

# "The Brown Man's Burden"

*Much like Lulu Baxter Guy's "The Black Man's Burden," Henry Labouchère's "The Brown Man's Burden" shifts the emphasis of Kipling's notorious poem, offering a view of imperialism from the perspective of those who were most directly affected by the expansionist policies of nations like Britain and the United States. "The Brown Man's Burden" offers an indictment of imperial hypocrisy, with particular emphasis on the violence employed in subjugating countries like the Philippines in the name of freedom.*

## The Brown Man's Burden

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.

**SOURCE** | Henry Labouchère, "The Brown Man's Burden," *Truth* (London); reprinted in *Literary Digest* 18, 25 February 1899.

**CREATOR** | Henry Labouchère

**ITEM TYPE** | Fiction/Poetry

# "The 'White Man's Burden': Uncle Sam to Kipling"

"Droch" was the pen name of Robert Bridges, a critic and editor at Scribner's and *Life* magazines and a friend to both Woodrow Wilson and Theodore Roosevelt. In this response to Rudyard Kipling's "The White Man's Burden," he opens by sarcastically thanking Kipling for "showing us the way," and goes on to explain why some Americans may not be enthusiastic about the prospect of an empire, making particular reference to the experience of the Civil War. While not as strongly anti-imperialist as other works of the time, Bridges nonetheless concludes that "We've got troubles of our own/Enough to keep us busy" without the imperial adventure in the Philippines and elsewhere.

## The "White Man's Burden": Uncle Sam to Kipling

*"Take up the White Man's burden!  
Have done with childish days." -- R. K.*

Oh, thank you, Mr. Kipling,  
For showing us the way  
To buckle down to business  
And end our "childish day."  
We know we're young and frisky  
And haven't too much sense --  
At least, not in the measure  
We'll have a few years hence.  
Now, this same "White Man's burden"  
You're asking us to tote  
Is not so unfamiliar  
As you're inclined to note.  
We freed three million negroes,  
Their babies and their wives;  
It cost a billion dollars,  
And near a million lives!  
And while we were a-fighting  
In all those "thankless years"  
We did not get much helping --

Well, not from English "peers."  
And so -- with best intentions --  
We're not exactly wild  
To free the Filipino,  
"Half devil and half child."  
Then thank you, Mr. Kipling,  
Though not disposed to groan  
About the White Man's Burden,  
We've troubles of our own;  
Enough to keep us busy  
When English friends enquire,  
"Why don't you use your talons?"  
There are chestnuts in the fire!"

**SOURCE** | "Droch" (Robert Bridges), "The 'White Man's Burden': Uncle Sam to Kipling," *Life* 33, 16 February 1899.

**CREATOR** | Robert Bridges

**ITEM TYPE** | Fiction/Poetry

# "The Black Man's Burden"

*This poem by Lulu Baxter Guy turns the tables on Rudyard Kipling's "The White Man's Burden," suggesting that the real "burden" was borne by African-Americans under the weight of racial oppression. Making an impassioned plea for racial equality, Guy implores readers to "think of the brave deeds [African-Americans] have done," such as those of the black soldiers who took part in the charge of San Juan Hill during the recent Spanish-American War.*

## **The Black Man's Burden**

Take off the black man's burden,  
This boon we humbly crave.  
Have we not served ye long enough?  
Been long enough your slave?  
Cut loose the bands that bind us,  
Bid us like men be strong.  
Think of the brave deeds we have done;  
Look not for all the wrong.

Take off the black man's burden,  
'Tis this that we demand;  
Think not of all the crimes you've heard  
But that march up San Juan.  
Oh, South, can't you remember  
When you fought to hold our lives?  
How loyal was the black man  
To your daughters and your wives?

Take off the black man's burden,  
Ye men of power and might.  
Wait not one for another  
But dare to do the right.  
The blood, the smoke, the ashes,  
Of martyred men that's slain;  
Comes wafted to you from the south  
But for another's gain.

Take off the black man's burden,  
His mind can then expand.  
He'll prove your equal in the race,  
Stand every whit a man.  
We'll wait till the burden's lifted,  
And to those who crush us down,  
Will come the words of God to Cain,  
"Thy brother's blood crieth from the ground."

**SOURCE** | Lulu Baxter Guy, "The Black Man's Burden," *Cleveland Journal*, 26 December 1903.

**CREATOR** | Lulu Baxter Guy

**ITEM TYPE** | Fiction/Poetry

# "The Real White Man's Burden"

*This satire of Rudyard Kipling's "The White Man's Burden" was written by Ernest Crosby, a pacifist and president of the Anti-Imperialist League of New York. Crosby's verses poke fun at Kipling's assumption that the "civilized" way of life is inherently superior, using irony to highlight the contrast between the industrialized world and "those benighted shores [where]/They have no cheerful iron-mills/Nor... department stores." Crosby also alludes to "the Maine," the ship whose sinking sparked the Spanish-American war, concluding with a scathing indictment of what he views as the imperialists' hypocrisy.*

## The Real "White Man's Burden"

Take up the White Man's burden;  
Send forth your sturdy sons,  
And load them down with whisky  
And Testaments and guns.  
Throw in a few diseases  
To spread in tropic climes,  
For there the healthy niggers  
Are quite behind the times.

And don't forget the factories.  
On those benighted shores  
They have no cheerful iron-mills  
Nor eke department stores.  
They never work twelve hours a day,  
And live in strange content,  
Altho they never have to pay  
A single cent of rent.

Take up the White Man's burden,  
And teach the Philippines  
What interest and taxes are  
And what a mortgage means.  
Give them electrocution chairs,  
And prisons, too, galore,  
And if they seem inclined to kick,  
Then spill their heathen gore.

They need our labor question, too,  
And politics and fraud,  
We've made a pretty mess at home;  
Let's make a mess abroad.  
And let us ever humbly pray  
The Lord of Hosts may deign  
To stir our feeble memories,  
Lest we forget -- the Maine.

Take up the White Man's burden;  
To you who thus succeed  
In civilizing savage hoards  
They owe a debt, indeed;  
Concessions, pensions, salaries,  
And privilege and right,  
With outstretched hands you raise to bless  
Grab everything in sight.

Take up the White Man's burden,  
And if you write in verse,  
Flatter your Nation's vices  
And strive to make them worse.  
Then learn that if with pious words  
You ornament each phrase,  
In a world of canting hypocrites  
This kind of business pays.

**SOURCE** | Ernest Crosby, "The Real White Man's Burden," *The New York Times*, 15 February 1899.

**CREATOR** | Ernest Crosby

**ITEM TYPE** | Fiction/Poetry

# "The Poor Man's Burden" (Excerpt)

*This poem was one of a number of parodies written in response to Rudyard Kipling's "The White Man's Burden." Here the author points out the special misery that imperialism abroad places on working people back home.*

Pile up the poor man's burden—  
The weight of foreign wars;  
Go shrewdly yoke together  
Great Mercury and Mars,  
And march with them to conquest,  
As once did ancient Rome,  
With vigor on her borders  
And slow decay at home!  
Pile up the poor man's burden,  
Accept Great Britain's plan;  
She does all things for commerce—  
Scarce anything for man.  
Far off among the pagans  
She seeks an open door  
While Pity cries in London,  
"God help the British poor!"

**SOURCE** | Howard S. Taylor, "The Poor Man's Burden," poem, in *The Public* 1, 18 February 1899.

**CREATOR** | Howard S. Taylor

**ITEM TYPE** | Fiction/Poetry