

## Excerpt from

### ***The White Man's Burden* by Rudyard Kipling, 1899**

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*This famous poem, written by Britain's imperial poet, was a response to the American takeover of the Philippines after the Spanish-American War.*

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→ As you read, answer the following questions to guide your understanding of the poem.

1. According to Kipling, and in your own words, what was the “White Man’s Burden”?
2. What reward did Kipling suggest the “White Man” gets for carrying his “burden”?
3. Who did Kipling think would read his poem? What do you think that this audience might have said in response to it?

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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. ...

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## Excerpt from *The Real White Man's Burden* by Ernest Crosby, 1899

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*Poet Ernest Crosby wrote this poem in response to Rudyard Kipling's popular poem, The White Man's Burden.*

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Questions for analysis:

1. What is Crosby's view of colonialism? How does Crosby characterize Western "civilization"?
  2. Compare Crosby's letter to the *New York Times* with Kipling's poem. Which poem more effectively anticipated America's experiences as an imperial power?
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Take up the White Man's burden;  
Send forth your sturdy sons,  
And load them down with whisky  
And Testaments and guns ...

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.