Chapter 6

"BUSINESS RUNS THE WORLD": INSTITUTIONAL COALITIONS BEHIND THE NEW ORDER

In the fall of 1989 Abraham & Straus opened a shopping mall on West Thirty-third Street and Broadway, the biggest ever to appear in Manhattan. Institutional forces of considerable magnitude, both public and private, joined together to get it built. Real estate developers drew on large reserves of borrowed capital for financing. The New York Transit Authority spent $50 million of public money to "modernize" subway stops in the area. Neighborhood associations and hotel owners worked to clear the homeless off the streets and out of alleys, and the city's Department of Parks renovated shabby Greeley Square across the street. Opening night was videotaped for later broadcast on national television; big name performers like Tony Bennett entertained hundreds of invited guests that September night in a glittery overheated setting of strobe lights and neon colors.[1]

In our time, of course, such coalitions have become a predictable feature of the development and redevelopment of American cities, as much symptomatic of a weakening domestic commercial culture—of its ever more noninnovative and even tiresome use of color, light, and glass—as a testimony to its still potent carnival appeal. Expensive projects from Baltimore to Minneapolis, each meant to revitalize the consumer sector and only slightly modified to capture local flavor and custom, have taken shape as public and private groups have come together in pursuit of a common objective. We know little about their history or about how central they have been to the formation of America's commercial life and culture. But any culture that endures rests on a similar base of relationships, a similar alliance among economic and noneconomic groups, and a similar circuit of power.

Before the outbreak of World War I, the new network of corporate business institutions that invented the modern strategies of enticement was already altering the cultural landscape. But such institutions were not enough in themselves to make anybody think or behave differently or to guarantee any lasting changes in American culture. Businessmen needed other institutions as well to ensure this kind of change; they needed other friendly partners (and, as we will see at the end of this chapter, even unfriendly partners) to help in the creation of the new commercial order of things.

In the next three chapters I want to explore the character of these institutions and how each, in their very different ways, helped give life to the mass culture of consumer capitalism. In the first chapter I describe four areas of institutional support. The first is educational and consists of commercial art schools, colleges, and universities (most notably the University of Pennsylvania and Harvard), which opened their doors to serve the educational needs of business. The second institutional area is cultural and focuses on the great urban museums and on their "new curators," on men like Morris D'Camp Crawford, Stewart Culin, John Cotton Dana, and Richard Bach, who were among the most ardent (even dreamy) converts in the United States to the goals of the new mass consumer industries. Federal and municipal governments form a third area of assistance and cooperation. Government involvement in the new economy was complex, fraught with tensions and contradictions, but it nevertheless did more to support than to impede the evolution of the new commercial culture. Finally, in the chapter's conclusion, I discuss an entirely unlikely participant in the new circuit of power—the Industrial Workers of the World, America's most radical labor union. No group in the country matched the IWW in its hatred of capitalism, yet it sometimes pursued tactics that mirrored and confirmed the power of that very capitalism—with tragic results.

The concluding chapters in Part Two examine another fundamental dimension of American institutional life: religion. They survey the landscape of institutional religion, dealing especially with John Wanamaker and evangelical Protestantism but also with other religious groups as they responded to the challenge of the new culture. The chapters describe a new mentality—mind cure—that suited ideally the hopes and expectations of many Americans. They also depart, in some degree, from the institutional aspect of the book, dealing with a shift in values and a change in spiritual life.

"Searching Out" and Satisfying "Human Wants"

Before 1898 or thereabouts no colleges or universities in the United States taught commercial business on a formal or professional basis with the sole exception of the Wharton School of Economics at the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia. "Commercial colleges" operated in the 1880s, but they gave only three-month instruction in arithmetic, penmanship, elementary bookkeeping, and "business" broadly conceived. Before the turn of the century, young people in the United States who wanted to study economic subjects in depth could choose agriculture, metallurgy, mining, engineering, and disciplines related to production. They studied, that is, how to "make things," not how to market and sell goods or how "to make money," as one business educator said. The educational system paid almost no attention to what a later observer called the "pecuniary aspects of business." Cost accounting was not only not taught, but it was also barely practiced by American firms. No two businessmen kept records the same way. And without uniform practices, it was almost impossible to keep track of the general flow of money and goods or to predict future flows.[2] Even the Wharton School, which aspired to advance the cause of professional business education, failed to get very far with this agenda in the early years; it offered only one-year instruction and focused primarily (and even here, not very well) on accounting and on business law and practice.[3]

No systematic examination of the economic institutions then emerging was undertaken, no study of the large mass retailers, of the credit system, of the investment bankers and their banks, or of the ever growing commodity markets that were penetrating hitherto insuperable economic frontiers. Nor did Americans devote much professional study, except within private, guild-like arrangements and in the secondary schools of some states, to art in relation to commerce. In England by the mid-1800s, as well as in France and Germany, large museums—from the English Kensington Gardens to the French Musée d'Arts Industriels—were cooperating with manufacturers in the teaching of industrial design. But in the United States, commercial and industrial art, display and decoration, advertising, style, and fashion were either just beginning to make strides or they were nonexistent fields of inquiry.[4]

After 1895, all this began to change, in response to the demands of industry and growth of corporate enterprise, until the United States by the late 1920s had the largest educational apparatus anywhere in the world for the study of such subjects. Art education in primary and secondary schools was championed by a whole new group of educators, an underlying aim of which, as art historian Diana Korzenik has written, was to get Americans to shift their interests and desires away from handcrafted goods to the new mass-manufactured consumer goods.[5] New materials, like colored chalk, colored crayons, and colored paper, were added to the stock of instructional materials. Philosophers like John Dewey spoke at conventions on the necessary relationship between "art and industry" and on why art education should be taught in the high schools.[6]

The new arts-in-industry movement or good-design movement rooted itself in the commercial art schools and museums of the pre-1920 period. Among the schools initially engaged in the nineteenth century in handicraft production or in the fine arts were Pratt Institute and the New York School of Fine and Applied Arts (later the Parsons School), both in New York City. After 1900 they switched to teaching commercial art. Pratt was hotly criticized by handicraft groups for catering to the "trade element," but year after year it absorbed new commercial subjects into the curricula—interior decoration, costume design, commercial illustration, and applied design. The commercial illustration class was so crowded in 1913 that it had to be divided into four sections, "there being 117 students in all." Two years later, Pratt students were beginning to find regular employment at such places as Bonwit Teller, Abraham & Straus, Gimbels, Best's, and Altman's.[7]

By the late 1910s, the New York School of Fine and Applied Arts, directed by Frank Alvah Parsons, had become a servant of mass market merchandising. Parsons, hired in 1906 to "promote a Department of Design and the teaching of it," in the next decade formed close ties with New York's clothing industry and stores. His curriculum consisted of such commercial subjects as display advertising and product design; his own personal specialty was interior decoration. Simplicity was his motto. "Anything irrelevant," he said, "is a waste of material, space, money, and mental consciousness." Influenced by psychologist Walter Dill Scott, he lectured

his students to target the "imagination," "the instincts," "psychology," and "suggestion" ("rational" appeals, he said, usually failed). Create "associations" in the consumer's mind; exploit the "sex appeal of objects"; manipulate the "language of color." Color, he said, "makes a direct appeal to the emotions."[8] He was among the hundreds of new educators who wanted to break down the distinction between "beauty" and "commerce," high and low art, popular and elite, a distinction already dissolving in department stores, hotels, and world's fairs. "Art is not for the few," he said, "for the talented, for the genius, for the rich." When it comes to marketing goods, art is "for everyone." Parsons' lifelong aim was to "make the connection between art and trade easier."[9]

Beyond these art schools were the colleges and universities, upward to 125 by 1920, specializing in commercial subjects. Among them were three graduate programs in retailing, at Simmons College in Boston, Carnegie Institute of Technology in Pittsburgh, and New York University in Greenwich Village. The Prince School of Salesmanship at Simmons, founded in 1915, was headed by the inexhaustible Lucinda Prince, who, fourteen years earlier, had managed her own retailing school in Boston. Boston stores—Filene's, R. H. White, and Jordan Marsh—hired her graduates as an experiment, liked what they saw, and decided to throw their financial weight behind her. In 1915 they had her appointed educational director of the National Retail Dry Goods Association and financed the merger of her school with Simmons College. Two years later, Pittsburgh merchants united with the local public school system and Carnegie Institute of Technology to form the Research Bureau for Retail Training. Seven Pittsburgh department store merchants—Edgar Kaufmann of Kaufmann's leading the way—underwrote the Bureau with an annual donation of $32,000 over a five-year period, their goal to improve store service by training and hiring new personnel and by instilling a commitment to service.[10]

Better service was also the stated aim of the New York University School of Retailing, a pooled effort of merchants, the New York City Board of Education, and New York University. The idea here came from Anne Morgan, a rich chain-smoking feminist and daughter of J. P. Morgan, America's most notorious investment banker. As willful as her father and as contemptuous of his anti-Semitism as of his wealth, Anne Morgan combined a love of easy luxury with an advocacy of many social causes. It was Morgan who in 1912 had persuaded the management of Lucius Boomer's McAlpin Hotel in New York to create an entire floor run for and by women.[11] In 1915 she co-led the Department Store Association, a group of reform-minded society women who urged Elmer Brown, chancellor of New York University, to establish a retail training program for young women in department stores. "The Department Store Association," she said, "wishes to advance the all-round development and technical education of the girl in the department store. We feel that this is a problem of vital importance throughout the country and that here, as in many fields, the great task is the teacher's who gives the necessary training."[12]

At Morgan's behest Brown set up classes in retailing at the university's School of Pedagogy. Then Macy's vice-president Percy Straus stepped in, eager to get the program off the ground. Straus belonged to a new generation of merchants who wanted to keep some measure of family control while building up an efficient hierarchical managerial machine. In 1912 he and his two other brothers, Jesse and Herbert, had risen to power at Macy's when their father, Isidor, was killed in the sinking of the *Titanic*. Percy, a scholarly appearing Harvard graduate with pince-nez glasses, was determined to hold the reins of the business. He opposed his father's brother, Nathan, and his cousins, all of whom had as much right to the business as he did. Through a series of clever maneuvers, he, Jesse, and Herbert managed to get Nathan and his sons to sell out and, although Nathan hardly lost everything (he kept ownership of the Abraham & Straus stock), the outcome so alienated him that he never forgave Percy. "Since his father's death (my lamented brother Isadore)," Nathan wrote Chancellor Brown of NYU, after learning of his nephew's role as chair of an executive committee of the new retail school, "I have not been in the firm of R.H. Macy and Co., as this man, together with his older brother, made it impossible for me or my sons to remain, and I would not care to meet him. For your further information I would like you to know that if he got the office on the strength of his being a Jew, or representative of our people, he does not deserve it."[13]

The younger Straus wanted to bring Macy's into the "modern age," to free it from the stigma of being a cheap, unfashionable place known for nothing but bargains. He was a fanatic about rationalized merchandising and was convinced that the system of distribution and marketing demanded overhauling to ensure stable turnover of goods and money. Appalled by a long history of incompetence in keeping the books at Macy's, he instituted new cost accounting measures and more systematic personnel policies, as well as a Tayloresque time-study analysis. He hired the first controllers at

Macy's and filled the store with electric adding machines, Addressographs, calculating typewriters, stenciling machines, electrically driven devices for folding and unfolding envelopes, and better cash registers.[14]

Straus was fully aware of the efforts elsewhere to upgrade retailing, and he longed for his own educational fief where he could train salespeople. But apparently unable to finance and organize it himself, he joined other merchants to press New York University to give them their own retailing school. The first start-up executive meetings were held at Straus's private offices at Macy's and in the Mandarin Room at Lord & Taylor's on Thirty-seventh Street and Fifth Avenue. More than twenty merchants from stores in Newark, Manhattan, and Brooklyn attended these meetings, along with people from the New York City Board of Education and New York University. They hammered out structure and management and clarified lines of authority, with the university getting full control over hiring and curriculum. Straus chaired the executive committee, and Samuel Reyburn, head of Lord & Taylor and of the Associated Dry Goods Corporation, controlled the finance committee.

In May 1919 the university's School of Retailing opened its doors to train professionals to teach retailing in the city stores and high schools, with the overall intention of upgrading saleswork into "skilled labor." Its curriculum included distribution and management, textiles, color and design, store organization, and business ethics. The first formal philosophical statement of the school's agenda gave training in service high profile. "In an age of impersonal sources of power and an ever-increasing dependence on the personal resources of man himself," we must get "the human touch back into selling. . . . Much of the failure in modern retail selling arises from the lack of appreciation of the fundamental fact that the human equation is at the heart of the whole affair." The NYU School of Retailing "attempted to improve retail selling by raising to a higher level the development of the human factors upon which rest the task of distributing the world's goods."[15] Thirty students were accepted for the school's first year of courses, small peanuts perhaps but in retrospect very promising. Over the next ten years, New York University would emerge as the premier school in retail training in the country.[16]

Other universities boldly moved into the arena of business education as well, occupying an even bigger terrain than Straus's NYU and exercising a far more substantial influence. Between 1895 and 1915, the Wharton School, weak on the startup, fulfilled the mission mandated to it by its founder, industrialist Joseph Wharton: to advance the cause of professional business education. Under its new, consumption-minded director, Simon Patten, the school acquired international fame, and for the first time it became a four-year school; enrollments rose from 150 (in 1900) to 950 (in 1914), and the curriculum shifted to the study of such new fields as marketing, finance, and corporate management.[17] Among the leading faculty was economics professor Edward S. Mead, father of anthropologist Margaret Mead and husband of Emily Fogg Mead who was also an economist and a specialist in advertising. Edward Mead created the prestigious Evening School of Accounts and Finance at Wharton (in 1904) and the influential Extension School (in 1914). He led in the teaching of his favorite field—corporate finance (investment banking and corporate expansion through the marketing of securities). He believed that large corporations were the most efficient economic units and that their "centralized" structures offered the best means to control the flow of goods and money. To illustrate his point in class, he often singled out large department stores, detailing the way they used internal accounting procedures to control and manage their organizations. His books *The Story of Gold* and *The Ebb and Flow of Investment* were pioneering contributions.[18]

His wife, Emily, a feminist Progressive and mother of three, is herself a fascinating figure worthy of more scrutiny. She studied sociology and economics at Wharton (no doubt with Patten) between 1899 and 1900; later she published an analysis of the "possibilities" of American agriculture that won the Hart, Schaffner, and Marx prize (a newly minted prize awarded by this Chicago men's clothing business to scholars studying questions of distribution). She wrote a landmark piece on advertising—"The Place of Advertising in Modern Business"—that owed a great deal to Patten's views on consumption and that appeared in Thorstein Veblen's *Journal of Political Economy*; the piece was later cited by Veblen in his *Theory of Business Enterprise* and was reprinted in other journals, including *Fame*, a fleeting but influential advertising magazine edited by Artemas Ward. In this piece, Fogg Mead urged businessmen to penetrate the home, break down the resistance of ordinary housewives, and "forget the past" in their pursuit of profits. "Hence the necessity to apply new stimuli to convert the individual to the use of goods," she said, to "break up fixed habits, to allow new wants to develop, and to offer innumerable possibilities for their satisfaction."[19]

Even more groundbreaking in business education than Wharton, however, was Harvard University; in 1908 it created its Harvard School of

Business, the first independent professional school with a full-time faculty anywhere to offer masters degrees in business administration (M.B.A.s). "We take men without regard to what they have studied in college," wrote Dean A. Lawrence Lowell, "and we must teach them business, not political economy."[20]

The decision to teach business as a professional subject rested on the pragmatic insight that Harvard students were going into business in droves. "More than half of our senior class," President Charles Eliot said in 1908, "graduating last June went into business and for a good many years a large proportion have attained high place, particularly in corporation industries and the financial institutions of the country." If Harvard graduates were entering business, Eliot figured, then Harvard itself had better wake up and teach it. Harvard was also convinced that a new "expertise" was required to run the new corporate firms of the day. "The one-man ownership stage" in capitalism was dying, wrote one of the original Business School faculty. What was needed was training in management, "administrative organization," "large investment banking," and "large sales organizations"—in short, all those institutions and activities that formed the bedrock of the new corporate industrial order.[21]

The Harvard Business School's dedication to teaching these new subjects was its *raison d'être*; although underfunded in its first years, it did much to build a firm pedagogical foundation for such study. The school's first dean, forty-two-year-old economist Edwin Gay, knew a great deal in a scholarly way about patterns of distribution and consumption but next to nothing about practical business; but he saw clearly the drift of the age. Appointed in 1908, he helped channel economic thought away from production toward "the plastic elements of the economy," as he called them. "Concentrate," he said, "not so much on the way production is organized but on the methods of distribution and the widening market area."[22]

Under Gay, the Harvard Business School curriculum offered new subjects, among them advertising, investment finance, cost accounting, modern banking, merchandising, retailing, and economic price movements. In 1914 one of the three required courses, "Economic Resources in the United States," was retitled "Marketing"—a shift of some note. Melvin Copeland, who first taught the course and published the first college textbook on it (a Harvard professor, Paul Cherington, also authored in 1914 the first textbook on advertising), wrote that marketing had been a term commonly used in schools of commerce before 1914 but meant only the study of "trade in raw commodities." The course at Harvard and soon at many other universities and colleges went well beyond this definition to "comprehend the whole process of physical distribution, demand activation, merchandising, pricing, and other activities involved in the exchange of products and services."[23]

Even more consequential than these changes was the opening in 1911 of the Harvard Bureau of Business Research, set up by Gay as part of the business school. It was the first such institution to study marketing, merchandising, and—Gay's personal province—distribution. Gay insisted that the "quantitative measurement for the marketing side of distribution" was central; and here he was guided by Archie Shaw, a millionare manufacturer of office equipment, editor of two influential business magazines—*System* and *Factory*—and an author himself of a widely circulated article on "the problem in market distribution."[24] At his suggestion Gay decided to organize the bureau. Other businessmen also expressed interest in the fledgling school, including national shoe retailers and manufacturers eager to overcome the disparities in their cost accounting methods.

Shaw believed that all energy should be spent on grappling with distribution. He persuaded the bureau to study middlemen—in particular, the new bankers and insurance companies that pooled the money many businesses needed to expand their marketing facilities. He argued that marketing should be examined in the broad sense described by Melvin Copeland. "Why has not systematic study been given to the problems of distribution?" Shaw asked. Industry had for too long been concerned with production; but "the problem of production" had been solved, Shaw argued—indeed, to such a degree that "our producing capacity" was "tremendous," "outstripping available markets" and threatening the United States with "overproduction," excessively low prices (too low for profits), and inefficiency. Factories had gone well beyond supplying the "staple needs" of the people; they were now "flooding markets" with novelties, luxuries, goods of all kinds, many attempting to meet needs "not even clearly formulated." Distribution was in a "chaotic condition" and a cause of "tremendous social waste."[25] "If our producing possibilities are to be fully utilized," Shaw said, "the problems of distribution" or of getting goods swiftly and profitably out of factories to consumers must be solved. "A market must be found for the goods potentially made available. This means, in the main, a more intensive cultivation of existing markets. The unformulated wants of the individual must be ascertained and the possibility of

gratifying them brought to his attention." How to identify and satisfy the "new desires," not to revile or repress them, was the business at hand. "There are some to be sure who deplore the increasing complexity of human wants," Shaw said. But "that is a problem for the philosopher, not the businessman." "The businessman finds his practical task in searching out human wants and providing the means of satisfaction."[26]

Marketing and distribution soon surfaced as top subjects for the bureau's analysis. At the request and with the help of shoe retailers and manufacturers, the bureau in its first year devised the first standard classification of accounts, which introduced a new uniformity into the shoe business. The shoe people had asked for a study of the industry's distribution methods, especially of the gap between factory costs and retail prices—a gap so big, one industry representative said, that "it is distribution that is being sold, not a manufactured product. The product itself and the cost of producing it bear a small percentage of the total amount of the labor, thought, and sacrifice that have gone into the transaction by the time the consumer gets the article."[27] The bureau's first study of shoe distribution, although done on a shoestring budget, was exemplary. Its "table of percentages," according to Copeland, was "the most valuable single research item ever published by Harvard." The shoe people praised it, printed its figures in the trade press, and gave their blessing to other similar investigations.

More distribution studies followed, each a collaboration between the bureau and merchants, who cofunded the research and willingly gave the bureau whatever operation statistics it desired. The bureau investigated the retail grocery business in 1914, wholesale shoe firms in 1915, the wholesale grocery business in 1916, retail general stores in 1917, retail hardware dealers in 1918, and retail jewelers in 1919. The National Association of Wholesale Grocers, like the others, was gratified by the fruits. "We feel," a spokesman said, "that this department of the university should be given all the encouragement possible. Not only is the information received valuable, but it has a great tendency to improve the accounting methods in the wholesale grocery business."[28]

In the late 1910s, the bureau was no longer a shoestring operation but big business. A 1920 study of department stores, the last in an unbroken sequence of yearly distribution studies, scrutinized more than five hundred department stores whose total sales volume exceeded $800 million. By Copeland's account, these investigations in retail and wholesale operating expenses were "the first studies of that type anywhere in the world."[29]

The Great Museums and the New Curators

Side by side with these educational institutions, the great urban museums were also on the march to place their expertise and collections in the hands of mass market manufacturers and retailers. Today we have come to accept the alliance between museums and business as a commonplace and as a reflection of the intimate relationship between art and market forces. This relationship began, for all intents and purposes, in this earlier period, with four museums in particular—the American Museum of Natural History, the Brooklyn Museum, the Newark Museum, and the Metropolitan Museum of Art, all but one endowed by businessmen with extraordinary gifts to their collections, the most lavish of which were the donations to the Metropolitan from investment banker J. P. Morgan and by department store merchants George Hearn and Benjamin Altman.

A leader in this movement was Morris D'Camp Crawford, curator at the American Museum of Natural History and editor at *Women's Wear Daily,* who spent years promoting industrial design. He refused to follow in the footsteps of his father, a respected New York lawyer or those of his grandfather, a well-known Methodist minister who attracted public notice in 1857 when, as an abolitionist, he led the northern church in expelling southern slaveholders from the Methodist Conference. The young Crawford did follow in the footsteps of his Uncle Hanford, a member of that new generation of "transitional" merchants who helped guide American retailing from its family-owned, small-scale beginnings into mass market corporate merchandising. In 1899, Hanford Crawford was invited to take over the management of Scruggs, Vandervoort, and Barney in St. Louis, whose last surviving owner, Mr. Scruggs, was too feeble to keep control. Working around the clock, Hanford revamped the business into a full-fledged department store and imposed strict discipline on the work force. He opened buying offices in Paris and New York; in five years was president; and, with the aid of investment bankers, reorganized the store again, merging it with two large specialized retailing chains, one in carpets and furniture, the other in hardware. Hanford paid a price for this frantic pace; the "strain and worry" he felt as manager of a huge store—"a world in itself," he wrote, "in its discipline, its machinery, its relations"—undermined his health. He had a nervous collapse, breaking down in tears at the least cause both in public and private, and was not cured until he took up the piano

(as a preventive measure, he even took a piano with him on business trips). At the same time, Scruggs, Vandervoort, and Barney became one of the commanding business organizations west of the Mississippi. By 1907, with Hanford still at the helm, a seventeen-story French Renaissance structure was built, noted for its huge show windows and its interior pillars covered with plate-glass mirrors.[30]

Morris D'Camp Crawford, then in his early twenties, was slightly repelled by his Uncle Hanford but mesmerized by what his uncle was accomplishing. As a young man, he worked for Horace B. Claflin, the ill-fated wholesale firm that collapsed in 1913, whereupon he turned to retailing, securing two posts he held nearly all his mature adult life—research editor of *Women's Wear Daily* and research associate in textiles for New York's American Museum of Natural History. The museum job was created expressly for Crawford by the museum's president, Henry Fairfield Osborn, in 1915, "in recognition of the work [Crawford] has been doing for us with Peruvian textiles."[31]

Crawford lectured at the museum to professional designers and factory managers on Peruvian fabrics (he was a national authority), on weaving and cotton, and on how to relate "primitive decorative art" to "machine processes."[32] Although the museum had a longstanding principle of supporting commercial design, Crawford, assisted by the head of the anthropology department, Clark Wissler, got the museum actively to open its collections to business on a regular basis.[33] He spoke publicly to industrialists on the wonders of the museum. In a 1916 speech before a National Silk Manufacturers Convention in New York, he urged his audience to come and see "the carving on a Maya tomb, the etched birchbark cradle of Labrador, the superb ponchos of archaic Peru, the rough raffia embroidery of Africa—all offer splendid, vital suggestions."[34] He put together exhibitions of contemporary costumes in the great North American Indian Hall, the design of every item "drawn from the aboriginal subjects" of the museum's collections.[35] President Osborn was delighted, giving Crawford and his associates "his every consideration and endorsement." Crawford was introducing everybody—not just the rich and upper class—to "art and beauty." ("My motto has always been," Osborn observed, "We must stoop to conquer.") As an excellent side effect, a new phase began in the evolution of women's dress in this country. At last, Osborn wrote, "our women" will wear American designs and "not have to express in their clothing the decadence which is so widespread in the countries of Europe."[36]

Sometimes Crawford imitated Fifth Avenue display strategies in his exhibits, however, that were a little too risqué, a little too European, for Osborn's tastes. In a 1919 show Crawford put lifelike "wax models" in silk garments in the "second alcove of the entrance" to the exhibition and several "living models" in the "silk loom exhibits." Osborn blanched and, through his director, Frederic A. Lucas, complained to Crawford that "these are Parisian rather than American."[37] He demanded that they be removed, and they were, although probably without much protest from Crawford who had, after all, achieved his larger goal of expanding his design movement. As an editor of *Women's Wear*, he took every chance to praise the American Museum of Natural History for being "the most progressive force in the development of the designer" and in "aiding the movement of industrial arts in this country."[38] He founded and managed the Textile Design Contests, sponsored for the first time in 1917 by *Women's Wear*. Through the pages of his magazine he arranged design activities on a national basis, spurring on museum curators everywhere, entreating them to take part in what he called his "Designed-in-America Campaign."[39]

Among the curators who followed Crawford's lead were Stewart Culin of the Brooklyn Museum and John Cotton Dana of the Newark Museum. Both, although a full generation older than Crawford, held positions of public prominence at the same time he did and both shaped their careers on behalf of industrial design. Culin—whom Crawford admired for his "flawless, inspired taste"—was born in Philadelphia in 1858 to German Lutheran parents. He became one of the foremost folklorists and anthropologists of his time. He traveled around the world collecting primitive artifacts and living with primitive peoples (his accounts of primitive games for adults and children are still drawn on today, including his groundbreaking *Games of North American Indians*, in 1907). In the early 1900s, under the sponsorship of John Wanamaker, Culin conducted three expeditions to study North American Indian cultures. He was named curator of the ethnological collection at the Brooklyn Museum in 1903, and through tireless collecting, built the Brooklyn Museum into a world-class institution.[40]

Less orderly in his evolution than either Culin or Crawford, John Cotton Dana was all over the map in his youth, looking for a life and an occupation that would free him from an intensely religious, guilt-ridden childhood in Woodstock, Vermont. Born in 1856 to strict Congregationalists who traced their origins straight back to John Cotton, "John knew the regimen of the inflexible moral law and of the old New England Sabbath," as a biographer put it.[41] After graduating from college in 1874, he worked in Colorado as a land surveyor, then came East to study law. Unsatisfied, he returned to Colorado to live on a ranch and marry the sister of a close Colorado friend. This marriage, coupled with the death of his parents (both events, in their very different ways, helping to end his dependence on his parents' world-view), plunged him into an agonizing religious crisis. The idea that "sin was a manifestation of wilful human depravity" became abhorrent to him. He adopted Unitarianism, but, as he himself said, "I was working a very different lead from Unitarianism." Restless and distraught, he went from job to job—construction work, journalism, bank-building. By 1890 all institutional religion was dead in him, the very thought provoking him to rage. Holger Cahill, the artist who worked with Dana at the Newark Museum, described Dana as "very vehement about religion." "He was opposed to it . . . vehemently opposed."[42]

Dana was becoming a "new man," rejecting anything that restricted his own personal freedom of choice and action and that cut him off from the "new" and "modern." As Cahill said, he became a true "Vermonter," a "libertarian who would let you do what he thought you really believed in." In the late 1880s he became a pioneering librarian in Newark, New Jersey, creating the first library for business materials and introducing "open stacks" to American libraries. In 1909 he founded the Newark Museum, not only as a place to exhibit "fine art" but also as an institution to serve business.[43]

Dana and Culin shared with Crawford a commitment to commerce, a commitment strengthened in part by the absence of any strong counter religious or moral conviction. Culin, from his many travels and a lifetime of ethnological reflection, had concluded that "everywhere from Nijni to Bucharest, from the Kirile Islands to Jahore, whatever is the nominal excuse, commerce is the center of life." For Culin, department stores epitomized "the social and commercial life of Americans." The stores, not churches, are "the greatest influences for culture and taste that exist today. They make it possible for us all to participate in the creative thought of a new and revolutionary era."[44]

Both Culin and Dana detested traditional museums; Dana saw them as "remote palaces and temples" inaccessible to ordinary people, gloomy and intimidating, and devoted only to the display of ancient artifacts and "fine art." It would be far better if all museums were like department stores. The stores were at the "center" of city life, "honest . . . steel and concrete" structures "filled with objects closely associated with the life of the people." They were "open at all hours"; they displayed "objects" alluringly; they provided "resting places" so that people could relax as they shopped. Department stores foregrounded "objects" and put them on sale for everybody, thus "increasing the zest of life."[45] For Dana, everything "new" (and thus everything "good") was related to business. "Business runs the world, or, the world gets civilized just as fast as men learn to run things on plain business principles. A public institution does its best work when it is useful to men of business." Like Walt Whitman but without the critical edge Whitman often showed, Dana celebrated the city's industrial life. He habitually walked the Newark streets, observing the "tenements and factories beside the railway and canal." "The streets were alive with men, women, and children," he told the Newark Board of Trade. "Smoke poured out of tall chimneys, and they and their factories loomed up in the mist, monstrous, picturesque, and imposing. Here was industrial America. Here was the machine age, and the fellow citizens-to-be of you and me, growing up to wait upon it."[46] It helped, of course, that businessmen themselves—above all Louis Bamberger of Bamberger's department store, who financed the expansion of the Newark Museum in the 1920s—gave freely of their money to Dana's experimental design enterprise.

Culin and Dana had no doubts or qualms about the strategic role that design played in increasing the profits of the mass-production companies. Nor did they believe that machine-made goods were in any way inferior to those goods produced by hands. "The handicraft of the day," wrote Culin to Morris D'Camp Crawford, "is not eminently distinguished in point of taste from the machine product," though machine-made goods could be often, but were not inevitably, weaker in pattern, line, shape, and color. Dana agreed, and he was aggressively critical of those "snobs" who, he said, worshiped at the altar of "the hand-crafted." Taking a page, he thought, from Veblen, he wrote that "the rich have usually been ready to adopt the older methods in art productions if for any reason they were inaccessible to the poor." "Today admiration for the hand-made is largely born of a desire to have something which, being unique in its kind, will impart a little of the old leisure-class exclusiveness to its owner."[47]

Animated by the same kind of consumer populism that typified Wanamaker and other merchants, Dana and Culin offered their museum facilities to designers from all walks of business. Dana organized design spaces in Newark and conducted large expositions of industrially made goods.

Probably the first U.S. museum director to dare such expositions, he believed that "the function of museums was to show the meaning of the arts in relation to industrial society." In 1912 he exhibited the work of Deutcheswerkbund, a German industrial design group and a major precursor of the Bauhaus, followed thereafter by "a great many shows of industrial art" from American firms. He was "prouder of the neglected art of the machine age than of the old masters."[48] Oil painting, which constituted the core content of the traditional museum, came close to boring him, because such art, in his view, had almost no relationship to the life or thinking of "ordinary people." Industrial art or machine art, on the other hand, was the art "the people" understood, because they could buy it themselves and bring it home. That the "people" did not conceive or "make" these goods hardly mattered. It was enough for him to assert merely that mass marketed machine goods were destined to reflect popular taste, whereas handcrafted goods—which *were* made by men and women themselves—were "removed" from the people, and inherently elitist, an argument more pro-business than pro-people.

Culin, for his part, made the Brooklyn Museum "a center for artistic industries"; his aim was to inspire industrial designers to integrate peasant and primitive designs and colors into machine-made goods. He viewed preindustrial cultures as "sensuously" and "vitally" superior to industrial cultures, which, he said, so often disparaged the primitive as "weak," effeminate, childish, and irrational. "I have refreshed myself," he said of his many visits with North American Indians, and "feel myself younger and more vital. I have realized my dreams among savages in whose lives and thoughts I have had glimpses of the dawn of the world." Getting the "primitive" into goods, Culin argued, would allow people to regain healthy contact with the "vital elements" while at the same time paying back to business a sure profit on a relatively cheap investment. Like so many others in the new commercial fields, he thought Americans had deprived themselves for too long of "bright" colors, falsely believing such colors childish. Besides, there is much to learn from childhood, just as from the "primitives." Why, I myself, he said, "had the child's eagerness and color desire" and "I still sympathize with this craving in children."[49]

In 1917 Culin opened a design studio in the Brooklyn Museum, and filled it with thousands of the primitive and peasant artifacts he had gathered on trips in Africa, Eastern Europe, India, Persia, and North America. A year later both the "studio" and Culin had "become very well known to some of our most successful designers," as Morris Crawford reported in *Women's Wear.* Culin, proud of "his laboratory of taste," boasted to his friend at the Museum of Natural History, the anthropologist Franz Boas, of the "intimate relations" that "have grown up between" his "department of the museum and a large number of professional artists."[50]

Furniture designers and designers of wrapping papers, combs, labels, and packaging visited the Brooklyn Museum. But, as a result of a lot of promotion by Crawford in *Women's Wear,* it was manufacturers and department store buyers of "fashion" clothing who flocked there. Fashion designers picked up ideas—primitive, exotic ideas—from peasant fabrics, and put them into American fashion. Museum space was at a premium because demand was so great. "I have set up my Indian materials on a stairway," he wrote a manufacturer in 1919, "employing the wood work I bought at Ahmadabad [in India]. Designers of women's clothes have turned to India for materials this winter and my Indian textiles and costumes have been in demand. The designers of women's clothes have been making much use of it."[51] At a moment's notice and on demand, moreover, Culin delivered folk artifacts to be used for display or as models for design virtually anywhere in the country to satisfy a current fashion trend.

Although the Newark Museum, the Brooklyn Museum, and the American Museum of Natural History contributed much to the new industrial design movement, none equaled in influence the Metropolitan Museum of Art in Manhattan. Shy in early years of taking part in the still inchoate industrial design movement (although the museum's charter mandated that the museum do something to help train artisans and artistic craftspeople), the Metropolitan found itself by 1915 enamored of the new frontier. Museum officials were immensely proud of recent acquisitions that, as the museum's *Bulletin* said, "enabled them to place at the disposal of the designer and manufacturer *an illimitable power of suggestion.*"[52] In 1914, a new position was created there—associate in industrial arts—and Richard Bach was appointed to fill it. Bach commanded even greater resources than Culin, Dana, and Crawford. He supervised the museum's close collaboration with business and shared the others' same unequivocal romance with machines and industrial design. "It may be a startling assertion to make," he wrote, "but the machine is undoubtedly the greatest single advantage and aid that has ever been offered to civilization so far as the industrial arts are concerned. . . . If there is anything wrong with machine manufacture, it is not the fault of the machine." The prospects were exciting: "We have the possibility of disseminating a good design in 20,000 places, while under ordinary conditions of purely manual craftsmanship, there might have been no more than a dozen chairs of that kind."[53]

Bach recognized, perhaps even better than the others did, how strategic "design" was to the success of mass production. The surfaces and shapes of many kinds of objects, not their underlying structure or function, so Bach understood, offered the greatest potential for business profits. Indeed, "design alone" might yield "the entire profit." "Those who make and sell but never design," he wrote, "or those others whose last year's designs are still good enough, are only 'marking time' in dread of industrial cataclysms."[54] Under Bach's regime at the Metropolitan close ties were established between the museum and manufacturers and designers. The museum welcomed the organization of special exhibitions that showcased the design industries. In 1915 a touring exhibit, displaying and explaining the relationship between the laws of color and harmony and "actual textiles, wallpapers, and woods" was presented under the auspices of the Art and Trades Club. One of the club's members, William Sloan Coffin—furniture maker and future president of the Metropolitan—supervised the exhibit. A year later, the Metropolitan cooperated with *Women's Wear Daily* in the presentation of that magazine's first Textile Design Contest, including thirty-one participating states and with Henry Kent, the museum's secretary, serving as one of the judges.[55]

Regular lectures and seminars, arranged in consultation with merchants, were conducted in museum rooms. In 1916, the design "expert" Florence Levy delivered a lecture series on design for industry representatives, salespeople, and department store buyers; the course became standard at the museum, dealing with line, mass, harmony, and color. In the late 1910s, Percy Straus of Macy's induced Bach to create a seminar on color and design for Macy's salespeople and executive managers; it was led by Grace Cornell of Columbia University's Teachers College. Display man at Altman's, Herman Frankenthal taught courses in the "art of draping," and Louis Weinberg gave classes on color based on a "study of the museum's originals." (The Weinberg lectures were later published in book form as *Color in Everyday Life, A Manual for Lay Students, Artisans, and Artists.*)[56]

In all of these activities, museum design experts appealed for new commercial aesthetics wherein color would be used as "a more deliberately planned factor" in consumer goods. Weinberg believed that the American businessman—unlike other American men, who still, he said, viewed color as "effeminate"—was at last beginning to recognize color's commercial value. "In the field of business, which is engaging the expert thought of men today, there are few lines in which a knowledge of color is not essential. The business man uses color, and pays dearly for its use." "Color is a business asset" and "not to be underestimated in a business career."[57]

The Metropolitan's most popular industrial design service could be found in the museum's "laboratories" and workrooms, where designers thought up ideas for apartment house lighting fixtures, cheap jewelry, soap wrappers, toothpaste containers, cretonne, and lampshades. It was here, mainly in the design workrooms, that the museum made contact with mass production. Established in 1909 on a small scale, these rooms quickly grew into large operations, staffed by men and women expert in furnishings, advertising, jewelry, clothing, package design, and the "host of other decorative arts for which the public expends $1 billion a year." These experts advised visiting manufacturers and designers and were especially "acquainted," Bach said, "with the devious [sic] requirements of the enormous and intricate selling machinery of the country." The leading associate—Bach himself—visited factories and shops to keep "abreast of the market" and to "visualize trade values in museum facilities and thus help manufacturers toward their own objectives." He supplied thousands of photographs at cost to students and designers.[58]

In 1917 Bach launched his first big industrial arts exhibition at the museum to show off the manufactured goods designed in these museum studios. Each commodity was exhibited next to the artifact from which its design was derived—reproductions of Colonial furniture next to eighteenth-century "originals," affordable jewelry against "Byzantine ivories," "embroidered crests" against American "sport skirts." At the 1919 show, Bach wrote in the museum's *Bulletin*, visitors were "astonished" as they passed by "commercial containers" looking like "Athenian vases" or by wallpapers with the look of "ecclesiastical vestments." On display the following year were Cha-ming talc cans next to Ming vases "dating from the period 1644–1662," La France Rose soap boxes in the company of Louis XIV jewel boxes, and Colgate toothpaste containers next to a variety of museum "art objects."[59]

Bach's exhibitions expressed the commitment of America's best museums to the emerging prerogatives of consumer capitalism. Bach, Culin, Dana, and Crawford, among others, all thought that ideas and images of the past were marketable goods, like any other goods, and that they should be enlisted in the cause of spreading the idea of "beauty" to the masses. They imagined a better world taking shape out of their collaborations with business. Still, they were opportunists who suspended judgment about businessmen and climbed on the bandwagon of catering to business needs. All argued that the large museums, if they wanted influence, status, and patronage, had no choice but to take this route, since commerce, they were all convinced, had overtaken religion as the center of life. Everything revolved around commerce—human aspiration, dreams, the imagination. Like numerous other men and women of their times—Frank Alvah Parsons, Joseph Urban, Faith Chipperfield, Nancy McClellan, Maxfield Parrish, and L. Frank Baum, among others—they were certain that commerce held the lion's share of power and that any institution or individual who failed to acknowledge that obvious fact would go under.

City Pageants and Hobnobbing with Mayors

Big merchants boasted of their closeness to city mayors and politicians. "We are intimate friends of Mayor Hylan," wrote John Wanamaker to an acquaintance about the mayor of New York. Mayor John Hylan "knows that none of us would do anything or permit anything to be done by others to hurt his splendid standing." "The mayor was our friend," remembered David Yates, Marshall Field's executive of Democrat Carter Harrison, and so also was "Bath House" John Coughlin, infamous and wily alderman of Chicago's First Ward at the turn of the century. "I'd see [Bath House] and he'd say: 'Don't worry what I'm going to say. I'm with you hook, line, and sinker, no matter what you do.' " And Bath House was, without question, smoothing the way for the store to buy up whatever real estate it needed to consolidate its place on State Street and Washington.[60]

After 1905, and as an outcome of many inside deals and appeals, many merchants managed to influence fundamentally the shape of urban space, acquiring new real estate to round out their properties and obtaining rights to destroy old structures to make way for new construction and better traffic conditions. Special subway stations were erected for the big department stores and hotels. Bus and train routes were created or rerouted to satisfy the business requirements of these and similar institutions. In New York, merchants like Abraham Abraham of Brooklyn's Abraham and Straus (who sat on the borough president's Traffic Committee in 1907) so influenced the planning of the subway lines that the lines converged in downtown Brooklyn, where several major department stores—including his own—did business.[61]

Sometimes the stores didn't even bother to petition the city, so confident were they in the public value of their actions. In 1913, without getting authority from the Board of Estimate, Gimbels on Thirty-fourth Street in New York built a covered footbridge from the elevated railway directly into the store. The city protested, and Isaac Gimbel responded with a letter explaining that the bridge removed congestion by encouraging the "free circulation of traveling to the avenue and streets surrounding the station and said store." It will, he averred, be "beneficial to the travelling public and the people of the City." No apologies, no admission of anything wrong. The references to "service" and "circulation" probably had their good effect, as intended. After another exchange of letters and a promise from Gimbels to "fireproof" the structure, the store was granted the right to do what it had already done.[62]

Mayors and other elected officials often made it their business to attend any important events having to do with the big stores. Occasionally they had to coax merchants fearful of making the wrong public impressions to accept the city's help. In the spring of 1901, a city alderman in New York wrote the Straus brothers at Macy's advising them to send representatives to a City Council meeting regarding a "resolution prohibiting push cart peddlers from certain parts of your district." "I have introduced" the resolution myself, the alderman said, so please "be present to give voice to it." The Straus brothers refused to go; advocating the removal of peddlers might upset some softhearted people. Didn't the Straus family come, after all, from a long pedigree of peddlers? Privately, however, the brothers were "in favor of the resolution" and they said so to city officials.[63]

The most important instruments for collaboration between city governments and merchants were the trade associations, groups that arose to shape the city in their own image and to counter the power of what they perceived to be irresponsible bosses and unsympathetic working-class Americans. New York City's Fifth Avenue Association, led by merchants, spawned imitators in cities throughout the country; it shaped—more than any other group—the entire evolution of the Fifth Avenue district. Between

1913 and 1920, the city implemented many of its demands. Streets were widened, trees planted, public space freed—to the "extent that it was possible"—of "riff-raff," as the association's reports noted. "Isles of safety" for pedestrians were created on the streets, and garish billboards were demolished. At the urging of the association, the city adopted new subway stations and rerouted bus service to serve the retail district better. As a result of intense lobbying "by a small group of our members" came new zoning and occupancy laws, meant to remove manufacturing from above Twenty-third Street and to prevent the "crowding caused by swarms of garment workers who loiter in the streets at mid-day and make it impossible for people to enter the stores, banks, and offices." These laws started the process by which much of Fifth Avenue became by 1929 a fully legally protected "Retail Zone" decisively set off like a jewel from the rest of the city and from all industrial development.[64]

Collaboration between city trade associations and city governments interjected a new consumer dimension into civic culture. In the summer of 1912 two prominent trade groups in New York City joined the Department of Parks and the Police Department in organizing a municipal pageant for children, "Around the World in Search of Fairyland," held on the Sheep Meadow of Central Park and adapted from a 1912 Hippodrome production of the same name. An allegory of consumer abundance in five parts, the pageant was designed, according to the city, to "promote real democracy" by "making for more 'inclusiveness' and by eliminating 'exclusiveness.' " It began by depicting "the search for fairyland," where children in Old World costumes "hunt and hunt but cannot find that wonderful land." It ended with dancing, colors, and electrical lights, and a "Feast" of "cakes, mineral water, ice cream, and candy."[65]

A fleet of automobiles, donated by many of the city's big merchants (including Gimbels, Macy's, and Greenhut-Siegel-Cooper), carried more than five thousand participating poor children from "the enormous mixed population" of the city's neighborhoods to Central Park. Edison Electric supplied red, blue, and white lights, decorations, and a "giant electrical 'Maypole,' " which contrived the "wonderful electrical 'Fairyland' scene." The Hotel and Business Men's League of Greater New York volunteered the sweets and refreshments for the concluding climactic "Feast."[66]

Similar large-scale pageants, collaboratively produced by city governments and merchants, occurred elsewhere in the country. In 1917 the municipal authorities of St. Louis cooperated with local businessmen to present a "spectacle," "the Fall Festival and Fashion Pageant," in the city's Forest Park. With cofunding from the Advertising Club and the St. Louis Fashion Show (both new trade groups), the city rushed all summer to finish constructing a new outdoor municipal theater in time for the pageant. It allowed the merchants and manufacturers to use the theater "rent-free" as long as they kept ticket prices low, donated their profits for maintenance and improvements, and brought workers and their families from around the city to the pageant performances.[67]

The first Fashion Pageant was unlike anything ever seen in St. Louis, a kind of consumer *Gesamtkunstwerk* or total theatrical spectacle integrating "all the arts"—theater, visual effects, dancing, music, and singing as well as merchandising. First came a military ensemble featuring a female marching band and bugle corps of over two hundred women, all employees from Famous-Barr, one of the city's large department stores. Hundreds of "live mannequins" paraded up and down giant runways that reached far out into the audience, displaying the "latest fashions" in footgear, coats, millinery, and evening costumes—150 different kinds of garments in all. Interwoven throughout were "artistic *tableaux* and ballet dancing," including the "Dance of the Statues," where marble figures "came to life" and were "magically" transformed into mannequins dressed in "glamorous evening clothes." A completely choreographed dance number, "The Revels of Dionysius," rounded off the pageant production.[68]

This event was so popular that it was held again and again over the next ten years. It was a gaudy symbol of the city's commitment to "democratizing" commercial culture. And it was perhaps the first time a municipal government had ever attempted, in such an open way, to use consumer enticements to influence public opinion (in the name of cultural uplift) and to divert it away from the conflicts and tensions plaguing the city. Of the pageant, a trade periodical said, "This was the first recorded instance when municipal authorities officially recognized commerce as a catholicon for the ills of urban life."[69]

The Widening Sphere of Public Action

A political apparatus on the federal level also emerged to support the new consumer economy and culture, joining the new chorus of supporting

municipalities, museums, commercial art schools, and universities. After 1890, the administrative arm of the federal government expanded, prefiguring a new era in American history. In this Progressive period, the antigovernment bias of the nineteenth century would be greatly weakened.[70] In 1903, for instance, the Department of Commerce and Labor was set up, with a range of divisions from the Bureau of Corporations to the Lighthouse Board and Bureau of Statistics. In 1913 this department was, in turn, replaced by the new Department of Commerce and new agencies, including the Bureau of Foreign and Domestic Commerce and the Children's Bureau. A Department of Labor also was organized in that year. The United States Postal Service incorporated the parcel post in 1912 and a vastly expanded RFD. Congress also created the Federal Reserve Board (1913), the Federal Trade Commission (1914), and the Tariff Commission (1916).[71]

The reasons for this expansion related directly to the rise of corporate capitalism and to the conflict and disorder, as well as to the opportunities, attending that rise.[72] The expansion, however, was not an easy one for Americans to accept or undertake (as it was for Europeans who went through similar changes but were accustomed to state intervention), given the traditional American fear of centralized power in any form. It was shaped, therefore, by tendencies often at odds with one another.

On the one hand, many progressives insisted that the federal government act as a vigilant arbiter of the well-being of all the people, as a mediator, according to historians Barry Supple and Mary Furner, for "civic purposes larger than the ambitions of any particular interest."[73] In pursuit of this aim, new agencies were created to carry out public investigations and to monitor injustices inflicted by one group on another; their efforts also produced new laws to protect the public interest.[74] Thus the work of federal commissions and congressional committees from 1880s onward produced antitrust laws and a remarkable legacy of protective labor legislation.[75] In 1912, Congressman Arsene Pujo held hearings to investigate the banking system and uncovered what he called "the rapidly growing concentration of control of money and credit in the hands of a few [New York bankers]"; the result was the creation of the Federal Reserve Board, which introduced regulation into banking and attempted to eliminate New York banker control.[76]

From the 1890s onward, indignant citizens also turned to the U.S. government to protect the people from the dangers of contaminated food;

to prevent corporations from exploiting women and children in industry; and to regain, in some measure, the older consumer control over what was being produced and how. Recognizing the dangers inherent in the ever-yawning distance between the worlds of consumption and production, new consumer advocacy groups—especially the National Consumers' League under Florence Kelley—insisted that people be protected against rapacious, irresponsible businessmen. As historian David Thelen has shown, these reformers were disturbed that more and more consumers knew nothing about how goods were made, nothing about the human cost and suffering. To prevent this trend from continuing, Kelley and others called on the state; they testified before commissions and demanded new laws designed to force the government into vigilance and, they hoped, to "reunite consumption and production" on a more humane foundation. One result was the Pure Food and Drug Law of 1906.[77]

At the same time, the federal government was beginning to serve the cause of corporate business, forming the foundation that Herbert Hoover and others would build on in the 1920s. Washington had, of course, long helped business, giving land subsidies to railroads, tariff protection to many industries, and funds for the nation's world's fairs. But after 1895, the range of reinforcements and interventions increased, albeit unsystematically. The antitrust laws, strict on paper, were rarely applied in fact and never enforced at all for oligopoly (or market domination by a few firms); indeed, as recent business history has shown, due to legal conflicts with the states never clearly resolved, the federal laws actually legitimized the existence of these firms while at the same time giving Americans a sense—a "symbolical" sense—that something was being done when nothing was being done to "alter the nation's new brand of corporate capitalism."[78] Even more crucial, the corporations themselves and the concentration of economic power they signified would not have existed at all had it not been for the enabling powers of the state, which invested the corporations with the legal rights to exist. Journalist Walter Lippmann wrote in 1937 "that the concentration of control in modern industry is not caused by technical change but is a creation of the state through its laws."[79]

Many departments and agencies also acted to aid business by facilitating the movement of goods outward into foreign markets. The Federal Reserve Act not only sought to expedite a reliable flow of capital at home and abroad but also assured American companies that they could establish branch banks in foreign countries. The Tariff Commission supplied the president with (among other things) data on worldwide markets so he might decide how best to help business enter those markets. The Bureau of Foreign and Domestic Commerce sent trained drummers and commercial investigators abroad; it produced industrial films to promote the sale of American goods, published *Commerce Reports* (a daily paper on foreign trade possibilities), and placed commercial consular offices in foreign countries to monitor trade information and to help American business find new markets.[80]

The Federal Trade Commission (FTC), empowered by Congress to move against "unfair methods of competition in commerce," was, during these years, an exemplar of cooperation between business and government. It was headed in this period by men favorable to business who championed advertising practices, helped instruct companies in "exact cost accounting procedures," and assisted domestic exporters by gathering data on trade and tariffs.[81] The FTC (and its immediate precursor, the Bureau of Corporations) also responded to appeals from business to settle disputes among competing economic factions. Between 1911 and 1913, for instance, national manufacturers urged the Bureau (and then the FTC) to arbitrate a disagreement between mass retailers and manufacturers over which group had the right to control the resale price of goods. The large retailers wanted freedom to cut prices at will, while manufacturers sought assurances that they could retain control over the prices of their trademarked goods (the bureau ruled on behalf of the mass retailers).[82]

A few years later, the FTC and national manufacturers worked together—at the invitation of the manufacturers—on behalf of establishing uniform standards of "truth" in advertising (the industry was then being attacked for "lies" and "distortions") and to prevent wildcat advertisers from "invading the sanctity of trademarks and disparaging competing products." In addition, national advertisers successfully discouraged the FTC from making a critical assessment of advertising as an inherently biased activity. The effects of this victory are still felt to this day. "Every man," declared a trade representative before the commission in 1915, "should have the right to say about his product what he believes to be true. There are circumstances where exaltation brings the reader nearer to precise understanding than scientific statement of technical facts."[83]

The results of these collaborations were not always pro-corporate business, as the abiding hostility to concentrated power and the continued support for small businesses within the government showed. Nevertheless, these new institutional relationships between government and business, with the government acting as arbitrator, did help make the government a far more formidable ally of large-scale businesses, and of the whole evolution of corporate commerce.

Better Babies and Better Deliveries

Two other federal agencies—the U.S. Children's Bureau and the greatly expanded U.S. Postal Service—worked similarly in their relation to commerce. The U.S. Children's Bureau, that most soundly Progressive of all agencies, fought to promote the health and welfare of children. It also helped, both intentionally and unintentionally, to spread a new commodity ethic and culture.

Founded in 1912 under the able direction of Julia Lathrop, the bureau galvanized opposition to child labor and sought to lower American infant mortality rates (the highest in the West) and to raise nutrition levels (the lowest in the West). It also worked closely with the National Consumers' League, a group that had already paved the way, by establishing a children's agenda. From the 1890s on, the National Consumers' League had ferreted out the exploitation of children in department stores, in textile and garment factories, and in candy and glass manufacturing, where children worked long hours and at extremely low pay, especially during Christmastime. The goal again was to make Americans aware of the cost involved in the historic separation of production and consumption, and to make the government the agent for ending the suffering that, in many instances, could not be seen.

The Children's Bureau upheld and forwarded this mission. It collaborated with the league in urging strict compliance with the compulsory school attendance laws as the best way to prevent exploitive employment, and it supported a federal Child Labor Law (twice declared unconstitutional by the U.S. Supreme Court), which gave Congress the power to limit, regulate, and prohibit the labor of persons under eighteen. (This law finally was passed as part of the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938.)[84] The Bureau created Baby Day in 1915, followed by Baby Week a year later, and Children's Year in 1918, all designed to publicize the need for better infant and maternal care.[85]

The achievements of the bureau and league were undeniable, bettering

children's lot in this country. They were undertaken because they were in and of themselves good things. But these changes occurred as well because Julia Lathrop and her staff cooperated with American merchants to make certain a new and better child world emerged.

Here again, the National Consumers' League led the way for the bureau, by tireless work with department stores to abolish child labor. As Florence Kelley later put it, "we endeavored to redeem the holiday season for children." By 1911, in response to league protests, nearly all big stores in major cities had ended what Kelley called the "holiday cruelties"—the nighttime employment of children during the Christmas holiday season. In the process, both the department stores and the National Consumer League began to see eye to eye on common aims in regard to children's welfare. Kelley drew attention to this pattern when, in a speech at Gimbels in 1910 honoring the opening of the New York store on Broadway and Thirty-fourth Street, she praised "the cooperation in this movement extended by the heads of the great retail concerns in many centers."[86]

The U.S. Children's Bureau, too, recognized the importance of department stores, not only as exploiters but also as allies. To get its messages across, the bureau established a special liaison relationship with hundreds of stores, by now among the key institutional anchors of downtown city life.[87] It relied, for example, on department stores to publicize Baby Day, Baby Week, Children's Year, and the Back-to-School Movement, all of which the bureau had inaugurated. In Boston, stores held "baby-welfare exhibits and talks." Retailers of every description around the country sold "baby buttons" and displayed "baby clothes." "The little child at birth and for several years thereafter," wrote one baby-campaigner merchant, "has to have an entire world of its own, not only special clothes and special foods, but special furniture, special bathing arrangements, special articles of all kinds."[88] In one Missouri city, a large dry goods business built an auditorium especially designed for "baby-week lectures." In other cities, the bureau reported, the link between the retailers and the baby-week campaigners was so close that "the campaign was in danger of being considered a commercial advertising one."[89] (See plate 16).

Many merchants took up the children's campaign with a fervor equaled to that of public officials. "Backed by plenty of newspaper publicity and the government's sanction," wrote one retailing spokesman, "the baby welfare campaign has been proved a crowdbringer by many stores." Even before the "government's sanction" legitimized a wave of such promotions, some stores had begun "Baby Weeks," distributing baby literature and showing goods in the windows around Baby Week themes. Stores held inexpensive classes on nutrition and diet as well as baby-weighing contests, an important public service since a baby's weight indicated an infant's nutrition level and its capacity to survive.[90]

This collaboration between the bureau and urban merchants had two not necessarily compatible results. First, it supplied mothers with services they might not have been able to obtain elsewhere, as many women learned useful ideas and methods of child care. And second, it served the interests of the merchants. In 1912 the bureau, in effect, "owned" the days it had created—Baby Day and Children's Day; in a few short years, control over these days was passed to merchants, who exploited them to the hilt.

Although its own goal had nothing overtly to do with merchandising, the general impact of the U.S. Children's Bureau's joint effort with stores was to contribute, indirectly, to the expansion of the consumer economy. By relying on the stores, the bureau had, in fact, endorsed them as centers for "service" and implicitly justified the introduction and sale of more and more children's goods, the addition of children's departments, and the enlargement of older departments.

The impact of the reformed U. S. Postal Service on a consumer economy, on the other hand, was direct, immediate, and extremely wide-ranging. Before 1900, Americans living in the country and on farms had no mail delivery to the door. They had to go to town to pick up their mail. City dwellers, by contrast, had enjoyed direct mail delivery by the federal government since 1861. At the same time, everybody—urban and rural folk alike—was dependent on six large express companies to deliver packages, but at very high rates. The companies served adequately only a few areas of the country and delivered packages to the customer's door only in a few big cities. Between 1898 and 1920 the federal government took over parcel post and rural postal deliveries.[91]

The origins of this reform lay mainly in the hands of John Wanamaker. As writers on Wanamaker have noted, his dream as U.S. postmaster general from 1889 to 1893 was to increase the powers of the government so that all people would enjoy greater access to the goods and pleasures of modern life.[92] In 1889 he introduced fast mail-train service on a transcontinental basis. He had mailboxes built for city residences and raised the number of free city delivery offices from 401 to 610. He worked hard for the passage of rural free delivery and parcel post, achieving something of a victory in

1892 when he was given monies to experiment with rural free delivery in a few towns. But his success was limited, for despite considerable support from farmers (and the National Grange in particular), neither he nor they had the power to generate widespread congressional support. Nor were they able to mount a strong offensive against their fierce adversaries—the small-town merchants and the national express companies. Fearing (and, to some degree, rightly) that a bigger U. S. Postal Service would destroy them, these groups organized national campaigns against the new reforms.[93] In the Midwest, the heart of opposition, they focused on the proposed changes as "dangerous class legislation"; "the tendency of such legislation," wrote a typical critic, "is toward socialism, causing the government to enter the business competition with private enterprise."[94]

Throughout the 1890s and into the early 1900s, however, the tide began to turn against this coalition of forces. Increasingly, the public wearied of the price gouging of the express companies. A new political alliance began to take shape. The big mail-order houses—always the most powerful backers of an enlarged service—began to act aggressively for the first time, joining the small farmers and city people in urging passage of the new postal laws. Behind a new Washington lobbying group, the Postal Progress League, formed in 1902, stood Sears, Roebuck and Co. and Montgomery Ward, plus all the large urban retailers with significant mail-order divisions—Macy's, Wanamaker's, Altman's, Siegel-Cooper's. "The Postal Progress League," wrote a national importer to Jesse Straus of Macy's, "has the support of such firms as Montgomery Ward, National Cash Register, ourselves, etc. . . . That a Parcels Post and an efficient rural service would be a benefit to all mail-order dealers is obvious, and for that reason we beg you to do as much as you can to hasten its coming." Straus joined the cause. "The Parcels' Post Campaign," he said, "is bound ultimately to be crowned with success."[95]

Congressional advocates began to multiply, especially in the wake of the economic troubles that swept over rural America in the 1890s. In 1892, the House Committee on the Postal Service claimed that a bigger RFD would "aid materially in stopping much of the growing discontent that now seems to exist among the farming population." A similar argument was made by Progressives in defense of postal reform. Parcel post and RFD, they said, would save the nation; unite it; bring together conflicting elements; and, above all, stimulate the flow of goods throughout the country. The nation would be transformed overnight into "one transportation system." "Men became enchanted," one historian of the Postal Service has written, "with the possibilities of a new and revolutionary way of marketing goods."[96] Wanamaker testified repeatedly before Congress between 1895 and 1912 that postal reform would "compel construction of roads for mail deliveries," "encourage people to go to sparsely settled regions," and lead to the "vaster circulation of goods" needed to forestall economic stagnation and to eliminate depression.[97]

As a result of this lobbying, the federal government assumed the burden of the Postal Service, introducing both rural free delivery and parcel post. In 1897 there were only eighty-two routes in the country, but by 1905, the year Congress made it relatively easy for citizen groups to get their own mail routes simply by asking their congressmen for them, more than thirty-two thousand routes had been opened. In 1912 Congress created the national parcel post system, followed a year later by the adoption of government-owned motor vehicles to deliver packages cheaply and efficiently. It was fitting that the first parcel post packages mailed in any city were sent by John Wanamaker himself in Philadelphia and by his son Rodman in New York, both on January 1, 1913.[98] The original act mapped out eight postal zones and set a limit of eleven pounds per package, which was shortly afterward increased to fifty, then to seventy.[99]

Federally run parcel post and RFD quickly outstripped all rivals in speed and efficiency, adding thousands of workers to government payrolls and incorporating into government many functions hitherto carried out by private business. The U.S. parcel post and RFD led to the extension of the road system, which, in turn, required full-time involvement of the government in the upkeep and repair of roads and highways, reforms that contributed greatly to the institutional muscle that anchored and fueled the new corporate consumer economy and culture.

In the nineteenth century, the goal of the U.S. Postal Service was to make "knowledge and truth" available to more and more people. By the end of World War I, this goal had been altered; the greatest user of the mails was now American business. By 1920, government postal workers were carrying hundreds of millions of packages yearly to American doorsteps, as well as considerable amounts of commercial advertising and correspondence. If the express companies suffered at first, as did rural merchants and wholesalers, the mail-order houses—Sears, Roebuck and Montgomery Ward, along with the mail-order divisions of some department stores—reaped colossal dividends. Obstacles to their growth were virtually

removed overnight, and their profits swelled from $40 million in 1908 to $250 million in 1920. Over the next decade, Sears, Roebuck in particular, would owe its great profits and its "golden age" as a mail-order house to the federal government, or to what one historian has called "the greatest distributing system on earth."[100]

The Paterson Pageant

Historian Caroline Ware long ago argued, in her book *Greenwich Village*, that American culture had undergone a major transformation by 1915. For most of the nineteenth century, Ware wrote, American culture was "essentially agrarian and mercantile, individualistic, mobile, and dominated by Protestant ethical values." Over time, that culture began to "wear thin," as new groups emerged to challenge it—business groups, immigrant and religious groups, and new industries. But still the culture "did not assimilate any important institutions." In the course of events, "industrialization greatly accelerated" and traditional American culture began to splinter; by World War I it had even begun to "disintegrate," not disappearing, but, in adjusting to the new institutions, becoming "disrupted." In the big cities especially, people were now "faced by fragments of conflicting culture patterns and conflicting principles of social organization." They were forced to adjust "in terms of themselves as isolated individuals rather than as parts of coherent social wholes." "The result was a great weakening of social controls and an almost complete absence of community integration."[101]

Ware's analysis drew on distinctions already widely held by European and American sociologists, and she applied them in an original and probing way to the history of Greenwich Village. But she failed to take seriously or even to note the newer culture—mass commercial culture—beginning to compete with and overtake the declining nineteenth-century one. Everything Ware described, in some degree or another, happened: Older social controls were weakened by industrial expansion and community integration in cities was disrupted (although, contrary to Ware, it had hardly disappeared "completely"). At the same time, a new capitalist culture—perhaps far more homogeneous than anything that ever appeared before—was beginning to fill the void created by the disappearance of this older coherence.

One measure of the power of this new cultural homogeneity was the degree to which it enlisted—as we have seen—the assistance of major institutions in the United States. The educational system did its part, as did the urban museums and the local and federal governments. Assistance also emanated from another institutional source as well: the labor movement and even from the most radical wing of the labor movement—the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW). The IWW damned the capitalist system lock, stock, and barrel as the most exploitive of all economic systems. Yet, the union leadership pursued tactical maneuvers and embraced an ideological agenda that could be seen as an institutional reinforcement to the very thing the union hated and attacked.

In June 1913 the IWW conducted a pageant at the newly rebuilt Madison Square Garden that showed the imprint of the new commercial culture. The pageant was part of a strategy to win a protracted painful strike against the silk manufacturers of Paterson, New Jersey. The union also hoped to capitalize on an already impressive string of strike achievements. In early 1912 it had been victorious over the woolen manufacturers in Lawrence, Massachusetts; months later in Manhattan it had led the first effective general strike against the hotel trade, an unheard of event in New York, hitting the august Waldorf, the Belmont, and Lucius Boomer's brand new McAlpin. Eighteen thousand workers walked off their jobs, asserting their existence before all New York and protesting the sweated misery of their labor. As Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, one of the strike's key organizers, later wrote, "mass picket lines encircled all the hotels and fashionable restaurants."[102] By and large, the strike was defeated, but a few gains were made—some hotels would pay slightly higher wages, the "pauperism of the tipping system" was exposed, as Gurley Flynn pointed out, and a basis for later organizing had been laid. The mere fact of the strike itself was exhilarating for many.

In the winter of 1912 the IWW had moved on to Paterson, New Jersey, to organize an even more daring strike of mostly unskilled silkworkers from many ethnic groups. The stakes were high. Wages had recently been slashed, hours were long, and many Paterson silk factories, where workers wove and dyed raw imported silk into fabrics, had just imposed technological innovations that greatly modified the character of the work. Before 1900 skilled weavers and dyers exercised much control over their work and no employee ran more than two looms at once; now, manufacturers were installing automatically driven looms, four per person. To replace skilled with unskilled labor, owners turned to the cheapest labor of all: immigrant

women and children (over fourteen). By 1913 the silk market was immensely profitable, and Paterson businessmen struggled to meet the demand being generated by the New York fashion industry. When workers objected to the speedup and low pay, owners threatened to move altogether to Pennsylvania, where they had already built annexes, where the new looms were in full operation, and where the wives of local miners were willing to work for small wages to supplement their family income.[103]

In the winter of 1913 group after group of silkworkers walked off the job, until all the factories stopped running. At the forefront organizing were IWW leaders William Haywood and Gurley Flynn. The silkowners used every means available to crush the strike. "The whole city administration and the whole court system of the city," Ewald Koettgen, a member of the IWW General Executive Board, recorded, "were working overtime to suppress the IWW."[104] Workers began to starve, forcing Haywood and others into a campaign for more money and publicity; Haywood, furious at the dire turn of events and at New York newspapers for refusing to report on Paterson lest they arouse worker discontent in New York, made appeals for help in Greenwich Village (where he was living temporarily) from such wealthy intellectuals as Mabel Dodge, leader of a famous Village salon, and John Reed, a recent Harvard graduate enraptured by labor radicalism. At a meeting in Haywood's apartment, Dodge urged Haywood to "bring the strike to New York and *show* it to the workers. Why don't you hire a great hall and reenact the strike over here?" Haywood was impressed by Dodge's idea but wondered how to implement it, whereupon Reed, also present, volunteered that he would "do it!" "We'll make a pageant of the strike," he said, "the first in the world." The hope was to raise the spirits of the strikers and to get the attention of workers in New York. Whatever money came of it would be given to the union strike fund.[105]

The ensuing pageant was conceived by Reed and his Harvard classmate scenic designer Robert Edmond Jones, in six episodes to depict onstage the very strike then taking place at the Paterson silk factories. It was Jones, later well-known for his adroit use of light and color on the theatrical stage ("When I go to the theater," he wrote, "I want to get an eyeful"), who integrated the IWW color red throughout the show.[106] In Paterson, the waving of red cards and red handkerchiefs by factory operatives infuriated the owners; at public meetings where strikers, union officials, and owners met to discuss the strike, strikers who dressed in red were often thrown out or forbidden admittance.[107] But in Manhattan red played a different role, as Jones pinned red bows in the hair of the female program sellers and had male program sellers wear red ties. He hung red banners in the theater, put red costumes on the performing children, and gave everybody in the audience a red carnation. Atop the Madison Square Garden Tower, there were red lights in four ten-foot-high electric signs that read "IWW" and that could be seen for miles around. John Sloan, a noted Village artist, painted the scenery, with a backdrop depicting a huge silk factory set within an array of smaller mills.[108] (See plate 15.)

This pageant starred a thousand workers recruited from the actual strike. On the day of the pageant, after much rehearsing, the workers marched from Christopher Street to the Garden, holding red banners and accompanied by a marching band. Onstage they enacted, as the program described it, "a battle between the working class and the capitalist class conducted by the Industrial Workers of the World." A recent murder of a worker by an owner-employed detective was portrayed in the last scene, followed by speeches actually given at his funeral by Haywood and Gurley Flynn, who delivered them again in person onstage. (See plate 14.)

The show was a triumph of "realistic art," according to Reed. It was a triumph for him as well and, to celebrate and recover from what he thought to be a great success, he sailed off on a luxury liner with Mabel Dodge, her son, the son's nurse, and Robert Edmond Jones for a vacation in Italy in the Florentine sun.[109] Hutchins Hapgood, a liberal writer and frequenter of the Dodge salon, believed he'd seen "self-expression in industry and art among the masses . . . spreading a glow over the whole humanity." Mabel Dodge thought that one of the "gayest touches" was "teaching them to sing one of their lawless songs to 'Harvard, Old Harvard.' "[110] But in every way that mattered to the strikers, the pageant was a debacle. It provoked Gurley Flynn to a rage: "No money. Nothing." "This thing had been heralded as the salvation of the strike," but only "$150 came to Paterson, and all kinds of explanation!"[111] Far worse, the pageant marked the collapse of the strike and may have even precipitated the collapse. Days after the performance, factory after factory in Paterson settled independently with various groups of skilled workers (many of whom had joined the strike unwillingly); in a week or so, with starvation continuing to loom, all the workers were driven back to work, without a settlement.

Gurley Flynn blamed the strike's failure squarely on the pageant, even though she herself had participated in it. The workers who should have been picketing in Paterson, she observed in retrospect, were rehearsing their lines for New York. "The first scabs," in fact, "got into the Paterson mills, while the workers were training for the pageant, because the best ones, the most energetic [workers] . . . were the best pickets around the mills."[112] Flynn berated the "dilettante element" (Reed, Dodge, etc.) "who figured so prominently" behind the event, and she lamented, above all, the pageant's obvious "theatricality." "Diverting the workers' minds from the actual struggle to the pictured struggle," she said, "was fatal. Distraction from their real work was the first danger in Paterson. And how many times we had to counteract that and work against it!"[113]

As nothing else could have, the Paterson pageant exposed the extent to which the new commercial culture was beginning to penetrate the ideological center of American life, and to what degree it had established—even in the heart of labor radicalism—the character of what people longed for and fought for. Even here the widening distance between production and consumption was playing itself out, confusing the difference between the real and unreal, potentially making the most exploited workers insensitive to their own suffering. Were the workers in Paterson striking for the "eyeful" being dramatized in Madison Square Garden? Were the merchants and factory owners succeeding in the imagination, too, just as they were winning concrete battles on the shop floors of factories and department stores?

Like many IWW leaders, William Haywood lacked a well-thought-out vision of what workers should be striving for; many of his dreams were borrowed ones, taken, for instance, from utopian thinker Edward Bellamy, who put department stores and consumption at the heart of his conception of the good life. In a 1913 speech before the Paterson workers, Haywood described "the ideal society":

> It will be utopian. There will be a wonderful dining room where you will enjoy the best food that can be purchased; your digestion will be aided by sweet music which will be wafted to your ears by an unexcelled orchestra. There will be a gymnasium and a great swimming pool and private bathrooms of marble. One floor of this plant will be devoted to masterpieces of art and you will have a collection even superior to that displayed in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. . . . Your work chairs will be morris chairs, so that when you become fatigued you may relax in comfort.[114]

Gurley Flynn, too, swore by the ideas of Edward Bellamy. Bellamy's *Looking Backward*, she later recalled, "made a profound impression on me, as it had on countless others, as a convincing explanation of how peaceful, prosperous, and happy America could be under a socialist system of society."[115] Yet, at the same time, in 1913, she insisted that there was something more compelling to fight for besides the comforts described by Bellamy and Haywood, or even besides the higher wages demanded by the strikers (although Gurley Flynn never denigrated these). "For workers to gain a few cents more a day, a few minutes less a day, and go back to work with the same psychology, the same attitude toward society is to have achieved a temporary gain and not a lasting victory," she said. "So a labor victory must be twofold, but if it can only be one it is better to gain *in spirit* than to gain economic advantage."[116]

By 1915 much of the United States was becoming a Land of Desire, formed by the corporate money economy, by the drive for profits, and by an ever-widening "distance between profit makers and operatives," as the Paterson situation shows.[118] The circumstance of material comfort and even of prosperity for most people throughout much of the nineteenth century was being superseded by the idea of possession, by being through having, by pageantry and show rather than by open confrontation with reality, by desire rather than by fulfillment.

In the early twentieth century, new economic institutions—department stores, national corporations, hotels, theaters, restaurants, and commercial and investment banks—were beginning to reshape American culture. Along with them were their brokers (men like L. Frank Baum, Maxfield Parrish, Joseph Urban, and O. J. Gude), who created new consumer enticements. At the same time, another circuit of noneconomic institutions and their brokers—museums, educational institutions, and governments—arose to meet the needs of commerce. And even the IWW, its leadership enticed and confused by the appeal of bourgeois strategies, had made its own unintentional contribution to the new circuit of power.

Chapter 7

WANAMAKER'S SIMPLE LIFE AND THE MORAL FAILURE OF ESTABLISHED RELIGION

When a preacher asked John Wanamaker in 1901 if he thought "modern commercialism" had had a negative "influence on church life," Wanamaker answered that he didn't think that anything negative had occurred. In fact, he said, "the last twenty years have been very favorable to a religious life."[1] But how could Wanamaker, a devout Presbyterian, have made this claim, given the character of the culture taking shape around him? What idea of the religious life led him to think this way? How could any religious person have looked at the fundamental changes going on in America—the rise of corporations, the new money economy, the spread of the culture of consumer desire—and not have wondered what impact they might have on spiritual life or what the future might be for religious vocations?

Something else besides department stores, government, museums, and universities was busy in behalf of this new culture: religion. And what is meant here by religion is not religion in only the institutional sense. What is meant is the "spiritual life"—or, more broadly, the principles people live by, their sense of right and wrong, their priorities and values. This chapter and the next explore the character of the religious response, examining not so much institutions per se but the ethical-spiritual resolutions of a relatively religious people as they considered or encountered the moral challenges of America's new commercial society.

For his part, Wanamaker believed that religion and commerce were