

**WHITE, ANDREW
DICKSON (1832-1918)**

American university president, historian of ideas, and diplomat. Educated at Yale in the famous "class of 1853," he early conceived the ideal of a university on the European model, with a scientific spirit and a breadth of learning in contrast to the narrow denominational instruction that had been the rule in the American college of the antebellum period. Together with Senator Ezra Cornell of Ithaca, New York, he drew up the charter of a new university that marked a major step toward the secularization and modernization of American higher education. Cornell University, founded in 1865, was novel in that it placed the natural sciences and engineering and the modern languages and their literatures on a par with the classics, and that its board of trustees was never to have a majority of any religious denomination; it was in all respects a modern institution comparable to those that already existed in Europe. White became President of the new university when it opened its doors in 1868.

In 1892 President Harrison appointed him American minister to St. Petersburg, where the minor rank and scanty means of the American legation prevented him from achieving anything of note at the corrupt court of Alexander III. But there he worked on his two-volume *History of the Warfare of Science with Theology in Christendom*, which he completed after his resignation in 1894. Published two years later, the work contained two chapters in which he exposed the the story of the destruction of **Sodom** and the pillar of salt into which Lot's wife had been transformed as a geographical legend inspired by the peculiarly barren and salinized terrain on the shores of the Dead Sea. Relying on the investigations of the French geologist Edouard Lartet published in the five-volume work of the Duc de Luynes, *Voyage d'exploration à la mer Morte, à Petra et sur la rive gauche du*

Jourdain (1871-75), he explained that the site of these legends had been submerged by the Dead Sea in prehistoric time, and that the fall of the water level exposed the surfaces whose sterility and desolation had been ascribed to an act of divine retribution for the depravity of the former inhabitants. Ignored as the work has been by the official scholarship of the divinity schools, it remains his legacy to critical scholarship on homosexuality.

Named Ambassador to Germany by President McKinley in 1897, he succeeded within a few months after his arrival in Berlin in winning the confidence of the homosexual Emperor Wilhelm II, whose favorite, the later Prince Philipp zu Eulenburg, was the center of a gay clique that influenced German foreign policy. He succeeded in keeping Germany neutral during the War of 1898, when the expanding American presence in the Western Pacific threatened to clash with German interests in the region.

BIBLIOGRAPHY. Wolf von Schierbrand, "Ambassador White's Work," *North American Review*, 175 (1902), 632-41; Roland Hugins, "Andrew D. White—Neutral," *Open Court*, 33 (1919), 428-31.
Warren Johansson

**WHITMAN, WALT
(1819-1892)**

American poet and prose writer. Often acclaimed as America's greatest poet, Whitman, of working-class background, was self-taught, but as a printer, school teacher, journalist, and editor he contributed fiction and verse in the worst modes of the day to the best literary journals. There is no evidence of his genius until he suddenly began to write scraps of what was to become *Leaves of Grass* in his notebooks.

The earliest of these are full of philosophical or religious speculations in prose and poetry; those after 1857 are full of names of men he had met in his strolls through Brooklyn and Manhattan, and after