

Committed to his Charge

grey walls of the church, and spoke of "distemper" and "conventional designs" and carved oak in a way most distressing to the wardens; he referred nearly everything to his wife and consulted her convenience before committing himself to any plan; he levelled the lawn with innumerable loads of loam, had it sodded, and on the green expanse set a white net, stretched between stakes, which puzzled the curious and scandalized the knowing; and altogether he conducted himself in a manner new to Slowford, doubly disconcerting in a clergyman. He brought with him three dogs, and his study walls were hung with a secular-looking assortment of fishing-tackle and fire-arms. The old Rector had been almost the cause of a scandal through a fancy for botany, geology, and entomology; but compared with sporting gear and noisy dogs, his beetles and weeds were evidences of piety. Furthermore, Mrs. Huntley was a very pretty woman, and it was whispered that she had a small independent fortune. Almost before the people realized the meaning of the overturn, the new Rector had read himself in.

However the people may have thought that