The White Man's Burden

Rudyard Kipling lived in India until he was 6 years old. He was schooled in England and returned to India in 1882. Although he had strong ties to India he believed in Imperial rule. 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.

Before you read look at the questions below:
What words does Kipling use to describe the white man?
What words does Kipling use to describe the native?
What words describe the white man’s burden?
What words describe the response of the native?

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 mad 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 hope 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 make 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 ye 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 cloak 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 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!
The Black Man’s Burden

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.