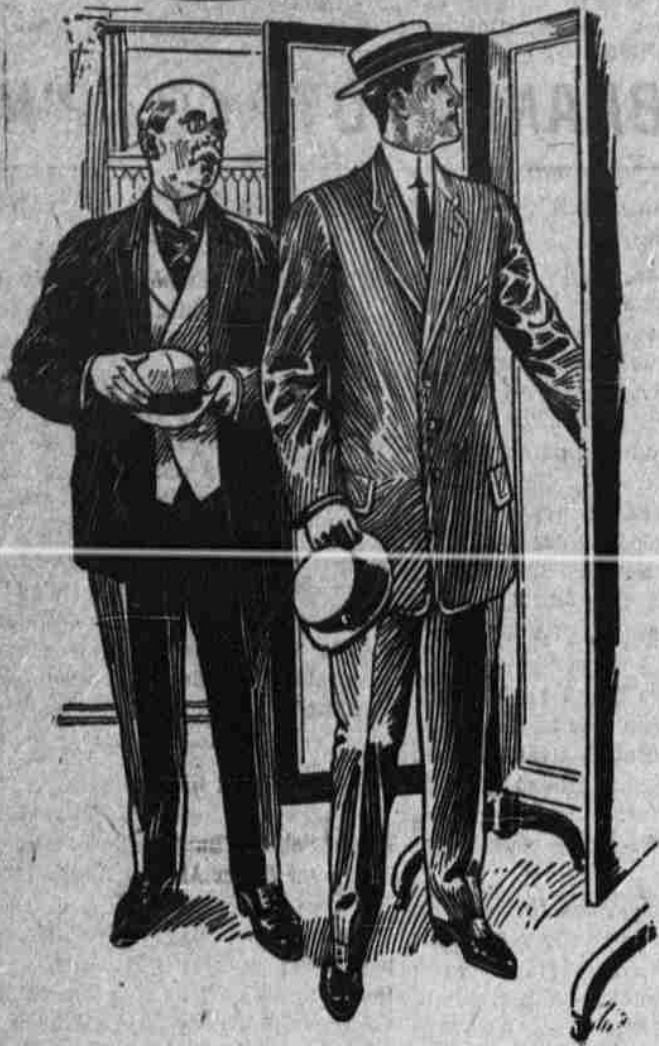


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(Continued from Page Three)

to promote naturally resorted to the body which exercised the control. There need have been nothing sinister about this. If the whole matter had been open and candid and honest, public criticism would have been centered upon it. But the use of money always results in demoralization and goes beyond demoralization to actual corruption. There are two kinds of corruption—the crude and obvious sort, which consists in direct bribery, and the much subtler, more dangerous sort, which consists in a corruption of the will. Business men who have tried to set up a control in politics through the machine have more and more deceived themselves, have allowed themselves to think that the whole matter was a necessary means of self-defense, have said that it was a necessary outcome of our political system. Having reassured themselves in this way, they have drifted from one thing to another until the questions of morals involved have become hopelessly obscured and submerged. The methods used are well enough known. Money has not only been supplied to these men in public life who would be serviceable to big business interests by way of promoting the legislation they desired and preventing the legislation they feared, but it has also been lent to those who would not be serviceable. It is this latter use of the money power which has attracted very little attention, but

which is after all the most insidious and contemptible part of the whole ugly system. Most of our legislators are men engaged in one kind of business or another, or engaged in one sort of employment or another. They therefore have their own individual business interests and connections, and again and again it has happened that individual legislators who wished to render conscientious and independent public service found themselves suddenly embarrassed when they refused to serve particular business interests which were seeking legislative favors. They have found that they could not renew their notes at the banks. They have found credit denied them and obstacles put in their way in the conduct of their business. The whole thing can be easily managed without attracting public attention and in such subtle ways that even the man injured cannot always prove that there is anything intentional or deliberate in the injury done him; but the grip of the money market tightens on him none the less and strangles him if he exercises too great independence and does not lend himself to the purpose which the machine has consented to promote at the bidding of the business men with whom they are allied.

Unhappily money is necessary at every turn of the political game. It is necessary in connection with every part of our electoral process because our electoral processes have to be public, men have to be commended to the electorate by methods of one sort or another, like public speeches, literature printed and distributed through the mails—by all the methods of publicity, which are necessarily costly. A man cannot get into office without the expenditure of a good deal of money, even if he confines the expenditure to perfectly legitimate objects. The sources of money are therefore the sources of political opportunity and of power, and those who supply the money can generally control the nominations, that is to say, the selection of those who are to exercise the powers of government and of law-making. And opportunity does not stop at election. The men elected to office generally hope to have some political future, and they find that future in turn controlled at the source; so that those who supply the "sinews of war" are too often able to exercise a kind of command which deprives representatives of the people of their own real independence. It requires a great deal of courage and an unusual amount of individual initiative to serve in one of our legislatures without being touched and restrained and coerced in some degree by influences of this kind.

The country has definitely made up its mind that it will get at the root of this matter and all other matters like it, and that it will break up this alliance. There was a time when it looked as if to accomplish this would involve a very dangerous sort of strife between the general mass of voters in the country and those who had exhibited splendid talents in building up the business of America. But, happily, that threat has disappeared. It is one of the happy circumstances of our time that the most intelligent and progressive of our business men have seen the mistake as well as the immorality of the whole bad business. The alliance between business and politics has been a burden to them—an advantage no doubt upon occasion, but a very questionable and burdensome advantage. It has given them great power but it has also subjected them to a sort of slavery and a sort of subserviency to leading politicians. They are anxious to be freed from the bondage as the country is to be rid of the influences and methods which it represents. Leading business men are now becoming great factors in the emancipation of the country from a system which was leading from bad to worse. There are those, of course, who are wedded to the old ways and who will stand out for them to the last, but they will sink into a minority and be overcome. They have found that their old excuse that it was necessary to defend themselves against unfair legislation is no longer a good excuse, and there is a better way of defending themselves than through the private use of money, and that is to take the public into their confidence, to make absolutely open all their dealings with legislative bodies and legislative officers, and let the public judge as between them and those with whom they are dealing in the field of politics.

This discovery on their part of what ought to have been obvious all along points out the way of reform, for undoubtedly publicity comes very near

being the cure-all for political and economic maladies of this sort. But publicity will continue to be very difficult so long as our methods of legislation are so obscure and devious and private. I think it will become more and more obvious that the way to purify our politics is to simplify them, and that the way to simplify them is to establish responsible leadership.

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