

**OUR MANIFOLD
NATURE;
STORIES FROM LIFE**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649153992

Our manifold nature; stories from life by Sarah Grand

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

www.triestepublishing.com

SARAH GRAND

**OUR MANIFOLD
NATURE;
STORIES FROM LIFE**

OUR MANIFOLD NATURE

STORIES FROM LIFE

BY

SARAH GRAND

AUTHOR OF

IDEALA, A STUDY FROM LIFE, THE HEAVENLY TWINS, ETC.



NEW YORK
D. APPLETON AND COMPANY
1894

COPYRIGHT, 1893, 1894,
BY D. APPLETON AND COMPANY.

ELECTROTYPED AND PRINTED
AT THE APPLETON PRESS, U. S. A.

PP 4723
215 62
12-42
10-71

PREFACE.

THESE stories are simply what they profess to be—studies from life. They appeared originally in magazines, some of them in a more or less unsatisfactory condition, having been mutilated for convenience of space, or in order to remove from them any idea of unusual import. Successful magazines dig deep grooves for themselves, and anything that does not fit into these is shunned as dangerous. Once established, they become for the most part unprogressive, neither leading nor following, but continuing to offer us the kind of thing that pleased our parents. Consequently they cease to appeal to us, and finally 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. Diffident young writers, full of the force which is carrying us onward and upward, and cruelly perplexed between what they perceive and which those in authority insist that they ought to be perceiving, crawl along in them on feet of lead until the restraint becomes unbearable, and then they break out on their own account in new directions, and their success proves to be the death-blow of their oppressors. The old order changeth in this

as in all else. We are growing and learning to walk, and must have room to tumble about in; if those who are left to find out for themselves how to do it have the most falls, they are also the strongest eventually. There is more to be done than our ancestors did, and more to find out than they ever discovered. Many thanks to them, nevertheless, for all that we owe them.

Fiction has always been held to be at its best when it was true to life. To be true to life seemed, therefore, to be the noblest ambition of an author, and this has led in our day to an effort to go beyond the mere semblance and grasp the reality of life. But those who try it are immediately met with the objection that their work is inartistic. Fiction is found fault with because it is not fact, and fact because it is not fiction. It is the old story of the man, the boy, and the donkey. Personally, I think the only art worth cultivating is the art to be interesting. If a book is readable, it is churlish to object to it because it has not been made so by methods which succeeded in somebody else's work. To "make school" is doubtless gratifying to an author as a proof of success; but all that imitators make is much monotony for the reader. A novel, it seems to me, should be like life itself—an unfolding, and not a regular structure; but at the same time I recognise that in many moods, and to many minds only artificial regularity is acceptable. That form was the outcome of a day which we have not yet done with.

But there is one thing which strikes me as significant, and it may be instructive, with regard to these little essays of my own in the new direction, and that is that it is not the embellishments, but the literal facts, which

have been attacked by the critics as "melodramatic" and "altogether impossible"—as, for instance, in *The Yellow Leaf*. There is no fiction whatever in *Evangeline's* story. It began, continued, and ended exactly as described, yet nearly every one has fallen foul of the conclusion as being improbable, especially for the reasons which are shown to have led up to it. This would seem to indicate that, in order to be convincing, a study from life must be a garnished interpretation rather than a literal translation. An actor has to paint his face to make it look natural in the glare of the footlights, and some analogous process must be resorted to by the writer who would produce the effect of life in his work. We are accustomed to the false and conventional in this branch of art as we are to the distorted figure of a fashionable woman, and, consequently, when truth and nature are presented to us, they strike us at first as strange; we do not recognise them, and we do not like them.

These studies were as experiments, and they now appear for the first time, unmutilated as well as carefully revised.

SARAH GRAND.

February, 1894.

CONTENTS.

	PAGE
EUGENIA	1
THE YELLOW LEAF	52
JANEY, A HUMBLE ADMINISTRATOR	148
BOOMELLEN	181
KANE, A SOLDIER SERVANT	204
AH MAN	221



EUGENIA.

I.

I AM a humble artist, studying always in the life-school of the world, blinking nothing that goes to the making or marring of life, more especially to the marring of it, for if we would make it lovely, we must know exactly the nature of the diseases that disfigure it, and experiment upon them until we discover the great specific which, when properly applied, shall remedy all that. And it so happened that, in order to be accurate in every detail of a work upon which I was then engaged, I required to study human nature, as it appears behind the scenes, at the time of night when that part of a theatre is most characteristically crowded with the company in costume, and such visitors as are admitted. A brother of mine made the necessary arrangements for me, and was so good as to escort me himself, the leading managers, to whom he had explained my difficulty, having most courteously allowed me free access for my purpose. I have only to mention here one of the numerous little items of interest I noted at the time. It happened at the beginning of the enterprise when everything was new and strange, and while the incident itself, although trivial, remains distinctly impressed upon my mind, the surround-