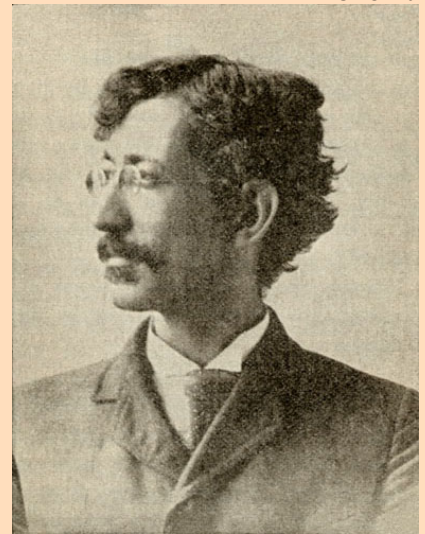


# “The White Man’s Burden”

## *New York Age*

T. Thomas Fortune, editor ❖ April 1899 ❖ Excerpts



T. Thomas Fortune

The underlying sentiment of the poem, as its title suggests, is a rank falsehood, the white man's burden being the voluntary and violent assumption of sovereignty over black and yellow races. . . Mr. Kipling and the white race everywhere think it a sacred duty to shoot thousands of savages, as the British troops did recently in the advance on Omdurman, and as we have just done in Manila, and to reduce the natives to slavery and to steal their land, “all in the name of God and civilization!”

Has the British slaughter of the East Indians and the virtual enslavement of 300,000,000 of them, as well as of the Australians, been of any service to those people? Has not the whole burden been upon the conquered people? Have the Indian races of North, South, and Central America and the Polynesian races of the Pacific archipelagoes been benefitted by contact with the white man? Not a bit of it. They have not only been robbed of their lands and liberty, but the contact is slowly working complete extermination of them. Take the continent of Africa, which has been entirely delimited and reapportioned among European conquerors, is the burden upon the despoiled black hordes or upon the white conquerors?

Nobody has asked the white races to rob and enslave the black and yellow races of the earth. The burden, if such it be, was assumed voluntarily and without the consent and desire of the victims, who preferred and still prefer their land and liberty and freedom from the tyranny of white men. They do not thank them for the assumption of the alleged burden and the alleged sacrifices. From Warren Hastings and Lord Clive in India to Cecil Rhodes in South Africa, the despoiled native has hated his despoiler and groaned under the load of foreign rule and taxation forced upon him.

The white races are the most consummate and self-complacent hypocrites in all the history of races.