

## THE CONVENTIONALISTS

I reached Crowston station at about four, and the house a few minutes later, and waited in the hall a little while, while Mrs. Banister was found. Then I was conducted out to the cedar tree where tea was laid.

Really these people were charmingly friendly and broad-minded. There was Harold, looking very spruce and cheerful in grey flannel with a rose in his button-hole, who handed me tea and hot cakes; there was Mrs. Banister, very particular as to whether I took two lumps of sugar or one: we had quite a pleasant little argument as to whether the general sugariness of a first cup did not make sugar in a second cup unnecessary, if proportions were to be observed. There was Mr. Banister himself, in grey tweed, who pressed upon me a cigar after tea, describing to me with considerable though dignified humour how he obtained them through a friend. There were one or two other people there, too, of no importance—I have even forgotten their names—but they were nice, though suspicious. Mr. Mortimer was there, in a black coat and waistcoat with white flannel trousers. A racquet lay beside his chair. He regarded me as one strange dog regards another—he morally walked on tiptoe, stiff-legged, with his frill expanded; but his words were smooth as oil; and he seemed to me a very earnest and sincere man. And, lastly, there was Lady Brasted, who gave me an understanding look whenever our eyes met.

Mrs. Banister, Harold, and myself strolled slowly