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Obliterating Middle-Class Culpability: Sarah Grand's New Woman Short Fiction
in George Bentley's *Temple Bar*

Nicole Perry Clawson

A thesis submitted to the faculty of
Brigham Young University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts

Jamie Horrocks, Chair
Leslee Thorne-Murphy
Lorraine Wood

Department of English
Brigham Young University

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ABSTRACT

Obliterating Middle-Class Culpability: Sarah Grand's New Woman Short Fiction in George Bentley's *Temple Bar*

Nicole Perry Clawson
Department of English, BYU
Master of Arts

Scholars interested in the popular Victorian periodical *Temple Bar* have primarily focused on the editorship of George Augustus Sala, under whom the journal paradoxically began delivering controversial content to conservative middle-class readers. But while the *Temple Bar*'s sensation fiction and social realism have already been considered, critics have not yet examined *Temple Bar*'s New Woman fiction, which was published during the last decade of the 19th century and George Bentley's reign as editor-in-chief. While functioning as editor-in-chief, Bentley sought to adhere to the dictates found in the 1860 prospectus, to "inculcate thoroughly English sentiment: respect for authority, attachment to the Church, and loyalty to the Queen."

The *Temple Bar* seems an odd publication venue for the audacious New Woman writer Sarah Grand. And yet, Grand published several short stories in *Temple Bar* under the editorship of Bentley. Knowing Bentley's infamous editorial hatchet work, we might assume that he would cut from Grand's writing any unsavory bits of traditional New Woman content. Instead, a comparison of Grand's *Temple Bar* stories, "Kane, A Soldier Servant" and "Janey, A Humble Administrator," with their later unedited, republished versions (found in Grand's *Our Manifold Nature*) suggests that Bentley had a different editorial agenda. This analysis of Grand's fiction demonstrates that it was not New Woman subjects that Bentley found objectionable but the culpability her texts placed on the upper-middle class for their failure to act on behalf of the lower classes. Examining Bentley's removal of this material thus sheds new light on the dangers of New Woman literature as perceived by its Victorian audiences.

Keywords: Sarah Grand, George Bentley, *Our Manifold Nature*, *Temple Bar*, New Woman, Victorian periodical press, "Kane, A Soldier Servant," "Janey, A Humble Administrator"

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Introduction

Sarah Grand's relationship with Victorian publisher George Bentley was acrimonious, to say the least. In 1889, Grand wrote to Bentley's father, publisher Richard Bentley, about George, "I believe the Editor of the *Temple Bar* [Bentley's most famous periodical] is an ogre who lives alone in a dark cavern, eats underdone babes, and growls when anybody approaches. Probably he makes those 'returned with thanks' documents out of the baby clothes" (qtd. in Forward 22). New Woman Grand's perception of Bentley might have had something to do with the fact that long before Grand became a household name as a writer of politically charged prose, she began pitching her writing to the conservative, middle-class *Temple Bar*. Trying, perhaps, to capitalize on the "growing demand for more-exotic story settings" of the 1870s and desperate to gain financial independence so she might leave her unhappy marriage, Grand began submitting work to Bentley when she was just seventeen: "I sent the first [story] from Singapore, the next from Hong Kong, and some from Japan, and suffered agonies once they had gone" (qtd. in Bonnell 153). Regrettably, as Marilyn Bonnell observes, Grand's "suffering was compounded by an ever-increasing pile of rejection slips" (153).

This was not terribly surprising, given the fact that even in her early years, Grand was an incendiary figure. In 1894, writer and editor W. T. Stead wrote, "Up to [the] barred and bolted door [of conventional morality] Sarah Grand stepped with the heroism of forlorn hope, carrying with her a bomb of dynamite, which she exploded with wonderful results" (68). Grand's depictions of reality and her indictment of a decrepit social order emerged from the blunt discussions about controversial issues showcased in her literature, which attempted to shock or awaken readers. Grand met the "Woman Question" with a new frankness that highlighted such issues as marriage customs, education for women, and the sexual double standard. She gained a

notorious reputation from candidly addressing these topics. In her obituary, *The Times* stated, “In former years Ouida, Rhoda Broughton and others shocked their readers in order to amuse them; the writers of the Sarah Grand school shocked theirs in order to improve them” (“Sarah” 7). It was with this tactic that Grand hoped to engender social change.

But *Temple Bar* was not, in the late nineteenth century, the kind of journal that courted authors intent on shocking their readers. Priced at just one penny and thus affordable for the middle classes (North), *Temple Bar* was founded in 1860 by John Maxwell with George Augustus Henry Sala working as editor. Sala’s 1860 preface claimed that his intention for the magazine was to inculcate “thoroughly English sentiment—respect for authority, attachment to the Church, and loyalty to the Queen” (“Temple Bar”). Sala (and later Edmund Yates, who edited the journal after Sala) briefly attempted to expand *Temple Bar*’s ideological position, exploring controversial social issues and publishing a few bohemian authors.¹ But when Richard Bentley & Son bought the magazine in 1866 and the “Son,” George Bentley, assumed editorship, the journal made a reactionary about-face. George Bentley quickly brought the magazine back to its original conservatism. By 1867, “[t]he magazine had come full circle, and was now producing the same conservative material as Sala’s first edition” (Blake 204). Bentley fought to portray

a domestic romance of English life and manners—and of love; for what is life without love, by ‘an eminent hand.’ An experienced reviewer will take the most popular book of the season, and give us a fair and honest description of its contents and its merits. A poet

¹ Blake claims that Sala “surround[ed] himself with a team of contributors hand-picked from his own bohemian circle, London journalists whose political and social outlook were at odds with those of a family readership” (Blake 185). Sala’s purposeful inclusion of Thomas Hood’s “Song of the Shirt,” for example, which “attacked and shocked bourgeois complacency,” was an indicator to his public that the magazine would “not pander to middle-class respectability but would highlight the plight of the poor, and stress the fluidity of class relationships” (Blake 198). Sala continued to run *Temple Bar* until 1863 when he accepted a post for the *Daily Telegraph* as a reporter for the American Civil War (204). At that point, Yates assumed the position as editor, continuing Sala’s social crusade by publishing works on the “conditions of the work-houses or refuges for the homeless” until *Tinsley’s Magazine* offered him editorship (“Temple Bar”).

will sound his lyre, and the social essayist, the biographer, the philosopher, the traveller, and the pleasant talker on the engrossing topics of the day, shall each find his allotted space. (“Temple Bar”)

More importantly, Bentley adhered to this dictum: “[a]s for politics, there will not be any” (“Temple Bar”).

Despite her knowledge of this and her personal disdain for Bentley, the highly-political Grand continued to submit her fiction to *Temple Bar*, and in 1891, her persistence finally paid off. Bentley accepted “Kane, A Soldier Servant,” the first of four Grand stories that he would publish in *Temple Bar* in the 1890s. If it is surprising that Grand would persist in sending Bentley her work for twenty years, it is even more surprising that Bentley would, at last, place her fictional dynamite in his “thoroughly English” periodical. That he did so causes us to reflect on a number of conclusions scholars have made about New Woman fiction and its middle-class Victorian readers.

Scholars of Victorian reading have long established that middle-class readers (especially female readers) were discouraged from reading literature that could be seen as subversive of social and domestic values.² Yet Grand’s inclusion in *Temple Bar* suggests that modern notions of which texts struck Victorian readers as inflammatory and which texts were acceptable may need to be readjusted. Critics have predominantly concluded that the most salient threat posed by the New Woman was sexual and, secondarily, political (Ardis, *New Women* 51). Ardis writes that New Woman novels “model[ed] ‘dangerous,’ sexually degenerate, behavior” for its

² See, for example, Ann Heilmann’s “Regen(d)eration” in *New Woman Fiction* and Ann Ardis’s *New Women, New Novels: Feminism and Early Modernism*.

Victorian readers to follow (*New Women* 51). By considering the publication and editorial histories of two of Grand's *Temple Bar* stories, we find that this was not always the case.³

Bentley was famous for his heavy editorial hand, and he certainly edited Grand's "Janey, A Humble Administrator" (1891) and "Kane, A Soldier Servant" (1891)⁴ to make them "suitable" for *Temple Bar*'s middle-class audience. Stephanie Eggermont and Elke D'hoker consider some of the edits made by Bentley to these and other of Grand's short stories, but they conclude that his edits are benign, done primarily to make the stories shorter. The stories themselves, according to Eggermont and D'hoker, did not contain any "ideas of unusual import" that might have motivated Bentley to suppress sections for ideological or political reasons (35). They instead suggest that Grand "allopathically" "gilded" the unpleasant aspects of her stories herself with humor and sparkling rhetoric to help them slide down the throats of middle-class readers (35).

However, so much un-gilded content remains evident in the periodical versions of Grand's *Temple Bar* stories that this conclusion needs to be examined more carefully. In doing so, I have found that Bentley's edits evince a clear editorial agenda, but not the one that might be expected by modern readers used to thinking about the threat of New Women like Grand in sexual and political terms alone. In his edits, Bentley left untouched the sexually and politically incendiary themes, characters, and plot points that New Woman writers were endlessly criticized for including in their writing. Instead, he cut out sections of the stories that make unfortunate social circumstances the result of middle-class failures. Laurel Brake argues that although we can

³ "Boomellen," Grand's fourth piece published in *Temple Bar*, does take up a traditional New Woman topic (eugenics), but its protagonist is male and so it offers a different perspective from the three female-centered stories: "Janey," "Eugenia," and "Kane."

⁴ It is difficult to know when she originally wrote these stories and when Bentley accepted them (Bonnell 154). Bonnell asserts that one can only guess at one of the pieces in *Our Manifold Nature*, "Ah Man," originally published in *Woman at Home* in October 1894, the content of which, Bonnell claims, was collected when Grand was traveling the East with her husband during 1873-78 (154).

know little about the reception of periodical works by their readers, “editors and contributors do indicate how they perceive their audiences” by means of their editorial practices (18). We can therefore assume that what Bentley found too objectionable to include in *Temple Bar* was not the New Woman’s threat to Victorian notions of gender and sexuality—the threat discussed most volubly by Victorian opponents of the New Woman and by modern feminist critics—but her threat to Victorian notions of class and class responsibility.

A close examination of “Kane, A Soldier Servant” and “Janey, A Humble Administrator” and the editing Bentley subjected them to thus reveals that for Bentley, and perhaps for his conservative middle-class readers, the threat posed by the New Woman was more about class than about sexuality, equality, or political representation. Although many middle-class conservative papers characterized the New Woman as a dangerously “epicene creature” (qtd. in Richardson and Willis 13), others afforded her space to expound her politics to the very readers who would seem most opposed to her. Grand was determined to occupy this space, and the manner in which Bentley allowed her to do so reveals a cultural narrative as much about the anxieties of class as about gender or sexuality. By comparing Grand’s 1894 collection of stories, *Our Manifold Nature*, with the versions Bentley edited for his journal, we can see that Bentley repeatedly and deliberately excises Grand’s accusations of the middle-class: their laziness, their lack of empathy, and their unwillingness to help those below them. His removal of these topics, repeated often enough to be considered an editorial strategy (at least with regard to Grand), alongside his preservation of the more shocking elements of the fiction suggests that Bentley viewed New Women literature as a threat to social hierarchies more than to sexual practices. The cultural exchange between Bentley and Grand thus elucidates the neglected class aspect of the New Woman’s agenda.

Sarah Grand and the Periodical Press

New Woman writers had a dichotomous relationship with the press: the press was at once a place to circulate New Woman ideals as well as a place to injure the feminist agenda. The term “New Woman” and its connection with feminist sexual politics was first contested and then solidified through its use in various periodicals (like *The North American Review*, *Punch* and *The Fortnightly Review*). The fiery 1894 correspondence of Grand and Ouida [Maria Louise Ramé] in *The North American Review* is marked as the genesis of the moniker “New Woman.”⁵ Because their discussion, which attempted to define the identifying features of the New Woman, took place between the pages of a periodical, New Woman writers looked to the periodical press as “the heart of New Woman writing and publishing practices” (Palmer 160). It gave these authors “an interactive and dynamic public voice” in forwarding their agenda (160). Feminists used the press as a place from which they could disseminate their message and create a support network for other likeminded women (Tusan 169).⁶ Grand and other New Women wrote pieces that were “offered with creativity, wit, and sparkling rhetoric” to “entertain” and educate their readers, but their first goal was always the promotion of a New Woman agenda (Broomfield 252–53).

Yet even as New Woman writers used the press to promote their ideals, the press created another representation of the New Woman, one that harmed their cause. Opponents put forth in the press an image of the New Woman as a “mannish brute, towering threateningly (in both size and stature) over men and flouting social convention” (Tusan 169). In the press, the New Woman upended traditional gender roles by engaging in “education, politics, and sport” (170).

⁵ Grand believed that the New Woman “represented a superior breed of liberal-minded women” (Tusan 171), while Ouida twisted the connotations of the phrase, claiming that New Women were “unmitigated bores” who believed that they held the responsibility to change the world (Jordan 20).

⁶ New Women created periodicals such as *The Woman’s Herald* specifically to promote their cause (Tusan 169)

Punch, the pages of which are rife with negative images and prose about the New Woman, variously called her “nagging” (Milliken and Asher 252), void of “honesty, truthfulness, wisdom, and mirth” (Burnand and Milliken 15), and “The Revolting Woman” (Burnand 39). In the *North American Review*, Ouida called the New Woman “odious and baneful,” and a lover of corruption (615). And Ella W. Winston, in *Forum*, said she was vacillating in her principles (“for what she asserts to-day she will deny to-morrow”) and a “stranger to logic” (186).

Grand herself had a conflicted relationship with periodicals and periodical writers. Grand knew the press’s power in promoting one’s agenda, yet she also knew its ability to disfigure ideas. Choosing to use periodical publication to her advantage, Grand made deliberate use of the press as her own bully pulpit. Charles Whitby, looking at a “bundle of press cuttings” sitting on his desk before him, wrote that her “memorable” speeches printed in journals like the *Pall Mall Gazette* and *Lady’s World* are “appropriately described” as “Lay Sermons” (qtd. in Forward and Heilmann, *Sex* 340). In a 1900 interview, Grand asked Athol Forbes if he thought she had “done any good in the world?” through her writing, to which he responded, “I wish the law would allow me to invite you to occupy the pulpit in Gorleston Church” (qtd. in Forward and Heilmann, *Sex* 259). On the other hand, Grand fully understood how manipulative the press could be. In 1898, she wrote in *Lady’s Realm*, “Where is this New Woman . . . this Gorgon set up by the snarly who impute to her the faults of both sexes while denying her the charm of either—where is she to be found, if she exist at all? For my own part, until I make her acquaintance I shall believe her to be the finest work of the imagination the newspapers have yet produced” (Grand, “The New Woman” 466). Later she lamented to Forbes that the New Woman was “a very different being from the caricature of femininity now presented to us under that name. . . . I never could have meant the vulgar creature who now passes for the approved type of new woman. . . .

That is not the idea I meant, but that is the idea people have, and it is difficult to dislodge it now” (qtd. in Forward and Helimann, *Sex* 259). In addition to attacking the New Woman figure generally, the press attacked Grand specifically even as she used it for her advantage. In an interview with Sarah Tooley in *Young Women* in 1897, Grand confessed to being “much struck by the persistent and vicious misrepresentation of me and my views by people who do not like my opinions, —and in this matter some sections of the press have not been without blame” (qtd. in Forward and Heilmann, *Sex* 243).⁷

One place in particular that the press was especially acerbic was in its reviews of *Our Manifold Nature*. The press excoriated *Our Manifold Nature*, the short fiction collection that houses the “unmutilated” versions of “Kane” and “Janey.” In opposition to Forbes and Whitby, who generally liked the book, other periodical critics attacked Grand’s preachiness and didactic tendencies. The *Bookman* called her stories “[s]econd or third-rate” (“Our Manifold” 56), complaining that she considered herself an artist but should remain a “teacher” as she “takes herself and her mission seriously . . . the first requisite of a teacher; she has the courage of her opinions which are not too much in advance of the time to make her a social martyr or a voice crying in the wilderness” (56). Here, the *Bookman* is, in essence, claiming that Grand’s work is not of the quality to give Grand the esteemed title of “artist” and not avant-garde or new in any way. In addition to writing that “Mrs. Grand’s stories are not art at all,” the *Saturday Review* remarked that the “pontifical solemnity” of *Our Manifold Nature*’s preface “would probably be excused in the Charge of an Archbishop” but is out of place in Grand’s collection of short stories (“Novels” 301). The *Critic* complained that Grand’s moralizing in the middle of her narratives

⁷ In response to the negative attention she received in the press, Grand comments in *Lady’s World* (1900) that reviewers have a fluctuating nature, that their “reviews go from one extreme to the other” (qtd. in Forward and Heilmann, *Sex* 260). Moreover, she claims that they hardly read those novels they criticize, but, more importantly, she says that “a good long article lashing the book and its writers” is the best type of advertisement (260).

ruins the “strength of [her] observation” (“Our Manifold” 232). But perhaps most damning is the observation this critic makes regarding her form: “she has no more sense of form than regulated the March Hare’s Tea-Party” (232). The *Athenaeum* wrote that *Our Manifold Nature* veers far from the merits of *The Heavenly Twins* (Grand’s 1893 novel) which, “in spite of obvious temptations, steered commendably clear of the vice of preaching” (“Our Manifold” 576). This reviewer goes on to comment that her stories were “really little more than tracts, exhibiting all the splendid disregard of probability and the irritating attitude of superiority which characterize that form of instruction” (576). It is clear that although the press did not regard her work as first-rate, what they really could not abide were Grand’s didactic leanings.

Even though these reviews in the *Athenaeum*, the *Critic*, and the *Bookman* locate the discussion of Grand’s New Woman literature among highbrow readers, Grand and many other New Woman writers actually aimed their work at the middle classes. This targeting of conservative and moderate readers is unexpected, but as Heilmann explains, Grand “invoke[d] the values of a traditional readership in order to radicalise it” (Heilmann, *Strategies* 17). Heilmann claims that Grand wrote for “married, non-militant, middle-class women” and at the same time addressed women who were “career-oriented” and “materially constrained” (16). Thus, Heilmann posits, Grand writes for the everywoman. Understanding that the periodical press often “foregrounded female experience and appealed to women’s feelings,” Grand and other proto-feminist Victorian writers used this venue to “improve the body politic and domestic power structures of the state” (17). This conflicts with what scholars like Broomfield have written, assuming that the periodical press was “hostile to their ideas, and if not hostile, malignantly indifferent” and that “editors censored the women’s rights movement because it was too radical or because they had personal misgivings about it” (256). While this was certainly true in some

cases, in others, New Woman writers found the middle-class mainstream press, rather than the feminist periodical press, to be the domain of the everywoman they sought to court.

Grand's desire to target middle-class readers makes her interest in getting published in *Temple Bar* a logical choice. Bentley's success with this journal, owing to his "shrewd editorial sense" and his ability to attract famous authors,⁸ was due to knowing his middle-class audience and tailoring the content of his journal to its needs (De Baun 9). When Bentley took over as editor of *Temple Bar*, his main effort was to return the magazine back to its founding conservatism. This is immediately made manifest on the revised title page of *Temple Bar*. Bentley changed the title page in 1866 to include the statement "Publishers in Ordinary to Her Majesty the Queen" and a "Fide et Fiducia" ("in faith and trust") crest (see fig. 1 and fig. 2). The latter placed emphasis on the name of the editor as well as on designating the readership. Bentley promoted literature that was not "too searching or subtle for his audience" and although potentially inflammatory issues such as religion and science were discussed, they were very little touched upon (North).

However, Bentley wasn't just dishing out milquetoast to his readers. Julia Chavez argues that *Temple Bar* "promoted active, engaged reading practices rather than fostering the kind of mindless consumption that would turn its readers into fiction addicts" (126). But this desire conflicted with Bentley's equally strong need to be a "keeper of mid-Victorian standards (Gettmann 312). Bentley viewed himself as a kind of sentinel for *Temple Bar*, and this entailed what contemporaries of Grand irately called his "bowdlerization" of their work (Robinson 147). Author Robert Black, remarking on Bentley's edits of his work in *Temple Bar*, claimed that he "felt insufficiently respected as both man and author" and took "affront at being 'corrected'—let

⁸ Contributors included: Anthony Trollope, Robert Louis Stevenson, Edmund Gosse, George Gissing, Mark Twain, Hans Christian Andersen, Ivan Turgenev, Arthur Conan Doyle, Wilkie Collins, and Marie Corelli (De Baun 9).

alone by a ‘Slasher’” (Robinson 151). In another instance, Bentley hacked his way through George Gissing’s *Mrs. Grundy’s Enemies*, putting “a mark against anything of which [he] disapprove[d], as likely to shock the public by its too great reality” (qtd. in Gettmann 308).⁹ Bentley thought this text contained “too much of the low element” and that it was “given too nakedly” (308). So while he did want *Temple Bar* readers to be intellectually engaged and constantly mindful, Bentley did not hesitate to help them along by omitting from his journal “everything which would give offence” (309).

It is not surprising, then, knowing Bentley’s history as a “Slasher,” that he would not publish Grand’s short fiction without extensive revision. Even Grand must have assumed that would be the case. Thus, the fact that he edited content out is not particularly compelling. What is interesting, however, is what Bentley chose to remove. Comparing Grand’s *Temple Bar* pieces with those found in *Our Manifold Nature* highlights what Bentley found, and what he perceived a middle-class Victorian public would find, objectionable in New Woman literature. Bentley personally edited four of the six Grand stories that were published in *Temple Bar* in the 1890s. In the preface of *Our Manifold Nature*, Grand expresses her feelings about Bentley’s changes. She states that her stories are “experiments, and they now appear for the first time, unmutated as well as carefully edited” (v). In their periodical venues, she notes, they were published in a “more or less unsatisfactory condition,” having been “mutilated” in terms of content (iii). Without stating his name directly, Grand claims that Bentley “remove[d] from them any idea of unusual import,” cutting out text that did not fit his journal’s ideological platform (iii). Journals like *Temple Bar*, she writes, are stale and “unprogressive, neither leading nor following, but

⁹ Another piece of Gissing’s that was heavily edited by Bentley was “Phoebe’s Fortune,” published in *Temple Bar* under the title “Phoebe” in 1884. Barbara Rawlinson states that “it is not surprising that [Bentley] balked at the idea of publishing, unabridged, a story that featured two young women engaged in a drinking bout, but unfortunately the excisions merely rendered the piece colourless. The censor altered the whole tenor of the tale” (16).

continuing to offer us the kind of thing that pleased our parents” (iii). She vents her anger in prophesying that they will ultimately “expire in a resolute effort to resist any attempt to induce them to air the grievances, touch upon the interests, or meet the special demands generally of the present generation” (iii).¹⁰

Grand’s “demands,” as evident in her *Temple Bar* stories, were largely feminist, but it was not her feminist material that Bentley found too “dangerous” (iii) to publish in his journal. This stayed in. Instead, he removed the largest chunks of Grand’s texts when they pointed an accusatory finger at the failings of the middle classes. Laurel Brake has described the extent to which Victorian periodical fiction was “open to control by the character of the journal and its editor” (8), and Grand’s stories—particularly “Kane, A Soldier Servant” and “Janey, A Humble Administrator”—evinced just this. Bentley’s editing of these stories demonstrates that while a conservative middle-class journal like *Temple Bar* could embrace a certain amount of gender-related controversy, it simply could not allow the attack a New Woman writer like Grand was making on the strictures of social class in Britain.

Grand’s Stories in *Temple Bar*

One gets a glimpse of Bentley’s editorial agenda by looking closely at Grand’s first story published in *Temple Bar*, “Kane, A Soldier Servant.” In this story, published July 1891 in volume 92, Grand tells of Kane, a forty-year-old Irishman living in a British army depot in Lancashire. Kane is unable to carry out his duties as a soldier and soldier-servant due to his drunkenness and brawling. As the sixteen-page tale begins, Kane has secured work as a servant in the unnamed narrator’s household as well as maintaining a part-time position as soldier. As

¹⁰ *Temple Bar* did unexpectedly expire shortly after Bentley published Grand’s stories. Bentley passed away the following year in May 1895, due to an attack of angina pectoris (Patten). The periodical struggled for few more years after Richard Bentley II sold out to Macmillan and Co. in 1898 (Patten), finally folding in 1906 (North).

Kane is unable to let go of his wicked ways, it affects his work. One Christmas, Kane reports for duty “worse for drink” and sporting a “black eye” (Grand, “Kane” 370). After serving the family for over two years, Kane’s fellow servants complain, claiming that “he did nothing, and made himself objectionable, and they would rather do his work than have him about” (370), and Kane is ultimately fired. The narrator (an upper-middle-class woman) hears little of Kane after his departure, until Kane’s wife asks for the narrator’s help at Kane’s deathbed. The story ends with the narrator placing flowers around Kane’s dead body, mourning that she was “[t]oo late” to help him (374).

Grand’s “Kane” includes all of the socially uncomfortable things typical of New Woman fiction. It includes a forward, strong female character who is pitted against a man characterized by drunkenness, bigamy, and brawling. The narrator embodies many of the characteristics found in a New Woman protagonist. She is independently minded, has a penchant for helping the lower classes, and puts herself in physical danger (going into the slums) to do so (371). She is, in other words, a classic New Woman heroine: an “intelligent, bold, unconventional woman with advanced notions” (Bonnell 154). Moreover, the narrator is invested in saving man (in this instance, Kane) from himself, a central aim of the New Woman endeavor at the end of the nineteenth century.¹¹ Also, the short story is imbued with the traditional New Woman type of gritty realism. Grand does not shy away from depicting scenes of drunkenness and poverty. This realism occasionally jars against the piece’s melodrama and its didactic tone, other standard features of New Woman periodical fiction.

¹¹ Interestingly, the man the narrator aims to save is, in a way, named after a notorious fallen man. According to the tale, Kane was christened “Keene.” Yet because of his Irish tongue, he “mispronounced it” “Cain” and “[s]ociety, reluctant to brand him with the accursed appellation of Adam’s eldest son, compromised the matter by spelling it Kane” (Grand, *Our Manifold* 204).

Also, typical of New Woman writing, conventional narrative values get inverted by Grand in the tale. Although a member of the lower class, a drunk, and a bigamist, Kane is touted as hero at the conclusion of Grand's piece because ultimately he personifies loyalty and selflessness. Grand ends her story by recognizing all that is socially wrong with Kane: "Poor Kane!—poor ignorant Kane! [I]mmoral old Irish reprobate, liar, drunkard, inciter to bigamy, would-be suicide" (Grand, "Kane" 374). Yet the narrator looks past all of those indiscretions, laments his death, and highlights his most noble points. She exclaims that Kane is "dead for want of the bread he had given to his rival's children, dead defending them and the woman he loved—faithful, honest, uncomplaining, considerate to the last; his poor, decrepit body gone to its hard-earned rest, but the chivalrous soul so long concealed from the world that wants words, ah!" (374). Through the narrator, Grand ultimately lauds Kane by giving him traits traditionally held for the "quality" classes. Kane is described as "faithful, honest, uncomplaining, [and] considerate to the last" (374). And not only is he touted as hero in his mortal body, but his "chivalrous soul" will be granted "hard-earned rest," a rest which society typically does not give to the classes that "wan[t] words" (374). Readers are left, at the end of the tale, uncomfortable—attempting to reconcile the reprobate Kane displayed throughout the bulk of the tale and the saintly Kane presented in the conclusion.

This discomfort is not dispelled or even moderated by Bentley; his edits to the piece leave a number of potentially offensive things unexpurgated. For example, *Temple Bar* does not flinch at giving its readers a portrait of man fatally flawed by his weakness of will, portraying Kane's insubordination, drunkenness, and amorous nature. The narrator begins the tale by showing how Kane's rebelliousness begins on a simple level (his facial hair) before showing how deep his other indiscretions lie. Kane's refusal to "dock his beloved [Dundreary] whiskers"

(Grand, “Kane” 365) establishes his rebellious nature. Having such facial hair is “contrary to regulation . . . which order Kane met by a standing objection” (365). The narrator moves on to showcase Kane’s love of drink, commenting how she (the narrator) was “very much troubled about these drunken bouts of his” (369), remarking on his near-constant drunkenness. His inebriation so affects the family and staff that the narrator sends him to see a priest. The priest “induced” Kane to take a sobriety pledge for three months (370). Kane keeps the promise only to “go on the spree” the day his pledge is up and slinks back in to work in a few days time. The narrator urges Kane to revisit the priest and remake the pledge. This pattern “happened regularly for two years”—with Kane “looking forward to that ‘spree,’ and thinking little else” during his sober episodes (370). The narrator also notes that Kane has a “weak point” with regard to his “amorous disposition” (368). One day, Kane “stayed absent without leave” and was found “in a small public-house with fourteen damsels, treating them all” (368). His fellow soldiers tell a story that in his younger years, when he felt “equal to the [*sic*] god,” Kane had a falling out with one of his young women and felt it so deeply that he “cut his throat” in an attempt to end his life (369).

In addition to highlighting Kane’s delinquency and insobriety, Bentley allows readers to see what seems like the natural consequence of Kane’s lack of self-discipline: his descent into poverty. Coming to Kane’s deathbed, the narrator describes his accommodations thus: “On the floor in the corner nearest to the scrap of fire was a straw mattress covered with canvas, and on this the old, worn soldier lay, partially dressed, and propped with a pillow made of a sack stuffed with straw and covered with an old rug. His wife, Mary, took off her shred of a shawl and spread it over his feet, which were bare” (Grand, “Kane” 372). This depiction reminds the reader of a Dickensian description of poverty by bringing to the forefront of readers’ attention the gritty

reality of the poor. The chill of the sparse garret seeps through the pages as it is juxtaposed with the narrator's comfortable home and lifestyle. It is hard to ignore Kane's bare feet being covered by Mary's "shred of a shawl." Although the narrator brings comfort to the garret by covering Kane with warm blankets and having a servant stoke the fire, unwelcome visions of poverty return. Mary "resume[s] her thin shawl, and [stands] in apathetic silence . . . staring stupidly before her, while great tears [fall] at intervals unheeded" (373). Mary's scantily clad body and Kane's face, "pinched from privation," are reminders to readers of the deprivations the lower classes suffer due to weather and a poor economic climate: "Soup kitchen, and clothing clubs, and every other effort know to the charitable, was being made to prevent starvation and relieve distress, but numbers of the people died nevertheless" (372).

Bentley further allows Grand to describe, in detail, topics that push the line of social appropriateness still further: bigamy and domestic abuse. While Mary's real husband drank too much, beat Mary and her children, and stole their money, Kane is a protector and provider to Mary and her children. Kane and Mary consider themselves married, just not in the way the narrator "would like" (373).¹² In fact, the picture Grand presents of Kane and Mary portrays a couple very much in love, striving to keep a family together under incredibly dire circumstances. Mary, in an attempt to show Kane's charity to the narrator, recounts her abusive first marriage: "But he [her first husband] went away, and it was a hard battle to keep the childer, but I did it, and got a little home about me, and had a shilling in me pocket, and me close dacent, and the childer nate and clane; and then he come back and bate me again, and druv the childer out into the street, and used language such as niver was, and sould all me things for the dhrink" (373).

¹² Kane, despite his wife's supplication, would not seek help from the narrator because, as the wife tells the narrator: "we wasn't married as you would like" (219). It is not until Mary's first marriage is dissolved by the death of her first husband and Kane and Mary are properly wed by a "praste" that Kane feels that he can reach out to the narrator for help.

Bentley allows the horrific depiction of abuse to remain—he includes the spousal abuse, the drunkenness, and the fact the children are witness to it all. And yet despite the abuse and hardship, Mary works at making a home for her family, which exemplifies her essential goodness and clearly denotes her as being one of the “deserving poor.” Grand’s portrayal of a weak-willed man saved by a strong-willed woman, her reversal of typical social valuations of the poor, her depiction of sexual immorality, and her stark New Woman realism all remain unexpurgated from the pages of *Temple Bar*. These aspects of the New Woman agenda apparently did not strike Bentley as potentially offensive to his conservative readers.

What Bentley did consider too incendiary to put before the eyes of his middle-class readers seems, to modern readers, rather innocuous. By comparing the *Temple Bar* version and the *Our Manifold Nature* version (published in 1894), we find that Bentley removed about ten percent of Grand’s story, and these cuts significantly alter the theme of the tale. For example, in Grand’s original, the narrator engages in a “lively discussion” with her dinner party guests after she is told that Kane has committed suicide (a fact that we later learn to be incorrect) (see fig. 3). The narrator states that after learning that Kane had earlier been incarcerated, she and her friends “meant to make proper enquires” but “delayed for some reason or other, and the next thing we heard of [Kane] was the sad news that he had committed suicide” (Grand, *Our Manifold* 216).

She goes on:

It was said that he had hanged himself because of his wife’s misconduct. We blamed ourselves then for not doing more for him in spite of himself, and had rather a lively discussion on the subject one evening, half our party maintaining that since he chose to sever the connection we were not at all bound to look after him, while the rest retorted that as we were attached to him we were bound to look after him, attachment being a

bond which carries obligation as well as pleasure. In the midst of the discussion the Colonel came in. “Is it Kane you are bothering about?” he said. “The old scoundrel! I saw in the town just now, selling sticks.” (216)

Although the narrator here takes the blame for Kane’s death, she uses the tragedy to begin a lively discussion. In this discussion, the narrator introduces an anti-capitalist notion of social responsibility. She brings up the idea of the “bond” created by choosing to hire someone of a very different class and the “obligations” that bond carries with it. She is arguing, essentially, that employers need to care for those whose labor they purchase.

The idea that it is immoral to disregard this bond and obligation would have resonated with socialist sympathizers in late-nineteenth-century Britain but been at odds with middle-class proponents of laissez-faire capitalism, the typical readers of *Temple Bar*. In the passage, though, at least half of the narrator’s party, also members of the upper-middle class, agree that they have a responsibility to those in their employ. The person who most volubly disagrees with this is the Colonel, who turns out to be Kane’s Colonel—someone who, according to the narrator’s logic, should acknowledge a direct responsibility for Kane. Instead, the Colonel brushes off any responsibility he might have, citing Kane’s generally poor character as justification for turning his back on the man. Grand is clearly indicting both the narrator, who fails to help Kane, and people like the Colonel, who feel no responsibility toward those over whom they have a stewardship.

In this scene, Grand is also pointing out a large and partly willful gap between the middle class’s assumptions about the poor and the actualities of individual situations. The narrator has allowed herself to be swayed by faulty information that allows her to form a false judgment of character (both of Kane and of his wife Mary) and of Kane’s situation. The narrator believes, due

to hearsay, that Kane has committed suicide, when in fact he has not. Kane has not committed the unpardonable sin but is near death due to starvation (he has given Mary and her children the last of his food) and to a beating he received while defending Mary and her children against Mary's first husband.¹³ Furthermore, the narrator believes that somehow Mary's "misconduct" is to blame for Kane's demise. However, once the narrator visits Kane's deathbed some years after the dinner party (upon Mary's urging), she learns that all of the information she received from her peers is false. The "misconduct" spread through the gossip of the narrator's friends turns out to be the result of a generous, if misguided, gesture. That is, Kane persuaded Mary to lie to the magistrates and marry him while still married to another man. Yet the impetus for his bigamy was to save her and her children from destitution and from her abusive first husband. Upon learning all of this, the narrator realizes that the faulty information she had received about Kane prejudiced her against helping him and thus contributed to his death.

In the *Temple Bar* version of this tale, Bentley removes all of this evidence of the neglect of the narrator, the Colonel, and the other middle-class characters, as well as the fatal consequence of this neglect. Without this (see fig. 4), an important element of Grand's story—her indictment of the middle-class narrator and her middle-class friends for the death of Kane and the destitution of Mary and her children—is lost. Grand clearly points the finger of blame at the narrator and her dinner-party friends, who mostly agree with her but who let their actions be influenced by flawed information and by apathy. However, Bentley's removal of key elements of this story (like the dinner party scene) softens this indictment considerably, making Kane the unfortunate maker of his own unfortunate circumstances. In the *Temple Bar* version, readers realize that the narrator should have done more, but she seems justified by Kane's weakness of

¹³ Like the narrator, Mary's first husband remains unnamed by Grand.

character. The blame shifts from the apathetic, misinformed middle classes (*Temple Bar*'s readers) to Kane himself.

While Grand indicts the upper-middle classes for inaction in “Kane,” Grand’s second story published in *Temple Bar*, “Janey, A Humble Administrator,” further showcases the consequences of bourgeois inadequacy by demonstrating the systemic failure of the social institutions run by middle-class administrators. “Janey” is the thirty-two-page story of a young, lower-class woman living under the shadow of “the great iron works” in an unspecified industrial city (Grand, “Janey” 201). An injury at work and then malpractice at the local hospital has left Janey paralyzed. Although bedridden, she manages to keep her large family together and financially afloat. From her bed, Janey tends to her mentally ill father and physically inept mother. She manages the family’s finances, secures work for her siblings, and even nannies a neighbor’s baby by use of a cane. Unlike the negligent narrator in “Kane,” the unnamed narrator in “Janey” sincerely tries to help the girl. Through the narrator’s love and care—miraculously—Janey’s paralysis abates. But the actions of one individual are not enough to save Janey. Shortly after her spontaneous recovery, Janey’s father strikes her in the head, which results in her death.

As it appears in *Temple Bar*, “Janey” is just as packed with the content typical of New Woman literature as “Kane” is. The narrator is a woman who, in an attempt to “vary the stultifying monotony of [her] elegant leisure” (Grand, “Janey” 200), wants to help those in need and believes in the power of sisterhood. The story has the “attendant themes of woman’s education, the reform of reprobates, and the marriage game” (Bonnell 154). In the course of this, there is plenty of social evil for readers to be appalled by. Grand presents scenes of poverty to match those in any mid-Victorian realist novel: “We stopped at a row of squalid cottages . . . the dreary town variety, two-storied, ugly, dingy, depressing, swarming with human beings, the

children overflowing into the street and crowding the curb, multitudinous, restless, and repulsive on the first glance in their dirt and movements as maggots on meat” (Grand, “Janey” 201). And Grand does not refrain from the depiction of violence or gore, as when she describes Janey moaning on the floor beneath the “cunning grin” of her father and then portrays “a horrid wound on the side of [Janey’s] head” and “a heavy wooden stool lying near her with blood upon it” (217).

These harsh and potentially offensive aspects of Janey’s life are left untouched by Bentley, who instead opted to cut a paragraph very similar to the one he excised in “Kane.” When the narrator learns that malpractice and misadministration at the hospital in which Janey receives care have caused her paralysis, she seeks help from a wealthy couple who have strong ties to the management of the hospital, who are “kind and charitable,” and who sit in a position to do something about the harm done to Janey and those like her (Grand, *Our Manifold* 155).¹⁴ But when she visits the gentlewoman, the narrator is brushed off. The narrator recalls,

This happened in the confident days of my youth, when I was still under the delusion that wrongs would be righted directly if those in authority were informed of the fact; and when I left Janey that afternoon I hastened to see an old lady whose husband was one of the gentlemen visitors to the hospital, and who was herself much interested in the institution. They were both by way of being kind and charitable, and were also people of position who could have instituted searching enquiries into the truth of Janey’s statements, but to my consternation when I told her story, the old lady answered in a tone which showed that she resented my interference:— “Oh, these people are never satisfied! They

¹⁴ In Grand’s original version, the narrator asks Janey about her treatment in the hospital, and Janey responds with accounts of negligence and harassment. Janey says that in one instance, the nurse “did treat [another] poor woman cruel” and would “do nothin’ for ’er. I’ve ’eard ’er call an’ call an’ call, for she was ’elpless too, an’ nurse ’ud come back an’ look at ’er an’ laugh” (Grand, *Temple Bar* 203). Janey’s complaint against the medical system remains in the *Temple Bar* version.

are always complaining of something. You should know better than to listen to them. We both visit the hospital regularly and have never yet seen anything wrong. (see fig. 5)

(Grand, *Our Manifold* 155)

Grand once again makes the upper-middle classes—“those in authority”—culpable for the hardships of Janey’s life and the ultimate tragic end she comes to. Instead of being sympathetic, the gentlewoman dislikes the narrator’s “interference” (155). It is clear that the gentlewoman refuses to consider the possibility of truth in the complaints of the poor and criticizes the narrator for doing so. Looking back on the incident, the narrator says that she went to the woman “in the confident days of my youth, when I was still under the delusion that wrongs would be righted directly if those in authority were informed of the fact” (155). Here, Grand does two things. This quote offers the narrator’s direct blame of the system administered by the upper-middle-classes, which paralyzes (both physically and socially, in this story) the lower classes. Second, the narrator, a member of the upper-middle class, loses faith in the social system and places culpability on her peers by showing how cruelly and unethically unconcerned they are with the poor.

Although Bentley’s version of this tale includes complaints from the lower class about the negligence of the nurses, it removes Grand’s “This happened in the confident days of my youth” paragraph (see fig. 6). Thus, there is no mention of the narrator’s criticism of her peers for their unethical lack of concern for Janey and those like her. Furthermore, we lose any semblance of a “call to action”; by cutting the narrator’s indictment of the faulty social system, there is no suggestion of the need for readers to correct what Grand shows as broken.

Despite this, readers of both versions of this passage may notice that Grand’s inclusion of this “confident days” paragraph sounds slightly odd. The paragraph just prior ends with Janey’s

speech to the narrator, and the following paragraph begins by remarking on this speech: “As Janey finished speaking, the door behind me opened” (155). The “confident days” paragraph interposed between them thus disrupts the tale with the narrator’s reflections. This leads one to wonder if perhaps Bentley might have objected to Grand’s prose here rather than to her content and cut the paragraph in order to restore the tale’s narrative flow. This certainly might have been his primary motivation, but because of the odd placement of the “confident days” paragraph, it is clearly something that Grand wanted included in “Janey.” Grand deliberately breaks the logical narrative sequence of the tale to introduce this critique of the upper-middle classes, suggesting that this was a significant inclusion—significant enough to risk the disruption of the prose. It is as though this message—this critique, which like similar passages in “Kane,” centers on the culpability of the upper-middle class—were more important to Grand than her prose itself. It is no wonder, then, that Bentley left untouched Grand’s depictions of poverty, domestic violence, female strength, and mental illness and instead found this paragraph problematic enough to require excision from the version of the story that he printed in *Temple Bar*.

Conclusion

A close examination of “Kane, A Soldier Servant” and “Janey, A Humble Administrator” and the editing Bentley subjected them to reveals that for Bentley, and for his conservative middle-class readers, the threat posed by the New Woman was as much about class as it was about sexuality, equality, or political representation. The New Woman has long been thought of as subversive, but her destabilizing influence on class is something that critics have glossed over. It was not just a matter of word count or print space, as Eggermont and D’hoker have argued, but an issue of social class. Bentley preserved Grand’s controversial New Woman content—content one would assume, upon first thought, that Bentley would cut. He kept strong females with a

penchant for raising men up. He allowed for scenes of domestic violence, drunkenness, and bigamy. And he included discomfoting scenes of tragic poverty. What he removed were moments in which Grand too bluntly accuses Bentley's middle-class readers of complacency, neglect, and selfishness.

In an interview with Sarah Tooley in 1896, Grand stated that New Women like herself wrote in the "hope of remedying the evils which exist" (qtd. in Nelson 167). One of her critics wrote in *Woman's Signal* in 1894 that "[a]n immense sympathy with the weak is the dominant note of Sarah Grand's work. She is like a woman haunted with the idea of the world's pain" (qtd. in Forward and Heilmann, *Sex* 277). This haunting pushed Grand to seek for "social consciousness. . . . She urge[d] people, especially the well-to-do, to recognize the claims that their fellow citizens have on them, chiding those who, rather than ask why poverty and deprivations exist, look the other way or even blame victims for their circumstances" (Bonnell 154). But the totality of this message was left unrealized in *Temple Bar*.

It was the message of culpability Grand places on the upper-middle class, the class of Bentley's readership, that is absent from Bentley's versions. In a way, he disembodied the blame Grand places on those in positions of responsibility. In regards to Bentley's brutal editorial work, Richard L. Selig claims that the "[t]rouble arises less from the absence of didacticism than from what Bentley thought the wrong didactic message—one that rejected accepted morality" (Selig 20). Grand "rejected accepted morality"—conservative bourgeois morality—by showing what was wrong with conventional social mores. Grand knew that social change would only happen if one represented the problem unequivocally and if one placed the blame on those responsible despite—and because of—their social power and influence. She knew that for the "bomb of dynamite" to take effect, one needed to know at whom to aim the blow.

"Sir," said DR. JOHNSON, "let us take a walk down Fleet Street."

TEMPLE BAR

A London Magazine

FOR TOWN AND COUNTRY READERS.

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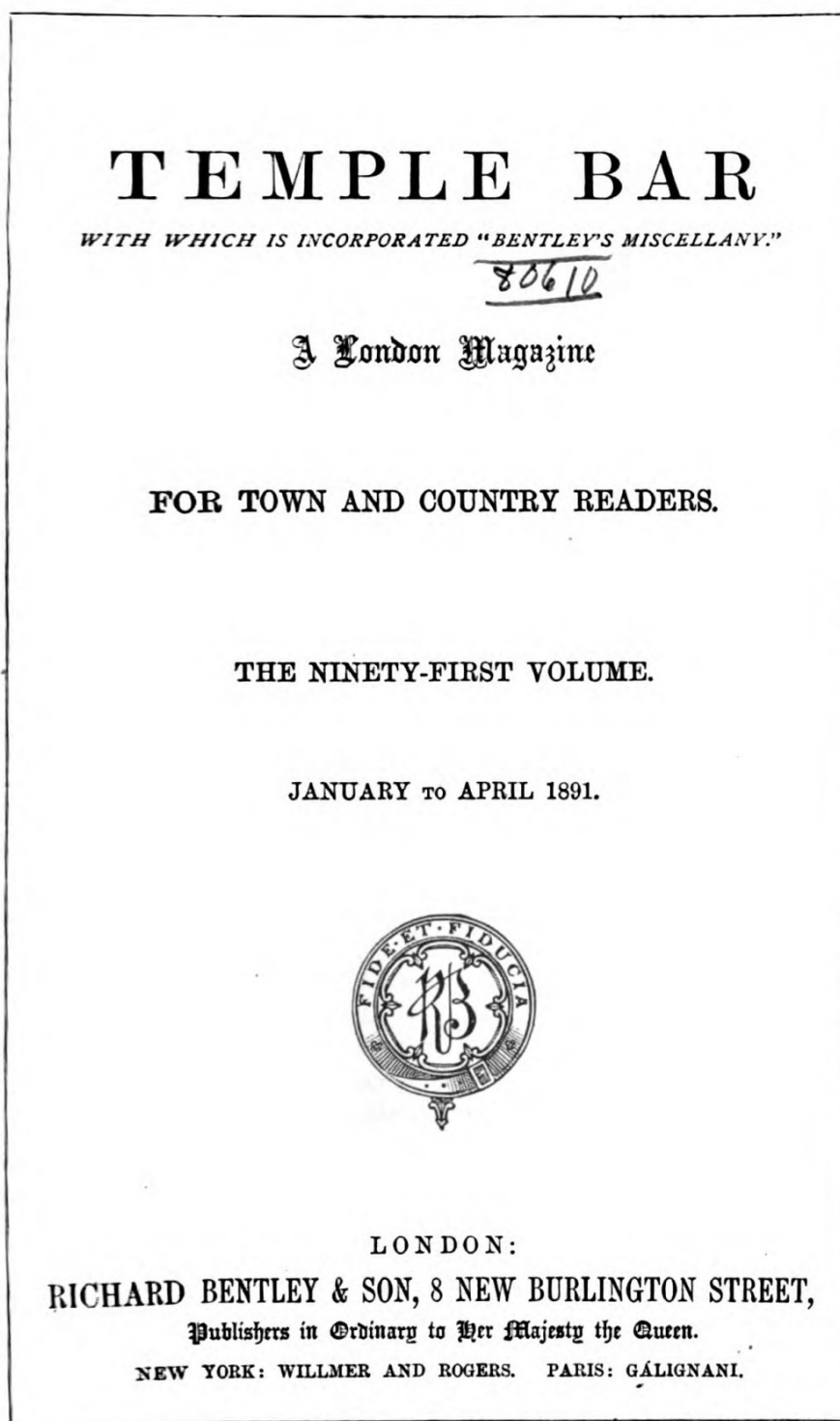
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Fig. 1. "Title Page." *Temple Bar*, vol. 1, Mar. 1861. *HathiTrust Digital Library*,

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Fig. 2. "Title Page." *Temple Bar*, vol. 91, Jan.–Apr. 1891. *HathiTrust Digital Library*,

<https://hdl.handle.net/2027/mdp.39015065359898?urlappend=%3Bseq=7>. Accessed 4

Dec. 2015.

Concluding that he had his own reasons for misleading me, we determined to respect them, and accordingly made no further enquiries; and for the next two years we lost sight of him entirely. During the winter of the second year the Lancashire operatives suffered terribly from the prevalent commercial

Concluding that he had his own reasons for misleading me, we determined to respect them, and accordingly made no further enquiries. The next news we had of him was equally startling, but in another way. We were told that Kane was in prison for neglecting to maintain his wife and step-children. We doubted this, however, for we learnt at the same time that his wife was a fustian cutter, and as work was plentiful just then she could not be in absolute want. We meant to make proper enquiries, however, but delayed for some reason or other, and the next thing we heard of him was the sad news that he had committed suicide. It was said that he had hanged himself because of his wife's misconduct. We blamed ourselves then for not doing more for him in spite of himself, and had rather a lively discussion on the subject one evening, half our party maintaining that since he chose to sever the connection we were not at all bound to look after him, while the rest retorted that as we were attached to him we were bound to look after him, attachment being a bond which carries obligation as well as pleasure. In the midst of the discussion the Colonel came in. "Is it Kane you are bothering about?" he said. "The old scoundrel! I saw him in the town just now, selling sticks."

For the next two years we heard nothing more of him. During the winter of the second year the Lanca-

Fig. 4. Sarah Grand, "Kane, A Soldier Servant." *Temple Bar* vol. 92,

July 1891, p. 372. *HathiTrust Digital Library*,

<https://hdl.handle.net/2027/mdp.39015065359906?urlappend=%3Bseq=376>.

Accessed 8 Oct. 2015.

Fig. 3. Sarah Grand, "Kane, A Soldier Servant." *Our Manifold*

Nature, D. Appleton, 1894, p. 216. *Internet Archive*,

<http://www.archive.org/details/ourmanifoldnatu00grangoog>.

Accessed 4 Dec. 2015.

“ And while you were so ill were the nurses good to you ? ”
 “ Well, you see,” she answered temperately, “ they ’adn’t much to do for me, for mother she used to slip in reg’lar an’ make me comfortable ’erself, an’ the nurses they’d wink at ’er comin’ cos it saved em’ a deal o’ trouble.”

Here the door behind me opened, and some one entered with a slouching step.

“ It’s on’y father,” Janey explained.

“ And while you were so ill were the nurses good to you ? ”
 “ Well, you see,” she answered temperately, “ they ’adn’t much to do for me, for mother she used to slip in reg’lar an’ make me comfortable ’erself, an’ the nurses they’d wink at ’er comin’ cos it saved ’em a deal o’ trouble.”

This happened in the confident days of my youth, when I was still under the delusion that wrongs would be righted directly if those in authority were informed of the fact; and when I left Janey that afternoon I hastened to see an old lady whose husband was one of the gentlemen visitors to the hospital, and who was herself much interested in the institution. They were both by way of being kind and charitable, and were also people of position who could have instituted searching enquiries into the truth of Janey’s statements, but to my consternation when I told her story, the old lady answered in a tone which showed that she resented my interference :—
 “ Oh, these people are never satisfied ! They are always complaining of something. You should know better than to listen to them. We both visit the hospital regularly and have never yet seen anything wrong.”

As Janey finished speaking, the door behind me opened, and some one entered with a slouching step.

“ It’s on’y father,” Janey explained.

Fig. 6. Sarah Grand, “Janey, A Humble Administrator.”

Temple Bar, vol. 93, Oct. 1891, p. 203. *HathiTrust Digital*

Library,

<https://hdl.handle.net/2027/mdp.39015065359914?urlapp=nd=%3Bseq=213>. Accessed 4 Dec. 2015.

Fig. 5. Sarah Grand, “Janey, A Humble Administrator.”

Our Manifold Nature, D. Appleton, 1894, p. 155. *Internet Archive*,

<http://www.archive.org/details/ourmanifoldnatu00grang>.

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