

**THE GRANTA
3 FEBRUARY 1900**

A BALLAD OF BURDENS.



HE 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 sober, 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 enemies:
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 travailing,
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 would'st fain expire,
And heeds't 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;
In the last days like earth thy throat shall be,
Thy lips a dusty desert, dry and drier,
Sharp-set with savours of the sterile sea:
This is the end of every man's desire.

The burden of the races. When the gun
Shall bring but new disgrace from day to day,
And men shall speak of such and such a one,
And thou shalt answer weeping, "Where are they?"
Lo these are fled along the world's highway,
At rest from all the toils and travels dire
Which bruise and break thy body for a prey:
This is the end of every man's desire.

L'Envoi.

Coxwains, and ye who reck not of distress,
Mark well my words: Before your days expire
Ye too shall taste our work and weariness;
This is the end of every man's desire.