

## “The Poor Man’s Burden”: Labor Lamoons Kipling

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

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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.