

## THE "WHITE MAN'S BURDEN."

It is the prerogative of Mr. Rudyard Kipling to embody in ringing verse the latent thought of the English-speaking peoples. All England leaped at the "Recessional," for he expressed in those fine lines our secret fear that we were growing vainglorious, too full of the pride of life, too charmed with our own success, and that we needed pardon from the Lord for spiritual fataess. We can but hope that his address to the American people will make a similar impression, for it conveys, in language almost as powerful, though not quite as simple, as that of the "Recessional," the truth which we have for a lifetime been endeavoring to preach. The duty of the white man is to conquer and control, probably for a couple of centuries, all the dark peoples of the world, not for his own good, but for theirs; to give them the chance of development which comes with a stable and well-ordered peace; to break for ever, if such breaking be possible, that strange arrest of progress which for so many centuries has benumbed their powers, and which leaves two-thirds of the world such hells upon earth that if the white man realized the truth, all the strength of the good would be absorbed in one great effort to ameliorate their condition. To

Asia the world owes all the great creeds it has, yet no Asiatic, untaught by a European, believes a reasonable creed; while in Africa the millions who have thought of nothing, invented nothing, built nothing, and founded nothing, live on more like evil children or animals with human form than like men with intellects and souls. It is surely the duty of the white man, who has advanced so far that he is almost bewildered by the rushing multitude of his acquirements, who has made of himself, through the favor of God, a restrained and self-controlling human being, and who can put on at will for any task the enchanted armor of science which no barbarian force, however vast, may pierce, to try at least whether he cannot terminate this arrest, and set the whole race of man free to work out the destiny intended for him. We all admit that duty within our own narrow lands, and try to perform it towards our own savages, and the extension of our work, if we can extend it over the whole world, cannot but be good. Only we must perform it in the right spirit, taking it up, as Mr. Kipling sings, as "the white man's burden," seeking no profit beyond fair pay for honest work, shrinking from no accusation except that of

wilful oppression, and above all, expecting no gratitude from those whom we may help to redeem. If we fail, and we may fail yet, for we are not yet sure that our patience will hold out under the necessary self-sacrifices, "the new caught, sullen peoples, half devil and half child," will curse us by all their gods; while if we succeed, and we may succeed, for we are slowly succeeding at home, they will bid us begone unthanked, perhaps use their new powers, the discipline enforced on them, the knowledge by degrees poured into them, to inflict on us untold miseries. If Asia acquired but half our science without acquiring our character and creed, and could lead Africa as Arabs even now lead negroes, she could extirpate the white man, and would do it with the glee of an evil child as it tears a mouse or crushes a butterfly into powder. Nevertheless, there is our duty clear before us, and Mr. Kipling, in this instance humbly following the Providence which is clearing the path, and compelling us all, even against our wills, to enter on it, bids us perform it, though we do but "reap the old reward, the blame of those we better, the hate of those we guard."

But then, is it a duty? The question is not an empty one, for it is at this moment disputed by a third of America, perhaps the best third, certainly the most cultivated; it makes some of the best Christians at home irresolute in their course, and hesitating in their approval; and we have heard Anglo-Indians, while civilizing provinces, doubt audibly, in a sort of agony of introspection, whether the work they were performing was "a great duty or a great dacoity." It seems to us that in principle the path is clear, if indeed we have any responsibility for our fellow-men, or for the benevolent use of our own powers—and if we have not, what is the teach-

ing of all the wisest worth?—and in practice the question resolves itself into one of method only. If we could civilize Asia and Africa by persuasion, by teaching, by example, no one, and especially no one of those who oppose conquest, would dream of opposing such an undertaking, though each man might contend that civilization meant something which all the rest denied. It is the use of force alone to which objection is raised, and which requires justification. What right, it is asked, can you have to rule men who do not consent to your rule, to deprive them of their freedom, to order that they shall live in this way or that when they declare with blows their preference for their own way? If we admitted, as some do, that all men were equal, and that apparent differences were chiefly matters of form, we should say this argument was nearly irresistible; but we cannot admit the hypothesis. There is no more equality among the races than among men. The same right which justifies those in a country who are wise enough to see what is gained by order, justice, and lenity in securing those good things even through policemen and soldiers, justifies the wiser races in compelling the less wise race to pursue the only course which can cure them of their deficiencies. There are races which are morally lunatic, races which are as children, races which are to the white man as the lowest residuum of Europe are to English Judges, and the right to protect them, to educate them, to guide and urge them, seems to us as clear in the one case as in the other. No one objects when a state suppresses a momentary anarchy within its own dominions, and why, if circumstances seem to open up the path, should it hesitate to put down anarchy in the Philippines? Our contention is that, as in a school, the conditions of prog-

ress in the world are peace, order, and the leadership of the white race, which alone has displayed inexhaustibly that faculty of accumulating wisdom which is the first distinction between man and the animal kingdom. We say nothing of the ruin of generations involved in the method of persuasion—fancy the ages to be wasted in persuading Turks to govern in Armenia as we govern in Ceylon—and point to the grand fact that on the Yangtse, on the Nile, on the Niger, on the Congo, in all the vast tropical valleys inhabited by a third of the human race, there has been in the last two thousand years, if anything, retrogression. What business is that of ours? That is just what Rudyard Kipling is trying to explain to the excellent American Gains who refuse to consider themselves responsible for Abel, but who, if he offends them, shoot without remorse. It is not their fault; we are all doing it, and some of us, like the Belgians on the Congo, doing much worse. To say we may interfere, with our scientific weapons, to protect ourselves, to further our

trade, to open ports and harbors—as we did both in Japan and China—but may not when the path opens interfere to govern, seems to us a conviction which can have its ultimate root only in perfect selfishness. If we claim to interfere at all, we must “take up the burden,” though it renders the pace slow and the sweat almost unendurable. There is solid thought in all Mr. Rudyard Kipling’s new verses, but the wisdom which the world most needs just now lies, we are convinced, in the last two:—

Take up the White Man’s burden—  
Ye dare not stoop to less—  
*Nor call too loud on Freedom*  
*To cloak your weariness.*  
By all ye will or whisper,  
By all ye leave or do,  
The silent, sullen peoples  
Shall weigh your God and you.

Take up the White Man’s burden!  
Have done with childish days—  
The lightly-proffered 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.