"George Meredith’s ‘Idea of Comedy’"

(A Study of its Theory and Practice)

Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

George Meredith was a late Victorian Novelist and a poet. His reputation as a novelist and a poet has been controversial and dubious. But his famous book *The Idea of Comedy and the Uses of the Comic Spirit* has sufficiently assured Meredith’s position as not only an exponent of theory of comedy but also as a great and incisive critic of literature. Meredith’s speciality lies in formulating a theory of comedy, which comprehensively explains the nature, scope and function of Comedy, from literary, social and philosophical points of view. For him comedy is not merely a literary form, but it is an attitude to life, and an effective weapon to establish an ideal human society, and it forms a part of his philosophical scheme.

George Meredith’s work was evaluated to his disadvantage by too many critics and novelists. Henry James had good personal relations with Meredith, and yet was very derogative about Meredith’s art. Edith Wharton, in her memoirs, recorded an incident where Henry James exploded against Meredith’s ‘unconscious insincerity’. He said,
"Meredith was a sentimental rhetorician whose natural indolence was congenital insufficiency, both made him in life as in his art, shirk from every climax, dodge around it, and veil its absence in a fog of eloquence." Such a response towards Meredith has not been new. But the author of *The Ordeal of Richard Feverel* and *The Egoist* cannot be dismissed so easily from consideration as a major novelist. Among the English novelists, Meredith must be considered as the most intelligent writer, coupled with rich imagination. Though Meredith faced the problem of lack of reading public, literary admiration and encouragement, he enjoyed a gradual ascendancy of admiration and popularity especially after 1880. It is a fact that in his early novels and poetry volumes Meredith adopted a peculiarly outlandish style, to the theme of psychological complexity. Actually the Victorian reading public always preferred a simple and straightforward reflection of life and its problems. The same reading-public enjoyed Tennyson, Browning and Arnold as it enjoyed Dickens, George Eliot and Thackeray. But it could not digest the intellectual brain-stuff, and the new style of Meredith.

When Meredith started writing, Carlyle and Ruskin were preaching the nobility of labour and fulminating against cant and sham, while Macaulay continued to write his brilliant essays and began his no
less brilliant history. The Tractarian movement ran its course with its remarkable display of fine rhetoric, enthusiastic zeal and deep religious feeling. The opposing leaders Pusey and Newton, both equally sincere, shook the English Church to its foundations, while Gladstone, though not in the midst of the conflict, hovered much apprehensions upon the outskirts of the battlefield. George Eliot hardly helped to simplify the matters of translating German inquiries into the authenticity of Christianity; and the works of Darwin and Spencer in natural science and in philosophy not only added to the confusion, but forced thinking men to give up long accepted doctrines, and to formulate other sacred beliefs. During the formative periods of Meredith's literary career, all these factors were inevitably there, and the young author was left with no other choice but to be effected by them in one way or other.

Round about 1850s, the citadel of the 'Victorianism' collapsed; the so-called complacency was dispelled. The social outlook and the intellectual ethos were completely changed. In such a holocaust, new and young authors and artists clamoured for new forms by indulging in innumerable experiments. As a result of which the old guards like Hardy either resorted to escapism or shifted to new fields. But only Meredith was not disillusioned by this cataclysm. He moved steadily from the Old to the New because he perfectly read the progress of the events. He was
a writer living in a period of transition. He wrote in 1860s and 70s and he also wrote in 1880s and 90s. The difference of subject and style in Meredith’s work must be appreciated on this background. In his last years, so many young artists and critics flooded his house Box Hill. The reason was that they wanted to see and meet the writer who lived through the cataclysm successfully.

"The first thing to be noted about this (Meredith’s) attitude is the curious way in which it seems to escape the age in which he lived. Meredith, we may say, is IN but not OF the nineteenth century... Take Meredith in-doors and set the wine before him, and it seems as if the nineteenth century had not yet begun. He is still ahead of most of our contemporaries. At the present when Meredith is in danger of serious neglect, perhaps in greater danger than most of the more important writers of his time, it is precisely his ideas that are slowly permeating the mass of cultivated opinion... He escapes from his age so completely, that at times only chronology can reassure us".

Meredith’s interest in the inner analysis of human mind, his brilliant poetic style to describe its subtle working, his absorption of the philosophy of evolution, his championship of the cause of women, definitely claim the title ‘Modern’ to Meredith. His works are no doubt
difficult and even obscure. In a way he also adopts the style of symbolists, and his writing also bases itself on metaphors, symbols and archetypal patterns. In this field also Meredith is a pioneer for the twentieth century literary style. On such a background, Meredith’s work must be studied and also evaluated.

Another glaring fact about Meredith is that his stable and steady faith in Nature. Even his Victorian contemporaries had some sort of strong faith, but at the same time, they doubted the base or foundation of their faith. With him there seems to be no struggle, no desperate sacrifice of something valuable, and no consequent strain. His temperament, a different education and a set of ideas, together, found a new synthesis. He escapes the science-religion, materialism-idealism trap probably because he is more a pagan. “Meredith from the first does not seem to live at all in the universe of Catholic theology. One feels with him that if Evolution had not been there, he would have had to invent one. This marks the difference between him and his contemporaries. That is why many of them seem to live in gas-lit shattered universe, and why with Meredith, who appeared to take Evolution in his stride and was never happy unless he was talking about Nature, we feel that the Sun is shining bright and the great winds blowing for the first time in Victorian literature. Thus he is a born
optimist, epicurean in temperament, and he possesses, what is at bottom a stoical creed. He is a naturalistic philosopher, whose every naturalistic fact has some how a mystical glow. He is a poetic and witty radical of a marked aristocratic temper. Everywhere he really occupies a middle position, believes in temperance, balance and nothing too much”. He is “an inspired prophet of sanity”.

**Meredith the Poet**

Before considering Meredith’s philosophy of comedy, it is necessary to understand the salient features of his literary output. Meredith wrote considerable amount of poetry good and bad. While reading Meredith’s novels, one is inspired to go to his poetry hoping to experience the true fountains of poetry there. But when we come to read his poetry, we feel that the prose was better. It is said, “At any rate, there is no point of view from which any sane critic would pretend that Meredith was the greatest of our poets”\(^3\). Yet Meredith’s poetry abounds in matter, in the stuff of brain and will and character and in real and vital knowledge of human life. Some of his early poems are sweet and sensuous carrying a liquid flavour with them, for example ‘Violets’:

> “Violets, shy violets!
> How many hearts with you compare!
> Who hide themselves in thickest green,
And, thence, unseen
Ravish the enraptured air
With sweetness, dewy fresh and rare!"⁴

Meredith sums up the flavour of Keats’ poetry in the four lines:

"The song of a nightingale sent thro' a slumberous valley,
Low-lidded with twilight, and tranced with the dolorous sound,
Tranced with a tender enchantment; the yearning of passion
That wins immortality even while painting delirious with death."⁵

The poem ‘South-west Wind in the Woodland’ displays the force of his imagination capturing the wild wind shaking the woods, makes

"lion-like roar
Roar to the echo-peopled hills,
And ravenous wilds, and crake-like cry
With harsh delight, and cave-like call” produce “A lofty anthem to the sky
Fit music for a prophet’s soul—
And like an ocean gathering power,
And murmuring deep, while down below
Reigns calm profound..."⁶

Even in this early collection, Meredith exhibits his keen interest in intellectual analysis and ironical expression. In poems like ‘Juggling
Jerry' and the 'Beggar's Soliloquy' we have ample examples of the same.

"Ay, when we're strong, and braced and manful,
Life's a sweet fiddle: but we're a batch
Born to become the Great Juggler's han'ful;
Balls he shies up, and is safe to catch."

"She's a dish for a man who's a mind to be poor:
Lord! Women are such expensive things."

"Love burns as long as the Lucifer match,
Wedlock's the candle! Now, that's my creed."

Meredith, in the same poem, adds something more about a wife:

"She pulls out your hair, but she brushes your hat.
Appearances make the best half of life."

The lyrical outburst of Meredith in the following lines have been acclaimed by one and all:

"We saw the swallows gathering in the sky,
And in the osier-isle we heard them noise.
We had not to look back on summer joys
Or forward to a summer of bright dye:
But in the largeness of the evening earth
Our spirits grew as we went side by side.
The hour became her husband and my bride."

The sonnet 'Lucifer in Starlight' is Meredith's classic example of sublime conception and execution:
“On a starred night Prince Lucifer uprose.
Tired of his dark dominion swung the fiend
Above the rolling ball in cloud part screened
Where sinners hugged their spectre of repose
Poor prey to his hot fit of pride were those.
And now upon his western wing he leaned,
Now his huge bulk o’er Afric’s sands careened,
Now the black planet shadowed Arctic snows.
Soaring through the wider zones that pricked his scars
With memory of the old revolt from Awe,
He reached a middle height, and at the stars,
Which are the brain of heaven, he looked and sank.
Around the ancient track marched, rank on rank,
The army of the unalterable law.”

The sonnet is a marvellous presentation of a dramatic scene on the night sky, alluding to the epic theme of Saturn trying to enter the Earth to fulfil his furious revenge with a vile design. The fallen archangel Saturn looks heroic, even in his cowardly ‘sinking’, to avoid the sight of the God’s night watchmen. The sonnet ends with the magnificent march of the divine army, asserting the power and authority of God’s unchangeable law. But all Meredith’s poems are not executed with such mastery and concentrated effect.

Some of his poems are in the mould of Keats and Tennyson, providing delight in the sheer beauty of the visible and audible world.
Though Meredith has some kinship with Shelley, Meredith can rarely rest in the gift that comes to eye or ear. Meredith hurries on to a rapture of intellectual and spiritual interpretation. If Shelley is ethereal, Meredith is firmly planted on this solid earth. The danger of Meredith is that the weak may shrink before his almost violent mastery, the simple may falter and fall before the prickly fortifications of intellectualism with which Meredith surrounds his gospel. Meredith's finest passages are full of energy of fire that sets the thoughts aglow and kindles the heart of the coldest reader. But the demerit of Meredith is to intellectualise whatever he touches. In his poetry, it is brain, ever present and ever dominant. "He has given us puzzles instead of poetry; we looked for an ecstasy and found a headache". Priestley summed up the paradoxical position of Meredith as a poet. He said, "Meredith is one of our most difficult poets, not merely because he is tough and frequently obscure, but because any estimate of his work raises questions that cannot be properly answered without some reference to the scope and nature of Poetry itself, so that the critic is faced with the alternative of either making what may appear sweeping and unsupported statements or writing yet another 'Poetics', in which Meredith and all his works would be lost and finally buried. And there can be no question as which alternative must be preferred here, where there are plainly no facilities
for any excursions into aesthetics." After quoting some lines from "The Empty Purse" he added, "It all seems as accepted as Song, as a dish of hay is accepted of dinner. There is meaning in the lines for one who will worry it out, just as there is sustenance in the hay for those able to digest it, but the one bears as much relation to poetry as the other does to food". In spite of all this, Meredith does have sublime moments of pure poetry where it reveals Nature, the woods and flowers and birds and clouds all bathed in the clear golden light as Nature has never been revealed by any poetry.

"Could I be, sole there, not to see
The life within the life awake:
The spirit bursting from the tree,
And rising from the troubled lake?
Pour, let the wines of Heaven pour!
The Golden Harp is struck once more,
And all its music is for me!
Pour, let the wines of Heaven pour!
And, ho, for a night of Pagan glee!"^15

and the poet adds about the Mother Earth,
"Can be she dead, or rooted in pain?
She has been slain by the narrow brain,
But for us who love her she lives again.
Can she die? O, take her kiss"^15
Meredith’s poetry is primarily characterised by its generative inspiration and intellectual power. His inventive and innovative urge continuously finds new forms where his imagination and intellect are united to each other’s advantage. For example in ‘Modern Love’ one cannot be definite if it is his psychological analysis or lyrical power or intellectual probe that makes it one of the greatest poems. Secondly his poetry reveals an abundance and fertility of imagination. It reflects in almost every sentence or a phrase Meredith writes. Laetetia Dale is ‘a race cutter’ and Clara Middleton is ‘a rogue in a Porcelain’. Sir Willoughby is stiff like the personal pronoun ‘I’. The couple in the ‘Modern Love’ finds their happy moment ‘as her husband and his wife’. If Meredith fails, it is not due to lack of imagination but due to excess of it. Thirdly his imagination is followed by an amazing ability of metaphor. Cecil Day Lewis described Meredith as the ‘greatest image maker after Shakespeare’. He selects one metaphor for analysis. ‘Darker grows the valley more and more forgetting’. Such a metaphor is the acme of the blending of imagination and intellect. This leads to the third quality of Meredith that is his imagery is not sensuous but intellectual. The ideas behind these metaphors are deep and they shine by suggestive meanings and implications. The reader’s imagination must also force its way with that of the poet to comprehend it. Besides metaphors in Meredith are issued one out of the other, even before one exhausts itself. ‘The analogy is always vitally real in one point, but the likeness usually stops. You are meant to catch the first light that flies off the metaphor as it passes; but if you seize and cling, as though it were a post, you will be drowned in the flood of fresh metaphor that follows’.
Meredith exercises tremendous compression, as his habit is to weed out the common place and the unessential. He likes to express the heart of the subject. Many times this process of choosing the essential, results in difficulty and obscurity. This is more visible when he writes didactic poems like the ‘Day of the Daughter of Hades’. His poetry flashes with imagination and amazes with intellect. It is difficult no doubt but at the same time teasing. There is no doubt that his poetry is often difficult but it is never artificial. For the same reason Meredith’s failures are often irritating but never dull.

**MEREDITH THE NOVELIST**

Meredith enjoys comparatively better popularity as a novelist. ‘The Egoist’, ‘The Ordeal of Richard Feverel’, ‘Diana of the Crossways’, ‘The adventures of Harry Richmond’ are read and admired. On the background of the Victorian novelists, Meredith is acclaimed as a modern writer, who tried to dislodge the concept of ‘realism’. Meredith concentrated on the inner analysis of a character and he also brought in a new technique to fiction. He displaced the traditional narrative and employed a method akin to the stream of consciousness mode. His novels are not only romantic in nature but also didactic in spirit. It may be stated that Meredith succeeded in producing real ‘romantic comedies’ in English literature after Shakespeare.
The dominant ingredients of Meredith's fiction are special and even individualistic. Primarily he conceived a novel as a form of poetry, in the sense that a novel is conceived in imagination and executed in poetic style and imagery. It is said that Meredith mastered everything of fictional technique except telling a story neatly and convincingly. He disliked the nineteenth century 'realism' for many reasons. Actually he hated it in such a way that he evolved his critique of fiction against this creed. To Meredith somehow poetry and fiction are complimentary to each other. In case of Meredith the poems and novels are two different but harmonious expressions of the same mind and the same imaginative view of the world, which could not be adequately expressed in either form alone. According to Meredith, life's reality is inseparably connected with the ideals and dreams, and the connective means is imagination. Poetry arises wherever imagination is. It must be remembered that Meredith asserts that art and literature must be in service of the society, for its growth and progress. Art and literature have no meaning and utility if they cannot augur the progress of man. It cannot be called mere didacticism, because in his novels the author takes the role of a philosopher.

The second quality of his fiction is that it asserts an attitude of life and also attempts to achieve the same. An author is first and
foremost a man who sees and reflects on life and nature with a critical mind. He finds the defects and deficiencies of the society and man, and also prepares the means and methods of cure. So a writer starts his career after equipping himself in this way because the purpose is to provide remedies for the ills of social life. The primary requisite of a writer, according to Meredith, is this quality of philosophy, which means a complete knowledge about the ailments of life and the necessary remedies. Baker states, “Now it is the insight of mind that has already thought and generalized reviewing the facts in the representative instances which it sets before the eye, now the creative faculty bodying forth characters, thoughts and actions, in which the secular process is seen going on”17

The subject of a Meredithian novel is Man. For Meredith nature and society are the super structures for the habitation of man. His sole aim is to see that man is happy healthy and progressive. He studies and analyses the inner-man; the mental process, the psychological states, the abnormalities, the egoism and the sentimentalism. This leads to an over emphasis on the characters and their revelation rather than on other factors like narration or plot construction or telling a neat story. In his novels, Meredith presents the ‘infinitesimal subtleties’ of human mind to bring out the innumerable shades of the characters’ thought. “ The
passion of his genius is, indeed, the tracing of the elemental in the complex; the registration of the infinitesimal vibrations of first causes, the tracking in human life of the shadowiest trail of primal instinct, the hairbreadth of measurement of subtle psychological tangents; and the embodiment of these results in artistic form”. Meredith does not aim at achieving the common results of an average novelist. Diana explains her author’s artistic aim and method: “The art of the pen is to rouse the inward vision, instead of labouring with a drop-scene brush, as if it were to the eye; because our flying minds contain a protracted description. That is why, the poets spring imagination with a word or phrase paint lasting pictures”. Meredith’s aphorisms and axioms are innumerable. He said, “A woman is a plateful of vanity peppered with vice”. According to him “Men may have rounded Seraglio Point; they have not yet doubled Cape Turk”¹⁹. Meredith declares that in the European countries, woman is treated well only outwardly, which is better than the Eastern nations, but in their hearts she is not still their equal. “A perverted politeness only tends to emphasise this”. After marriage, a man thinks that a woman is a white paper across which he can sign his name. He also stated once that ‘Perfect simplicity is unconsciously audacious’. He felt that ‘Simple ingratitude to a benefactor is a pardonable transgression’.
Meredith's novels are comedies after Shakespearean method and spirit. Unlike Shakespeare, Meredith based them on a clearly elaborated theory. Meredith's theory of comedy is explained in his "Essay on Comedy", (which will be comprehensively discussed in Chapter 4 of this thesis,) as primarily a study of unbalanced personalities. Only a balanced man can fulfil his social role satisfactorily, otherwise he creates disorder in the society. A comedy aims at exposing the deficiency or discrepancy to correct it. By this method an abnormal man is cured of his egoism or sentimentalism, to join the mainstream of a healthy society. While Shakespeare dealt with these abnormal individuals before the floodlight of romantic love, Meredith extends and widens the field to deal also with others (not mere lovers) in their daily actions. In Meredith's comedies, there are poetry, satire, humour and romantic atmosphere. Here also there are brilliant and radiant heroines, and all of them are normally superior to men. The fictional world of Meredith contains a great variety of characters, but the majority of them belong to the wealthy, landed and often cultured class. Few of them have money difficulties, still fewer are poor.

**Meredith's Attitude to Man, Society and Nature**

It must be submitted that in this thesis, a separate chapter on Meredith's philosophy of life seems to be out of place. It primarily deals
with a thorough analysis of Meredith’s theory of Comedy and its practice by him in his novels. However, it is also true that Meredith’s theory of Comedy cannot be independent of his tenets about Man, Society and Nature. Meredith has evolved a theory, which is comprehensive and rather foolproof. A short summary of the structure of Meredith’s attitude towards these problems will be presented below.

‘Nature’ to Meredith, is like ‘imagination’ to the Romantics. It is stated that to Meredith there are no lost Edens, and burning memories of Heaven. Man is not exiled here for a term, but he is himself a creature of Nature, who becomes conscious of herself in him. This is his deep-rooted belief that finds expression directly or indirectly in so much of his work, whether he is describing a skylark, a moment when he turns to her in sorrow or desolation or tells us how one of his characters like Diana, renews her strength and confidence and sanity in the face of Nature. And this is because we are Earth’s creatures drawing our sustenance from Nature.”

For Meredith Man is a social being, and the Society is the result of progressing civilization, a part of the evolutionary process towards becoming an ideal Man. He opines that Society at its core is sound and it is deficient only on its outer rind. If it is not sound, at core, it does not
need any attempt to rectify it and in that case it needs to be destroyed. The ills and evils of Society are the result of the defective and deficient inhabitants. So Meredith attempts to cure these deficiencies of the social beings to establish a perfectly sound Society.

In tune with the spirit of Evolution Meredith conceives Man’s life as a gradual growth from the physical, to the mental and ultimately to the spiritual. A Man is perfectly sound when he has fulfilled the needs of the trio, the body, the mind and the soul, and only then he becomes a completely a balanced being. When the Society consists of such balanced human beings, that Society is a perfect one. But unfortunately the Society contains at least some though not all such imbalanced individuals because of which the Society is infested with the present evils.

According to Meredith, the imbalanced individuals are of two types—the Sentimentalists and the Egoists. "Sentimentalism" says Crees, "is a sham masquerading as a lover of glorious emotions, .. a stench beneath a perfume." Actually these Sentimentalists are the by-products of the artificial civilization. Usually they are found in affluent and indolent quarters of the Society, reeling under the hypocrisy, false notions and lifeless traditions. It is also stated that Sentimentalism is "a
timorous apprehension of realities, some times of the realities in the world at large, some times in reference to a person’s immediate environment”.

An egoist also belongs to the same kind but only differs in degree. For example, Sir Willoughby Pattern of ‘The Egoist’ is the ideal of egoism. First of all Sir Willoughby possesses more of his normal masculine share of Man’s old secret brunt. Secondly he parades his masculine superiority beyond normal limits. He possesses primitive selfishness in a very high degree. It is the artificial civilisation which enabled him to strengthen his selfishness. Thirdly Sir Willoughby enjoys his feudal properties not by his natural talents but by inheritance. His apparent politeness and urbanity are only false acquisitions. In essence Sir Willoughby is void of common sense. According to Meredith such are the egoists.

These sentimentalists and egoists are people without Commonsense. Actually ‘Commonsense’ is a silken thread binding the individual to the Society. It is this ‘Commonsense’ which defines the individual’s role in a collective habitation. It also exerts control on the individual’s whims and fancies, so that the others can live happily and peacefully. If this silken thread is split, individuals become a nuisance or
a trouble to the others. So Meredith's serious concern is to identify such sentimentalists and egoists and to mend them with the help of the Comic Spirit.

According to Meredith, a man becomes a sentimentalist when he disobeys the common laws of Nature. Meredith strongly believes that Nature is the supreme force of this world, and Nature is idolised as Mother. Nature has its own plan to curb and control such imbalanced individuals. It has its own agents to affect the required change in the abnormal persons. For example, woman is the prime agent of Nature to straighten the stiff and incorrigible sentimentalist. Nature has gifted woman with such qualities to correct and to naturalise those who violate the laws of Nature. A Woman also takes care of fulfilling the mission of Nature by her instinct and practical attitude. Meredith says, "Man is a speculative animal; Woman practical". There are other agents entrusted by Nature to fulfil this job.

In literature the Comic Spirit is the agent to achieve this correction of the sentimentalist or the egoist. It must be stated here that Meredith takes it for granted that the present society is a civilised one, and is a developed by-product of the primitive. It is a fact that the civilised society also has some residual elements of primitivism, just as
a civilised man does still possess a hidden element of primitivism. This is the reason why Meredith adopts the intellectual method in his writing. He thinks that he is writing for civilised community.

These are some of the preliminary tenets for Meredith’s thought and attitude toward life. Other concepts shall be explained in the following chapters wherever it is necessary.

**Meredith as a Publisher’s Reader**

It was in the autumn of 1860 that he became literary adviser and reader of manuscripts to Chapman & Hall, succeeding John Forster, who for nearly twenty-five years had acted as negotiator with them on behalf of Dickens. His salary was £250 a year, and until 1894 this was the basis of his income. During these years he read almost all the manuscripts sent in to the firm. One day a week he went to the office, where he interviewed those authors whom he thought worth advising. For it was a more trying task than reviewing. A printed book can be skimmed through fairly comfortably, and the reviewer is not responsible for deciding whether it ought to have been published. Also it must be remembered that Meredith’s drudgery was done before typescripts were in existence, which would add appreciably to the demands on mind and eye. All this reading of commonplace writing was to some extent
answerable for the exaggerated mannerism of his style. The perennial
perusal of mediocre performances must have made him more
contemptuous than ever of bourgeois taste, and more than ever
determined to be fervid and fantastic and exceptional.

The intention of the article, which was published after his death,
was to show what a conscientious reader he was, and to give extracts of
his opinions of the works submitted to him. Interest, however, was
mainly aroused by the revelations of certain books rejected by him. He
was blamed for over-fastidiousness and for turning down books which
afterwards became best-sellers. Certainly, from the commercial
standpoint, he began and ended badly. Within six months of his
appointment *East Lynne* arrived at the office. His judgement was
‘Opinion emphatically against it. In the worst style of the present taste.’
The fact that he was right did not present it selling a million copies when
published by Bentley. Similarly Meredith advised against Samuel
Butler’s *Erewhon*. Butler wrote afterwards that if he had been the
publisher’s reader he would have advised them to the same effect.

As against a few emphatic refusals of books, some of which
afterwards attained success, there is to be set a long array of early
appreciations, encouragements, corrections, and advices, which prove
him to have shown extraordinary versatility in the post which he so long and so patiently occupied. He was bound to support the claims of literature, and to reject what was illiterate. If he missed a few successes by the way, he at least preserved his own self-respect, and the firm’s as well. Too little has been said about the shining integrity of his literary ideals, and the consistent encouragement which he gave to the promise which he himself was often the very first to perceive.
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