

responsible for it? Not the halls and the politicians, but the people of the city and State. It is the people who, through their law-makers, have failed to make any provision for defraying the expense of printing and distributing the ballots on election day, that are responsible for this annual sale of offices. The State provides for the registration of the vote and for its reception and counting, but makes no provision whatever for the printing and distributing of ballots. What the State has failed to do, the political machines have been built up to do, and as a matter of course they do it in the way best calculated to further their own interests. They meet the expense by a tax levy upon the candidates, and the candidates recoup themselves from the public treasury after election, either by means of exorbitant salaries, or by resorting to some of the methods of indirect pilferings which are so familiar to politicians. If a candidate's assessment is paid by a "hall," he pays back the obligation by quartering a sufficient number of "workers" upon the city pay-rolls, or in other ways enabling them to get living at the city's expense. Every general election in this city, involving the choice of a Mayor and other high officers, requires an assessment fund of at least \$400,000. This year it will not be so large, but it will be at least half that sum. Why should the candidates be called upon to pay this tax, which belongs to the city as clearly as the tax for poll clerks and inspectors?

Any man can see that the necessity for such a tax must inevitably affect the character of the candidates. It bars out all but the rich or those who have the support of the "halls." The poor man who stands outside the "halls," and whose personal friends are unable to put up the money for him, has no chance. Even if he were to receive a popular nomination, he could not hope for an election, because there is no existing machinery by which he can get his ballots distributed at the polls. We have a case in point here now. Mr. Nicoll has made a most creditable record as Assistant District Attorney. There is a distinct and gratifying public sentiment in favor of his nomination for the head of the office. But it is a moral impossibility for him to get a regular nomination, and equally a moral impossibility for him to get an election on an irregular nomination. He stands outside the "halls," he is not connected with either of them as "their man," and their leaders will not hear of his candidacy. Suppose, now, that there should be a citizens' movement to take him up, or suppose the Republican Machine were to consent to make him their candidate. If he were the citizens' candidate, an entirely new machine would have to be organized to distribute his ballots on election day. It would cost as much to do this as it has in previous years to run an independent candidate for Mayor—that is, between \$60,000 and \$100,000. Even with that outlay, the chances would be ten to one that he would be sold out at the polls by the very men who were hired to distribute his ballots; for every one of the 37,000 workers of the various machines, whose business would be at stake in the contest, would be his bitter and most wily enemy from the start. If he were to be the candidate of the Republi-

can Machine, his case would be even more hopeless, for he would be nominated solely to be "sold out."

With an election law providing for the printing and distribution of ballots at the public expense, and allowing the candidacy of any man who could be named for a position by a specified number of citizens, this could all be changed: Mr. Nicoll, or any other capable official, could snap his finger at the "halls," and could take the field as a candidate without submitting to an assessment and without fear of "knifing" at the polls. It is the grossest neglect of our own interests for us as a community to go on year after year under the present system. It is putting a premium upon misgovernment. It bars from office the men most fit, and opens wide the door for dishonesty and extravagance. We cannot get more than two or three honest men out of the thirty-one which represent us at Albany each year. The others buy their nominations for from two to ten times as much as their salaries amount to, and get their money back by selling their votes or by favoring the most vicious kinds of "hall" legislation.

The project for a new election law, which attracted so wide attention through the debates of the Commonwealth Club last winter, is to be revived this year, and we are assured that a carefully prepared measure, applying to the large cities of the entire State, will be presented in the next Legislature soon after it comes together. A more laudable work could not be undertaken, and every citizen, whatever his politics, who has the welfare of popular government at heart, ought to give it his most earnest support.

THE DREAM OF THE COMTE DE PARIS.

THE great vision of the Comte de Paris, the narrative of which he published two or three weeks ago in the form of a manifesto "to the representatives of the Monarchist party in France," may thus be epitomized in his own moods and tenses: France will pass through one of her periodic violent crises. This crisis will be the work of Republicans, when demagoguery shall have led to civil strife, or faction attempted the seizing of the supreme power by force. The monarchy will be hailed as the restorer of order and concord. That monarchy will not mark a retrograde step. It will but steady French democracy. It will renew the old pact between the nation and the Capet family. This pact will be recalled into force by a constituent assembly, or by the more solemn agency of a popular vote. As an act for ever, it will be carried out on the basis of universal suffrage. The country will desire a strong government. To fit this the method of election will have to be modified. The King will govern with the concurrence of the Chambers. The Senate will be in part elective, and have equal authority with the Chamber of Deputies. By both royalty will be enlightened and guided, but not enslaved, leaning for support on either the one or the other. The budget, instead of being voted annually, will be an ordinary law. The annual financial project will contain only modifications of it. New taxes will require the consent of the representatives of the nation, who will also

have the right of discussing all subjects of national interest and of listening to complaints of abuses. The monarchy—thus the story of the vision goes on—will have to re-establish financial economy, administrative order, and judicial independence. It will have to raise by peaceful means the position of France in Europe, to make her respected and her alliance sought after. The Ministers will in this work be free from the fear of an omnipotent Chamber, as they will be responsible to three branches of legislative power. The monarchy will be strong abroad, and yet able to relieve ruinous military burdens. It will protect all religions, guarantee respect to the clergy, restore the freedom of Christian education, and insure liberty to religious as well as secular institutions. It will raise the discipline of the army. It will study industrial problems, work for the amelioration of the lot of the laboring classes, endeavor to bring about social pacification, leave the new strata of society in the enjoyment of the advantages recently obtained, maintain universal suffrage, and leave unpretending and honest Republican office-holders in their positions. That the King will be the first servant of France is the last word of the dream.

M. Ferry, in a speech on Thursday, declared that the Republic regarded this dream with "contemptuous indifference." If he had said "ignorant indifference," it would doubtless be true of the country at large, because we presume nine-tenths of the provincial voters do not even know who the Comte de Paris is. But he admits that it is not true of the Chambers, for he says it will probably be made a pretext for attacking the Cabinet, and an excuse by some Republicans for deserting their party, and expresses a fear that a ministerial "crisis" may arise out of it. The meaning of this is, that the Cabinet has owed its capacity to hold its own during the past six months to the support of Royalists who had come to the conclusion that the weakness of successive ministries, the facility with which they were overthrown, and the instability thus introduced into the management of public business, constituted a great danger for the country. It is feared that the Comte de Paris's manifesto may have sufficient influence on these men to make them feel that they ought not to do anything further to save the Republic from discredit or danger, and that as soon as they fall away from the Ministry the Radicals will attack it fiercely for ever having had their support.

On the other hand, the manifesto, in adopting the Bonapartist plan of substituting the popular vote for divine right, or "the grace of God," as the source of sovereignty, has profoundly afflicted a large body of the Monarchists, while it has filled Paul de Cassagnac and the other surviving Bonapartists with glee as a grand vindication of the main plank in their own platform. The adoption of it is certainly the most serious step, and at the same time the most absurd, that the head of the house of Bourbon has ever taken, for it is clear that no two things can be more opposed than the hereditary principle and the bestowal of the crown by popular vote. If the Comte de Paris were restored to-morrow by a plébiscite, he might be the choice of the majority as the best man available for the chief magistracy. If his son were to succeed him by inheritance, however,

without obtaining the confirmation of a popular vote, it would be a violation of the principle of popular sovereignty. If, on the other hand, every heir to the throne had to be elected, what would become of the hereditary principle? And then there would be something manifestly absurd in asking people to vote simply to put on the throne a particular man who was always designated beforehand by his father, or grandfather, or uncle.

This curious combination of two irreconcilable theories was a device of Napoleon III., but he had no chance of putting it into practice. Nor would the Comte de Paris have the chance, even if he got back to the throne of his ancestors. If the people are allowed to elect monarchs at all, they cannot be compelled to choose the candidates always from among the members of a particular family, and still less to vote only for the eldest male of a particular family. No such device would ever have been thought of, in fact, in any country in which the monarchical tradition had any strength, and nothing is more certain than that the popular vote cannot in our day make what kings call a king. It can make dictators and Presidents, but it cannot make that curious mediæval magistrate whom people reverence and obey, without reference either to his character or capacity, on simple proof of a certain descent. There is something pathetic in the Comte de Paris's attempt to get the French majority to crown him as a descendant of Louis XIII., for he is an able, conscientious, and honest man, who would make an excellent chief magistrate, but the bulk of Frenchmen have ceased even to understand the royalist claim. They understand the claims of a ruler who has an army at his back, and has "got the drop on them," as they say in the West, or of a ruler whom they have chosen because they consider him the best man for the place; but they do not understand the claims of a man who says they ought to crown and obey him, and pay him a large salary, because he was born of certain parents.

THE ETHICS OF LITERARY CRITICISM.

"WHAT ought a writer to do when another mutilates, falsifies, and radically misrepresents his ideas, and then, after having made him out different from what he is, falls upon him for the purpose of bringing his character under suspicion?" "What ought we all to do to the end that the effort to get at the truth, the effort which inspires our scientific research, may also at last become the guiding star of our literary criticism?"

These are the two questions to which Wilhelm Wundt, the well-known professor of philosophy, addresses himself in a recent brochure entitled "*Zur Moral der literarischen Kritik*." The pamphlet is interesting less for its substance of doctrine or for the novelty of its results than for its mode of treatment. The "case," as stated by the pamphleteer and by him made the starting-point of a general discussion which has interested us, is this: In the *Preussische Jahrbücher* for March, 1887, appeared an article by Hugo Sommer upon "Wilhelm Wundt's Ethical Evolutionism." In this essay, written by a professed representative of Christian ethics, the writer commits, as Prof. Wundt pretty conclusively shows, nearly all the gravest sins of which a critic can be guilty. He writes without any adequate knowledge of the book he is criticising; ascribes to his author views which the author not only

does not hold, but has been at pains to criticise adversely; adduces expressions of opinion and omits essential qualifications; manufactures quotations, either out of whole cloth or by garbling the text, patching together sentences and phrases that do not belong together, changing important words and interpolating matter of his own; charges his author with ignoring or having no conception of matters which the author has in reality discussed at length; gives, in short, an utterly false and distorted impression of the man he is talking about, and then indulges in intimations calculated to injure him with certain portions of the public.

After having thus set forth the facts, Prof. Wundt invites his assailant to a calm consideration of the case as an ethical problem. Come, he says, let us inquire what a man ought to do who has been treated as you have treated me. Let us reason together, your ethics against mine (Herr Sommer is the author of a book, "Conscience and Modern Culture"); you who think that the idea of evolution is for ethical purposes empty and worthless, and I who think it of the greatest importance; you who hold in substance that the advent of Christianity said the last word in the process of man's moral improvement, and I who think that it was only the beginning of a new era; you who represent individualism and passive submission to the will of God, and I who stand for evolutionism, and look for improvement in the future through active resistance to evil.

Having thus laid out his work, the author first gives us a chapter entitled "The Test of Individualism," the philosophy of which he reduces to something like this: It is all of no use, things will only go on as they were going before; we should submit to the inevitable and get what comfort we can from the consolations of religion. Prof. Wundt disclaims any intention of casting a stone at the consolations of religion; but making, as he does, a sharp distinction between religious motives and ethical ends, he finds that this philosophy holds out a cheerless prospect. Applied to the case in hand, he argues, it will simply help to bring on an era in which the malicious or ignorant critic shall go on doing his wretched work without let or hindrance, and in which the attacked party shall seem always in the wrong. Such a state of affairs must react unfavorably upon the progress of knowledge, particularly where the critic is an acknowledged authority, and the object of his attentions a writer who has yet to win his spurs. In such cases criticism may do immense harm by chilling the ardor and poisoning the life of those who might otherwise do creditable work. It is of little use, so Prof. Wundt thinks, to say, as is so often said, that if the writer's work really be good, hostile criticism cannot in the long run harm him. This is cold comfort, because we are not here for the long run, and one of the most potent incentives to good work is the approval of contemporaries. Naturally our author concludes at the end of his reflections that the "test of individualism," the philosophy of quietism and passive submission, fails. For ethical purposes, and as applied to the case in hand, it declares its own bankruptcy in advance.

Then we have the "Test of Evolutionism." Under this head the writer glances at the evolution of the literary conscience as we now know it; remarks upon the history of plagiarism, forgery, and such like frauds; also upon piracy, and upon the change that has taken place quite recently in the tone, if not in the spirit, of literary controversy. From all this he concludes both that there has been great improvement in the past, and that this improvement is, in part at least, due to well-directed effort. The final upshot of the matter is, therefore, that it is the

duty of a person circumstanced like himself to reply to his critic, expose falsifications, and restore the defaced image of the truth; not, indeed, in the hope of convincing his censor or turning him all at once from the error of his ways, but in the hope of inspiring in him a faint sense of shame, which may perhaps serve to render him a little, even were it but infinitesimally, more careful the next time, and which, being then duly passed down to his children and his children's children, may at last grow into a thrifty and sensitive literary conscience.

As before remarked, there is nothing novel in this conclusion, considered as a practical maxim of conduct. It simply recommends the course which writers are very generally in the habit of pursuing when they deem themselves unfairly treated by a critic who is worth replying to. And evidently, in applying the rule, this last consideration cannot be left out of the account, since, if authors of repute should, out of tender solicitude for their misguided critics and for future generations, undertake to reply to every criticism which seemed to them unjust or something worse, many of them would have little else to do, and original production would languish.

From the above outline, which is tolerably exhaustive, it will be seen that our German philosopher is not a pessimist and not a radical. He sees hope, and sees it this side of the guillotine; and so we venture to commend him to those of our Anglo-Saxon friends who take so dark and even desperate a view of the critic evil. How deeply many people feel on this subject is well known. Of what use is your critic anyway? we hear them asking from time to time. Are not his praise and his blame alike impotent to affect the course of events? Does not the world go on its way precisely as if he had not been? Does not the arbiter of letters at any particular time become, with all his personal rules and standards and decisions, simply a more or less amusing reminiscence for the next generation? What importance can possibly attach to the dicta of a guild whose craft is in such a condition that if you take three representatives of it, all of them apparently equally competent, and submit to them the same work, the work will very likely touch the heart of one, the spleen of another, and leave the third untouched? And then, is it not nobler to have made the poorest original effort than to have written the best imaginable criticism of it? Is not this business of talking about what other people have done, a tiresome and foolish business, which it would be well to do away with?

Questions of this kind are most likely to arise when the mind is overheated and in a state of ferment; and for the purpose of cooling and clarifying the mind, nothing is better than the study of history. To the mind thus calmed, it can but seem rather foolish to regard anybody's opinion as worthless simply because the next generation has no need of it. The opinions of critics about books are, in the process of the suns, neither more nor less nugatory than the opinions of other people about other subjects. The opinions are themselves a part of the historical process. Nor is it very philosophical to try to cast contempt upon the critic as a parasite, a being who lives and thrives upon what is given him by others. We are all of us the children of those that have gone before, and criticism at its best is a fine art which is just as truly creative as any other art, and is also, like other fine arts, capable of affording a high kind of intellectual enjoyment. This is the right point of view from which to look at the subject.

But when is criticism at its best, and what is to be done to better it? It is of no use to indulge in outbursts of despair which hint at no other