

THE CONVENTIONALISTS

"I suppose so," I said. "And Sybil Markham will do very well, from what I've seen of her."

"She's charming," said Algy. "Then the engagement's recognised?"

I told him yes; but that the marriage would be delayed until Algy's own profession.

"And Miss Maple?" he said quite simply.

"I have not seen her," I said diplomatically, "since I was at Crowston last year"; and he was content with that, fortunately.

I asked him then about the life; and he described it to me, with the special regulations made for novices, the manner in which they were particularly looked after and guarded against depression and morbidity: he spoke of his novice-master with affection.

"And what do they say of your own prospects?" I asked.

He smiled.

"They say nothing at all," he said.

"But you are happy?"

Then his eyes opened a little; and while he spoke, it was as if the old Algy were almost back again. His humanity slid back into himself as he spoke of the extraordinary content that had come to him. He implied that he had been initiated—that he understood the point of things at last. . . . I knew what he meant. There come moments to every man, I suppose, when this is so—when every faculty, so to speak, is at rest in its object—when personality fits life as a key a lock, when life closes gently round personality, and