

EDITORS' NOTE

Capitalism—or more precisely, the corporate and industrial subspecies of capitalism—generated the monikers “Gilded Age” and “Progressive Era.” When Mark Twain and Charles Dudley Warner lampooned the corruption and vulgar materialism of the United States in the 1870s, they pointed to the ways in which capitalism was as much a political system and set of cultural practices and self-conceptions as it was an economic system. The host of reform efforts from the 1890s onward that often if not always defined themselves as “progressive” took aim at the inequities of capitalism—child labor, monopoly, environmental destruction, urban living conditions—even when they frequently accepted many of the economic and cultural tenets of corporate capitalism.

The hydra-like qualities of turn-of-the-century capitalism are on display in many of this issue's articles. Standard Oil, the *bête noire* of reformers for its roughshod treatment of consumers and competitors alike, pioneered the use of public relations tactics to defend its tarred reputation. Stephen Leccese argues that although these efforts were not enough to reverse the damage done by muckraker Ida Tarbell's masterpiece *The History of the Standard Oil Company*, they were nonetheless harbingers of corporate public relations. Reputation, like oil, was a commodity that experts in the employ of corporations could locate and preserve.

Progressive reform, ironically enough, aided corporate capitalism by making clear the importance of having a clean and upright reputation among the public. The mining companies discussed in Mark Hendrickson's “The Sesame that Opens the Door of Trade” became even more dependent on expertise this time in the form of mining engineers. These experts became critical not just for locating and extracting valuable ores, but increasingly to identify promising investment opportunities abroad. Focusing on John Hays Hammond, Hendrickson frames engineers as key players in an increasingly global corporate capitalism. Stephen Hausmann provides a complementary portrait of the intense conflict over the politics of expertise. Focusing on the surprisingly influential anti-vivisection movement, Hausmann shows how the female-dominated debate over animal experimentation actually provided an important cultural foundation for the legitimacy of modern, scientific, professional—and male—medicine.

The capitalism that gave rise to such commercial entertainments as dance halls, saloons, movie theaters, and amusement parks was more proprietary than corporate. That women and men could now amuse themselves outside the confines of their family and community provoked both rejoicing and alarm. Christine Talbot explores the distinctive Mormon response to commercial amusement. Like genteel Progressives, Mormon leaders feared that these opportunities would lure the young into immorality, especially sexual immorality. Yet their success in providing similar social opportunities within the structure of the church proved both more egalitarian in terms of gender and more successful than did the efforts of non-Mormon reformers. By the 1920s, the Mormon Church had become extremely deliberate about its social programming, in the process imbibing some of the culture of commercial entertainment even as it kept its distance from the market in pleasure.

The Catholic Church in New England also faced a challenge in these years, one brought not by new social opportunities but rather by newcomers from Quebec. Drawn by the hundreds of thousands to work in the region's burgeoning factories, these arrivals posed a particular dilemma for a church whose leadership was torn between organizing the "national" parishes that most immigrants found the most appealing and presenting itself as a force for the equitable social integration and Americanization of immigrants by putting them in mixed congregations. Drawing parallels to Mexicans in the U.S. Southwest, Patrick LaCroix argues that the Catholic Church became less tolerant of ethnic particularities in the late nineteenth century. Like the mass culture that both drew and repelled French Canadians and Mormons, Catholicism was, ultimately, a foundational force for Americanization.

In the issue's final article, Johanna Neuman revisits the national campaign for women's suffrage, focusing on the undeniable yet astonishingly understudied fact that votes for women required the votes of men. The success of the campaign for suffrage was in fact one of the clearest signs that decades of industrialization, urbanization, and cultural changes had transformed gender roles. The activism of the New York Men's League for Woman Suffrage, Neuman shows, convinced the public to see women in the daylight of the political and ideological battles of Progressivism rather than in the shadow of domesticity.

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