

It must also be noticed that though the deacons were primarily appointed to *serve tables* (i.e., to distribute the alms of the believers), yet their duties were not confined to that business, for we find S. Stephen expressly referred to as doing great wonders and miracles (Acts vi. 8), and his speech before the high priest, recorded in Acts vii., shows him to have been a great preacher; as was also S. Philip (See Acts viii. 5, 35), and we also see that he baptized: *Ib.* 38.

These duties which the first deacons were called on to perform, the deacons of the Church of England are also called on to perform, and it is therefore that they are set apart for these sacred functions in the presence of the congregation with the like solemnity as were the first deacons of the Christian Church.

I. THE MAKING OF DEACONS—INTRODUCTION AND LITANY.

As it was in the Apostles' days, so it is now—no one can take the office of deacon on himself. He must be called thereto. It is the duty of the Archdeacon or the Bishop's chaplain to take care that none but fit and proper persons be brought to the Bishop to be ordained; and before the ordination service proceeds, the Bishop calls upon any person present knowing of any reason why any person presented for ordination should not be ordained, to declare it.

But the deacon must be called in two ways. He must not only be outwardly called by the proper authority in the Church, but he ought to be inwardly called by the Holy Ghost. He must be firmly persuaded in his heart that he is thus called to the sacred office of the ministry, or he should not venture to seek it.

The Bishop cannot look into the hearts of the candidates; God alone can do that; but the Bishop is required to take all reasonable precautions that no unfit person be ordained, and we are all taught to pray at the Ember seasons, when the ordinations take place, that only fit persons may be chosen (*see Prayers to be used in the Ember weeks*). How earnestly we ought to join in those prayers. If any good reason be alleged against the ordination, it is not to be proceeded with; but if none be alleged, then the Litany with a special petition inserted for those about to be ordained (*That it may please Thee to bless these Thy servants, etc.*), is said or sung.

II. THE COMMUNION AND ORDINATION.

After the Litany, the Communion service is commenced, and after the reading of the Epistle, which is selected with special reference to the office of deacons, the Bishop calls upon the candidate to declare (1) Whether he trusts that he is inwardly moved by the Holy Ghost, and truly called according to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ; (2) whether he believes the Scriptures; and (3) whether he will faithfully discharge the duties of a deacon. Upon satisfactory answers being made, he is then ordained, by the Bishop laying his hands upon the candidate's head, and solemnly giving him authority to execute the office of a deacon. The Communion service is then proceeded with, one of the newly ordained deacons being usually appointed to read the Gospel. It must be noticed that only Bishops have the power or authority to constitute or ordain deacons, or any other order of the ministry, whether it be priest or Bishop. The Apostles, we have seen, ordained the first deacons, and now the Bishops, who have succeeded to their authority, alone are authorized to confer ministerial authority.

The duties of deacons.—The office of deacon is the lowest of the three orders of the Christian ministry. His duties are limited; as in the case of the first deacons, he has authority to distribute the alms of the faithful which may be entrusted to him, to visit the sick and needy, to teach the young, to baptize, to read the Scriptures, to lead the prayers and confessions of the congregations, to assist at the administration of the holy communion, and, if so authorized, to preach. But deacons are not empowered to pronounce the Absolution, to consecrate the sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ, nor yet to pronounce the blessing at the end of the Communion office, the rubrics requiring that all these shall be said by a Priest (or Bishop, if he be present). Sometimes a deacon

never attains to any higher rank in the ministry and in any case he is usually required to serve at least a year as a deacon before he can be advanced to the office of priest (see rubric at the end of Ordination service). Deacons wear the stole over one shoulder and across the breast, instead of hanging over both shoulders, as it is worn by Bishops at present.

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Family Reading.

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Stella awoke the following morning with certain uncomfortable sensations pressing on her mind. When sufficiently aroused from sleep to analyze them, she remembered that her German lesson was very imperfectly prepared; consequently there was some doubt as to her being able to go to Tracy for the spare half-hour after breakfast, as she had proposed; also, that she had, on the preceding evening, seriously displeased Lora, who, no doubt, ere this, had told all to Somerset, so that some sharp rebuke was awaiting her in the dining-room. To avoid, as far as possible, the first annoyance, she hastily snatched up her German book, and would have mastered the lesson, had not the maid just then made her appearance, informing her that it was very late, and she must lose no time in being dressed. There was no help for it; but Herr Schmidt was considerate, and would not visit an imperfect lesson for once with much displeasure. So, comforting herself, Stella took the book in her hand, and went down to breakfast.

Very quietly she glided into the large room, hoping with all her heart that she should escape much notice, or that the offence of the past night had been forgotten. At first she thought that such was the case: neither brother nor sister took more than usual notice of her entrance; and, sitting down in her accustomed place, Stella ate her toast, and drank the cup of coffee which Lora sent her, with a perturbed heart it is true, and with eyes never once lifted from the book before her. She made her meal as short as possible; and, thankful to escape the expected danger, Stella was proceeding with all haste to Tracy's room, when a word from her brother startled and brought her back again.

"Stella," he said, lowering the morning-paper with which he had been engaged, "I wish to speak to you."

No culprit could have felt more painfully the shame and danger of his position than did Stella, as with slow step and drooping gaze she came and stood before her brother.

"I hear you were extremely rude and impertinent to your sister last night," Somerset said, in that same cool tone. And Stella knew, though she dared not look up to encounter them, that those dark eyes were searching her countenance, and reading its every change. She felt her very neck and arms grow crimson beneath her little scarlet jacket. O how unkind of Lora to have told of her, after all!

"What have you to say about it?" asked her brother.

"Nothing," replied Stella faintly.

"Very well. Now, just go and fetch that piece of music you played so beautifully last evening, and let me have the pleasure of hearing it too."

"O Somerset," gasped Stella, with mingled alarm and consternation, and glancing for a moment into his face to see if indeed she heard the words aright; "I can't."

"Can't? It appears you could last night for your own pleasure; and now I choose you should do it for mine. Come, get the piece at once."

Poor Stella! She saw full plainly that her brother was inexorable, and that, come what might, she must obey. With a beating heart, and a choking sensation in her throat which seemed well-nigh to stifle her, she went to the drawing-room to fetch the unfortunate "fantaisie."

There was no danger of not finding it. There it lay, plain and open to view, just as she had left it, with all those runs and turns and puzzling minors through which she had scrambled with such small success on the foregoing night. O if she could but burn it, or tear it into a hundred pieces rather than suffer so dreaded a humiliation. But *that* she dared not. With a desperate grasp she snatched it up, and returned to the dining-room. Somerset had opened the piano, and stood there beside it. Almost Stella felt as though she should sink through the floor; and it seemed to her very dubious whether her fingers would have power to move a single note. Even if Somerset would go back to his seat and listen to her there, it would be better; for that lofty form, with eye and ear so closely ready to criticise and condemn, seemed to strike yet greater dread and incapacity into her fingers. One trembling glance she directed towards her sister, vainly hoping that for once she might stand her friend, and excuse her from the task. But Lora's eyes remained impenetrably fixed upon the book before her. No marble statue could have been more frigid and indifferent.

"Somerset, I wish you would, please, excuse it," Stella murmured as her last resource, hesitating to place the music on the stand before her.

"When I say a thing, I mean it," was the only response; and Somerset took hold of the top of the leaf, ready to turn over.

Stella knew that longer resistance would be of no avail; and a sort of proud desperation succeeded the terrible agitation of the past moments. Since it must be played, she would strain every nerve to do her best; and a kind of unnatural strength seemed imparted both to eye and fingers. With the consciousness of that displeased and searching gaze following every note, Stella often marvelled in after-hours how she got through the piece. Yet through it, however, she did with not half the blunders of the preceding night, but in a style very different to that which Somerset was accustomed to hear her play. When it was finished, her hands sunk into her lap, and the glance of her down-cast eyes followed them.

"And that is how you played this piece last night, before a room-full of people! I wonder at your effrontery," said Somerset coolly, taking up the music, and turning over the leaves one by one.

No answer came from Stella; for that strange choking in the throat seemed to prevent her utterance.

"Tell me," said her brother. "You really ventured to commit yourself and your sister in this manner; and all out of spite and naughtiness?"

"She has played it well this morning, in comparison with last night," remarked Lora, who had been really astonished at the difference.

"Very well," continued Somerset. "Now, Stella, you will please to take this piece of music, and go to the library, and not come out until you know it. If you stay there all day, I don't care: it will be a punishment to you for your naughtiness. I don't blame you for not knowing the piece, because for the second time of playing you have done it very well; but, if you think I am going to allow this sort of impertinence towards your sister and towards the guests that come to my house, you are mistaken. Do you understand?"

"Yes," whispered Stella; "but, Somerset, Herr Schmidt is coming."

"Well, you will go to him, of course, when you are called. Any one else?"

"The drawing-master," explained Lora, "shall she go to him, too?"

"Yes, certainly. I don't wish her other lessons to be hindered; only that nothing else shall come in the way; and to-night before your sister and I go out I shall expect to hear the piece. We don't leave before nine o'clock, do we, Lora?"

"No," replied the sister.

With an aching troubled heart, Stella left the room. Another whole day to be kept away from Tracy! That was the chiefest sorrow; though her brother's cold harsh words were hard enough to bear. "If it were not for Tracy, I wish I could die," she murmured passionately to herself: "there is nothing but unkindness and wretchedness for me here, and it gets worse every day."

In crossing the hall she came upon her aunt, Lady Trevanion, just coming down to breakfast. "My dear, where are you going?"