

Committed to his Charge

to let slip; so, little by little, with many diplomatic beginnings made by those who were determined to give things an airing, the Rector, his sermons and his views, the Rector's wife, their children, the Rectory, were put through the mill. At times conversation drifted into other channels, but inevitably it came back to the subject of all absorbing interest.

Mrs. Lyte, small, fair, and kindly, held her needle up high to thread it, looked along the line of her spectacles, focussed the steel and put the thread through after many ineffectual dabs.

"He seems awfully in love with his wife."

"Whose wife else would he be in love with?" snapped Mrs. Forby, the dragon of the parish, and out-and-out the best and most useful woman in it—but also owning a tongue from which people turned instinctively as from a flame.

"Nobody's, nobody's," Mrs. Lyte hastened to explain. Then a human kind of wish for retaliation made her add, "but it is more than can be said for every man."

This meant that Mr. Forby was not as attentive as he might be to his wife, and that everyone knew it. But Mrs. Forby had a bold way of her own of checkmating.