OBLIGATION CEREMONY

March, officers enter, with any preferred march; stop at stations; each Star Point carries emblematic flowers.

W. M.:

Before the altar on bended knee,
Under Jehovah's watchful eyes,
I vowed to keep the mysteries,
All that the stars keep and prize.
All words they say, all things they do,
I would observe and do,
On yonder book that vow I took,
And I will break it never;
I'll stand by this—and this—and this—
(gives sign of Adah)
Forever and forever.

I vowed to answer—and truly,
The laws and constitution to obey,
Whether sent by member's hand,
Or in Chapter array,
I vowed that I would never stray
From the laws which bound
The stars in their Chapter renowned
But would observe them truly.
On yonder book that vow I took—and I'll break it never, etc.
(gives sign of Ruth)

I vowed to deal in honesty
With each true heart around me;
That "honor bright" should ever be
Unbroken bond—'twixt thee and me.
Nor wrong, nor guile, nor cruel fraud
Should break or loose that holy cord
By which my ties had bound me.
On yonder book that vow I took, etc.
(gives sign of Esther)

I vowed to deal with generous care
With those in sorrow laden—
The member in the darkened sphere,
The mourner deep in grief and tears,
The widow and orphan doomed to stray
Upon life's rough and rugged way,
While tears gush forth unhidden.
On yonder book that vow I took, etc.
(gives sign of Martha)

I vowed that I would never
Speak evil of a sister or a brother,
But would ever protect their fame
Nor would I permit another
By impure act to cast a stain
Upon their fair and honored name,
But he to them a brother! sister! mother!
On yonder book that vow I took, etc.
(gives sign of Electa)

Be those vows your constant care
And may to you such aid be given
That you may ever do, and dare,
All that God's holy laws enjoin,
So that when evening shadows decline
You may be found in heaven.

Worthy Matron continues:
"These vows, and the obligation, are the very heart and soul of our Order. In them we find the essence of true Christianity. Too many of us forget, or fail to remember that the seven ties in this incomparable vow are the ethics of true Christian living. We all know our obligation is perpetual. It cannot be retracted nor taken the second time, but it can be repeated, and each time it may be more firmly impressed upon our memory. Bearing this in mind, let us unite with our Worthy Patron in repeating our obligation."

Organist plays softly, tune, "Annie Laurie"; "Eastern Star Hymn," from "A Song Service," by Helen E. C. Baimer, P. W. G. M., Michigan; W. M. calls up Chapter, officers singing as they advance very slowly and circle around the altar. Song:

"Assembled 'round our altar in adoration 'true
Our sacred obligation to once again renew,
To once again renew, to once again renew,
Our sacred obligation to once again renew."

At close, all kneel slowly with W. P. and W. M. East side in circle around altar. W. P. repeats obligation followed by the members in unison; all rise slowly, simultaneously; organist gives key, all sing third verse of "Eastern Star Hymn":

"Let peace and love surround us, no strife
nor discord mar,
Live in the light and splendor of the beautiful
Eastern Star,
Of the beautiful Eastern Star, of the beautiful
Eastern Star,
Live in the light and splendor of the beautiful
Eastern Star."

At the beginning of the third line all back slowly to stations, reaching the square, stand facing altar until beginning of last line, then turn slowly and march to stations.

W. M. seats Chapter.
Conductress at station:

"The years of man are the looms of God
Let down from the place of the sun.
Wherein we are weaving always
'Till the mystic web is done.
Weaving blindly, but weaving surely,
Each for himself his fate;
We may not know how the right side looks;
We can only weave and wait."

Associate Conductress at station:

As nature in the beauteous spring days makes her supremest effort in bringing forth leaf, and bud, and flower, so let us follow her example and by a renewed devotion to our Order and its teachings bring out in greater beauty those flowers of the Eastern Star—fidelity, constancy, purity, faith, hope and love.

Adah, wearing veil, at her station:

Adah was the daughter. Her color is blue, which stands for fidelity. In the name of the daughters of the Chapter I promise fidelity to our obligation. The blue violet shall be our seal (steps forward, slowly places flowers on open Bible, backs slowly to station, pointing to book says):

On yonder book that vow I took
And I will break it never,
I'll stand by this—and this—and this—
(gives sign of Adah)
Forever! and forever!

Song— First verse "Rock of Ages" or "Be True," by officers.

Ruth at station:

Ruth was the widow. Her color is yellow, which stands for constancy. In the name of the widows of this Chapter I promise constancy to our obligation. The yellow daisy shall be our seal (steps forward and places flowers on the open Bible, backs slowly to station). Pointing to book repeats:

On yonder book that vow I took
And I will break it never,
I'll stand by this—and this—and this—
(gives sign)
Forever! and forever!

Song, by officers; one verse, "Bringing in the Sheaves."

Esther at station:

Esther was the wife. Her color is white signifying light, purity and joy. In the name of the wives of the Chapter I promise purity of thought, and action and a joyful obedience to our obligation (steps forward and places white lilies on Bible, backs slowly to station) points to Bible, saying, the white lily shall be our seal. On yonder book, etc. (gives sign)
Song, one verse, by officers: "Somebody Did a Golden Deed."

Martha at station:

Martha was the sister. Her color is green, represented by the fern, which stands for immortality. In the name of the sisters of the Chapter I promise to make our obligation a road to immortality (steps forward and places fern on open Bible) saying. The fern shall be our seal (backs to station):

On yonder book, the vow, etc. (giving sign of Martha)

Song by officers, "My Faith Looks up to Thee."

Electa at station:

Electa was the mother. Her color is red, which denotes fervency, and is represented by the red rose. In the name of the mothers of the Chapter I promise to be ever fervent in carrying out our obligation. The red rose shall be our seal (steps to altar, places rose on Bible, backs to station) and says:

On yonder book, etc. (gives sign of Electa)

Song—"Jesus, Lover of My Soul."

Worthy Patron at station:

The brethren are members of the Blue Lodge. Blue stands for faithfulness. For ages the Masons have guarded the secret of their obligation faithfully, and as faithfully carried it out. Should we be less sincere in this obligation that means so much to us? We have made a solemn pledge that binds us to each other as closely as the Masons were in the days of old; and today, in the name of the Master Masons of the Chapter, I promise to be ever faithful to our obligation. The cedar shall be our seal (steps forward and places cedar in center of the Bible, backs to station).

Song—"Blest Be the Tie That Binds."

W. M.: Let us unite in prayer. Calls up Chanter: all officers begin singing "O When Shall I see Jesus," tune, "Annie Laurie"; advancing slowly, circle around altar; W. M. and W. P. at stations. Chorus to song:

"Christ is all the world to me,  
And His glory I shall see,  
And before I'd leave my Savior,  
I'll lay me down and dee."

All slowly kneel.

Chaplain: "Our Father who art in Heaven, renew in our hearts this obligation to each other and to Thee; help us to practice it in our lives and to teach it, in the true spirit; help us each day to do something for the good of mankind and for Thine honor and glory; for Thy name's sake. Amen."

Song—"O When You Meet With Trouble," etc. (back slowly to station).
Associate Matron at station:

"So may we live, that when the sun of our existence sinks in night,
Memories sweet of mercies done
May shine our names in memory's light,
And the blest seeds we scattered, bloom
A hundredfold in days to come."

Third verse, song—Tune, "Annie Laurie."

"But now I am a soldier
My Captains gone before,
He's given me my orders,
And bids me not give o'er."

Chorus—
"Christ is all the world to me,
And His glory I shall see.
And before I'd leave my Savior
I'll lay me down and dee."