

**Sarah Grand** (nom de plume of Frances Elisabeth McFall, née Bellenden Clarke, 10 June 1854 – 12 May 1943) was an Anglo-Irish writer.

She was born in Northern Ireland, where her father was stationed as a naval lieutenant. After his death, in 1861, Sarah and her four siblings were taken by their mother to live in Yorkshire. In 1868, Grand was sent to the Royal Naval School, Twickenham, but was soon expelled for her support to the protests against the Contagious Diseases Act, which subjected women suspected of carrying STDs to humiliating physical checks and forced hospitalisation. Sarah was then sent to a finishing school in Holland Park, Kensington.

When she was sixteen years old, in 1870, Sarah married a thirty-nine-year-old widower with two sons – the Army surgeon, David Chambers McFall. The couple had a son, born in 1871, and from 1873 to 1878 the family travelled to China, Japan and the Far East.

In 1888, Sarah anonymously published her first novel, *Ideala*, whose profits, albeit modest, enabled her to leave her husband. She moved to London to pursue a literary career, and renamed herself *Sarah Grand*, in 1893, with the publication of her first literary success, the novel *The Heavenly Twins*. Grand is said to have helped to coin the expression “New Woman” in an article titled ‘[The New Aspect of the Woman Question](#)’, published in *North American Review* (v. 158, n. 448, 1894, pp. 270–6), addressing the double-standards inherent in Victorian marriages. The writer ‘Ouida’ then used the expression as the title of her essay ‘[The New Woman](#)’, published in the following issue of the magazine (v. 158, n. 450, May 1894, pp. 610-619). Once coined, the term became popular to describe the new independent, educated women seeking change and equality.

Sarah took an active part in the women’s suffrage movement, and was a member of the Women Writers’ Suffrage League and vice-president of the Women’s Suffrage Society. In the early 1900’s, she lectured throughout England and the United States on women’s issues.

Grand scandalized critics with her frank portrayal of sexual double standards and her crossdressing heroine in *The Heavenly Twins*. Her work was encouraged and admired by authors like Thomas Hardy, George Meredith, Mark Twain, and George Bernard Shaw.

Grand moved to Bath in 1920, where, from 1922 to 1929, she served as “Lady Mayoress” alongside Mayor Cedric Chivers.

She died in 1943.







