

circumstances will, so to speak, "save" a great deal out of what in the whole was tiresome, and both at the time and afterwards be tender over queer little angles and corners in a life that on the whole is most uncongenial to her. Certainly it was so with Eleanor Ramsden, of the uncertain profile and eighteen years. It would be hard to fashion for this unfortunate young woman a life of which the general conditions were less naturally congenial, but to say that she hated her life here would be to leave out of account the hundred little crannies and caves in which her soul made a garden for itself. These little infinitesimal gardens, it is true, were ringed about by sandy places, which often seemed illimitable, but her general unsuitableness to her surroundings was sensibly qualified by them.

But T. Ferris and his works, it must be confessed, partook more of the nature of the illimitable sand, and when the church emptied of the footsteps resonant on the encaustic tiles, it was with a very strong sense of impatience that she began a further study of the anthem. The sordidness, moreover, of such a study was accentuated by the fact that she could easily have composed without trouble an anthem quite as good as his. It needed only, as she thought to herself, a knowledge of the key of C, and a more than blissful ignorance of what could be done with it. She herself, all undeveloped as she was, was artistic to the end of her finger-tips, and perhaps more particularly there. As far as her life had manifested herself in the few years when they had worked in company together, it would have been altogether premature to prophesy for her the possession of anything like genius, because an essential part of genius is not so much the capacity for taking pains as the capacity for being educated. It has, even as she had, fine perception and sensibility, which by instinct, so it seems, sort the gold from the dross, but there is no knowing, while yet the nature is immature, whether it is capable of so being bred and mined that it will itself produce the precious metal. Exquisite sensibility is not enough; sensibility by itself never produces more than the pale flower, perfect though it may be, of criticism. It was a frowning critic, at any rate, that investigated the anthem. She was a little short-sighted, and her dark-grey eyes had that slightly lost, slightly unfocussed look that is characteristic of those who find it difficult to see very distinctly. Close over them ran a very narrow line of dark eyebrow, and above a low forehead shone the only beauty that had as yet definitely