

crated by a dentist who had filled Miss Perkins's teeth, and whose description of the fillings tallied with those in the mouth of the dead girl. The body was accordingly given over to Mr. Perkins for burial, and steps were taken by the police to implicate some acquaintance of his daughter's who might possibly have had reason for covering up the crime. But circumstances did not happen to favor this consummation. Soon after the positively identified remains of Miss Perkins arrived at her father's home, Miss Perkins herself, full of life and spirit and accompanied by a husband—a brand new acquisition—with whom she had gone upon a wedding trip, stepped off the cars into the midst of her own funeral. It is easy to imagine what might have happened to that young husband had his wife happened to go crazy and wander away, leaving him with dumb lips to explain to an angered father and an outraged community, why he had taken Miss Perkins's life and mangled her remains. Surely this Bridgeport case ought to serve in some sort as a lesson in future cases of mysterious homicide.

Some anonymous writer from London to an American daily paper, caps the climax of transcendental absurdity in setting forth his views as to the cure of poverty. Confronted in London with the awful condition of the "submerged classes," he finds in that condition an excuse for what he calls "Mr. Henry George's apparent extravagance when he declared it to be his deliberate opinion that 'if, standing on the threshold of being, one were given the choice of entering life as a Terra del Fuego, a black fellow of Australia, an Eskimo in the arctic circle, or among the lowest classes in such a highly civilized country as Great Britain, he would make infinitely the better choice in selecting the lot of the savage.'" But this anonymous correspondent is a hard headed man. He is not to be beguiled in his search for a remedy for poverty, by any "moonbeams of an Utopian shad-

owland." It is no affair for party treatment; it is nothing that can be accomplished by legislation. It will not be accomplished by socialism, nor by theoretical anarchy, nor by nationalized railways, nor by nationalized land. What then will it be accomplished by? Ah! It will be accomplished by "nationalized sympathy!" That, of course, is no moonbeam from shadowland! And this soft hearted but extraordinarily hard headed proposition of our anonymous friend is followed by its author with a lot of pietistic cant about the Christian duty of dividing up with the poor.

But is it true that the extirpation of poverty cannot be accomplished by legislation? Why not, if upon examination poverty proves to be caused by legislation? When legislation maintains conditions under which producers are forced to pay tribute out of their earnings to men who to that extent earn nothing, and opportunities for each to abolish his own poverty without impoverishing others are diminished, the poverty caused by those conditions certainly could be abolished by counter-legislation. In thus referring the cause of poverty to the legal maintenance of parasitical conditions, we have touched the question at the core. Voluntary poverty there might be, irrespective of legislation; but without plutocratic legislation involuntary poverty cannot be. Poverty is the result of nothing but a subtle form of slavery, and any "nationalized sympathy" that stopped short of justice, could no more do away with it than it could do away with other forms of slavery. Isn't it interesting, though, to note how your pietistic canter, when his conscience is touched, snuggles up to such vaguenesses as "nationalized sympathy," but shies off from anything as robust as simple justice.

President McKinley is reported from Washington as deriving extraordinary gratification from the success of the tin plate provisions of his tariff bill. Mr. McKinley's capacity, for

gratification appears to be one of his deformities. To the extent that the tin plate policy has been a success at all, its success has been in the direction of impoverishing Welsh workmen, of driving some of them from their homes to this country to find employment at their trade, of lowering wages in the trade here, and of building up an American trust in tin plate manufacture. The only persons besides Mr. McKinley who are peculiarly gratified at this are the members of the tin plate ring.

#### THE NEW AMERICAN ARISTOCRACY.

Professor Harry Thurston Peck, of Columbia University, is a writer of unusual force and pith and betrays a certain liberality, generosity and largeness of conception quite remarkable when he deals with literary subjects. But when his notions of government and social structure crop out, as they often do in the *Bookman*, of which he is editor, and other magazines, he appears thoroughly illiberal and medieval.

The modern theory of social and political equality, Prof. Peck regards as particularly unsound and incompatible with a stable and prosperous community. The one thing which this country needs to give it stability, dignity and standing among nations is an aristocracy, and in his article in the October number of the *Cosmopolitan Magazine*, he welcomes indications in which he sees that this want is about to be at length supplied. The American people have been learning something; they know a good thing when they see it, and they have the faculty of getting the best that is going. They have lately determined to have an Aristocracy, and they will not put up with an inferior article, for they have already tried several of that kind.

With admirable grasp and perspicacity the professor shows how the theocratic aristocracy of the early days in New England, broadened until it ceased to exist; how the feudal landed aristocracy of the South disappeared with the expansion of our national life; and how the more recent self-constituted plutocracy cannot obtain recognition, because it is

vulgar, selfish and unpatriotic. So far, we have made shift to get along without an aristocracy that was at all worth while. But that sort of thing must not go on too long. That "no nation ever reached a high degree of political power and national prosperity without developing some form of class distinction" is, he says, a "political axiom."

Fortunately, people with money are beginning to study the arts and refinements of social distinctiveness, and, more important still, "to men of wealth and leisure, the field of politics seems to have become of late far more attractive than it appeared some years ago." And we are about to have "an aristocracy in the best and highest meaning of the word," which will "give the state a class of men distinguished, highly cultivated and intelligent."

Such an aristocracy would foster art and learning, smooth down national angularities, "establish noble charities," and in general "confer a lasting benefit upon the nation."

It would be in order to inquire whether Prof. Peck's political axiom really has general acceptance, or is merely a dogma of his, requiring proof; whether the class distinctions which have always developed with nations were a cause of such development, or a cause of the subsequent decay which has usually followed the increasing emphasis of such class distinctions. It could be as truthfully said that no nation ever "reached a high degree of political power and national prosperity" without developing some form of political corruption.

But that is not necessary, to show the fallacy of his position. As a student of history he ought to know that there never was an aristocracy such as he hopes for. There never was, and never can be, an aristocracy of culture, or intellect, or wealth. There can only be an aristocracy of Force. It may have, for its outward and visible sign and its instrument, wealth, or land, or traditional rank, but after all it is mere force, applied in these several different ways. Prof. Peck himself says that no aristocracy can be of any consequence unless it obtain approval from the general pub-

lic. Its little assumptions of superiority, its vanities and ambitions, are entirely futile and fruitless, and it cannot even take itself seriously, without popular recognition. But no such recognition has ever yet been obtained and held except by force. Whether the force be political, or military, or theocratic, or what not, it is still force.

The aristocracy for which Prof. Peck hopes is not one of mere wealth, but must be one in the "highest and best sense," with superior intelligence, dignity, generosity, patriotism and nobility of character as prerequisites. But how is the noble class to be selected from the body of the people? Who is to determine the individual possessors of the worthy traits which make one eligible? Obviously, only the elect themselves can perform that office of selection. For what can you expect of human nature when one sits down to make a list of those few who are highest endowed with patriotism, generosity and general excellence? Is there anyone who would from that favored class exclude himself? Or those of like ideals and sympathies? Surely, the professor would admit that there is no one. The chosen few must choose themselves, and since everybody elects himself as one of the number, there remains as serious a problem as ever to determine who are actually chosen. Really, it seems that the process of choosing would never be complete, or even fairly begun.

But supposing the choice were accomplished, the maintenance of the distinction would be fraught with equal difficulty. The general recognition would be entirely wanting without the application of force to compel it.

It is true, of course, that people do recognize individual worth. They revere the Washingtons, they defer to the Websters and Choates, they glorify the Grants and Deweys, some of them doff their hats to the Edisons and Clara Bartons. But all that consideration is paid to them as individuals, as their personal due. They are not deferred to as a class, or because they belong to a class. Nor do their relations or associates draw any of the honors paid them because be-

longing to their class. These suffer by comparison rather, in the public estimation. It is a matter of individual excellence, and cannot be made a matter of class excellence, which wins approval.

The New Aristocracy can only establish itself by force, and to those with high character and sense of justice, which are indispensable in its members, force would be quite impossible.

The only aristocracy for which it is possible, then, to secure popular recognition, is the one which Prof. Peck despises: the note-shaving, railroad-gutting, franchise-grabbing gentry. The members of this class, by serious attention to politics, by obtaining control of legislatures so that they can more completely command the natural sources of wealth and monopolize all opportunities, may finally compel not only the deference, but the service of the multitude.

Thus, indeed, can the New American Aristocracy maintain itself in comfortable and complacent excellence, and "establish noble charities" wherewith to beguile itself into the belief that it is really "conferring a lasting benefit upon the nation!"

JOHN TURNER WHITE.

#### A PERSONAL COMPARISON.

Col. Theodore Roosevelt and Col. William J. Bryan have often been compared as men of the same type. This is usually done by people who dislike them both. To a partisan of Roosevelt's, it would be in the highest degree offensive to liken him to Bryan; to a partisan of Bryan's, it would be no less offensive to liken him to Roosevelt. Each is a disagreeable character to the partisans of the other. Yet there is good reason for the comparison. They certainly present to the public eye a striking resemblance.

We suspect, however, that their resemblance is less a resemblance of each to the other, than of Roosevelt as he actually is to Bryan as he has been pictured.

Bryan is habitually described by the republican and the pluto-democratic press, including the professional funny papers, all of which are