

No. 821

TRIBUTE TO ROBERT MORRIS

By Lola Lamoreux

Preparation

The Bible on the Altar is closed. Worthy Matron and Worthy Patron are in their stations in the East. Other officers may or may not be in their chairs. The National Flag and the O.E.S. Flag are in their standards in the East. A basket of greenery and flowers are placed in the West before the station of the Associate Matron. There should be plenty of room left in the basket for other flowers which will be placed there later.

Characters--

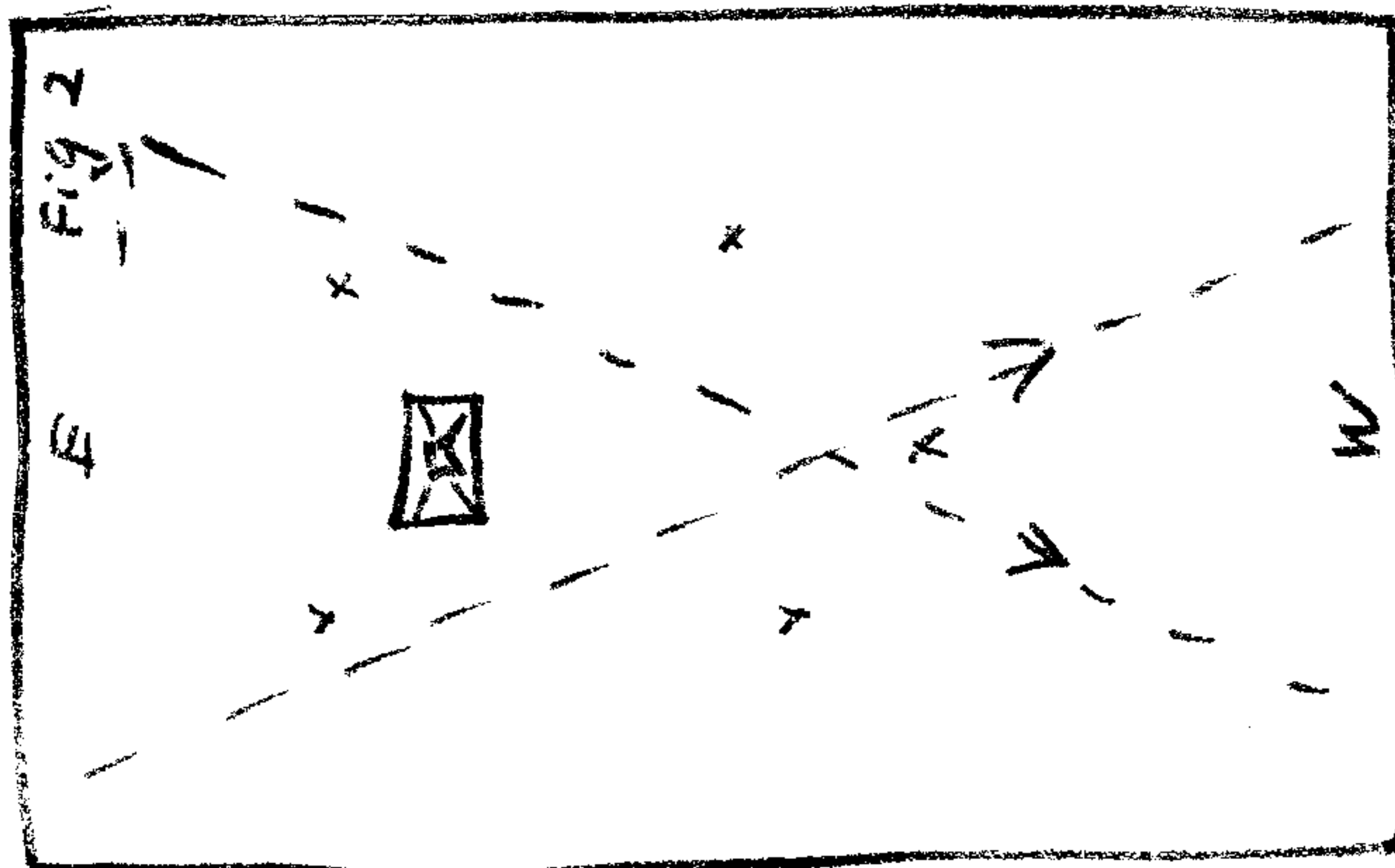
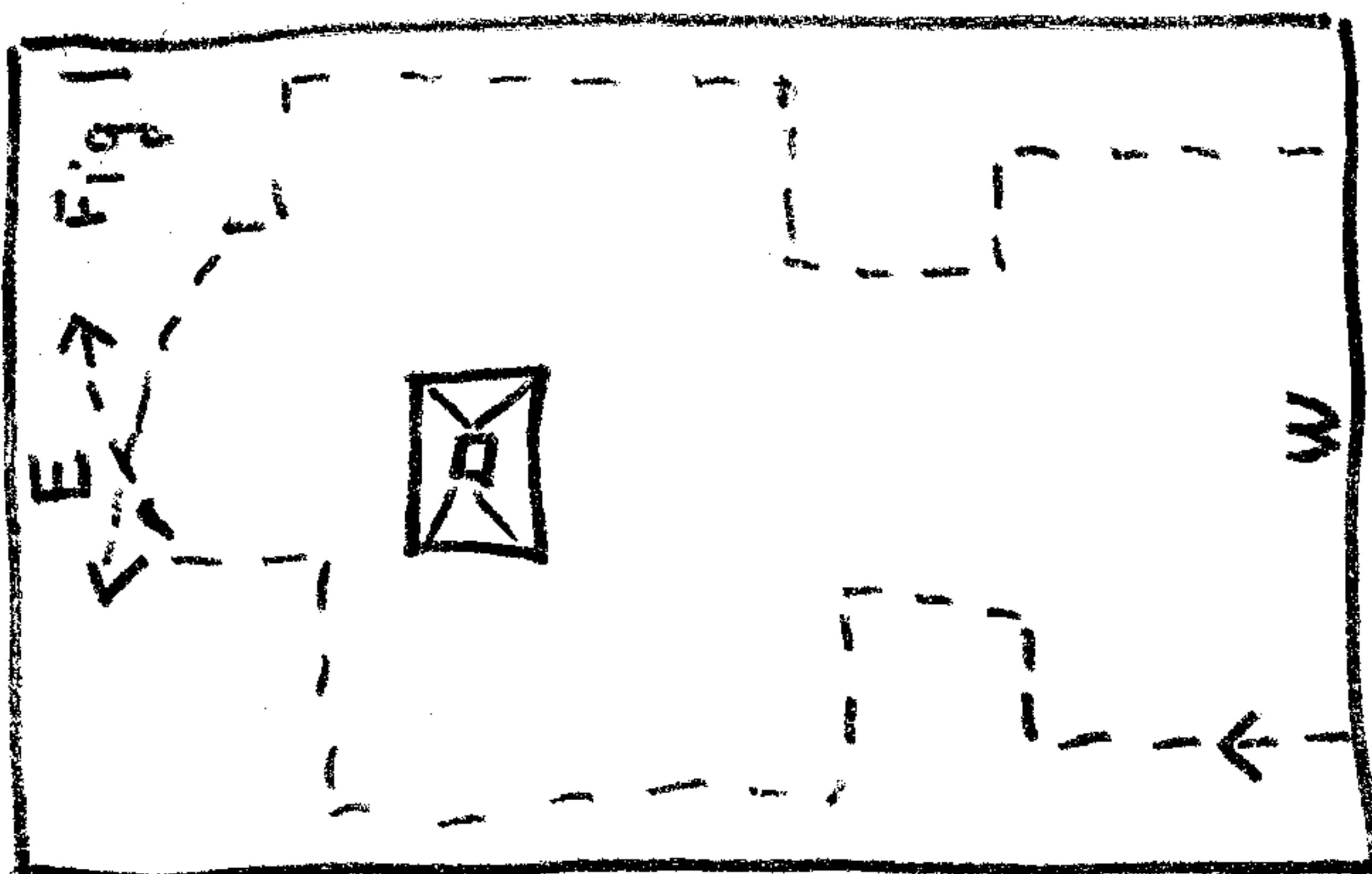
There are speaking parts for the Worthy Matron, Worthy Patron, and eight sisters. These sisters may be drill team or some of the Chapter officers.

The Worthy Matron speaks:

Friends and members of the Eastern Star, at this our Natal Day celebration it seems very fitting to honor the founder of our Order--Robert Morris. So in the following ceremony we will endeavor to pay a worthy tribute to his memory.

Music--any good march

Eight sisters enter, all but the first two carrying flowers. They march as shown in the diagram below.



When the above position has been reached the girls stand for eight counts of the music then the two leaders march to the East on the outside of the labyrinth and each takes a flag--National and O.E.S. and counter-marching go West until they are at a position even with Esther's station. Here they stand while the sister nearest the middle of the line takes the basket of flowers from the West and advances to the Altar with it.

Placing the flowers on the Altar she says:

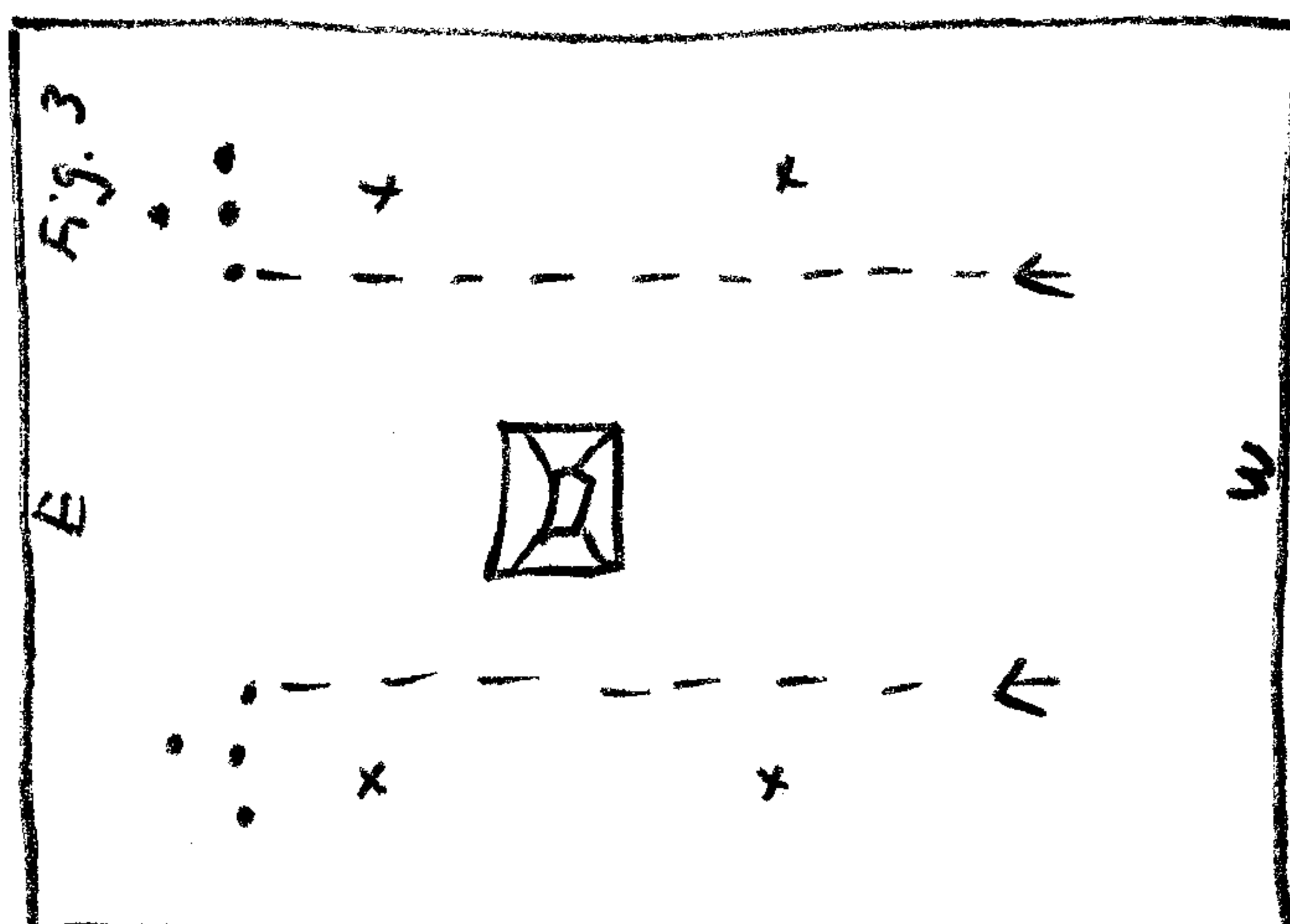
"In memory of the founder of our Order, Robert Morris, we place these flowers upon the Altar."

She then resumes her place in the line. The two flag bearers then march to a position on the North and South sides of the Altar. At the same time the six girls advance in a straight line to a position behind Esther's chair. They will keep this position while the Worthy Patron gives a short Biography of the life of Robert Morris. (This biography is attached to the last page.) After the biography has been given the six sisters having the flowers will advance to the Altar two at a time (beginning with those at ends) and after giving their tributes to Robert Morris, will resume the places in the line. Flowers are placed in baskets.

1. Robert Morris
He never quite leaves us
Our friend who has passed;
Through the shadows of death
To the sunlight above.
A thousand sweet memories
Are holding us fast
To this place he has blessed
With his work and his love.
2. Robert Morris
Wherever he said he was noble,
Whatever he did, he did well,
Whenever he spoke, he spoke kindly
Giving joy wherever he dwelled.
3. Robert Morris
He gave us an order most worthy
When he gave us this Eastern Star
His memory is enshrined in thousands of hearts
In countries both near and far.
4. Robert Morris
His life was an exemplification
Of ideals highest and best
In our heroines five we see these portrayed
And in following them we are blest.
5. To Robert Morris, our tribute we pay.
We owe him more than words can say
Founder, friend and a guide to our Star
His honored name is revered afar.
6. A Christian man, A Mason and a Star
Was Robert Morris, our founder so grand,
And on this Natal Day we rejoice
That for the same principals as his we stand.

Music--

The two flag bearers march thru the labyrinth to the East, followed by the six other sisters (three on each side). The two leaders take position by the flag standards, the others stand



in a row behind them (three on each side) with right hand on heart. Diagram shows the positions. After the National Flag has been placed in the standard the sister steps back and says:

"Robert Morris as a good citizen, deeply revered the flag of his country."

After placing the O. E. S. flag in the standard the sister says:

"Robert Morris gave us the privilege of honoring our Eastern Star flag."

The leaders then step back into the line and each leads her line West where they retire thru the same doors as they came.

Brother Robert Morris, whose name gives a thrill of pride to each Eastern Star heart, was born near Boston, Mass. August 31, 1818. He became a school teacher and taught in several states, finally locating in Mount Silvan Academy for some years. Here, he married in 1841. This union was blessed with what at that time was regarded as a rather small family of seven children.

In 1850 he with his family moved to La Grange, Kentucky, where they resided until his death. He was offered the chair of Ancient and Modern History in the Masonic College at La Grange, in which college he received the degree of L. L. D. After teaching a few years he became the President of the college.

Robert Morris was, during his lifetime probably the widest known Mason in the country, if not in the world. He was crowned Poet Laureate of Free Masonry, and the greater part of his life was devoted to Masonic knowledge. He received the degree of Masonry at Oxford, Miss. In 1846 and was Grand Master of Kentucky in 1858. Brother Morris also received other degrees, orders and honors to the number of 143, among them was the first Master of the Royal Solomon Lodge of Jerusalem. He also organized and opened the first Grand Eodge in the Holy Land and was honorary member of 150 Masonic bodies.

A woman who was initiated into the then new order of the Eastern Star by Robert Morris himself gives us the following vivid description of him: "He was a powerful and magnetic speaker. There would not be a movement in the hall while he was speaking for he held his audience spellbound. He was a small man with brown hair and a short full beard. He had the merriest blue eyes you ever saw and every one who ever heard his voice or had shaken hands with him could never forget that hearty brotherly handclasp of his."

Robert Morris was deeply spiritual. He was a great student of the Bible and one of the most devoted Christians America has produced. While in Palestine, he worked as if in the living presence of the Master. This spiritual vision of Christ he reflected in a great many of his beautiful poems.

In his lectures a beauty, grandeur and significance are apparent that cannot fail to impress even the most careless mind.

But perhaps the most enduring and magnificent monument that he left in the Order of the Eastern Star, which owes its very existence, if not its origin to Brother Morris' generous heart, fruitful brain and untiring efforts in the face of derision, scorn and abuse.

From his very first connection with Masonry, Robert Morris was committed to a liberal interpretation of Masonry's attitude toward women. In the richness of Masonic symbolism, and in the beauty of its teachings he found the idea, which impression became conviction, that, notwithstanding the Masonic landmark that no woman can become a Mason this storehouse of knowledge and beauty and culture should in some way be opened so that women of Masonic relationship should at least be permitted to share the benefits and privileges of Freemasonry. He began a research which did not abate until he had shaped the philosophy and evolved the ritual for the new order--one destined to become international in its scope and powerful in its influence in making Masonic knowledge and principles a family heritage.

It has been said of him that while he was the most learned and accomplished gentleman, he was very plain and unassuming, with a most pleasing personality, full of wit and humor and with a heart overflowing with love for his fellow men. He was generous and was frequently known to part with his last dollar to aid one in distress. He passed from this life in 1888, having lived the allotted span of life, three score and ten.