

## A FACT.

“An idea has struck me,” said Brown, breaking a sleepy silence of some twenty minutes, duration.

“Must have been painful,” remarked Jones, drily.

“Though hardly an original one,” continued Brown without deigning to notice the interruption.

“Of course not,” said Jones, with telling absent-mindedness.

Brown waved a languid hand, and continued, “As we are now in the first year of the twentieth century—”

“Excuse me,” interrupted Jones, “last year of the nineteenth!”

At this moment Robinson, who had to all appearances been asleep, was suddenly seized with a most unusually violent fit of coughing, the other two took the hint.

“Well,” said Brown, “be that as it may,—*The Snavl* is dead.”

“R.I.P.,” sighed Jones, sorrowfully. *The Scream*—

“Don’t!” cried Robinson, shuddering.

“So,” Brown went on, “my idea is *this*—”

“Is it really?” asked Jones dubiously, and a moment later deftly caught the tobacco tin that was aimed at his head.

“My idea,” said Brown, speaking very slowly and distinctly, “is this: to start another magazine.” There was a long and dead silence. “It is to be called *The Squirm*,” he went on.

“Why?” asked Robinson.

“No better reason presenting itself,” Brown replied, “because it is,” and continued, “I shall write nothing in it but the most abject drivel.”

“Of course not,” said Jones again,—the sarcasm had not told sufficiently the first time.

“Isn’t he sarcastic?” sniffed Brown, turning to Robinson; “you shall do the drawing—as you draw worse than anyone I know.” Robinson coughed; he had always prided himself on his drawing. “There shall be, at least, three parodies on ‘The Absent-Minded Beggar,’” he went on.

“That reminds me,” put in Jones, who was getting sleepy, “*my* bedder is infern—”

“And another poem,” continued Brown in a loud voice, “of thirty verses, all ending in ‘love,’ ‘dove,’ and ‘glove,’ and things.”

“Doesn’t rhyme,” remarked Robinson drowsily.

“What doesn’t rhyme?” asked Brown.

“Oh, I dunno,” said Robinson, and snored.

“That’ll do for my editorial,” mused Brown, and he made a note of it.

“Yes,” he went on, “it’s an excellent idea—excellent!”

Jones and Robinson snored assent.

“I am convinced,” he went on talking to the air, “that it will go down in Cambridge like—like anything!”—And it did!

G. N. P.

## A BALLAD OF BURDENS.

THE burden of hard rowing. This is pain,  
For days shall come upon thee, when to swing,  
Yea, and to finish, shall be wholly vain  
Beyond thine uttermost imagining.  
While down thine eyelids slowly shuddering  
The sharp salt sweat drips tremulous like fire,  
Till life seem hateful, and a hideous thing,  
This is the end of every man’s desire.

The burden of down-sitting. This is sore,  
None sorer, saving if it be to rise,  
Then shalt thou think on times that were before,  
And thinking, know that thou hast once been wise.  
When in a mist of many maladies  
The solaces of sitting slain retire,  
A ravaged ruin of rash remedies:  
This is the end of every man’s desire.

The burden of the seasons. Rain in spring,  
Wet wind, and rain which beats upon thy head  
Shall fill thy days with travail, ushering  
Summer with miseries unnumbered;  
Rank autumn, when all pride of place hath fled,  
And lonely coaches labour in the mire  
Dumb with despair, soul-sick with speech unsaid:  
This is the end of every man’s desire.

The burden of strict training. Day by day,  
Regret re-born for fruitless travelling,  
And speed self-slain in some sad shameful way,  
Self-slain between each dawn and evening,  
By bucketing in the boat, by bucketing,  
Which breaks thy breath till thou wouldst fain expire,  
And heedst not time, nor length, nor any thing:  
This is the end of every man’s desire.

The burden of long courses. Dumbly blind,  
Blind as the wild whirl of eternity,  
Shall be thy sum of being at the Grind,  
Nor shall the gods have any use for thee;