

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

bitterly partisan against him, as a self-seeking man.

In his Chicago speech, which rang round the world, this press could see nothing but a bid for the presidential nomination to gratify personal ambition. In his extraordinary round of campaign speeches in behalf of silver coinage, it could detect nothing but overweening ambition supported by a superabundance of animal energy. His courteous telegram to the successful candidate after election, a telegram which at least sounded like a generous expression of patriotic good feeling, was treated as another bid for popular notice, and the reply of scant courtesy as a merited rebuke. When he offered his services to the country without reservation, in any military capacity in which the president thought he might be useful, he was again pictured as a notoriety hunter; and the president, who was at the time appointing callow sons and nephews of political and social favorites to positions in which they have proved more dangerous to our troops than the enemy, was commended for the insulting manner in which he ignored Bryan's offer.

Then, when Bryan enlisted among the volunteers of his state as a private, he was sneeringly described as a man with an itch to get into the muss somehow, for the sake of attracting attention to himself; and when he was chosen by his comrades to be their colonel, the sneers were renewed in aggravated form. At last, when the war was virtually over, when nothing remained to do, except garrison duty in conquered countries which we had no right to subjugate and the subjugation of which was never contemplated as an object or result of the war, when, in other words, the intention of all patriotic enlistments had been accomplished—when this time had come, and Col. Bryan applied for the release of his regiment, or rather, when it was reported, truly or falsely, that he had made such application, a new variety of sneer broke out. He was now a soldier who wished to lay down the sword of war in order to resume the jaw of politics.

An ambitious, self-seeking politician, without political principle, and

restless for notoriety; such is the picture that Bryan's plutocratic enemies have drawn of him. Whether it is a true picture of the man, we shall not now stop to inquire. We have for the present a different purpose in view. What we wish especially to call attention to is the fact that the picture of Bryan as his enemies paint it is a perfect picture of Roosevelt as he paints it himself.

Consider Roosevelt's career. To become a member of the legislature, he pretended for a term to change his residence. His own counsel tells it, by Col. Roosevelt's authorization. And in support of what political principle did he do this? None. There was nothing in the episode to indicate a better motive than personal ambition.

Then he became a reformer in politics. Here was an indication of his possession of political principle in some sort; but, when the reformers were defeated in national convention by the boss, he abandoned his reform associates. His reward came two years later, in the form of a boss's nomination for mayor of New York. This he accepted at a time when, according to the present authorized statement of his lawyer, he was not a resident of New York. What could have been his motive but personal ambition?

Next we find him again pretending to remove to New York so as to accept an appointment as police commissioner, returning to his old residence upon vacating the office. And he vacated it, not because his term had expired, nor because there was not as good work to do there as anywhere, but because he had successfully solicited an office at Washington which, while offering him no greater opportunities for usefulness, did offer opportunities for a more ambitious career. At a critical moment he abandoned that office too, in order to take the field in the spectacular role of the most sensational officer of a spectacular cavalry regiment. Here he made a dashing record. It was just such a record as an ambitious and reckless man overflowing with animal spirits might have been expected to make—just such a record as a magazine article which he had

published two or three years before, indicated his ambitious desire to make.

Largely on account of this record, the independent republicans, regarding him as one of themselves despite his former desertion, hopefully looked to Roosevelt as the man to overthrow boss-ship in the republican party of New York, by running as an independent republican candidate for governor. But that would have savored of fidelity to political principle, and Col. Roosevelt ignored his independent friends to dicker with the boss of New York himself, whereby he became the accredited candidate of the machine. Thus, at the present climax of his career he again subordinates political principle to personal ambition.

Col. Roosevelt has not only never given the slightest indication of any ambition for aught but his own selfish advancement, but he has distinctly shown by his conduct, and though guardedly yet not ambiguously, has at times shown in words, that his own glory is his chief concern in life. Even what he would call his political principles—frequent war to foster the military spirit, expansion of territory to make the nation great, and an enormous navy to make it mighty—are but a magnification of his own personal ambition. He thinks of the nation as his greater self.

All that Bryan is by his meanest political enemies described to be, that is Roosevelt proved to be by Roosevelt himself. His whole career testifies, directly and positively, without reference to the judgment of his enemies, without reference to any motives which he has not himself frankly revealed, that, utterly oblivious of political principle, he is dominated by an intensely personal and selfish ambition.

CALIFORNIA FARMERS AND TAXATION.

In the state election now in progress in California the issue is the legitimate interests of the people as a whole against the plundering interests of the combined monopolies.

On the one hand the nomination of Congressman Maguire for governor was forced by the rank and