cry of the orphan, the call of want, and the piteous wail of sorrow, and seeks through the Order of the Eastern Star to pay the tribute of her love and labor in this service. Into this field of labor you have now entered. You have taken the solemn obligation of the Order and have been instructed in those sublime virtues which should adorn our lives and make this institution worthy of the protection and support of all good Masons.

We extend to you a fraternal love and shall rejoice to learn that your devotion to the great moral and social purposes of our Order is earnest and persistent.

That the blessing of our Heavenly Father may rest upon our labor, let us unite in prayer.

The Chapter is called up for prayer. The officers form a circle around the Altar in the following manner Secretary, between Adah and Marshal—Marshal, between Secretary and Ruth—Associate Matron, between Ruth and Esther—Associate Conductress, if not assisting, between Esther and Martha—Treasurer, between Martha and Electa—The Worthy Matron, at the left of Electa.

As the Chaplain reaches the west side of the Altar the officers join hands and the members assume The Reverent Attitude.

When there is only one new member, the Conductress offers her right arm to the sister and they countermarch to form a straight line in the East, facing the West. When all officers are in their places in the circle, and have joined hands, the Conductress and the new member advance to their places in the circle between Adah and the Worthy Matron When they are in their places the Conductress joins hands with Adah.

When there is more than one new member and the Associate Conductress is assisting in the initiatory ceremony, the officers and new members form in single file and countermarch to form a straight line in the East, facing the West. When all officers are in their places in the circle, and have joined hands, the Conductress and Associate Conductress with the new members, will march abreast to their places in the circle between Adah and the Worthy Matron When they are in their places, the Conductress joins hands with Adah and the Associate Conductress joins hands with she Worthy Matron. The Chaplain should then kneel. When the words "golden chain thus lengthened" in the prayer are being pronounced, if there is only one new member, the Worthy Matron and the new member join hands if there are two or more new members, the Associate Conductress and the new member on her left join hands, then the new members join hands. The Conductress closes the circle by taking the hand of the new member on her right, thus making it complete. The clasped hands then are raised as though showing the links of a chain, remaining in this position until the words "each link shall fall away in death" when the hands, beginning with the Worthy Matron's right, are lowered one by one and unclasped. As the hands are unclasped The Attitude of Prayer is assumed until the prayer is finished.

The Chaplain, who should kneel, offers the following prayer at the Altar.

Prayer

Source of all wisdom, truth and love, grant, we beseech Thee, that in the reception of this member into our Order we may add strength to strength and grace to grace. Oh, may the golden chain thus lengthened become the brighter for this link and be strengthened for the great work we strive to do. Enlarge our powers to benefit mankind and to honor Thee, our God.

And when, one by one, each link shall fall away in death, may the parting be temporary and the meeting eternal. In the world where death comes not, may we realize the full happiness of loving and serving Thee forever.

Amen.

The response is given by all the members.

Response: So may it ever be.

The Chaplain rises and remains standing west of the Altar. An ode may be sung.

The Conductress and new members countermarch away from the Altar, in single file, and march abreast to the East, in the same position they were in before going to the Altar. The remaining officers return to their stations.

The Worthy Patron seats the Chapter and proceeds with his lecture or the Worthy Matron may, at the request of the Worthy Patron, complete the initiatory ceremony.

W.P.: In taking upon yourself the solemn Obligation of our Order, you enter upon a new phase of life; henceforth, you will be numbered among the members of this Order who have for their inspiration the Star of Bethlehem which will guide all the faithful to the New Jerusalem, that city not made with hands. I must remind you that with privileges come responsibilities. You have been informed that we are in possession of certain secrets by means of which we are able to make ourselves known to each other where ever we may meet. You have been conducted to the several points of the Star and have been instructed in the secret work of the Order which, if properly understood, will enable you to make yourself known as a member.

That the signs and passes may be more firmly impressed upon your mind, with the assistance of our Conductress, I will repeat them with explanations.

The Conductress gives the Signs as the Worthy Patron explains them.

The first is the Daughter's sign, or the sign of Adah. It is given though the face is covered with a veil, by taking the veil in the hands at the lower corners, raising it as high as the forehead, dropping and raising it as before and then dropping and raising it again, as before; then throwing it over the head to the back of the neck, holding the ends firmly in the hands. It alludes to the heroic conduct of Jephthah's Daughter.

The Pass is 'Alas, my daughter.'

The second is the Widow's sign, or the sign of Ruth. It is given by letting the hands hang perpendicularly at the sides, then raising them and holding them out horizontally forward, the elbows pressing against the sides of the body, as if showing the barley straws.

Then bringing the hands nearly side by side on the breast a little way under the chin, letting the heads of barley fall over the shoulders and finally casting the eyes upward. It alludes to the humble gleaner Ruth with her handfuls of barley gathered from the fields of Boaz.
The Pass is 'Who is this?'
The third is the Wife's sign, or the sign of Esther. It is given with raising the right hand. the palm downward. a little over the head. as if touching a crown there, then throwing the hand forward, as if touching a scepter held by the person opposite; keeping the hand level with the eyes and finally carrying the hand to the left breast. It alludes to the manner in which Queen Esther saluted the king, reminding him of his promise, by giving a sign which was understood between them.
The Pass is 'What wilt thou?'
The fourth is the Sister's sign, or the sign of Martha. It is given by joining the hands together at the tips of the thumbs and fingers, forming the figure of a triangle, then raising the triangle thus formed directly above the eyes and finally raising the eyes. looking through the triangle. It alludes to Martha's meeting with Jesus.
The Pass is 'Believest thou this?'.
The fifth is the Mother's sign, or the sign of Electa. It is given by crossing the arms over the breast, the left arm over the right, the ends of the fingers on the shoulders, then casting the eyes upward. It alludes to heroic submission, under the wrongs of persecution.
The Pass is 'Love one another', being the impressive lesson taught by Electa.
Any member of the Order is at liberty to give any one of these signs when she or he is among strangers and desires to become known to a Sister or a Brother.
Any member seeing one of these signs given should respond by giving the Pass belonging to the Sign given and then, having withdrawn to a place of sufficient secrecy, should ask, (17). This is all the examination that is required under such circumstances. It may be followed by such questions as are necessary.
(17) May also be used by the Examining Committee.
In passing an examination to visit a Chapter you will be required to show a receipt for dues or a demit, to take the Test Oath and give the sign and pass of each degree.
There is one other sign, called the Salutation Sign, which is given by members on entering or retiring from a Chapter while in session. They shall advance in front of the Associate Matron and the Associate Patron.
This Sign is given by any member entering or leaving the Chapter room during the work of the Chapter. To give it, the member advances past the Associate Matron toward the Altar, facing the East: puts the hands together as in prayer, interlacing fingers, makes a slight bow and drops the hands and returns to original position; then she may leave.
The Grip of the Order is given by taking the right hand of the person opposite, in the ordinary manner of shaking hands; after balancing the hands once or twice (as customary). Then move the thumb over between the thumb and forefinger of the opposite person's hand and press lightly. Finally return the thumb to the original position, while watching her reaction.
The Conductress gives the Grip to the new member if there are more than one, the Conductress gives the grip to each new member.

The Signet is prepared to assist the memory of any one who has received the degrees.
On the outer edge of the central division will be found the five points of the Star, representing the five degrees of the Order. In the different points of the Star are the symbols of the five characters: Adah, Ruth, Esther, Martha and Electa, whose histories make up the degrees.
Each point has its own color and flowers, as follows:
Jephthah's Daughter—Blue, for fidelity and faithfulness; represented by the violet.
Ruth—Yellow, for obedience and steadfastness; represented by the jasmine.
Esther—White, for loyalty and pure happiness; represented by the lily.
Martha—Green, for truth and hope in eternal life; represented by the fern.
Electa—Red, for heroism and zeal; represented by the red roses.
I will explain the significance of the colors, the emblematic flowers, and the meaning of the several emblems alluding to the distinguished characters portrayed in the degrees.
Blue symbolizes Fidelity. It is represented by the Violet.
The open Bible is appropriate to Jephthah's Daughter as a symbol of Obedience to the Word of God.
The emblem is the Sword and Veil united.
By the Sword Adah was slain. The Veil alludes to her determination to die in the light, suffering no stain to rest upon her memory.
Yellow symbolizes Constancy. It is represented by the yellow Jessamine.
The Lily of the Valley is appropriate to Ruth, as a symbol of Loveliness among the Lowly.
The Sheaf is an emblem of plenty and, from its collection of minute parts, teaches that by patient industry, gathering here a little and there a little, we may provide for the infirmities of age.
White symbolizes Light, Purity, and Joy. It is represented by the white Lily.
The Sun is appropriate to Esther as a symbol of the Light and Joy she gave to an oppressed and captive race.
The Crown and Scepter united is an emblem of Royalty and Power.
Green symbolizes Hope and Immortality. It is represented by the Fern.
The Lamb is appropriate to Martha as a symbol of Innocence and Humility.
The Broken Column is an expressive emblem of the uncertainty of human life.
Red symbolizes Fervency. It is represented by the red Rose.
The Lion is appropriate to Electa as a symbol of the Courage and Power that sustained the martyr defenders of Truth.
The Cup is an emblem of Charity and Hospitality and teaches us to extend generous aid to the victims of poverty and distress.
W.P.: Sister Conductress, you will conduct this sister to the Associate Patron in the West.
The Conductress proceeds to the West by the north marching line and causes the sister to face the Associate Patron.

My Sister, led by the guiding hand of our Conductress, you have traversed our Chapter room again and again and your footsteps have traced upon the floor an intricate design. To you it may have seemed without purpose and without meaning. It was intended to symbolize the labyrinth of human life into which we enter without knowledge and through which we wander helplessly and without being able to foresee the end or even one little step before us. A friend in whom you trusted walked beside you. This was to teach you that in this Chapter you will find friends who will be ready to stand by you in your journey through life and, also, that there ever walks beside you an Eternal Friend whose all-powerful hand is always ready to guide and support you through all the difficulties and trials that may come to you.

No matter where your journeyings took you, you always returned to pass close to our sacred Altar on which rests the open Holy Bible. Our wanderings may be devious and our footsteps uncertain, but so long as we keep close to God and His teachings, and return frequently to that Great Light for instruction, we may confidently believe that we will come safely to the end of our journey.

As we travel along life's road we learn many lessons, and some of them have just been presented for your consideration. The lesson of Adah is Fidelity. It is a lesson we cannot have too often called to our attention. "The chief glory in the crown of manhood is fidelity. The brightest jewel in the diadem of a monarch is fidelity." Without fidelity between man and man the entire social structure of the world would fall into ruin and become utter chaos. The story of Jephthah's daughter teaches the importance of fidelity to a spoken vow. The first lesson for us is that we should keep sacredly inviolate the vows we have taken at the Altar. However, this is but a narrow application of a great truth. We are to be faithful, not only to the vows here assumed, but to all our obligations to ourselves, to our sisters and brothers, to our country, and to our God.

The story of Ruth is one of the most beautiful ever written and it brings to us the lesson of a constant devotion to a righteous purpose. Ruth recognized a great filial duty and in spite of entreaties, hardships, and trials, refused to be turned back from that which she believed to be right. We all have duties and responsibilities that come to us. Whether our station be exalted and our duties heavy, or whether our station be humble, like Ruth's, and our responsibilities light, we have need to be steadfast, constant, and true.

To Esther was given to choose royal magnificence and splendor, with a guilty conscience; or purity and loyalty, with probable degradation and death. With splendid courage she chose to be loyal to her people, let the consequences be what they would. We may never be called on to make a choice so tragic or so far reaching in its results, but day by day we are called upon to be loyal to ourselves and to the best there is in us, loyal to our friends, loyal to our country, and to our God.

The greatest and most important questions of our lives are those that reach out beyond the materialistic, beyond the things we can know, and search in the infinite for the things beyond our knowledge. The answers to these great questions can only be found in Faith. From Martha we learn that a trustful faith is greater than knowledge. Without faith in a Supreme Beneficent Power, without faith in a resurrection after death to a glorious life eternal, the suffering and trials of this life would be unbearable.

But our faith is real. It "is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." "We walk by faith not by sight."

Electa, we are told, was distinguished for her generous hospitality and loving-kindness to the poor and distressed. However, we are impressed, not so much by her giving, as by the motive that prompted it. We learn from her story that she had learned and was putting into practice the second great law laid down by Christ. "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." What she did has made her famous even to this day because she did it in love. "Let us love one another."

Truth is eternal and unchanging. Fidelity may waver, constancy may fail, loyalty may falter, and faith may grow dim, but truth never changes. Seek ye to know that which is true and, having found it, hide it close in thine heart and make it thine own, and all these others, fidelity, constancy, loyalty, faith, and love shall be added to it.

If the Associate Patron has given the optional lecture, he instructs the Conductress to return to the worthy Patron

A.P.: Sister Conductress, you will conduct this Sister to the worthy Patron.

The Conductress proceeds to the East by the south marching line

W.P.: Finally, my Sister, Jephthah's Daughter, who freely sacrificed her life to preserve her father's honor, Ruth, who, though poor and lowly, was faithful to the demands of honor and justice; Esther, noble queen, who was prepared to sacrifice her crown and life to save her people from destruction, Martha, who exhibited her trustful faith and hope of immortal life; and Electa, who was pre-eminent in charity and heroic in endurance under the wrongs of persecution, were (18).

So may it be with you. As you illustrate in your life the virtues of these tried servants of God, so shall be your reward.

You will now be conducted to the Secretary's desk where you will sign the By-laws of this Chapter after which you will be conducted to the east, facing west.

While the member is signing the By-laws there may be vocal or instrumental music.

After the By-laws are signed, the Chapter is called up and all join in singing a welcome song, during which the Conductress and the member make the circuit of the room and take positions in front of the East, facing West.

If robes are used, the member is conducted to the preparation room and the robe is removed. When the door is opened for the Conductress and member to return, the Chapter is called up, and all join in singing a welcome song, during which the Conductress and the member proceed along the north marching line and lake positions in front of the East, facing West.

W.P.: Sisters and Brothers, our Sister has passed through the several degrees of our Order, we hope with some pleasure to her and we know with great satisfaction to us.

You will give her a hearty welcome and resume order at the sound of the gavel.

The worthy Patron seats the Chapter and returns the gavel to the Worthy Matron.

Closing of the Chapter

At this time the Signs and Passes may be given by the members under the direction of the Worthy Patron or the Worthy Matron.

W.M.: Sister Associate Matron.

A.M.: Worthy Matron.

W.M.: Do you know of any further business to come before the Chapter at this time?

A.M.: Worthy Matron, there is none within my knowledge.

W.M.: Warder.

War.: Worthy Matron.

W.M.: You will inform the Sentinel that we are about to close the Chapter and direct … to permit no interruption while we are thus engaged.

*The Warder in due order ** ** * * opens the door.*

War.: … Sentinel, we are about to close the Chapter and you are directed to permit no interruption while we are thus engaged.

The Warder closes the door.

War.: Worthy Matron, your order has been obeyed.

W.M.: It is well, let us unite in singing our Closing Ode.

The worthy Matron calls up the Chapter.

SINGING

W.M.: Let us unite in prayer.

The prayer is offered at the Altar as in the opening ceremony

PRAYER

Holy and merciful God, who answerest prayer and dost not scorn the petition of the humblest of Thy children, bestow upon us in our parting that spirit of affection which can resist the selfishness of the world and cause us to remember our obligations to each other and to Thee. Grant that we may be permitted with loving hearts to assemble here again for Thine honor, for our instruction, and for the good of our fellow men. All of which we ask for Thy name's sake. Amen.

The response is given by all the members.

Response: So may it ever be.

The Chaplain steps back into the circle of Star officers between Esther and Martha, faces the Altar, and remains in this position until the Chapter is closed.

W.M.: Sister Conductress, you will attend at the Altar.

The Conductress approaches the Altar as in the opening ceremony, gives the Salutation Sign to the open Bible, closes the Bible, makes a slight bow, and steps back into the circle of Star officers between Ruth and Esther and faces the Altar She remains in this position until the Chapter is closed.

When the Conductress is in position, all members face the East.

W.M.: Sisters and Brothers, we go forth into the world not knowing what trials may await us in the journey of life. Let us not be dismayed for our Heavenly Father has promised to strengthen and uphold us by the right hand of His power. Farewell.

The response is given by all the members.
Response: Farewell.
W.M.: I now declare … Chapter, No. …, closed.
The Worthy Matron strikes one blow of the gavel on the word closed
W.M.: … Warder, you will so inform the Sentinel.
The warder opens the door without raps.
War.: … Sentinel, … Chapter, No. ... is closed.