

the brokers in the business. The demand and supply are the important factors, and the demand and supply arise chiefly because of the unequal distribution of wealth.

Next to the poor selling their souls comes selling their votes. Bribery and political corruption are largely due to differences in wealth. In a democracy we have the ideal conditions for such perverted uses of wealth. In a democracy there are two great powers, the power of the ballot and the power of the purse. The power of the ballot rests with the poor because of their numbers. The power of the purse rests with the rich. Nothing could be more natural than that the unscrupulous representatives of these two classes should contrive to get together for mutual advantage. They need not meet directly. The perverted politician intervenes as a broker. Many of the city governments of the United States exemplify this condition. These politicians make, on the one side, a business of controlling the votes of the poor, partly by bribery, partly by dispensing "charity," and partly by activity in party organizations; and, on the other side, they make a business of "holding up" the capitalists who want franchises for street railways, water, gas, electric light, telegraph or special tariff legislation. The unscrupulous capitalist finds it advantageous to pay toll to the politician, either by actual bribery or by stock in corporations, or by what a politician recently called "honest graft" in the form of "tips" or inside information as to the stock market, real estate transactions, etc. Some of the politicians in our state legislatures and even in our national Congress are of this character. Some are avowed or secret representatives of capital or "the interests"; others, of voters or "the people." In this case the conflict between plutocracy and democracy becomes more direct and visible. But it always exists and will continue to exist, in some form, unless one of the two powers shall some day completely vanquish the other. Here is one of the great practical problems of the day.