

**THE MOST BITTER FOE OF NATIONS, AND  
THE WAY TO ITS PERMANENT OVERTHROW.  
AN ADDRESS BEFORE THE PHI  
BETA KAPPA SOCIETY AT YALE COLLEGE,  
JULY 25, 1866; THE MESSAGE OF THE  
NINETEENTH CENTURY TO THE TWENTIETH**

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The Most Bitter Foe of Nations, and the Way to Its Permanent Overthrow. An address before the Phi Beta Kappa Society at Yale College, July 25, 1866; The Message of the Nineteenth Century to the Twentieth by Andrew D. White

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**ANDREW D. WHITE**

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The most Bitter Foe of Nations, and the Way to its  
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AN

193-00  
From  
E. J. Whitehead.

ADDRESS,

DELIVERED BEFORE THE

PHI BETA KAPPA SOCIETY,

AT

YALE COLLEGE, JULY 25, 1866,

BY

ANDREW D. <sup>White</sup> WHITE.

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NEW HAVEN, *July 26, 1866.*

DEAR SIR,

The undersigned have been appointed by the PHI BETA KAPPA SOCIETY a Committee to render you the cordial thanks of the Society for your admirable Address, delivered last evening, and to request a copy for the Press.

Respectfully and truly yours,

A. C. TWINING,

G. P. FISHER.

Professor WHITE.

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STATE OF NEW YORK,

*Senate Chamber,*

*Albany, Aug. 30th, 1866.*

GENTLEMEN,

Accept my thanks for the very kind expressions regarding the Address which, in accordance with the request conveyed by you, I forward herewith.

With great respect,

Very truly yours,

A. D. WHITE.

Professors A. C. TWINING and  
G. P. FISHER.





## A D D R E S S.

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IN this sacred struggle and battle of so many hundred years,—this weary struggle of truths to be recognized,—this desperate battle of rights to be allowed ;—in this long, broad current toward more truth and more right, in which are seen the hands of so many good and bad and indifferent men,—and in the midst of all, and surrounding all, the hand of very God,—what political institution has been most vigorous against this current,—what political system has been most noxious to political truth and right?—in short, what foe, in every land, have right and liberty found it hardest to fight or outwit ?

Is it Ecclesiasticism ?—is it Despotism ?—is it Aristocracy ?—is it Democracy ?

The time allotted me this evening I shall devote to maintaining the following Thesis :

OF ALL SYSTEMS AND INSTITUTIONS, THE MOST VIGOROUS IN BATTLING LIBERTY,—THE MOST NOXIOUS IN ADULTERATING RIGHT,—THE MOST CORROSIVE IN EATING OUT NATIONALITY, HAS BEEN AN ARISTOCRACY BASED UPON HABITS OR TRADITIONS OF OPPRESSION.

I shall also attempt to deduce from the proofs of this a corollary, showing *the only way in which such an Aristocracy ever has been or ever can be fought successfully and put down permanently.*

Let me first give this Thesis precision.

I do not say that Aristocracy, based upon habits and tra-

ditions of oppression, is the foe which takes deepest hold;—Despotism and Ecclesiasticism are dragons which get their claws far deeper into the body politic;—for Despotism clutches more temporal, and Ecclesiasticism more eternal interests.

Nor do I say that Aristocracy is the enemy most difficult to find and come at. Demoralization in Democracy is harder to find and come at; for demoralization in Democracy is a disease, and lurks,—Aristocracy is a foe, and stands forth—bold; Demoralization is latent, and political doctors disagree about it,—Aristocracy is patent, and men of average sense soon agree about it.

But the statement is that Aristocracy, based upon oppression, is, of all foes to liberty the most vigorous, of all foes to rights the most noxious, and of all foes to nationality the most corrosive.

Other battles may be longer;—but the battle with Aristocracy is the sharpest which a nation can be called upon to wage,—and as a nation uses its strength during the contest—and *as it uses its wits after the contest*—so shall you find its whole national life a success or a failure.

For my proofs I shall not start with *a priori* reasoning:—that shall come in as it is needed in the examination of historical facts. You shall have the simple, accurate presentation of facts from history—and plain reasoning upon these facts—and from Ancient History, rich as it is in proofs, I will draw nothing!—all shall be drawn from the history of modern States—the history of men living under the influence of great religious and political ideas which are active to-day—and among ourselves.

Foremost among the examples of the normal working of an Aristocracy based upon the subjection of a class, I name SPAIN. I name her first—not as the most striking example, but as one of those in which the evil grew most naturally, and went through its various noxious phases most regularly.

The fabric of Spanish nationality had much strength and much beauty. The mixture of the Barbarian element with the Roman, after the Roman downfall, was probably happier there than in any other part of Europe. The Visigoths gave Spain

the best of all the barbaric codes. Guizot has shown how,\* as by inspiration, some of the most advanced ideas of modern enlightened codes were incorporated into it.

The succeeding history of the Spanish nation was also, in its main sweep, fortunate. There were ages of endurance which toughened the growing nation,—battles for right which ennobled it;—disasters which compacted manliness and squeezed out effeminacy.

This character took shape in goodly institutions. The city growth helped the growth of liberty, not less in Spain than in her sister nations. Cities and towns became not merely centres of prosperity, but guardians of freedom.†

Then came, perhaps, the finest growth of free institutions in Mediæval Europe.

The Cortes of Castile was a representative body nearly a hundred years before Simon de Montfort laid the foundations of English parliamentary representation at Leicester.‡ The Commons of Arragon had gained yet greater privileges earlier.

Statesmen sat in these—statesmen who devised curbs for monarchs, and forced monarchs to wear them. The dispensing power was claimed at an early day by Spanish Kings as by Kings of England;—but Hallam acknowledges§ that the Spaniards made a better fight against this despotic claim than did the English. The Spanish established the Constitutional principle that the King cannot dispense with statutes centuries before the English established it by the final overthrow of the Stuarts.

Many sturdy maxims, generally accounted fruit of that early English boldness for liberty, are of that earlier Spanish period. “No taxation without representation” was a principle asserted in Castile early, often and to good purpose. In Arragon no war could be declared,—no peace made,—no money coined without consent of the Cortes.¶

\* History of Civilization in Europe. Third Lecture.

† Semper, *Histoire des Cortes d'Espagne*, Chap. 6.

‡ Prescott's Ferdinand and Isabella. Introduction, p. 48.

§ Hallam's Hist. of Middle Ages, Vol. 2, p. 30.

¶ Robertson's Introduction to Life of Charles V., Section 3d; also Prescott.