

man to obtain an opportunity of honestly filling a public office.

The ignorant and the dishonest apologists of the System contend that the men of wealth have, in self-defence, merely corrupted corruption and bought up the politicians who were preying upon them. You might believe it, if there had ever been a case in our courts in which a corporation had prosecuted a legislator for blackmail or attempted to defend itself from a dishonest public official. You might believe it, if you could believe that the boys who steal "junk" are preying upon the junk dealer who induces them to steal it. And even if you believed it, you would have to concede that there is no patriotism in business, no responsibility to the state, no obligation of citizenship to expose dishonesty in public office or oppose the profit of it, and no higher sense in the man of wealth than a criminal self-interest and the cowardice of a knave.

Such an excuse — such an apology — it is impossible to accept. Every man who has had anything to do with politics knows that it is a lie. Our Legislatures have been bought by the corporations not for self-protection; our courts have been corrupted in no struggle against injustice; the "dives" have been subsidized against society not because society oppressed the good. The whole System is an alliance of law breakers against