

## Inspiration of the Labyrinth

All of us have witnessed the beautiful ceremony of Initiation and we ourselves have walked the winding path on the night we became members of the Order of the Eastern Star. Often members have wondered WHY such a winding path is woven about the Chapter room as we pass from one star point to another. The history of our order tells us that the founders were seeking lines of March which would make the work more lasting and beautiful to the candidates. The first marches were directly from one star point to another. When asked why the change was made the reply was given that it looked better. However, when we stop to think of the heroines of our order, we can see that these marching lines not only look better but are surely inspired. Perhaps as we re-weave the Labyrinth march with this in mind we will see this to be true.

At this time we will start an exemplification of the Initiation.

The Worthy Matron addresses the Associate Conductress. The Associate Conductress waits until the order has been given, then picks up her staff and proceeds to the west where she will give the salutation sign to the Worthy Matron. The Worthy Matron gives the responding sign. After the sign is given the Warder rises and proceeds to the door, gives the raps which are then returned by the Sentinel. The Associate Conductress retires.

The Warder returns to his station.

When the Associate Conductress has obtained the names of those in waiting, the Sentinel will rap the alarm at the door. The Warder then addresses the Worthy Matron, she responds then the Warder answers the alarm at the door. The Associate Conductress enters to the West with the salutation sign and response given. She then reports. The Associate Conductress is the only one who addresses the candidates using the maiden names. Mr. and Mrs. are also used for her introduction.

The Worthy Matron then ascertains that the candidates have been elected to receive the degrees from the Secretary. Then has the Associate Conductress go prepare them for the initiation. The Associate Conductress again gives the salutation sign to retire. When the response has been given from the East the Warder rises and attends the door.

When the Warder assumes his chair the Marshal, Conductress and Star points rise to prepare the Labyrinth for the ceremony. When the Marshal hands the ribbons to Ruth the Conductress should be entering the labyrinth. The Conductress places the Bibles on the East side of the altar. She places the second Bible at the same time the Marshal is handing the ribbons to Electa. They then meet on the three foot line with the Marshal closest to the Alter and return to their stations. The Marshal returns to the side of the chair and all are seated together.

The Associate Conductress then gives the alarm at the preparation room door. The alarm is answered by the Conductress. She proceeds to the door. Grounds staff, answers alarm,

then speaks. She closes the door and proceeds to the west to report. Since she did not leave the room she did not need to give the salutation sign.

The Worthy Matron has the Conductress admit the Candidates. When the Conductress opens the door the lights are dimmed. She enters with a Candidate on her left arm and the Associate Conductress with the Candidate on her right arm. They assume a position facing north. The Associate Conductress will return to close the door when the Candidates are in position. When the Associate Conductress grounds her staff on returning the Conductress steps out in front of the Candidates to give her lecture.

When she is finished they conduct the candidates to the West she will use the North line, the East Initiatory line, a little closer to the East than midway between the East and Adah and Electa's stations, the South line, the West Initiatory line, which is two steps East of the West line and the West line to a point where the candidates are in front of the Associate Matron.

She does her address. The Associate Matron has the Conductress lead the candidates to face east. She will then be on the West Initiatory Line when they are in position.

The Worthy Matron gives her address then gives the gavel over to the Worthy Patron to preside. The Worthy Matron does not pick up the gavel again until the Initiation is finished and it is given back to her.

The Worthy Patron addresses the Candidates. He then instructs the Conductress to present the Candidates at the altar in proper position. The Conductress proceeds to the East Initiatory line and diagonals around the altar. The candidates kneel if possible. The Conductress and Associate Conductress move to the east end of the Altar and turn to face each other and ground their staffs. They pick up the Bibles with their right hands. The Conductress gives directions from the secret work. The Conductresses then pick up their staffs face east and back to the candidates and place the bibles in proper position. The conductresses then take one step back and ground staffs.

The Conductress then reports to the Worthy Patron. The Worthy Patron raps the Chapter up and proceeds to the east of the altar to give the obligation.

When the obligation is finished the Conductresses pick up staffs and step forward to the candidates remove the bibles from their hands, placing them in front of them on the altar. Then they step back to a position one step behind the candidates and ground the staffs. The Worthy Patron then moves to the candidate on his right and then the left assisting them to rise. He steps back to the position in front of the altar to finish that section. For the next section of his speech he steps back to the edge of the labyrinth. He turns left and returns to his station. When the Worthy Patron returns to his station he seats the Chapter.

After he gavels the Conductresses pick up the bibles, hand them to the new members. After the Candidates have taken the obligation required of them, repeating the words that all members of the order must repeat made the pledges and promises that only members

of the Order know and understand she is taken to Adah. They leave the Altar on the North side and diagonal to the East Initiatory line turning on the south line, they proceed to square the Chapter room returning to the East Initiatory line. They will angle to Adah's station.

Here they hear the pathetic story taken from the Book of Judges. Here a young girl and an only child, becomes a sacrifice in order that a promise made by her father might be kept. A rash promise, perhaps, but one made in good faith, and one that he had to keep to retain his sacred honor. That the blow would strike his beloved and only child was no doubt very far from his thoughts at the time it was given; but a vow was a vow, and must be sacredly kept. And so, Adah became the sacrifice and the beauty of her sacrifice was her willingness to keep her fathers honor.

The sign of the degree is given, the color appropriate is blue and the emblem is the Sword and Veil united.

The Conductress then proceeds to wind the labyrinth. The candidate is led around the fourth point of the star Martha's point. Now Martha's plea to Jesus to restore life to her brother Lazarus, who had died, brings out that beautiful lesson of life after death, and the Resurrection of the body; but this point also reminds us of the surrender of the life of Jesus on the cross, a human sacrifice made to fulfill the prophecies. And there in lies the similarity of these two points. Adah, an only daughter, was made a sacrifice to save her fathers honor, when he made a vow unto the Lord that he would sacrifice and offer up for a burnt offering the first thing that came to meet him when he returned from war victorious; and Jesus, the only begotten Son of God, was offered up as a sacrifice for the remission of sins of us all, that who so ever believed in him might not perish, but have everlasting life.

The candidate is taken to Ruth, where she hears one of the most beautiful love stories of all time. History and literature abound in stories of the love of man for woman; but there are very few instances aside from David and Jonathan, or Damon and Pythias, were there was such a close affection between members of the same sex, as existed between Ruth and Naomi. Ruth was a woman of Moab, and as such, was from a nation of idol worshippers. Her family was wealthy in lands and cattle and there is nothing in the story that would indicate that she would ever be in want if she remained with her kindred and friends in there native land. But Ruth loved Naomi, and she loved Naomi's God and her love for them was so strong that she was willing to for go luxury and ease if she remained in her native land and go in poverty among strangers. She was willing to toil in the most severe manual labor rather than give up that which had become dearer to her than all else besides Naomi and her God.

The sign of the degree is given, the color appropriate is yellow and the emblem is the Sheaf.

The Candidate is then taken from Ruth around the point of Electa which represents love, quite the most natural place to go.

She now comes to Esther, the wonderful queen, the wisest and most beautiful of her time, and the one to whom the Jewish race owes much. Esther's story is well known. She loved her own people and, while her Jewish ancestry was unknown to the king, it was known to others and to herself; and when the edict was issued that would destroy the entire Hebrew race on one day, Queen Esther rose to her most sublime height and offered herself, if need be as the sacrifice. To fail in her purpose, she well knew would mean the death of the entire race, including herself. Knowing the King's love and admiration for her, she risked all to save her beloved people from destruction. She heeded the call "Perhaps thou were born for a time like this" and went before the King. She was successful, and the story had a happy ending.

The sign of the degree is given, the color appropriate is white and the emblem is the crown and scepter united.

When the candidate leaves Esther's station, they go around Adah's point and the similarity of these two characters can be plainly seen. Adah gave up her life to save her father's honor; and Esther was prepared and willing to give up her life also if need be, to save her people from death; but fate, in the person of an adoring King, saved her from the fate of Adah.

The candidate is taken to Martha, the fourth point of the Star, and they hear the story of Martha's meeting with Jesus and how he tries to comfort her for the loss of her brother; when he says "I am the Resurrection and the life, and he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and he that liveth and believeth in me shall never die." It was indeed a glorious privilege for Martha to receive this wonderful message. Martha, the humble sister who had labored that those who came to her house might have the entertainment that honored guests should receive. You can easily recall that on one occasion when Jesus was a guest in the home, that Martha complained to Him because her sister Mary had left her to do all the serving, and it seemed then that Jesus chided her for doing too much for their entertainment. But, it was Martha who sought Him when in her deepest trouble, and it was to Martha that the great announcement came; to Martha who raised her hand and implored Jesus to recall her beloved brother. I can almost see her now, her toil worn hands and the tear stained face, as she kneels pleading for that which she earnestly believed the Master could grant. How great was her faith. And to Martha came the message the greatest that was ever given to any human being, and the message that is the very foundation of our Christian faith.

The sign of the degree is given, the color appropriate is Green and the emblem is the broken column.

And then there follows that, which to my mind is the most beautiful sentiment in the entire labyrinth. After the point in which Jesus stand out most prominently, the candidate is led around the point of Ruth. Now, Ruth was the ancestor of Jesus through her marriage with Boaz, on down the direct line to David, for Jesus was often alluded to as the "Prince of the House of David" so we can see the appropriateness of this point in the march.

The Candidate is then taken to the point of Electa, where they hear the wonderful story of Love. Love for God and all Mankind. Electa served through her great love for God and finally suffered the fate of the early Christian martyrs because she would not renounce her faith. It was the Master who said "I give unto you a new commandment, that ye love one another even as I have loved you."

The sign of the degree is given, the color appropriate is Red and the emblem is the cup.

Following the lecture on love, at Electa's station, the candidate is led around Esther's point. Now, Esther represents purity and here we have love and purity linked together in the Labyrinth, and these two attributes are the crowning glory of womanhood. But, when the Master spoke of purity, he made no sex distinction, for what was pure and sacred for women was equally pure and sacred for men, do double standard of morality where the Master was concerned. You will remember that when the cringing woman was cast at his feet, the punishment for whose crime was stoning to death, the Master said, "Let him that is without fault cast the first stone." And not a stone was cast.

So we complete the Labyrinth march by circling around the outside of the labyrinth and tying the stories all together. We have joined the points that seem to have something in common. We have shown the relation between the story of Adah and that of Martha; Ruth with that of Electa; the story of Esther has been compared with Adah; the message of Martha with the point of Ruth; and that of Electa with the point of Ester; and in every instance there was some characteristic of the one that bound it up with that of the other. Through it all, on every march, the open Holy Bible lay on the Altar as the candidates were led by, thus indicating that the absolute reliance upon the Scriptures is essential to our faith and well being. As the candidate was finally led out of the labyrinth around the outside of the points, she drew together all the beautiful lessons that had been given by the heroines of the Order, to the Altar where the Obligation is taken and the Bible, which is the Christian's law book.

The Conductress and Associate Conductress end the labyrinth and are in front of the Worthy Patron on the East Initiatory line. The Worthy Patron then gives a short address and instructs the new members to listen to the address of the Worthy Matron. At the end of the Worthy Matrons address the Officers form the Prayer Circle. The Worthy Patron gavels the Chapter room up. The Worthy Matron immediately leaves her station. The Conductress and Associate Conductress do not move until the Worthy Matron passes them they do a hair pin turn to watch the circle being formed. The Star points go behind their chairs. The other officers move in a straight line to the Labyrinth. The Chaplain enters the labyrinth across from Esther's chair. The Worthy Patron, Warder, Sentinel and Organist do not enter the circle. When the Chaplain is behind the altar, the members in the circle join hands and the Conductresses move into the circle with the new members. On the word may lengthen the new members and conductresses join hands with the circle and the hands are raised. On the words One by One in the prayer the hands are dropped starting with the Worthy Matron and Electa ending with the Associate Conductress and Worthy Matron. As soon as your hands are free you assume the reverent attitude. At the end of the prayer all hands are dropped to sing.

The Conductress leads the new members out of the prayer circle and when there backs are to the circle the members leave the labyrinth. When the Chaplain returns to the front of her chair the Worthy Patron seats the Chapter.

The Conductresses and new members return to in front of the Worthy Patron. In this section of the Worthy Patron's address the rest of the secret work is done with the help of the Conductress. The Conductress squares to the Chaplain to hand her staff to her, and proceeds to the East line facing south. When in this position the signs and passes are given again, the salutation sign and grip are also given. When the Worthy Patron gives the explanation of the grip the Conductress approaches the first member and stays with that member until the Worthy Patron has finished his statement. The Conductress then goes to the next member. She goes behind the members squares to the Chaplain to pick up her staff and angles back to her place. When she is back in position the Worthy Patron continues with his speech which includes the signet.

When the Worthy Patron starts describing the portion of the signet pertaining to Electa or Red a member sets up chairs in the West facing the Associate Patron. The Conductresses and new members are able to sit for his address.

The Conductresses return to the East Initiatory line, then they are instructed to the Secretary's desk to sign the by-laws. The Conductress leads the first member to the desk and assumes a position on the south line facing west. The Associate Conductress leaves her member in front of the Marshal's station to assist the other member to the Conductress. The she then takes her member to the secretary's desk. When the Associate Conductress is in a position behind the Conductress the Worthy Patron gavel the Chapter up to welcome the new members the Conductresses square the Chapter room to the East facing West. This is the only time the East line is used in the Initiatory work. The members are given a hearty welcome and then are escorted to seats. The Conductresses then return to their stations and are seated together.