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THE CONCLUSION OF THE MATTER 331

And here we will drop the curtain upon the commonplace drama of Dinglewood. Our characters were not saints or heroes at the beginning, and they are not saints or heroes at the close, but just ordinary middle-class men and women, living in an ordinary Midland village, and striving—according to their lights—to do their several duties in the various states of life to which they have been called.

Claude and Dagmar are happy in the prospect of the future—Luke Forrester is peaceful in the contemplation of the past. Mrs. Peppercorn and Mr. and Mrs. Sprott continue to pursue their daily avocations with a cheerful courage; while Theophilus and Mrs. Mawer and Miss Skinner enjoy their own especial grievances in their own peculiar way. Octavius Rainbrow is fast making his mark in the world of journalism: and Mr. Duncan is living again in his nephew's career. Here we leave them all as we found them—none absent except Charlotte Fallowfield and Amelia Tovey. They two are already fulfilling life's purposes and serving their Maker in other and wider spheres; and so are the happiest and most blessed of all.

In the centre of Dinglewood Park—not far from the old Roman road—there stands a house of rest for weary pilgrims, where they may take their ease for a little while before they pass onwards, across the river to the land which is no longer so very far off. Nature and art have combined to render this spot beautiful exceedingly, so as to make it a fitter preparation for those glories which eye hath not seen nor ear heard, and yet which the pilgrims are now so nearly approaching. The life in this house of rest is conventual in its mysticism and regularity; but the inmates are hampered by no dedication and bound by no vows; it is fashioned upon the life at Little Gidding in the seventeenth century, and has all the peace of a convent without its austeritv. Here