

THE CONVENTIONALISTS

each explains and understands perfectly the other. It is not that one knows the answer to everything, but rather that there is an answer to everything so adequate and yet so transcendent that there is room for nothing but content. That man is happy who finds it so in his course of life ; it is the best sign of a fulfilled vocation ; but the souls of Contemplatives, I think, have it more completely and continuously than the souls of any others. Algy, at least, had found it.

I said good-bye to him after a few minutes ; and had a word or two with the Prior before leaving.

Then I went silently out of the gate, with a huge envy in my heart, and climbed into the dog-cart that waited.

All the way in the cross-country train journey to Crowston I was thinking of Algy. I had to wait an hour or two at Brighton, and still, as I walked in the hot streets, I thought of Algy. I was thinking over all the times I had seen him since our first meeting in the London streets, under the mystical dawn so long ago. That dawn, surely, had been full of omen. Even then he had shown, though it was only beneath the stress of a very sentimental and unreal human love, that instinct for solitude that had led him now so far. I had patronised him then as he walked beside me in his white frieze coat ; I was far from patronising him now in his white frieze of another cut. I suppose it is rather superstitious to dwell on such details ; but I am not quite sure.