**White Man’s Burden (Rudyard Kipling-1889)**

Take up the White Man's burden--  
Send forth the best ye breed--  
Go bind your sons to exile  
To serve your captives' need;  
To wait in heavy harness,  
On fluttered folk and wild--  
Your new-caught, sullen peoples,  
Half-devil and half-child.  
  
Take up the White Man's burden--  
In patience to abide,  
To veil the threat of terror  
And check the show of pride;  
By open speech and simple,  
An hundred times made plain  
To seek another's profit,  
And work another's gain.  
  
Take up the White Man's burden--  
The savage wars of peace--  
Fill full the mouth of Famine  
And bid the sickness cease;  
And when your goal is nearest  
The end for others sought,  
Watch sloth and heathen Folly  
Bring all your hopes to nought.  
  
Take up the White Man's burden--  
No tawdry rule of kings,  
But toil of serf and sweeper--  
The tale of common things.  
The ports ye shall not enter,  
The roads ye shall not tread,  
Go mark them with your living,  
And mark them with your dead.  
  
Take up the White Man's burden--  
And reap his old reward:  
The blame of those ye better,  
The hate of those ye guard--  
The cry of hosts ye humour  
(Ah, slowly!) toward the light:--  
"Why brought he us from bondage,  
Our loved Egyptian night?"

Take up the White Man's burden--  
Ye dare not stoop to less--  
Nor call too loud on Freedom  
To cloke your weariness;  
By all ye cry or whisper,  
By all ye leave or do,  
The silent, sullen peoples  
Shall weigh your gods and you.

Take up the White Man's burden--  
Have done with childish days--  
The lightly proferred laurel,  
The easy, ungrudged praise.  
Comes now, to search your manhood  
Through all the thankless years  
Cold, edged with dear-bought wisdom,  
The judgment of your peers!

**The Brown Man's Burden (Henry Labouchère's-1889)**

Pile on the brown man's burden  
To gratify your greed;  
Go, clear away the "niggers"  
Who progress would impede;  
Be very stern, for truly  
'Tis useless to be mild  
With new-caught, sullen peoples,  
Half devil and half child.  
  
Pile on the brown man's burden;  
And, if ye rouse his hate,  
Meet his old-fashioned reasons  
With Maxims up to date.  
With shells and dumdum bullets  
A hundred times made plain  
The brown man's loss must ever  
Imply the white man's gain.  
  
Pile on the brown man's burden,  
compel him to be free;  
Let all your manifestoes  
Reek with philanthropy.  
And if with heathen folly  
He dares your will dispute,  
Then, in the name of freedom,  
Don't hesitate to shoot.  
  
Pile on the brown man's burden,  
And if his cry be sore,  
That surely need not irk you--  
Ye've driven slaves before.  
Seize on his ports and pastures,  
The fields his people tread;  
Go make from them your living,  
And mark them with his dead.  
  
Pile on the brown man's burden,  
And through the world proclaim  
That ye are Freedom's agent--  
There's no more paying game!  
And, should your own past history  
Straight in your teeth be thrown,  
Retort that independence  
Is good for whites alone.

**“The Poor Man’s Burden”: Labor Lampoons Kipling**

In February 1899, British novelist and poet Rudyard Kipling wrote a poem entitled “The White Man’s Burden: The United States and The Philippine Islands.” In this poem, Kipling urged the U.S. to take up the “burden” of empire, as had Britain and other European nations. Theodore Roosevelt, soon to become vice-president and then president, described it as “rather poor poetry, but good sense from the expansion point of view.” Not everyone was as favorably impressed as Roosevelt. In one of many parodies of “The White Man’s Burden” from the time, labor editor George McNeill penned the satirical “Poor Man’s Burden,” published in March, 1899.

**The Poor Man’s Burden**

(After Kipling)

Pile on the Poor Man’s Burden—  
Drive out the beastly breed;  
Go bind his sons in exile  
To serve your pride and greed;  
To wait in heavy harness,  
Upon your rich and grand;  
The common working peoples,  
The serfs of every land.  
Pile on the Poor Man’s Burden—

His patience will abide;  
He’ll veil the threat of terror  
And check the show of pride.  
By pious cant and humbug  
You’ll show his pathway plain,  
To work for another’s profit  
And suffer on in pain.  
Pile on the Poor Man’s Burden—

Your savage wars increase,  
Give him his full of Famine,  
Nor bid his sickness cease.  
And when your goal is nearest  
Your glory’s dearly bought,  
For the Poor Man in his fury,  
May bring your pride to naught.  
Pile on the Poor Man’s Burden—

Your Monopolistic rings  
Shall crush the serf and sweeper  
Like iron rule of kings.  
Your joys he shall not enter,  
Nor pleasant roads shall tread;  
He’ll make them with his living,  
And mar them with his dead.  
Pile on the Poor Man’s Burden—

The day of reckoning’s near—  
He will call aloud on Freedom,  
And Freedom’s God shall hear.  
He will try you in the balance;  
He will deal out justice true:  
For the Poor Man with his burden  
Weighs more with God than you.  
Lift off the Poor Man’s Burden—

My Country, grand and great—  
The Orient has no treasures  
To buy a Christian state,  
Our souls brook not oppression;  
Our needs—if read aright—  
Call not for wide possession.  
But Freedom’s sacred light.

Source: George McNeill, “The Poor Man’s Burden,” *American Federationist* (March 1899).

**“The Black Man’s Burden”: A Response to Kipling**

In February 1899, British novelist and poet Rudyard Kipling wrote a poem entitled “The White Man’s Burden: The United States and The Philippine Islands.” In this poem, Kipling urged the U.S. to take up the “burden” of empire, as had Britain and other European nations. Theodore Roosevelt, soon to become vice-president and then president, described it as “rather poor poetry, but good sense from the expansion point of view.” Not everyone was as favorably impressed as Roosevelt. African Americans, among many others, objected to the notion of the “white man’s burden.” Among the dozens of replies to Kipling’s poem was “The Black Man’s Burden,” written by African-American clergyman and editor H. T. Johnson and published in April 1899. A “Black Man’s Burden Association” was even organized with the goal of demonstrating that mistreatment of brown people in the Philippines was an extension of the mistreatment of black Americans at home.

Pile on the Black Man’s Burden.  
'Tis nearest at your door;  
Why heed long bleeding Cuba,  
or dark Hawaii’s shore?  
Hail ye your fearless armies,  
Which menace feeble folks  
Who fight with clubs and arrows  
and brook your rifle’s smoke.  
Pile on the Black Man’s Burden  
His wail with laughter drown  
You’ve sealed the Red Man’s problem,  
And will take up the Brown,  
In vain ye seek to end it,  
With bullets, blood or death  
Better by far defend it  
With honor’s holy breath.

Source: H.T. Johnson, “The Black Man’s Burden,” *Voice of Missions*, VII (Atlanta: April 1899), 1. Reprinted in Willard B. Gatewood, Jr.,*Black Americans and the White Man’s Burden, 1898–1903*(Urbana: University of Illinois Press), 1975, 183–184.