

ordinary humanity in one vast and un-
distinguishable bundle of low hopes and gro-
wing fears?

It was settled at length, that Grace should
remain on board the vessel until it went up to
city, in order to save the expense of quar-
antine regulations, which Percy's pocket could
well meet; and, taking a few shillings—all
he had on earth—he kissed his wife, and
sped gaily on board the steamer, which had
come along-side to take off the passengers,
was soon on shore, and treading the delightful
walks of the Battery.

Percy Meredith was a man of the most de-
voted genius—enthusiastic, original, chaste and
punctilious in his style, he felt certain that the
manuscripts he bore with him were far superior
to the endless periodical trash of the day, and
that he should meet with no difficulty in find-
ing a purchaser. As it is an universal truth
that noisy pretenders and quacks attract more
attention, and are better known in the literary
world, than men of real genius and discern-
ment, it will not be wondered at that Meredith
made his first application to one of the great-
est of our metropolitan humbugs, whose fero-
cious ignorance, envy and malice are on a par
with his lack of all the decencies and cour-
tesies of life; and whose only principle of ac-
tion is a most insufferable vanity, joined to the
heart and soul of a miser, who gloats on gold
and cares not how it is obtained—who is ready
at any moment to sacrifice honour, faith and
reputation to procure the gratification of his
base passions. The individual to whom
Meredith had concluded to apply, on the pre-
sent occasion, was the very *beau idéal* of this
species of literary highwaymen, and universal-
hated and despised by the honorable amongst
the profession, while the timid and weak-mind-
ed had learned to fear him. Weak-minded
and common-place himself, he passed his
orthless and poisonous life in abusing every-
thing above him, and grinning and spitting his
nom upon all who journeyed along the high-
road to literature. Meredith knew nothing of
this; nor would he have believed for a mo-
ment that the noble cause of literature posses-
sed such unworthy followers.

It was not without a throbbing at the heart,
high, for the moment, almost unmannered our
young aspirant after literary honours, that Mc-
Meredith stood in the presence of the 'great man,'
and modestly made known his wishes. The
latter, seated in a large stuffed chair, with his
legs drawn up under him like a couple of Bo-
bena sausages, left his victim standing, and

with an air of supercilious condescension, glan-
ced over the manuscript, which Meredith put
into his hand.

What a situation for a high-spirited young
man, whose heart was keenly alive to every
appearance of neglect, and took fire at the pos-
sibility of an insult! He was on the point of
snatching his manuscript from the fellow's
hand, and overwhelming him with a torrent of
eloquent rebuke; but he thought of his desti-
tute and penniless situation—of his beautiful
wife—and, smothering his rage, he coolly drew
up a chair and seated himself in front of the
critic.

By this time, Mr. Grub, who was quick
enough to detect merit in others, if only to feed
his envious and malignant disposition, had dis-
covered that he was dealing with no common
man, and that, in all probability he could turn
an honest penny, in the way of his profession.
Assuming, therefore, a cheerful and almost
boisterous manner, he said:

"Ah, excuse me, sir—I am forgetful! Glad
you have helped yourself to a chair. I have
so many things on my mind that really—you
have plenty of this sort of stuff, sir, I suppose?"

"Stuff, sir! What do you mean?"

"Tut, tut, man—that's a mere phrase of en-
dearment amongst us authors. I even allow
my friends to call some of my best things stuff.
All in the way of trade, you know. But you
can throw off these things readily, can you
not?"

"Yes—tolerably so?"

"Well—you see the literary market is terri-
bly glutted, just now, and even I, myself, have
to resort to all sorts of expedients to sell my
own productions. 'Tis a villainous shame, I
know, my dear sir; genius ought to be better
paid. But, so it is—the world is full of hum-
bug and trash, as I take care to convince the
world every week, in my paper; and real solid
talent is *obliged* to humbug as well as the rest,
if it would succeed."

"Can you buy my manuscripts, sir?" in-
quired Meredith, abruptly, unmeasurably dis-
gusted with the frothy being before him.

"Why, I don't know about that—I'll see.—
As I said before, the market is entirely over-
stocked, and nothing but a *great name* will
sell any thing. Let me see—'The Lost Genius
of the Ancient Greeks,'—a good subject, but
rather too learned for this market. 'Donna
Inez, of Seville,'—that's better. I'll tell you
what I think can be done. I will change the
name of this,—say, to 'The Orange-flower of
Seville,'—so as to tickle the fancy of the pub-