From October 12 to October 16 was designated as Grand Visitation Week in western Maryland—five nights of social activities to greet the Worthy Grand Matron, Sister Mary V. Randall and other Grand officers who accompanied her.

The outstanding event of the week took place on Friday evening in the Masonic Temple, Cumberland, when McKinley Chapter celebrated its 35th anniversary with a very beautiful and impressive ceremony called "Trees" which was composed, written and arranged by the chapter's talented Worthy Patron, Bro. John J. Robinson. The following is the ceremony as written by Brother Robinson:

"Trees"

"What does he plant who plants a Tree
A scion full of potency;
He plants his faith, a prophecy
Of bloom, and fruitfulness to be.

Worthy Patron: "Tonight we observe another birthday of McKinley Chapter, and to those of us who are privileged to have our names recorded as members of this outstanding chapter of our Order, there comes a feeling of deepest gratitude.

"So to those who were responsible for our chapter's origin, and to those who have directed its progress in the past we pay particular honor tonight.

"We therefore dedicate our ceremony to all those faithful members from Oct. 16, 1901, to the present time, who have been instrumental in the success of McKinley Chapter.

"God has given us many things of beauty—many things for our comfort and happiness. And yet how often are those gifts and their values not recognized by us.

"When for instance, we look at a tree, do we notice how strong and sturdy it appears, how it stretches from the earth heavenward—spreading its branches as if for protection to the helpless?

"And how the leaves dancing in the sunlight, seem to envelop it in a graceful covering of exceeding beauty.

"Need I remind you of the many ways a tree fits into our lives, rendering service that we can never do without?

"Forests furnish us with great watersheds, some trees bear us fruits and foods, and even our homes could not be built without the use of the wood which our trees supply, and so many articles of necessity, comfort and luxury are derived from trees, that to enumerate them here would not emphasize their usefulness strongly enough.

"May I suggest that sometime each of you sit down with paper and pencil (two articles from wood) and list those things that are so essential to our welfare and prosperity, and which originate from the tree.

"So tonight, in keeping with this theme, we offer you, in a small way, a comparison of our organization of the Eastern Star with the life and beauty of a tree."

Solo—"Trees"

"Worthy Matron: "For many centuries trees have been the subject of artists' masterpieces, the inspiration by which many authors have reached their heights in books and in poetry, and the basis of scientists' exhaustive studies, as they search for those hidden mysteries within the tree.

"Forceful and descriptive sermons have been written and delivered from this thought, to say nothing of the beautiful music inspired by this theme.

"Industry has thrived for years by the use of this wonderful gift of nature.

"While we do not have the least hope of our efforts this evening ever being so famous, or even approaching the results I have mentioned, we simply call your attention to these facts that you might agree with us that our theme is well chosen, and on this thought we have founded our anniversary ceremonies.

"Brother Associate Patron, you are charged to render assistance when required. You may help us greatly by becoming stronger and more substantial as the years go by.
Associate Patron: "I will begin by saying that the 'trunk' of the mythical tree represents the Grand Chapter, growing year after year skyward, and becoming stronger and more substantial as the years go by.

"It seems to reach upward, as though to touch those heavenly stars and claim them for its own.

"In its steady climb it puts forth many branches that seem to move out farther and farther from the center, yet always that security, firmness and united devotion by holding fast to the source of its life and strength.

"These branches I would call the subordinate chapters, closely joined together by the main trunk.

"The leaves, then, would seem to represent the individual members, as they cling to their own branches, yet mingle merrily and friendly, as the gentle breeze moves them to and fro, with joy and seeming laughter.

"We have found this tree to be so beautiful and useful that its roots have spread all over the world, bursting forth with fidelity, constancy, purity, hope and love.

"Sister Associate Matron, surely we must have a tree such as that right in our own chapter. Tell us something of its life and symbols."

Associate Matron: "Thirty-five years ago tonight, on October 16, 1901, 35 faithful workers were rewarded for their untiring efforts by witnessing the institution of McKinley Chapter No. 12.

"That first meeting, held under dispensation of the Grand Chapter of Maryland marked the summit of their achievements and the fulfillment of their ambition.

"From the very start, McKinley Chapter was destined to become one of the leading chapters of the state, and the example set by our charter members for hard work, devotion to purpose, and determination to succeed, became an inspiration to those who were chosen to carry on the work in the years that were to follow.

"We salute those charter members, and dedicate the trunk of our tree to them and as this tree lives on and on through the years, so will their names live on across the pages of our chapter's history.

"Sister Secretary, read from our record the names of these honored ones."

Secretary: (Reads the list of charter members.)

Associate Matron: "May these charter members ever be our guidance and inspiration towards greater success.

Sister Associate Conductress, I have furnished the trunk of our chapter tree. Will you tell us of the branches.

Associate Conductress: "From the first year of its existence this chapter tree began to put forth beautiful branches to strengthen its security and to enlarge its scope of service to those who needed its spreading arms of protection.

These branches represent our Past Worthy Matrons and Past Worthy Matrons, who have served our chapter so faithfully during these 35 years.

"As these branches stretch out as though extending generous aid to those who seek their shelter, so our Past Worthy Patrons have given to their sisters and brothers words of encouragement to the troubled comfort and sympathetic understanding to the sorrowful and aid and assistance to the unfortunate.

"Just as these branches added beauty and longevity to that trunk, so our Past Worthy Matrons and Past Worthy Patrons shaped the destinies of our chapter and strengthened its stability.

"We salute you, Past Worthy Matrons and Past Worthy Patrons, and acknowledge your years of service with great appreciation.

"Sister Secretary, read also from our record the names of these who are likewise honored tonight."

Secretary: (Reads the list of Past Worthy Matrons and Past Worthy Patrons.)

Associate Conductress: "We now have our trunk and branches, but how bare and lifeless those branches seem without any foliage.

Sister Conductress, will you add the leaves to our tree?"

Conductress: "Yes, a tree looks unhappy and unfinished without leaves. After all, a healthy and flourishing tree must be clothed with a covering that radiates the beauty and firmness that otherwise would remain concealed and unnoticed in the world of nature's wondrous beauty.

"I, therefore place upon those branches an abundance of leaves, to add the loveliness that our tree rightfully deserves."
"These leaves represent our chapter members without whom our Order would cease to exist.

"As the leaves of a tree supply the moisture and strength to the branches and trunk, as well as the roots, so our chapter members supply the strength and support the power and success to our organization.

"Worthy Matron, we have completed our mythical tree, which now is bearing the fruits of the toil of our charter members, our Past Worthy Matrons and Past Worthy Patrons, our present officers, and our membership itself.

"May it ever stand straight and tall, firm and broad, and beautiful throughout the years to come."

Worthy Matron: "I accept this symbolic emblem of our chapter with the greatest assurance that our Order will ever cherish the sentiments you have so beautifully expressed.

"May I add another symbol to those already portrayed. As the falling leaves of trees bring sadness to our hearts we who have gone on to that chapter not made by hands. Unlike the leaves that seem to fall to the earth and be taken into the soil, the leaves from our chapter tree are carried heavenward to that Grand chapter on high.

"In loving memory of our departed, let us unite in prayer."

(On her way to the altar, the Chaplain carried an immense wreath of autumn leaves which she placed on the altar in memory of the departed members. Then she pulled a string attached to a large leaf-shaped receptacle suspended above the altar, which caused it to tip and send a shower of leaves down over the altar, symbolizing the fall of the members who had served their time on the chapter tree.)

Chaplain: "Bless us, our Father, in this hour of meditation and remembrance; and grant that that spirit of sincerity, fraternal love and friendship, so truly exemplified by those who have departed from us here, may be instilled into our hearts, and may the memories of their kindliness ever be to us that inspiration to carry on to nobler thoughts and nobler deeds. Bless our chapter, our Grand Chapter and all those members of our beloved Order who seek Thy love and blessedness. Amen.

All: "So may it ever be."