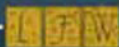


*Apostle of
Human Progress*

LESTER
FRANK
WARD

and

American Political Thought,
1841-1913



Edward C. Rafferty

Apostle of
Human Progress

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*Apostle of Human Progress: Lester Frank Ward and American Political
Thought, 1841–1913*
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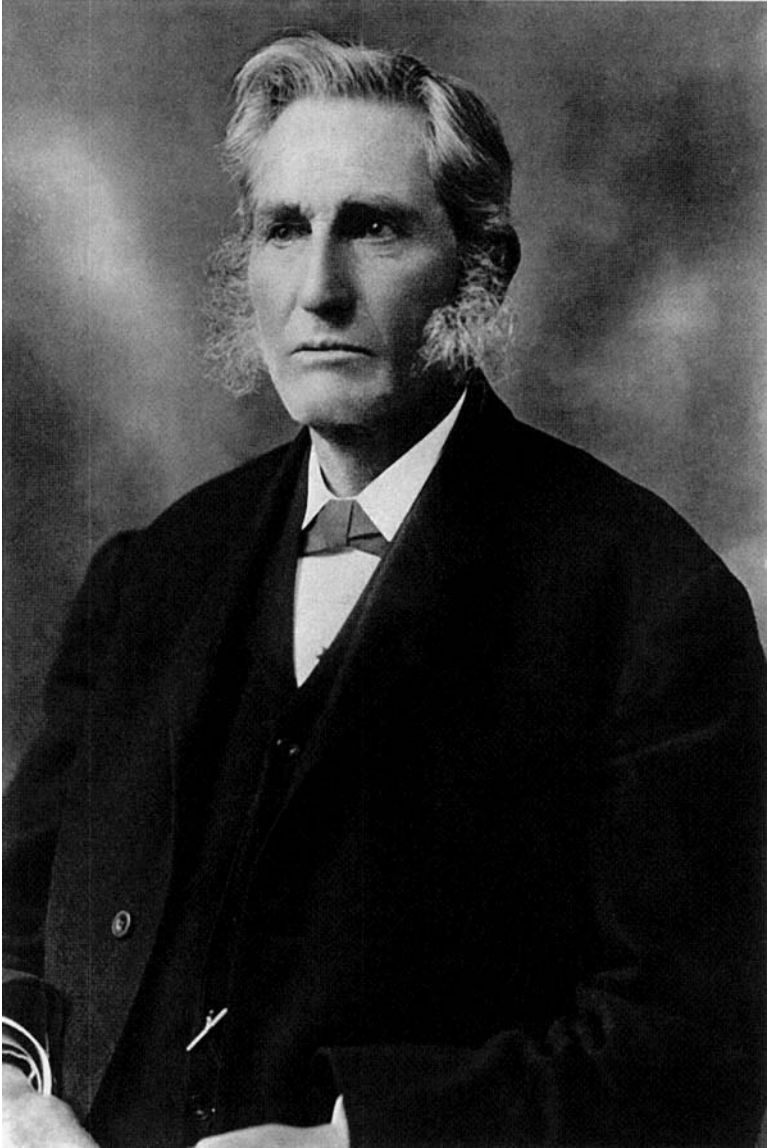
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To my parents, Edward and Ann;
to my wife, Marie Myers;
to my daughter, Cecilia Anne;
and to the twins, Edward and Emma.



Lester F. Ward photographed when he was a professor of social science at Brown University, circa 1910. (Courtesy of Brown University Archives)

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Introduction

A Life Apart from Circumstantial Things

In late April and May 1913, letters of condolence arrived at the home of Rosamund Ward from all across the country and the world. Major social thinkers expressed profound sorrow over her husband Lester Frank Ward's death on 17 April 1913. Giants of late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century thought, including French social scientist Émile Durkheim, German social scientist Ferdinand Tönnies, British urban planner Sir Patrick Geddes, American social scientists Edward A. Ross, Albion Small, and Thorstein Veblen, mourned Ward's passing. They had lost a major voice in international debates about political reform, social science, and the direction of social progress in the modern world. Glowing obituaries appeared in newspapers in New York City, Providence (Rhode Island), Washington, D.C., and a few international dailies.

Brown University, where Ward was a professor of social science and a beloved member of the faculty, also paid homage to the popular thinker who, they declared, "came to us near the close of a long life of severe mental exertion. . . . [Ward] was a profound student, and an original investigator in the most abstruse problems with which the human mind can grapple. For seven years the faculty and students found in him a genial associate, an inspiring teacher, and a sincere and unflinching seeker after truth."¹ In the wake of his death, Ward's relatives and Brown University librarian Harry Koopman created a Lester Frank Ward Room at the university's John Hay Library preserving his book collection and the memorabilia he collected during his lifetime of intellectual work for the federal government and for his last years at Brown University. Thousands of letters, books, photographs, and other materials were placed in the room as a memorial to this important American intellectual.

Most of this is forgotten today. Except for the handful of American intellectual and cultural historians in the world, Lester Ward is virtually unknown. Few American policymakers know that Ward and an entire generation of intellectuals in Washington provided key intellectual groundwork for the modern administrative and regulatory state; few are knowledgeable about the debates that occurred more than a century ago about the relationship between the individual citizen and the government. Fewer still have ever read Lester Frank Ward's books, though they are an excellent guide to the major trends in late-nineteenth-century liberal thought and the major debates framing the arguments about government power, the relationship between labor and capital, the importance of science and social science in shaping government policies, and the role that the state should play in American life. Most modern sociologists do not celebrate Ward, or those of his generation, as disciplinary founders; the sociological canon has, for the most part, ignored Ward and his colleagues. Although the Society for Applied Sociology does maintain a Lester Frank Ward Award for distinguished contributions to the field of sociology, he is not part of the discipline he worked so hard to establish.

The Ward Room at Brown University was dismantled long ago. Most of his books are out of print. The only surviving memorial to Ward is on a small rural road in the northeastern corner of Pennsylvania. On Route 187 in Bradford County, Pennsylvania, in a village called Myersburg, there is a small state historical sign celebrating "Lester Frank Ward: Father of American Sociology." The sign also informs passersby that Ward was once regarded as "the American Aristotle." It is a statement of high praise and a remarkable piece of Americana tucked away in this small town in Pennsylvania. Most people who drive by the sign probably have no idea why this man could lay claim to the title "father of American sociology."

Only remnants of Ward's influence are recognized today, despite the fact that his influence was profound and diffuse on a wide range of American intellectuals, government officials, and professional social scientists by the turn of the twentieth century. Progressive historian Charles Beard viewed the story of Ward's life as an "American epic" and considered him one of the most impressive minds of the late nineteenth century: "I have always regarded it as among my great good fortunes . . . to have met this remarkable man in the later years of his life," Beard wrote in *New Republic* magazine in the fall of 1939. "At the age of nearly seventy, Ward impressed me as a monolith of living granite. . . . His learning was vast, his interests truly cosmic, and his impacts upon American thought wide-reaching."² Beard, and a wide variety of his contemporaries, wanted to know much more about this self-taught American social theorist—someone they regarded as having a profound influence on their intellectual lives.

This book is an attempt to heed Beard's call for a comprehensive study of Ward's life story and the diffuse impact of his work on American intellectuals and political thinkers in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Ward's life and thought are a fitting example for this series of books on "American Intellectual Culture" and the role of public intellectuals in American life. Ward was a consummate public intellectual believing for his entire career that it was necessary for men and women of ideas to work for the public good; the public intellectual must serve a nation struggling to emerge from the Civil War and come to grips with modern industrial society. This is not the first attempt to chronicle Ward's life. Many have gone before me in writing about him, and I am deeply indebted to their work. But few historians have ever tried to write a full-scale intellectual portrait of the man, tied his work to the restructuring of American liberalism after the Civil War, or examined his relationship to the community of intellectuals working in government science in late-nineteenth-century Washington, D.C.³

In part, the current ignorance of Ward's role in shaping debates about the role of government and the state in American life is a reflection of the scholarship about the man. Although widely celebrated by American and European scientists and social thinkers immediately after his death in 1913, his reputation has generally suffered since. Numerous scholars from the early 1930s to the late 1950s have noted the contradictions in Ward's thought, his inability to incorporate changes in the scientific world into his own scientific and philosophic system, and his reliance on his early publications to defend attacks on his ideas. Charles Ellwood wrote in the late 1930s that Ward "was too big a man, perhaps, to permit contradictions to trouble him."⁴ More recently, historian John Burnham has harshly criticized Ward's scientific ability and denies him any significance in the history of American science or American social thought: "Ward systematized when he should have experimented; he speculated when he should have observed; he tried to embrace all knowledge in a world turning increasingly to specialization. Because of his failure to adapt to the rapid changes in his own intellectual environment," Burnham concludes, "he became an anachronism; he represented a part of the nineteenth century surviving into the twentieth."⁵ But Burnham's dismissal of Ward's significance misses much of Ward's importance in the reconstruction of American liberalism and his formative role in the intellectual community of late-nineteenth-century Washington, D.C.

Burnham's interpretation responded in part to the rising interest in Ward's work among a few mid-twentieth-century liberal historians such as Ralph Gabriel, Richard Hofstadter, and Henry Steele Commager. Their studies of Ward's life celebrate his criticism of social Darwinism and his contribution to the development of the modern welfare state. Ralph

Gabriel's wide-ranging history, *The Course of American Democratic Thought*, first published in 1940, found in Ward's social thought a "non-Marxian socialism resting on a foundation of democracy."⁶ In 1944, Richard Hofstadter published *Social Darwinism in American Thought*, which examined Ward's role in the debate over social Darwinism—particularly his ongoing conflicts with William Graham Sumner, the American disciple of English social thinker Herbert Spencer. Hofstadter argued that Ward was the only comprehensive critic of a laissez-faire state before the New Deal; his main contribution to American intellectual life was his work against the popularity of "survival of the fittest" arguments about the American social system. Henry Steele Commager, in his history of the American mind and in his published anthology of Ward's work, *Lester Frank Ward and the Welfare State*, argued that Ward provided the philosophical foundation for the modern administrative welfare state and deserves to be recognized for this contribution to American social thought.⁷ In addition to these studies, Sidney Fine devoted a large amount of space to Ward in his history of the conflict between the laissez-faire state and the general welfare state in American social life and politics, and Eric Goldman, building on Hofstadter's interpretation, counted Ward among the key "Reform Darwinists" who used Darwinian categories for social analysis while stripping away the harsher elements of social Darwinist pessimism.⁸

Historians who have dealt with Ward—whether they celebrate him or dismiss him—relegate him to a peripheral role. His work has been used to smash critics of regulatory government, exponents of a social Darwinist approach to economic life, and laissez-faire attitudes of political and economic administration. He has also been dismissed on the grounds that his scientific work is now ignored, that he emphasized taxonomy over scientific experimentation, or that he was just too simplistic in his epistemology and assumptions about the positivist nature of knowledge. But by focusing broadly on Ward's life and career as a civil servant and public intellectual, a clearer and more subtle picture of his work emerges. In order to better understand him and his generation we must pay attention to the cultural and intellectual context within which he and his contemporaries worked.

Part of that important context lies in the changing structure of political thought in the late nineteenth century. Historians have recently begun to reassess the history of late-nineteenth-century politics and ideas. Scholars have moved away from a sterile debate regarding the "origins and outcomes" of the Progressive generation, focusing instead on what Daniel Rodgers called the "surrounding structures of available rhetoric and ideas—akin to the surrounding structures of politics and power—within which progressives launched their crusades, recruited their partisans, and did their work."⁹ We are reexamining the Gilded Age as something more

than a dark period of political corruption between Reconstruction and the emergence of progressive liberal reform; we are grappling anew with how to characterize this era in American life. In his recent book, *Atlantic Crossings*, Rodgers has brilliantly illuminated the broad trans-Atlantic connections in social reform circles from the 1860s and 1870s into the 1930s; the social politics of reform was a shared occupation and obsession with reformers in England and Europe that American social thinkers borrowed from, reshaped, and refit to a democratic government and polity. More than fifteen years ago James Kloppenberg's *Uncertain Victory* traced the shared discourse of intellectuals and social philosophers between the last three decades of the nineteenth century and the first three decades of the twentieth. Kloppenberg illustrates the ways in which political theorists reshaped thinking and language about knowledge, individualism, and social development. These political thinkers, such as John Dewey and William James in North America, Englishmen such as T. H. Green and Henry Sidgwick, and Europeans such as Wilhelm Dilthey and Albert Fouillée were all concerned about the meaning of liberalism and democracy, and the relationship between state intervention and individual freedom. Their work provided a key basis for reviving an Enlightenment faith in the power of virtuous citizens to provide for ethical and social progress in a modern world of "immediate experience."¹⁰

Even more recently, Louis Menand traces the impact of slavery, the Civil War, and late-nineteenth-century social change on the development of American pragmatism. As Menand argues in *The Metaphysical Club*, the Civil War "swept away the slave civilization of the South, but it swept away almost the whole intellectual culture of the North with it. It took nearly a half a century," Menand concludes, "for the United States to develop a culture to replace it, to find a set of ideas, and a way of thinking, that would help people cope with the modern conditions of life."¹¹

It is right that historians should turn to the history of ideas, political thought, and thinking about social relationships in examining the last years of the nineteenth century. These years saw the emergence of huge industrial corporations, international in scope, that changed the nature of capitalism and markets in the twentieth century. These years witnessed the rise of reform movements to check the rush of capitalist expansion and the social costs of economic change. We have too often neglected the ways in which those living through the last decades of the late nineteenth century responded to these developments and dealt with this complex world of social change. Now at the beginning of the twenty-first century, as we are still trying to assess the last years of the twentieth, it is understandable that we turn to those years to see how both Americans and Europeans handled their own transition. How did late-nineteenth-century thinkers understand the problem of historical change? What was the role

of social science and social investigation in government institutions? How could social reformers and intellectuals respond to the old liberal fears of government tyranny over self-rule, individual freedom, and liberty? These were questions asked in the United States and abroad, questions that shaped the development of politics and political thought from the late nineteenth century until at least World War II. For Americans, these were particularly pressing problems. Emerging from the devastation of the Civil War and the debates over the direction of the nation's democratic institutions during Reconstruction, Americans faced an uneasy future in the late nineteenth century.

In the late nineteenth century, as recent historians have shown, lies the development of modern social politics and the reconstruction of American liberalism. Borrowing from trans-Atlantic worlds of thought and political strategies, Americans forged a new definition of liberalism that came to dominate the political landscape until well after World War II. Lester Ward's work was central to this changing structure of American political thought and his life well demonstrates the broad connections between reform communities in the United States and abroad. Much of this contribution has been neglected and needs to be recovered to understand the contours of late-nineteenth-century thinking about politics and society in the United States and in Europe as well. Ward's thinking combined homegrown notions of democratic politics, producerism, egalitarianism, and moral economy gained from his own education and experience with a vision of a "positive science" of society inherited from his scientific work and his study of the philosophy of Auguste Comte, John Stuart Mill, and Herbert Spencer. His "positive science" of society emphasized the necessity of a centralized national educational system and disinterested experts as the foundation for governing the republic.

Ward's life story is one of the most remarkable among American intellectuals. He was born and raised in genuine poverty and spent his whole life struggling for money, working in a government job dependent on often reluctant congressional funding. He remained deeply committed to egalitarian social principles throughout his entire life, participating in a wide variety of social reforms including abolition, women's suffrage, and the rights of labor unions. Ward was essentially self-educated and spent years learning a remarkable number of fields of study, far too many for any one historian to fully grasp. He was a geologist, botanist, biologist, paleobotanist, paleontologist, and an able critic of various theories of evolution; he was also a philosopher, social thinker, economic critic, and something of a historian (at least in interpreting theories of society since the Enlightenment). Ward mastered at least six languages in his life—French, German, Russian, Spanish, Latin, and Greek—and had a passing knowledge of others; he translated his work himself whenever possible.

His books are difficult to read; long and often ponderous, they can tire even the most devoted reader of his work. And yet they did have a profound influence over a number of important American social thinkers of the twentieth century, including such luminaries as Thorstein Veblen, John Dewey, Edward Ross, Albion Small, Richard Ely, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, and many others who often read them on their own or in graduate programs in the social sciences and philosophy.

Why, then, the general ignorance of Ward's life and thought? For one, he inhabited and worked in a lost intellectual world, the community of reformers and scientists who built the government research bureaus and scientific associations of the capital city in the late nineteenth century. Ward and the intellectual community in late-nineteenth-century Washington, D.C., remained aloof from the professionalization and specialization of the social sciences that has been the subject of so much interest in the history of American intellectual life; most of them did not receive training in German scholarship, another important subject in late-nineteenth-century historiography. Few of the scientists in Washington ever worked in universities (although they did have ties to university life); most spent their lives in Washington's government scientific bureaus.

In short, these intellectuals do not really fit well with histories of professionalization in social science disciplines or intellectual life of the modern academy. Their "disciplinary professionalism" was limited. For Washington scientists and intellectuals, men such as Ward, Major John Wesley Powell, W J McGee, George Brown Goode, and for a time even Henry Adams, the most important concern of late-nineteenth-century social thought was not defining the boundaries of disciplines but in discovering ways to apply the accumulated knowledge of society to the solution of social problems. The shared concerns of this group focused on the public distribution and organization of knowledge as the most significant problem facing a burgeoning industrial democracy. Ward, for example, argued that the great problem of the last four decades of the nineteenth century was not the social distinction between "progress and poverty" but the disparity between ignorance and intelligence: "The great demand of the world," Ward argued in one of his last public addresses, "is knowledge. The great problem is the equalization of intelligence, to put all knowledge in possession of every human being. . . . I call this the principle of intellectual egalitarianism, the principle that—no matter what class of society you may select from . . . the individuals from all classes . . . will be equal in their native capacity for knowledge."¹² Ward and many Washington intellectuals wanted to place social science within the structure of government and public life itself.

In addition to the loss of the institutional context for Ward's life his own personality was often troublesome and difficult. He was thin-skinned,

argumentative, intensely ambitious, and, by the end of his life, often felt ignored and slighted by other American (and European) intellectuals. He did not lack for confidence that his work was important in shaping political thought. But he could often be repetitive in much of his work, and left many critics wondering if he had any other ideas beyond his interest in social reform and education. Ward was also at pains his entire life to prove his knowledge of all scientific subjects because he never received the professional education characterizing many members of late-nineteenth-century American and European universities. His habit of creating difficult neologisms in his books, symptomatic of his effort to prove his knowledge to others, was particularly bothersome to many readers of his work. Reading some of his books is hard-going work, his prose sometimes turgid and complicated, his penchant for synthesizing all knowledge lost on most modern readers (and some of his contemporaries).

But, as some of his admirers have made clear, there is something very worthwhile in reconstructing Ward's intellectual universe and understanding his political thinking. Ward was part of that broad "revolt against formalism" so well captured by historian Morton White. It was above all a revolt against the fiction that society was a simple aggregate of autonomous individuals. Instead, social thinkers in the late nineteenth century increasingly turned to the rhetoric of social cohesion—a "search for order" defining the bonds that connected diverse members of a community through a common and collective social experience. In this effort, historians have generally concentrated on the new emphasis on specialization, bureaucratic efficiency, and social engineering. This tradition, however, was driven mainly by an understanding of corporate organization, what some historians have called a "corporate liberalism," which focused on industry as an example of perfect order and the only avenue available to solve the mounting social problems of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century: population growth, rapid economic expansion, labor unrest, and farmers' revolt.¹³ Historians have had a difficult time placing Ward in this scheme, however, and, when they do, rarely mention the foundations of his thinking on the problems of social organization in the late nineteenth century.

More recently, historians have begun to reexamine liberalism and political thought in the late nineteenth century, particularly the development of a state-centered new liberalism. The central question that concerned many late-nineteenth-century social thinkers was the relationship between democracy and authority: was there a role for the controlling hand of the government in a democratic state and polity committed to the liberal values of individualism and natural rights? For Ward and the Washington intellectuals, the answer to this question was a resounding yes. For them the liberal tradition did not mean upholding free market capitalism

and “negative liberty,” that is to say individualism freed from government tyranny, as the end product of social development. They were deeply troubled by the problems facing the nation at the end of the Civil War, and they were well connected to those trans-Atlantic networks of social thought that began to reshape the role of government in protecting the social polity in many quarters around the world.¹⁴

Two major sets of concerns defined the development of new liberalism for Ward and the Washington intellectuals: the distinction between nature and culture and the distinction between government and the state. Ward, for example, argued that the fallacy of social Darwinist thinking, the “survival of the fittest” doctrine, was the conflation of nature and human society or natural evolution and social evolution. Unregulated competition may be the rule of animal evolution, or “animal economics” as Ward called it, but it did not serve as the example for human society or “human economics.”¹⁵ Although social development and progress continued under the influence of the forces of nature—the various versions of liberal and laissez-faire political economy—the result had been halting, wasteful, and beneficial to only a few members of society. Social progress was dependent on the interference of individuals and not on a natural, infinitely progressive evolution. Government power must have a hand in social change or the damages of rampant growth threatened to tear the nation apart.

The distinction between government and the state was roughly similar to the distinction between the individual and society—a microcosm to a macrocosm. Government was a component part of the state just as the individual was embedded within the larger society. The state was defined as the whole social order or, as historian Michael Lacey argues, summarizing the arguments of John Wesley Powell, “the combination of public and private agencies that made up the organizational structure of society.”¹⁶ The government consisted of the public system of regulations, institutions, and bureaus, which organized and coordinated knowledge to direct and control the progress of the larger social order. Ward argued that society needed to develop a “social intellect,” created from the work of public research bureaus such as the United States Geological Survey, the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the Smithsonian Institution, and private scientific associations such as the National Geographic Society, the Anthropological Society of Washington, and other similar organizations. It was this social intellect that Ward described in numerous essays and books in the late nineteenth century; it was these works that helped shape the examination of society and politics by early-twentieth-century reformers.

In the Washington intellectuals’ vision the line separating the public function of these bureaus and the private learned organizations was permeable. Both the newly emerging government bureaus and the private learned societies formed by the Washington intellectuals served as

the institutional network providing the knowledge necessary for the “social intellect” to take control of society’s development. A hoped-for National University, the capstone to their vision of government institutions, was to serve as a government graduate school for experts trained to gather and interpret the data of political, social, economic, and intellectual development. This state-centered form of social knowledge had advocates in many quarters in the United States and abroad. The networks of intellectuals in England and Europe—in professional societies in Paris, London, and Berlin—that Ward joined and associated with had a host of similar efforts at the national coordination of knowledge. In particular, Ward’s relationship with the Institut International de Sociologie (IIS), an organization still in existence today, connected him to a network of political intellectuals interested in cross-disciplinary and international research on social development.

The scientific politics that Ward and the Washington intellectual community in general hoped might emerge from such a focus on government and the “social intellect” was not designed in their minds to be hostile to democratic participation. They never harbored fears of democracy, as many more commonly known genteel reformers did, and they harbored no pessimism about the nation’s future. They shared a common prejudice against party but did not believe that only those of “proper” education could be the nation’s political leaders. Ward’s educational faith was far more democratic than that. And though some later progressive theorists following in the footsteps of the Washington intellectual community certainly rejected democracy, Ward and his colleagues did not.¹⁷

Instead, Ward believed that the work done in Washington might lead to the creation of a true “people’s government” unfettered by the partisanship and political party corruption of post-Civil War politics. The problem of political life for Washington intellectuals was an old fear of monopoly control by “interests” above the needs of the people. Their understanding of the relationship between government and the state and between the individual and society rested squarely on the republican tradition, which required a virtuous and knowledgeable citizenry for the continued progress of American institutions. Only a government designed to furnish society with the knowledge of social and economic conditions could provide for the progress and health of the state. For the Washington intellectuals republican categories such as virtue, independence, fears of monopoly, and the need for knowledgeable citizenry could be used to analyze the social, intellectual, and political events of the late nineteenth century.¹⁸

This is not to suggest that this republican tradition resembled the version that has dominated the study of eighteenth-century political thought and the forces shaping the American Revolution. As James Kloppenberg has recently argued, the language of the republican tradition survived in only

limited ways into the nineteenth century and in a quite different context. It is Ward's understanding of the republican tradition that is of most interest here; the ways in which Ward showed an interlocking interest in the liberal faiths in freedom and self-rule and the republican faith in virtue and responsible citizenship are evident in his work. For Ward, these interlocking concerns were filtered through his experience in antebellum political life and his education both before and after the Civil War. Ward inherited a producerist ethos that framed much of his understanding of the social relationships in politics and economics in the late nineteenth century. Producerism in Ward's vision celebrated the economic contribution of productive work, free labor, and the producing classes—artisans, skilled labor, small merchants, and craftsmen—as distinct from the nonproducing classes who accumulated capital for their own gain. It was a rhetoric of moral economy and class that owed much to the experience of industrialization in the antebellum north, a language of politics set in contrast to the mainstream faith that America was a land with an open social system.¹⁹

Much of the producerist language about the danger of monopoly, concentrations of power, and fears of conspiracy was linked with the republican language of the Revolutionary generation, but it was altered in the nineteenth century by the force of market growth, democratic expansion, and the mechanization of industry. Ward's later incorporation of producerist ethics into his vision of social development stripped producerism of its many antebellum class connotations, elevating it to a level of moral and scientific ideal. He added to the producerist distinction between productive work and nonproductive acquisitive capitalism a profound interest in egalitarian social reform led by the power of education to lessen the social distinctions of a growing industrial democracy. These ideas served as the basis for Ward's social thought and provided the basic themes in his publications.²⁰

At the heart of the new liberal vision in Ward's work was this firm belief in the productive value of labor. The intellectual and social legacy of Ward and the Washington intellectuals—in particular their emphasis on an activist and interventionist government—can be found in limited ways in the nation's state and private universities and professional scientific disciplines, though not in the public agencies or the National University they envisioned. In economics, for example, it meant an increased interest in a democratic statism—a political economy that emphasized the state's role as a guiding hand to national economic growth and function. In political science, it meant attention to the relationship between private organizations and the functions of a growing state bureaucracy. And in sociology, the discipline that most often views Ward as one of its founding fathers, it meant the study of the social role of intellectuals and a debate about the purposes of activist social science in a modern industrial democracy.

The work of defining the new liberalism of the twentieth century, however, was to be more profoundly understood by a later generation of thinkers—among them John Dewey, Herbert Croly, Walter Lippmann, Thorstein Veblen, and many others—who moved far beyond Ward and the Washington intellectuals in their understanding of the state and its development. They also understood, as Kloppenberg noted in *Uncertain Victory*, the contingency of human experience and the lack of any clear objective foundation for knowledge. Ward's thinking was based on nineteenth-century categories, and that should not be surprising. Yet he still provided a key transitional foundation these later thinkers. Ward and the Washington intellectual community represent a too-often ignored and misunderstood transitional phase between an older republican tradition of elite-led, disinterested public service and the twentieth-century creation of an administrative and regulatory state. They represent a momentary but important provincial intellectual community in an age before universities and professional societies.²¹

In a sense this biography is a character study tracing the fortunes of one individual's life across the mid-nineteenth century to the turn of the twentieth century, a life framed by the end of the antebellum era and the middle of the Progressive generation's efforts at social reform. In another sense, this study is a history of ideas tracing the changing definitions of science and social science in the late nineteenth century and the contributions of Ward to those debates. I try to pay very close attention to the broader problems of political thought and Ward's connections to different intellectual communities in the late nineteenth century, in particular his long work in Gilded Age Washington.²²

Ward's favorite novelist was George Eliot, and he regarded as something of a motto her remark regarding a "life apart from circumstantial things." His comment fits well with the purposes of this series as well. Ward always wanted to escape from the circumstances of his life because he believed that in doing so he could be of larger service to the nation. Just about a year before he died Ward wrote his friend (and his first biographer) Emily Cape and defined what he felt was essential about a life's work and a life's purpose: "Almost everybody allows 'circumstantial things' to dominate him completely. Many persons of talent never *do* anything because they have not the power to cut loose from the immediate environment. It requires discipline. It means character. . . . It is the power to distinguish the great from the small, the important from the trivial."²³ In his personal life, in his science, and in his political thought Ward wanted to overcome his immediate environment. That struggle provides a critical perspective on those all-important years in American life from the end of the Civil War to the early twentieth century.

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Self-Made Men, 1841–1862

Lester Frank Ward was born shortly after midnight on 18 July 1841, in the first-floor room of a small two-family home on Joliet Avenue in Joliet, Illinois. He later joked to his friends that he had escaped the Chicago suburb just in time; the place where the house used to sit became a state prison in the late nineteenth century. In 1887, from the confines of his office in the Smithsonian Institution, the place where he wrote all of his books and essays, Ward fondly recalled the midwestern prairie of his youth. The area that came to be called America's "middle border" had a profound effect on him and his generation. Ward remembered with nostalgia and longing "the Great West with its endless length and breadth of expanse, its interminable stretch of prairie, its rivers, and mountains, and plains." But the landscape of the nation's western frontier was not Ward's only concern. He also suggested that although the "Great West" shaped his imagination, playing an important role in his life and in the lives of his contemporaries, the expansion and growth of the nineteenth-century western frontier paled in comparison to the educated "mind of which [I] knew nothing that eventful morning [of my birth]."¹

The middle border experience defined Ward's life in unique ways. In a region of weak educational institutions, Ward pushed his own self-education. He was fundamentally an autodidact and polymath completely convinced that knowledge and education could provide a basis for social and political reform; the power of the individual's will and reason could overcome what he would later regard as the inertia of tradition. His independent education also provided him with a deep and lifelong interest in nature, natural history, and science. In addition, raised watching the

rough and tumble of the antebellum marketplace and the rising sectional consciousness that eventually led the nation into war, Ward developed a powerful political animosity toward privilege, monopoly, and the evils of financial capitalism; he also developed a basic belief in the need for equality in American political and social life. His political and social interests were driven by the rise of antebellum reform movements—particularly abolitionism, temperance, and the common school—and the development of the Republican Party.

Ward carried the experience of the antebellum prairie frontier for his entire life; it formed his personality and shaped his attitudes toward reform, science, economy, and the social problems of late-nineteenth-century politics. The elements of Ward's later social science—concern for securing the nation's progress, expanding the power of national institutions, developing a basis for a science of American politics well fitted for a rapidly industrializing society, protecting the victims of national growth and expansion—were deeply embedded in his family's experience.

The origin of the Ward family in North America can be traced from the arrival of Andrew Warde, born in Sheffield, England, in 1597. Andrew Warde was an early New England settler. He arrived in Massachusetts Bay Colony around 1630 as part of the great Puritan migration that came to the shores of New England in the first third of the seventeenth century seeking independence from the corrupting influence of the Anglican Church. By 1635 he settled in the town of Wethersfield but, troubled by the religious theology and power of the Puritan divines of Massachusetts Bay, Warde left the colony as one of the original settlers in the settlement of New Haven, on the shores of Long Island Sound. In the early twentieth century, when Lester Ward visited the commemorative statue celebrating his famous ancestor in the town of Fairfield, Connecticut, he remarked to his friend Emily Cape that "he too wanted to free humanity."²

Andrew Warde's descendants encompassed many of the famous "first" families of New England: the Beechers, the Welds, and many others prominent in the social and political history of Massachusetts could trace connections to his arrival. Lester Ward himself later proved to have little interest in his own genealogy. He was a self-made man with little connection to his family's past. "My mind has always been trimmed toward the future rather than the past," he wrote of his family history. "Firmly convinced for most of my life that the human race is ascending rather than descending, I have cared little for my ancestors except in a biological sense. . . . Pride of ancestry is a mark of degeneracy."³ Despite his own lack of interest in his early life, however, that family past did shape Ward's character, ideas, and social experience.

A family historian traced a direct line of descent from Andrew Warde to Lester Ward's father, Justus Ward, born in western New Hampshire on 8

October 1788.⁴ Justus Ward was an itinerant millwright, mechanic, farmer, and general jack-of-all-trades, far removed in status and space from the more illustrious Massachusetts members of the Ward family line. But Justus Ward's life provides one of those unique opportunities to trace the social processes of the early nineteenth century: the market revolution, the massive population movement across the continent, and the religious awakening that prompted the most comprehensive reform movements in nineteenth-century America.

Justus Ward was a generation removed from the American Revolution, but he fought in his generation's own battle for independence and national pride in the War of 1812. He participated as a fife major in the war and, his son Lester recalled, served with some distinction at the Battle of Buffalo. He remained in upstate New York after the war, where he met Silence Loomis Rolph, the daughter of an itinerant Methodist minister. Silence Rolph, whose family lacked the distinguished past of the Ward name, was nonetheless a "scholarly [and] refined" woman who was "fond of literary pursuits." The couple married on 11 April 1816, settled in Rochester, New York, and became deeply involved in the religious ferment of New York's burned-over district.

The flames of religious revivalism swept through this area in the 1820s and 1830s, especially after the arrival of the most well known of the Second Great Awakening's fiery ministers, Charles Grandison Finney. The Second Great Awakening, begun with the camp meetings in the early nineteenth century and soon spreading to all denominations, changed the nature of American religion. It was a democratic shift in American religious sensibility paralleling the democratization of politics in the early national period. Sin was no longer predestined in man but could be changed through individual effort and salvation.

The Wards, especially Silence Ward, imbibed deeply in this new religious faith. An intensely spiritual woman, Silence Ward imparted a profound faith to her older children. Silence Ward believed that all of her children should live a life in Christ; her few surviving letters indicate that this was an important part of child rearing in the Ward home. The couple's first child, Lorenzo Ward, was born in 1817 and later recalled his mother's evangelism pushing him toward an unwanted career as a Methodist minister; another son, Justin Loomis Ward, did become a minister when he left the family fold. Lester Ward was to have a more difficult time reconciling religious faith with the realities of late-nineteenth-century politics and science. But as a young man, religion was his entry into the world of social reform and education.

Methodism was a faith well attuned to the interests of the young family. Religious revivalism during the Second Great Awakening was a populist crusade carrying the tide of a democratic revolution in the young nation.

Justus and Silence Ward were neither poor and downtrodden nor rich and well-off. They were a family of the "middling sort" desiring upward mobility and were attracted by the appeal of rigorous study of scripture and a fundamental belief in the primacy of free will over the Calvinist determinism of predestination and the burdens of original sin. Another hallmark of the Ward household was a deep distrust of Roman Catholicism, a common prejudice in the region as many Catholics immigrated to the area in the mid-nineteenth century. In addition, some American Methodists like the Wards became closely attracted to the radical social reform movements of the 1820s and 1830s, particularly temperance and the rising tide of antislavery.⁵

The small family spent a few years in the Rochester area, absorbing the influences of religious evangelism and politics, before eventually setting off around the mid-1830s, like thousands of others, on a trek westward across the Allegheny mountains and into the Ohio Valley. Rochester was a town experiencing a whole host of social changes in the early national period: an economic revolution that changed the relationship between employer and employed; a religious revolution that prompted a heart-rending search for spiritual meaning and guidance in a rapidly changing social environment; and a political revolution with new issues—abolitionism, temperance, the rights of the working classes—sparking interest in questions of social reform. Religious revivalism swept over this area of western New York in wave after wave, reaching a fevered pitch in the 1820s and 1830s. The Wards absorbed all these influences; they left Rochester committed to the principles of a renewed evangelical faith in the perfectibility of the individual and society, social egalitarianism, and reform in politics and society. It was a reform faith they bequeathed to all their children.⁶

The commitment to social reform that Justus and Silence Ward absorbed in the 1820s and 1830s promised that America was the land of chosen people destined to carry progress to the entire world, a "redeemer nation" chosen by Providence to expand freedom and realize the coming of the millennium. Mid-nineteenth-century Americans looked at the expansion and growth of the republic since the Revolution with awe and wonder. They easily linked the country's spatial growth in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries with an emerging democratic culture that swept away the remaining elements of the founders' hierarchical republic. The energies released by the religious revivalism of the Second Great Awakening offered seemingly limitless perfectibility as a goal of both the democratic citizen and the American republic. When Alexis de Tocqueville surveyed post-Revolutionary America, he highlighted the twin principles of equality and perfectibility as unique features of American democracy and reform. Equality and perfectibility,

Tocqueville noted in his chronicle of American democratic culture, *Democracy in America*, “put many ideas into the human mind which would not have come there without it and it changes almost all the ideas that were there before.” In countless books, pamphlets, newspapers, and magazines, Jacksonian Americans of all political stripes and social classes celebrated boundless perfection as the central meaning of democratic government in the United States.⁷

What confronted pioneers like Justus Ward as they moved across the Old Northwest and even further was a bewildering “revolution in choices” offering Americans an abundant material society as well as expanding markets across the continent and the world. The economic and political practices of nineteenth-century Americans reflected the energy of expansion and growth in the post-Revolutionary period. The American economy experienced an unprecedented commercial boom in the first half of the nineteenth century—transforming wealth from its eighteenth-century basis in property to a new one in industry and markets. The expansion of suffrage in the first quarter of the nineteenth century, moreover, opened participation in the nation’s politics far beyond what the revolutionaries had ever envisioned—at least for the republic’s white, male citizens like Justus Ward. Americans justified this expansion of privileges in political and economic life with what Tocqueville called “the doctrine of self-interest properly understood.” The principles and rhetoric of antebellum politics, for both Democrats and Whigs in the mid-nineteenth century, centered on concepts of both equality of condition and individual liberty for the nation’s citizens. Both Jacksonian Democrats and Whigs could lay claim to the remnants of revolutionary republicanism left over after the immense social changes of the early nineteenth century. Whatever their platforms and political constituencies, both parties could agree that self-rule and self-interest in America’s language of politics meant control over one’s individual destiny and the assurance of personal progress. Citizens, proclaimed antebellum America’s prophets of success, were “masterless,” boundless, and free from all constraints and limits.⁸

Justus Ward sought all these possibilities of freedom and economic success on the frontier as he took his family into Pennsylvania and Ohio, following work in canal building, farming, and the artisanal trades. Lester Ward often recalled his father’s “inventive genius,” which left him discontented if profits in any enterprise were not quick to come his way. It was a story told thousands of times during the early republic’s rumbling market revolution and social movements. Lured by the promises of success, migrants like the Wards continued traveling westward seeking newfound freedoms on the frontier. They were small yeoman farmers, craftsmen, and artisans—men and women whom Thomas Jefferson had celebrated as forming the backbone of an independent republican

citizenry, the foundation for the republic's growth in the nineteenth century. They were "producers" as the language of nineteenth-century political economy defined them—they toiled with their hands, and their work had economic value in and of itself. In time, this nascent labor theory of value came to define an ideology of class and politics in late-nineteenth-century labor and farmer political organizations. But for Justus Ward as he raised his family these producerist assumptions defined only the character of individual democratic citizens rather than a political ideology. As free laborers Justus Ward and others like him carried with them a stern moral idealism and convictions of the ethical value of work as key ingredients in the citizen's character. But these eighteenth-century assumptions that shaped their vision of a producerist paradise of democratic citizens succeeding in the antebellum frontier proved far more difficult to put in practice in the boom-and-bust cycles of the nineteenth century's market revolution than any of them ever imagined.

The family grew quickly. By the middle 1830s, when Justus and Silence Ward left the Rochester area, they had nine children in all, four boys and five girls. They traveled across New York and into the Ohio Valley, following the paths of thousands of free laborers seeking their economic fortunes on the frontier. In 1840, they arrived in Joliet, Illinois, not far from the shores of Lake Michigan. Justus Ward and his sons—Lorenzo Ward, the oldest; Justin Loomis Ward, the second oldest son; and Cyrenus Osborne Ward, nine years older than Lester—built the two-family home where the tenth and last child, whom the family called Frank, was born in 1841. The elder Ward had come to the area to help build locks for the Illinois and Michigan Canal, work to be completed with the help of his sons. The family did not remain in Joliet very long after Lester Frank's birth, however. Justus Ward's restless energy kept him moving throughout the early 1840s, and his youngest son recalled that as a boy he was mostly "left to [my] own devices" to find entertainment while his father and older siblings worked in the mills and farms near their home.

In 1842, the family moved to Cass Township in DuPage County, Illinois, establishing a small mill in the area. This was the place where Lester Ward "first came to consciousness." The family remained in the area for about a decade, although Justus Ward would move around seeking to capitalize on the economic opportunities brought about by the canal. DuPage County was just becoming part of the booming hinterland around Chicago. Cass Township was a small rural community, not as large or as important as the towns of Naperville and Wheaton that would come to be the centers of county enterprise by the late 1840s and early 1850s. Justus Ward, however, moved before the county's expansion in the 1850s; the eventual failure of the mill prompted him to relocate in 1852 to the Fox River Valley in St. Charles, Illinois, where he tried to establish another

mill near the small prairie village. Shortly after Justus Ward left DuPage County, Joseph Powell arrived. Joseph Powell was another pioneer who shared similar religious and class roots to the Wards in upstate New York and traveled a similar but much more successful path in the growing market economy of the young republic. Joseph Powell came to DuPage County to begin a major educational institution on the outskirts of Chicago, the Illinois Institute in the town of Wheaton. Powell's son, John Wesley Powell, destined to become one of the nation's leading scientists and a leader of efforts to reshape the American West in the late nineteenth century, was nineteen years old at the time and just starting out in a teaching career. By the 1870s, he was to become Lester Ward's intellectual mentor and closest friend; they shared a close kinship later in life based in part on the similarity of their backgrounds in the towns and on the farms of the nation's middle border.⁹

But for the young Lester Ward, just eleven years old when his father left the county, education, science, and the frontier existed only in his dreams. He spent much of his time in these years in the company of his next oldest brother, Erastus Ward (two years older), and later in life he celebrated these boyhood experiences when he recalled his childhood. Hunting, fishing, and play in the mills and farms of the prairie villages of Illinois were "the companions [nature] so liberally provided," for the two youngsters. Nature gave all they needed and wanted for personal fulfillment, Lester Ward recalled, and "[we] had the skys, the streams, the fields, and forests for [our] tutors."¹⁰

Ward received some basic education during the time he spent in the Illinois villages. The common school movement had just begun to take shape in midwestern states and territories in the 1830s and 1840s. Local activists built small schoolhouses in many communities, although common school advocates did not make extensive progress until the early 1860s and, in some areas, not until after the Civil War. Both of Ward's parents were literate, so it is not surprising that they pushed their children to acquire some basic educational skills. His mother's Protestant faith also called for all her children to at least be able to read the Bible. The famous *McGuffey's Readers*, as well as other geography and history texts, in addition to the Bible, were the main sources of training in these rural, ungraded schools. The schools operated for only brief terms during the year, probably no more than six to twelve weeks. In any case, the constant movement of Ward's family limited the time he could devote to study in the early 1850s.

While his youngest son tried to receive a basic education, Justus Ward again sought to achieve his fortune. The real promise for success and social mobility on the frontier, he believed, lay in land ownership—in the propertied independence of the yeoman's life. As a result of his service in the War of 1812, Justus Ward was eligible to apply for a 160-acre bounty

land grant on the public domain. Congress had originally limited these grants to lands in Illinois, Missouri, and Arkansas, but in the early 1850s legislators extended the ability to purchase grants into Iowa and elsewhere on the plains. Although modestly successful as a manufacturing entrepreneur despite his failures, Justus Ward was troubled by the boom and bust of economic investment and he decided, in Lester Ward's words, to "sell-out" and travel further out on the frontier to a 160-acre plot in the middle of Iowa. In 1855, he moved his family yet again and set out to establish his prairie homestead. In a covered wagon the family crossed the muddy roads stretching from Lake Michigan across Illinois and settled nearly 250 miles away in Buchanan County, Iowa.

Buchanan County was in the heart of the Iowa prairie—rich farming lands and rivers, in addition to extensive forests, greeted the first settlers of the region who began to arrive in the 1840s. Buchanan County had only been part of the U.S. territory for about twenty years when Justus Ward and his family arrived. The region had been home to a host of spring villages for the Native American tribes in the upper Midwest, especially among the Sac and the Fox. The United States only obtained title to the region following the war with the Sac leader, Black Hawk, in the early 1830s, and after a series of complicated treaties, known collectively as the Black Hawk purchases, signed in the late 1830s. The original settlers in the region were much like Justus and Silence Ward: migrants from New England, New York, and Illinois, seeking wealth and riches in the bounty of prairie farming. The settlers named the county seat Independence, a reflection of their "energetic toil" in taking control of the rich prairie and stretching the reach of American democracy further west.¹¹

Many boosters had celebrated Iowa in the 1850s as the new "empire of the West." Thousands arrived in Iowa to partake of the bounties of prairie life, lured by the kind of promises that Nathan Howe Parker offered in his guide to the state, *Iowa As It Is in 1856*. Quoting from the newspaper accounts of Iowa riches, the accounts someone such as Justus Ward surely read, Parker portrayed an Iowa with "her limitless prairies, her mighty rivers, her mountains of iron, the lavish richness of her all-bountiful soil, that expands the soul of man, and elevates him above the cramped, and confined ideas of . . . the well-worn channels and small conventionalities of older hum-drum communities. . . . [Here] all is new, and plastic, and vigorous." Buchanan County had fewer than thirty-five hundred residents in the mid-1850s, no newspaper or churches, and only a handful of manufacturing establishments. It was, in short, a region ripe for the taking—rich in valuable natural resources for the hardy pioneers.¹²

What these pioneers found, however, was much different from what they expected. Life on the distant reaches of the prairie was difficult and isolating, and farming the rich land was hard work requiring hours of of-

ten unrewarded toil. Though Parker and other similar boosters described the ability to “break prairie” as inexpensive and relatively simple once a good plow was secured, the reality of farming life was far different. The Wards settled in an area now known as Ward’s Corners, in Buffalo township. No cities were close by, no towns of any size for that matter; the Northern Iowa Railroad (an extension of the Illinois Central lines) remained only a dream of Iowa boosters. The only way to reach the region was along the series of badly built rough roads winding their way westward from Illinois. Lester Ward later recalled the excitement as well as the harsh experience of this emigration: “Only those who have emigrated from comfortable homes and kindly friends, can imagine the barrenness of life in a new country. It was uphill business. Mr. [Justus] Ward found himself broken in health, with funds low, and no end of hard work in store before [anything] such as comfort could be insured.”¹³

The pages of the Iowa state census of 1856 speak volumes about the county and the experience of Justus Ward in establishing his farm. Justus and his eldest son, Lorenzo, who lived in a home nearby, listed their occupations as simply “yeoman.”¹⁴ It was an honorable occupation with deep meaning for nineteenth-century Americans, evoking the image of the individual producer carrying American democracy to the barren West. Americans of Lester Ward’s generation eventually fashioned a political rhetoric and a social science out of the yeoman experience. As adults, Ward and his contemporaries offered a vision of political economy that highlighted the producer’s contributions to the American democratic republic and the role of work and property in developing citizens in opposition to concentrations of economic and political power in the hands of a nonproducing few.

Ward’s mature political ideology and social theory was part of a broad trend in political thinking in the late nineteenth century that remade American liberalism. The yeoman experience provided one of the key threads in the late nineteenth century assault on both laissez-faire liberalism and the idea that America’s growing class divide somehow had its roots in natural law and the natural process of social development. Ward and his contemporaries such as John Wesley Powell, Thorstein Veblen, Simon Patten, and Richard Ely, and even other sociologists such as Edward Ross, openly believed in the key aspects of the classical liberal creed—*independence, freedom to participate in the fruits of market growth, and the freedom to participate in democratic politics*—but they remade these canons of eighteenth- and early-nineteenth-century liberalism based on the experience of antebellum economic growth, the devastation of the Civil War, and the emergence of profound class conflict in the nineteenth century. Liberty and independence no longer needed to fear government. Indeed, as the Civil War and slavery would prove, they needed government’s active protection.

As Ward matured in the late 1860s and 1870s, he never forgot the experience of his father as a part of a producerist commonwealth of farmers, artisans, and craftsmen who forged democratic communities on the western frontier. He later combined this producerist faith with an examination of nineteenth-century theories of social evolution and the consequences of the rise of huge industrial corporations in the late nineteenth century. But the origins of Ward's new liberalism in the late nineteenth century lie in this antebellum experience. He combined a republican faith in the capabilities of the virtuous, independent, educated citizen, and the liberal faith in the expansive possibilities of the free market. Late-nineteenth-century social theorists like Ward hoped to establish a new politics for the American republic in the aftermath of the Civil War and the unprecedented industrial growth of the Gilded Age. At the United States Geological Survey and the Smithsonian Institution in the late 1870s and into the twentieth century, the place of Ward's employment, Ward, Powell, and other Washington intellectuals made the producerist vision a centerpiece of their vision for settling the American West. Their ideas came to define the political debates of the Washington community in the late nineteenth century.¹⁵

For the sixty-seven-year-old Justus Ward, however, the experience of farming and producing on the land was not an education in political ideals or ideology. He did not fashion the experience into a blueprint for western settlement or the foundation for a new scientific government and politics. For the elder Ward, prairie farming was a harsh and difficult task. He had to spend enormous time felling timber rather than farming the land, and by the end of the year he had barely enough for his family to survive: a few bushels of wheat and corn, and a few cows and pigs for meat and dairy products. Lorenzo Ward's nearby farm produced much more and helped support his father and his younger siblings during the years they spent in Iowa.

For Justus Ward's youngest child, fifteen years old by the summer of 1856, the experience proved just as difficult. Lester spent his time helping around the farm with the difficult work of tilling, plowing, and planting. Buchanan County offered little else of interest to a young man. Education and educational institutions, which Ward later made central to his social philosophy, were haphazard and disorganized in the frontier regions of the republic. The common school movement had made enormous strides in the East under the leadership of men such as Horace Mann and Henry Barnard and women such as Catharine Beecher. But the Midwest remained very much an untouched hinterland compared to the educational development in New England and the Mid-Atlantic states.

What is known of country schooling in the antebellum years indicates that Ward continued to receive instruction in reading, writing, and arithmetic—enough at least to occupy his time in the days between planting and har-

vesting on the farm.¹⁶ By the 1850s, he was among the older children in the classroom, which required more responsibility on his part. O. H. P. Roszell, one of the original settlers of Buchanan County and the first county superintendent of education in 1858, recalled the schools of the area in the pioneer days of Buchanan before the Civil War:

The architecture of these school buildings was of course the crudest and most primitive, all built of unhewn logs with board seats against the wall on three sides, with a continuous desk of rough basswood, this being soft, and easily worn smooth by friction. . . . These back seats were for the larger scholars, while the smaller ones were accommodated by rows of plain, backless benches made of oak slabs. The fourth side was devoted to the large fireplace, flanked on either side by the entrance door and the woodpile. The paraphernalia consisted of a few books furnished and selected by the school master from his own usually meager library and devoted to the benefit and advancement of all the scholars, regardless of age or mental capacity. The Bible was largely used for a text book for spelling and reading lessons, and sometimes a dictionary was added to the equipment, and always either birch, the hickory, or the strap or the cat-o'-nine tails was a necessary and essential adjunct.¹⁷

These rural schools became Ward's first introduction to the national idea of common school education. The experience had an important effect on his later interest in a nationalized educational system, and his faith that education could erase the social distinctions of a modern industrializing democracy. When he reflected on the middle border's common school classroom, he recalled the powerful egalitarianism it reinforced in him. He placed himself in the middling ranks of his town's social structure—despite his family's hardship on their prairie farm:

I vividly recall that when myself a pupil in the public schools of my own village there were some boys in attendance who belonged to the lowest classes. They were poorly clad and their parents were day laborers living in remote, little frequented quarters of the town. There were also in attendance some of the sons of the wealthy men of place. All were placed on a common level in the school, and the only test of merit was ability to recite the lessons given out. And I remember the genuine satisfaction that it afforded me frequently to see the poor boys "beat" the rich ones and "go to the head." And I began to see, even at that tender age, that all was not gold that glittered.¹⁸

This midwestern world nurtured Ward's development, and it put an imprint on an entire generation of intellectuals Ward was to come in contact with after the Civil War including John Wesley Powell, Edward Ross, Richard Ely, Thorstein Veblen, and many others. In addition to the yeoman producerist commonwealth Ward and his colleagues viewed as the

centerpiece of American political economy, they firmly believed that education was the essential means to create and sustain American democracy. Ely later called it the effect of the "free air of the Mississippi Valley" on the social theories of late-nineteenth-century America. Practical and useful knowledge was the essence of middle border education, as historian Lewis Atherton examined almost fifty years ago; it provided citizens with the means to function in a rapidly changing political and social environment. For Ward and others in the Washington intellectual community it was the practical and useful knowledge of science, nature, and the social facts of American expansion that formed the basis for good political policy. Alexis de Tocqueville noted this American desire for the utility of knowledge in the antebellum era; it was characteristic of the kind of towns Ward and his colleagues grew up in before the Civil War. "In America the purely practical side of science is cultivated admirably," Tocqueville argued, "and trouble is taken about the theoretical side immediately adjacent to application. On this side the Americans always display a clear, free, original and creative turn of mind. But hardly anyone in the United States devotes himself to the essentially theoretical and abstract side of human knowledge." The faith in the utility of knowledge and fact explains partially Ward's later interest in the social theory of John Stuart Mill as well as his faith in the scientific positivism of August Comte, theories that would help him write his first book in the 1870s.¹⁹

Despite the educational ethos Ward inherited and elaborated on in his social theory, however, he still yearned for an escape from the world of Buchanan County. Like many others of his generation, he found the midwestern town an example of close-knit community life and a stifling atmosphere. As he noted later in life, settlers in Buchanan County had only recently established the first schools in the early 1850s, and, like most areas of the Midwest, there was little state support at the time for an extensive educational enterprise. Teachers were very hard to come by, and there was no county superintendent of education until 1858. Less than half of the school-age children attended schools in Buchanan County by the late 1850s. Although he attended school for a short time with his brother Erastus, Lester Ward believed that his education was virtually useless, and the teacher lacked both intelligence and knowledge; the school itself was very far from their home. In his last major book, he offered a rare glimpse of the antebellum world of frontier Iowa and the education he received in his youth: "Roaming wildly over the boundless prairies of northern Iowa in the fifties. . . . Interested in every animal, bird, insect, and flower I saw, but not knowing what Science was, scarcely having ever heard of zoology, ornithology, entomology, or botany, without a single book on any of those subjects, and not knowing a person in the world who could give me the slightest information with regard to them,

what chance was there of my becoming a naturalist? It was twenty years before I found my opportunity, and then it was almost too late."²⁰

The Wards struggled in their years in Iowa; poor and without the means to establish a large and successful farm, Justus Ward's hope for independent prosperity proved impossible to achieve. For young Lester Ward, this experience became a part of his character. For the rest of his life he was to remain fearful of his lack of money and inadequate means for support. The way out of this world, he soon realized, was through education. Frontier Iowa, however, did not offer him much in the way of educational systems. Much like his contemporary Hamlin Garland, himself a product of the antebellum prairie farm, Ward came to see the towns of his youth in a largely negative character. It was Garland who best described what many men and women felt and saw in villages of their youth:

The main-traveled road in the West (as everywhere) is hot and dusty in summer, and desolate and dreary with mud in fall and spring, and in winter the winds sweep the snow across it; but it does sometimes cross a rich meadow where the songs of the larks and bobolinks and blackbirds are tangled. Follow it far enough, it may lead past a bend in the river where the water laughs eternally over its shallows. Mainly it is long and wearyful and has a dull little town at one end, and a home of toil at the other. Like the main-traveled road of life, it is traversed by many classes of people, but the poor and weary predominate.²¹

In the Ward family's second winter in Iowa, on 3 January 1857, Justus Ward died, leaving a farm without food and his family in "dire circumstances." The death of his father was important marker in Lester Ward's transition from boyhood to manhood. Toil, struggle, independence, and determination, he knew, were signs of a strong male character even though he was not quite sixteen years old; the excitement of boyhood travel and freedom was now supposed to give way to the responsibilities of manhood.²² Lester and Erastus Ward remained at the farm in Iowa with their mother for the remainder of the winter of 1857. Most of the large family was now gone—the older sons obtained farms of their own for their families, or left the region entirely for work, education, and travel. The older daughters all married and moved to homesteads with their husbands, some in Iowa and others in Illinois. Justus Ward left the farm land to his oldest son, Lorenzo, and his two youngest sons decided to leave Iowa with their mother in the spring of that year and return to St. Charles, Illinois, where their older sister Orpha now lived. Ward's brother, Justin Loomis Ward, a Methodist minister, and his family also lived nearby.

In a sense, the return to family in St. Charles freed both young men from the responsibilities of independent manhood although Lester Ward

later recalled that he and his brother were determined to receive an education and establish themselves apart from their family. He felt deprived by his father's constant movement and his own inability to obtain a solid education on the "barren" prairie. If nature served as his comforting tutor, he was still left without formal schooling to fulfill a growing desire for escape and independence.²³

In St. Charles, Ward worked as a farm hand and mill worker to earn the money to begin his serious education. He and his brother, he recalled, held "bachelor's hall" living alone in St. Charles while their mother remained on a nearby farm with their older sister. The young brothers kept to themselves and resolutely sought success in spite of the hardships they faced; their bachelor's home was a place of constant work and restless ambition: "In [our] zeal for knowledge [we] made many sacrifices and endured persistent hardships," Ward later recalled. "But never did young men study harder . . . or make more rapid strides up the royal highway of knowledge than [we] did."²⁴

In his spare time Ward composed sentimental stories, most of which concerned yearnings for escape, adventure, and success. The stories are not literary successes, but they demonstrate Ward's thorough involvement with the male culture and sentimental society surrounding him. One of the tales concerned a young man's close relationship to his mother and his difficulty pleasing his hard-driving father, a hero of the War of 1812. The older brothers in the story scheme to steal the family farm from their mother after the father's death, leaving the youngest son and his mother with no means of support. The older children force them to leave for the city of Chicago, but they later discover that the brothers have lost the farm because of the dependence on "demon rum" (a common refrain of temperance advocates throughout the nineteenth century). The thinly veiled autobiographical content of the stories, and the lashing-out at his older siblings, were the products of an immature imagination, but Ward's struggle for self-expression was real enough. Independence was apparently a difficult proposition for a young man without money and lacking an education that might offer him advancement. Other stories Ward wrote dealt with murders, the thrills of western exploration, and tales of great adventure—characteristic themes in the popular melodrama of the middle of the nineteenth century. Ward did manage to publish one of the stories with the title "The Spaniard's Revenge" in the *St. Charles Argus*, around March 1858.²⁵

At the same time, Ward also began to absorb the reform energies sweeping across the midwestern prairie in the 1850s and to express a set of coherent political ideals for the first time in his young life. Although Illinois and Iowa were not necessarily hotbeds of political reform in the 1850s, Ward (and his parents) leaned toward the more radical factions in

the region. His parents were strong Free-Soilers, dedicated to ending the expansion of slavery into the territories of the upper Midwest and West. Ward often spoke of his repulsion in childhood when he saw a picture in a geography book of a Georgia slave gang being beaten by an overseer. He began to read widely in the antislavery literature of the 1850s. Novels such as *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and published slave narratives like those by Solomon Northrop and Frederick Douglass reinforced these images and, Ward recalled, he "swore eternal enmity to slavery" by the mid-1850s. Hatred for the South's peculiar institution of bondage, he said later, "was an integral part of [my] constitution."²⁶

The broad appeal of Whig political culture also shaped Ward's early political consciousness. American Whiggery emphasized many ideals appealing to an ambitious young man on the make: self-culture, striving, free labor, character building, and education. By the mid-1850s the surviving remnants of the party had been reassembled in the Republican Party, which in some ways offered a more democratized and a more radical vision of social change. For an Illinoisan like Ward, Abraham Lincoln offered the best example of a Whig turned Republican. Lincoln remained a hero to the young man, the subject of at least three school essays Ward wrote in the early 1860s. It was in the political culture of the Whig/Republican Party that he discovered the reform principles of antebellum politics that later informed his mature social theory: character building through strenuous effort at self-improvement, a firm belief in the primacy and honor of the producer's life and labor, a faith in the continued progress of American democratic institutions, and a fundamental belief in the power of education to uplift and improve both the individual and society.

At the end of his life, Ward explained what the political culture of the 1850s meant to him as a young man: "In general it may be said that the Whig or Republican party has constituted the party of innovation, while the Democratic party has been the party of conservation." When he was a young man, he concluded, "The Republican was the progressive party and the Democratic party the conservative party."²⁷ It was Whigs who called for the state establishment of common school education in the antebellum republic. It was Whigs who appealed to Americans who believed that the small producers—craftsmen, artisans, farmers—could succeed in the market as long as they had the freedom to participate in economic growth as "self-made men," a theme Ward would frequently draw on as a young man. And it was Whigs who supported an expanding arm of government, in the form of internal improvements, laws regulating market practices, and the general establishment of what historian William Novak has called the "well-regulated governance" of the antebellum republic. The Democratic Party, for Ward as a young man and as

an adult, was the party of slavery, of tradition, of a backward sense of social development. It was, in fact, the emergence of the antislavery Republican Party that drew the young Ward into politics. Ward's participation and knowledge of Republican Party politics drove home the point that there were enemies to the republic—most especially the slave power—who might destroy the American commonwealth of producers.²⁸

Ward and his brother Erastus followed closely John Frémont's Republican campaign for president in 1856, and after the party's defeat they sank "in a state of despairing apathy as to the country." The Republican Party's reform platform appealed to a young man struggling for individual autonomy and the rights of citizenship in a democratic culture; the party's cry of "free soil, free labor, free men" was well suited to an ambitious individual and the image of him as a struggling citizen. For Lester Ward, "free labor" offered the promise of advancement and the possibility of success. Slavery was a threat to the promise of freedom that an expansive democratic culture supposedly offered. Ward's adolescent interest in Whig/Republican politics was not to last his entire life. After the Civil War, like a number of men and women in his generation, Ward tired of politics itself; after voting for Lincoln in 1864 and Grant in 1868, for example, he did not vote again until 1912. Moreover, Ward concluded that just as slavery had threatened the producerist commonwealth, so too did the growth of class distinctions and the pervasive power of American industry over labor. Ward's faith in reform always remained strong despite his lack of formal political participation. His experience with antebellum political culture helped frame his understanding of the effort to remake American liberalism in the late nineteenth century.²⁹

In the spring of 1858, Ward's older brother, Cyrenus Osborne Ward, wrote his two younger brothers and asked them to come East. Cyrenus Ward, born in upstate New York in 1832, had moved to Bradford County, Pennsylvania, and established a wagon-hub factory outside the town of Wysox. Cyrenus had left the family's home in the early 1850s and spent the decade as an artisan and traveling musician (he was an accomplished violin player) in the Old Northwest, briefly attending Oberlin College, a hotbed of political reform and agitation in the middle of the nineteenth century. Except for his brief stay in college, Cyrenus Ward was also largely self-educated, reading widely in the reform literature of the 1850s especially on abolition, labor and working-class reform, and temperance. He also closely observed the growing contest between the North and South in Congress. While in Ohio he met a young woman from Bradford County, Stella Owen, and after they married the couple eventually moved to the area in the hopes that Cyrenus Ward could set up his own artisan shop. Like his younger brother, Cyrenus had inherited from his parents the same deep faith in the producerist commonwealth. By the 1870s and

1880s, however, he believed that there was no hope for any social progress within the framework of market capitalism. Cyrenus Ward, unlike Lester, would instead move toward communism and the establishment of a socialist republic here in the United States.³⁰

When Cyrenus Ward arrived in Bradford County, however, these changes in his ideas still lay in the future. This section of northeastern Pennsylvania was a rapidly industrializing region in the mid-nineteenth century. It was home to a large number of small manufacturing establishments—tanneries, shoe factories, and furniture companies—built on the banks of the Susquehanna River, which runs through the entire county. The county boasted a strong antislavery and free-soil political heritage; it was home to a branch of the abolitionist Liberty Party in the 1840s and a strong laborers' party into the 1850s. By the late 1850s the county was most proud of its famous resident, Representative David Wilmot, who still maintained a law office in the town of Towanda, and later served as a senator before his death in 1861. Wilmot was a legendary political figure in the county, frequently celebrated for bolting the Democratic Party in the mid-1850s and for his role in the establishment of Pennsylvania's Republican Party. The county was a comfortable home for those interested in reform, such as Cyrenus Ward and his younger brothers.

Lester and Erastus Ward jumped at the chance to abandon their difficult life in St. Charles, lured by their hopes for profit in their brother's factory. The hard trip east to Pennsylvania took about one month. They arrived in late summer 1858 somewhat surprised to learn that their brother's confident reports of the success of the factory were not quite true. For two years they tried to make the factory profitable, but Ward generally had to accept payment in wagon wheels rather than specie. Erastus, discouraged by his own failure to make the factory succeed, decided to leave Bradford County in the fall of 1861 and eventually gained admission to the University of Michigan.³¹

Two years after their arrival in northeastern Pennsylvania, Lester Ward began keeping a diary to record the progress of his life, a practice that he maintained until shortly before his death. He chose 4 July 1860 to begin writing and thus signify his own coming of age: "I am just struck with an idea which excites me," he wrote in the diary's opening entry.³² The diary, however, is not a deeply reflective document. It often reads instead like a laborious record of the emerging of intellect and the awakening of sexual passion. He recorded the daily successes and failures of his education: scattered readings in the classics and in science; classes in the local common schools and academies; practicing languages, penmanship, and writing. Ward's diary also reveals the building and testing of his character, and the constant measuring of his autonomy and independence. He often remarked on the daily grind in the mill, family turmoil due to the difficult

existence, and the variety of farm and factory jobs he held in the Bradford County area. He consistently doubted whether any of the experience he recorded was worthwhile. For days he left the journal bare—having nothing of personal import to record. In a typical entry explaining the insignificance of his diary, Ward wrote on 28 May 1861 that he “commenced the last page of my first journal. I should like to know if anything of importance to the world is set down in it. I think not.”³³ At one point he railed against what he felt were the injustices of his position: “I am determined not to stay here any longer. I have great plans and ideas for the future, great ambitions. But I suppose they will all vanish for lack of money.”³⁴ Ward was so intent on self-improvement and character building that he even recorded diary entries in French to practice the language and improve his command of it.

The diary, even if it is not a reflective document, does reveal much about Ward’s thinking about his own character. He was obsessively driven to measure his progress—in his work, in his education, and in his personal relationships—against the progress of others. It was a trait he was to keep for his entire life and it supported his belief that the struggle to succeed measured a man’s independence. He was also not modest about his achievements. Ward maintained few close friendships during his life in part because many people felt him to be too proud. Later in his life, particularly in his last publication, his immodesty translated into a sense that he had been slighted by the American public and intellectuals in social science generally.

The most noticeable aspect of Ward’s early diary is the record of his struggle to achieve a proper education. Bradford County offered more opportunity than frontier Illinois and Iowa for an ambitious young man, and Ward later wrote that he felt he had moved from the “backwards” western United States to the more established and enlightened East. “I was hampered by poverty and adversity,” he recalled near the end of his life, “by the necessity of earning a living, by being born in a backward region, and having to find my way to a more enlightened one.”³⁵ The nineteen-year-old Ward was a gangly six-foot-tall handsome boy when he began writing his diary in 1860. He had an adolescent enthusiasm as well as a tendency toward wild swings of emotional excess, especially when it came to his sexual experience. Life seemed to him a constant struggle. The failure of the factory meant Ward had to travel to farms and mills in the region to find work, often boarding with local families if it meant a day’s pay and some food. By the fall of 1860, however, he was fortunate enough to obtain a teaching position in a local common school in Towanda, which offered him about six dollars a month plus board. He lived mostly with Cyrenus’s growing family in a home shared with the Owen family as well. Ward was especially close to William Owen, Stella’s

younger brother. Whenever he could Ward tried to escape the confines of this crowded house, traveling with friends in the region, or staying at the homes of the parents of his pupils.

Although common school teaching offered him a little money, he still lacked an adequate education of his own. He had only briefly attended common schools himself, and his ability to read and write was the most important factor in getting him the teaching position in the first place. In the fall of 1861 Ward managed to persuade the leaders of the Susquehanna Collegiate Institute in Towanda to admit him as a student despite his lack of funds for the tuition payments. The institute first opened its doors in 1854, with the support of the local Presbyterian Church, as a place for classical studies and training of common school teachers for Bradford County's elementary schools. It was in this institution that Ward first achieved his "long cherished dream of uninterrupted study" and recognized the power of universal education for national improvement. Ward later recalled that "perhaps the most vivid impression that my early experience left on my mind was that of the difference between the educated and uneducated person. I had much to do with the uneducated, and I could not believe that the chasm between these and the educated people was due to any great extent to their inherent nature."³⁶ The collegiate institute offered Ward his first real chance at serious institutional education, and, although his time there was short-lived (one term in 1861 and two terms in 1862), he cherished the experience since he was not able to attend another educational institution for seven years.

The educational regimen of nineteenth-century Americans fit well with Ward's professed goal of improving himself and his station in life, and it had close connections to the Whig political culture that shaped his earliest political ideals. Ward spent much of his time in school composing essays on education and the common school creed, explaining the need to expand and improve the common school system in essays such as "The Popular Idea of the Requisite Qualifications for a Teacher of the Common Schools," and many others. Self-improvement in men and in society, he suggested, demanded education.

The cry for self-improvement and education, or self-culture as it was called in antebellum America, was a common refrain. Americans from Lincoln to Mann to Ralph Waldo Emerson all called for a national crusade of self-improvement. In an essay entitled "Aspiration," Ward asserted the importance of building civilization and American institutions on the basis of a national school system: "the great work after all devolves upon ourselves individually," he wrote. "We are the ones who are expected to bring about this reform. There is far more mental capacity among men than is generally supposed, but the great difficulty lies in there being such a vast amount lying latent and undeveloped. There is a great deficiency in

the one grand moving power, the will."³⁷ Discipline, determination, and education were the only means available to build the character of democratic citizens.

It was in America, Ward believed, where self-improvement and democratic character best cultivated. In June 1862, the twenty-year-old Ward penned a brief school essay entitled "Self-Made Men" in which he argued that, although the Civil War was destroying the nation's landscape and institutions, America should not forget the glory of its republican founders. These self-made men, these self-made revolutionaries, he wrote, should provide examples of hope and courage for all men of humble backgrounds. He cited the rise of hundreds of Americans to positions of success and importance in the world as evidence that men can become more and more "self made," that even the poor man had the ability to rise in the world. Witness, as an example, the election of a man as humble as Lincoln as president of the United States. Like many other Americans born in the 1840s, and like most of those drawn to Whig/Republican political culture, Ward found in Lincoln a genuine American hero. "The glorious day is approaching," he concluded, "when the world will be a vast theater of intelligence, not among the rich alone, but throughout the humbler walks of life. Self-made men in our day are the greatest in the world. The greatest men in America (and to say in America is to say in the world) are men who have risen from humble circumstances and humble blood." For Ward, the self-made man was the defining characteristic of mid-nineteenth-century progress, proof of the success of democratic institutions in the United States.³⁸

Ward's call to be self-made was closely linked to the growth of democracy and ideals of perfectibility in antebellum American reform. The ideal of the self-made man became a defining characteristic in the political and economic rhetoric of the antebellum republic. The ideal itself had a long history in the American imagination—dating at least as far back as Benjamin Franklin's celebration of himself—but it had become an American conceit by the Jacksonian era and after. The self-made man truly became a national cultural hero in the 1830s and 1840s; he entered national political rhetoric, for example, with the famous "Log Cabin" campaign in 1840.³⁹ By the middle of the century, Lincoln emerged as the classic example of an American self-made man, to be constantly cast and recast in the mold of self-made success. Lincoln was the "rail splitter" struggling against odds and rising up from poverty to worldly success and power. When America's mid-nineteenth-century prophets of success and democracy spoke of the self-made republic, young men like Ward listened attentively.⁴⁰

Ward's vision of self-made men found a powerful political expression in the free labor ideology of the young Republican Party. Free labor pro-

vided the link between Ward's interest in the independence and freedom of the individual producer and the faith that education could provide the central means for social mobility in the expanding market economy. In his producerism, Ward saw a reconciliation of growth, progress, and freedom without the fears of a society fractured by class. In adopting this faith of Republican Party politics in the late 1850s and 1860s, Lester Ward moved in a profoundly different direction than his older brother Cyrenus. Cyrenus Ward was to find free labor an empty promise by the end of the Civil War, and he gravitated to socialism and communism as collectivist solutions to the problems of social growth in the nineteenth century. But Lester Ward always retained his faith in the basic promises of civic equality and independence in the free labor rhetoric of antebellum American politics.

In addition to the creed of common school education and his faith in the freedom to become a self-made man, which he learned as a student and expressed in his essays, Ward's teaching and his participation in the Bradford County Teacher's Association also reinforced the necessity for education in a democracy. The Teacher's Association, established by the Susquehanna Collegiate Institute in the mid-1850s, was the main force behind the establishment and organization of the county's common schools. It set the regulations for teacher preparation, considered the role of grades in classrooms, set meeting times, and acted as a lobbying organization for educational issues in county government. As a teacher, Ward demanded strict discipline and duty in his classroom. He was a traditional teacher initially, insisting on use of the lash in school, not an uncommon practice in the mid-nineteenth century. It was an experiment that nearly caused him to lose his classroom at one point. "The rod is an utterly indispensable concomitant with good order in school," he wrote, "[it] is the main instrument in moulding that mind to obedience to the laws of humanity and reason. It should often be resorted to."⁴¹

That Ward was interested in the discipline of the rod is not all that surprising, given his own obsession with driving himself to succeed. The more Ward taught, however, the more liberal his temperament became with his students. Despite his harshness, teaching itself provided an important means for Ward's own recognition of the purposes of education: "A week has passed and all my expectations are well realized," he wrote in one diary entry, "I am satisfied with everything. . . . They [his students] regard me with respect and I commence to believe that I am actually a MAN!"⁴² By the end of his life, when he finally settled on teaching as his career, he looked back on these early years as his first experience of the influence teaching can have.

The central course of instruction in the advanced schools Ward attended while he lived and taught in Towanda was moral philosophy.

Mid-nineteenth-century moral philosophy existed as a kind of halfway house between theology and secular science. It was also closely connected to Whig political rhetoric in the antebellum era—infusing the language of American politics with moralistic absolutes regarding basic moral right and wrong, in particular about slavery. The moral philosophers' goal was to identify the "natural history" of the mind; the most important subject of interest was in the study of the character of democratic citizens. It was an intellectual tradition that had gained much of its force from the spirit of the Second Great Awakening. Moral philosophers—especially such leading thinkers as Francis Wayland and Noah Porter—built on an evangelical tradition that had replaced the harsh rules of Calvinism with a faith in the individual's responsibility for sin and the personal discipline needed to overcome it. These philosophers emphasized the hierarchical structure of the mind divided between key intellectual "faculties": reason, passion, and will. In this way, the emphasis on personal discipline in the moral philosophy of antebellum America, as historian D. H. Meyer has argued, sought to create "an ethical frame of mind that would direct a new nation seeking a moral, as well as a political identity in a changing world."⁴³

The philosophy and political theory of the antebellum moral philosophers had broad connections to Enlightenment rationalism and the eighteenth-century desire among intellectuals to rid the world of theological domination. But moral philosophers were no less concerned with the nineteenth-century Romantics who rebelled against Enlightenment rationalism. Their obsession with teasing out these connections was the focus of their work in explaining society. The human mind, moral philosophers argued, was divided between passions and reason, and the role of education, self-training, and discipline was to maintain the right balance of character to avoid the extremes of passionate self-interest or obsessive rationalism. Instruction in mid-nineteenth-century moral philosophy courses focused on the ways the citizen could translate the theories of the mind into actual social and political behavior. It was a philosophy well fitted to the free labor ideology, which dealt with the reconciliation of autonomy and the responsibilities of citizenship in the republic. The relationship between reason, passion, and self-interest was to become one of Ward's main concerns in his later social philosophy, but as a young man it also served as the basis for many of his inquiries into personal character.

Throughout his life, Ward remained in this halfway house of science and religion; the connections between Enlightenment rationalism and Romantic feelings were always in his work. He never fully accepted a complete scientific rationalism and naturalism as did many of his scientific colleagues. Although he was to develop a deep anticlericalism, common

to a number of American scientists, and was very much antagonistic to religious orthodoxy in all of its forms, Ward still believed that it was possible to contemplate the cosmic beauty of nature's creation; feelings still played a central role in his later social theory. Religious faith fit somewhere into that scheme though it would be years before he determined exactly how it fit.

Religion and religious faith were difficult for him to fully explain. His youthful religious faith caused him great emotional pain as a student. He spent hours with teachers and friends discussing the role of faith in an individual's life. By the middle of the nineteenth century the evangelical energy that had earlier prompted waves of religious revivalism across the nation had dissipated. But for many men and women, like Ward and his friends, whose parents had participated in and accepted this evangelism, the lack of a conversion experience created profound psychological unrest; a "quiet erosion" of inherited belief characterized the religious experience of many children of the Second Great Awakening.⁴⁴ Ward never seems to have had the piety and faith of his evangelical mother. He doubted the efficacy of religion alone to lead and direct the search for identity in a rapidly changing world; despite his mother's evangelism, Ward never really experienced a deep religious conversion. In one entry in his diary he recorded his experience going to church and talking to the local professors about religion: "Prof. O.S. came into my room last night and talked a long time with me concerning my duty to God. He supplicated, he admonished and he prayed. . . . My heart was very heavy, and when I sat down in church I could not suppress the tears. I wept and O how my heart felt it. I came home and *tried to pray but I did not know how. I cannot say why, but I did not know how.*"⁴⁵ Instead, Ward found in moral philosophy a temporary antidote for his religious anguish. The integration of science and theology offered a comfortable ground between nature and belief. It was a problem Ward wrestled with for his entire career.

In examining nature, Ward argued in his school essays, the instruction of moral philosophy found "a symetry [*sic*], a consistency and a perfection upon which man may as securely rely as upon the succession of day and night." A supreme power still set down universal laws in this moral vision, but they were laid before man to discover. Moral philosophy denied superstition and mocked belief in the supernatural miracles of an unknowable God: "Now for pity's sake," Ward wrote, "if you take pride in the advancement of man, if you do not wish to have a sect of disgusting spiritualists spring up and monopolize the world, if you do not wish to sink supinely and stupidly back into the shades of superstition and the disgusting putrescence of witch and wizardism, beware of inhaling the degenerating beliefs in superstition and miracles."⁴⁶ If the piety and faith of his parents' generation had faded by the middle of the century, a discovery

many men and women made in the 1850s and 1860s, it was still possible, Ward argued, to hold the belief that "true morality can exist without vital piety but regarding the Christian religion in its purity as the great civilizer of the heart."⁴⁷ Ward was never comfortable drawing a bold line between science and religion. Eventually, he concluded that religious faith was an essential part of the evolutionary history of the human mind.

These central precepts of an integrated and scientific natural religion, Ward insisted, were the pillars of a free labor society and democratic government. Moral philosophy offered a way out of religious uncertainty, and the chance to escape the limiting forces of everyday experience and provincialism through what he called "that wonderful faculty called reason." Most important, moral philosophers argued, this vision of religion, natural science, and faculty psychology provided the proper character for the democratic citizen and the self-made man. The wonders of science and naturalistic ethics allowed for the freedom of the individual and for self-control: "By this [man] is able to comprehend the truth of nature," Ward wrote in one of his school essays, "and by this he is compelled to admire the sublime, investigate the unknown, and wonder at the marvelous." A searching human curiosity, Ward concluded, provided the discipline needed to resolve the uncomfortable fragmentation of religious faith in nineteenth-century culture: "We may thus possibly suppose that nobody is stationary, that sun around center and center about sun all is in motion till we arrive at the Grand Tribunal itself. How useless it is then for man to attempt to calculate onward to the end of time or break its commencement. All the theories in time prove mere conjecture and all will one day be obliged to acknowledge their inadequacy . . . and will willingly submit the question to the ruler of eternity."⁴⁸

For Ward, this search for integration was what made nineteenth-century America—and democratic self-government—so far advanced over all other civilizations in the world. "Never before, and nowhere else was the cause of universal civilization advanced, or the interest of Christianity promoted, as they have been for the last three quarters of a century on the free soil, and under the free institutions of America."⁴⁹ Ward celebrated American nationalism as a product of freedom. And, like many northern Republicans, this meant that the South and slavery posed special dangers to the republic's progress.

Ward used his diary as the place to test and measure his character and to record the ways in which he learned to control passion and understand reason, the central objects of moral philosophy's psychology. In addition to his education, the other great subject of his diary is the passionate courtship of his beloved "girl." The awakening of passion and feeling occurred simultaneously with Ward's search for intellectual growth and development, and his description of this relationship re-

mains the closest thing to a conversion narrative in the early years of his life. Ward's heart awakened during the course of his relationship with the "girl." In the last twenty years, historians have gone far in recovering the sexuality of Victorian Americans from a simple view of puritanical humility. Mid-nineteenth-century Americans have often been portrayed as prudes, hypocrites, fearful of any form of sexual love and sexual desires. But as historians such as Karen Lystra, John D'Emilio, and Estelle Freedman have noted, Americans actually celebrated sexual passion in the mid-nineteenth century although not in the public way twenty-first-century Americans might recognize. There was far more complexity in the private lives and sex roles of Victorians than has commonly been understood.⁵⁰

Ward's diary is one of the most explicit records by a man of a romantic relationship in the mid-nineteenth century. He frequently celebrated passion and feeling, as he would in his later social theory, and romantic love to him was part of his emergence into manhood and masculinity. Historian Peter Gay has argued that Ward's entire sociological work was "a celebration, a poignant, glowing portrait of the paradise Lester Ward had shared with his wife." This is somewhat overstated but it is surely true that expressions of passion and feeling were parts of Ward's character. And he made feeling, for both men and women, common parts of the analytical tools for social analysis.⁵¹ Throughout the diary he recorded both success and failure in his courtship. At times he was blissful about the relationship, but he also occasionally recognized his inability to control passion as a sign of physical weakness. "Sweet girl how I Love You," he wrote in one entry. He then confessed, however, that he was "determined not to go see her without an excuse."⁵²

Ward first met Elizabeth Carolyn Vought, the "girl" of his diary, in July 1860. "Lizzie" Vought was born on 4 March 1842, and was working as a school teacher in the local common schools when she and Ward met. Her family had a long history as pioneers in Bradford County, and her father currently worked as a craftsman and shoemaker in the town of Towanda. The courting began with letters and chance meetings in town but gradually escalated into a closer and more intimate relationship. Ward wrote the following entry in his diary in September 1860, a few months after he met Lizzie Vought: "We had considerable difficulty with the lamp which finally went out at the critical moment when it started to rain. Taking her by the hand I attempted to find the door but in the shadows we stumbled over a shoemaker's bench, and embracing her I sat down with her on the bench, where we remained about an hour, embracing, caressing, hugging and kissing. O Bliss! O Love! O Passion, pure, sweet, and profound! What more do I want than you?"⁵³ He often dreamt of her and, at one point, recorded fearfully that in his dreams Lizzie married another: "What a

sensation of horror and despair it produced in me! That assures me that I truly love her."⁵⁴ A few months later Ward described his experience at meeting his rival suitor for Lizzie's affection, a young man named Peter. In a fit of anxiety, Ward exclaimed, "Was she going to stray from me? Actually I was afraid of it. I told her that I was never going to see her again, if she did not wish it."⁵⁵

Despite these expressions of doubt and fear about love, Lizzie Vought and Lester Ward grew even closer in the winter of 1860–61. In a revealing entry Ward described the following scene shortly before his confrontation with the rival suitor: "I unfastened my shirt and put her tender little hand on my bare breast, and there we counted the beatings of our hearts like the whispering of angels. She gave me her heart and her body, asking nothing more in exchange than my own. But with what tenderness and humility she said, 'I'm afraid I am doing something I shouldn't in putting my hands on your bare breast.' As we lay in this position . . . the old man [Elizabeth's father] got up, but I escaped the workshop." Lizzie's concern about touching reveals much about mid-nineteenth-century norms of sexual expression. Ward also expressed his own hesitation about how far their relationship was to go: "I kissed her on her soft breasts, and took too many liberties with her sweet person," Ward wrote in February 1861, "and we are going to stop. It is a very fascinating practice and fills us with very sweet, tender, and familiar sentiments."⁵⁶ Lizzie Vought and Lester Ward never did stop. Within a month Ward recorded that the two spent the night together in a workshop and held each other all night: "We have never acted in such a way before. All that we did I shall not tell here, but it was all very sweet and loving and nothing infamous."⁵⁷

Passion and education went hand in hand in Ward's mind in the early 1860s. He had great hopes for himself: dreams that Lizzie might marry him, dreams that he might start a family, and dreams that he could continue his serious education. His greatest desire was to obtain a college degree at Lafayette College in Easton, Pennsylvania, and study law, where many of the teachers at the Institute had themselves gone. He had no money, however, and little opportunity to save any as a student and laborer. If he could only borrow \$175, he argued, he might be able to escape with Lizzie: "If I should receive \$175 and my girl the same amount, what a fine world this would be then. She could obtain an education, and I could soon establish myself in some business which would earn me enough to put me through college and her also, and I could study law and set up an office, and then I could marry her, my sweet girl, and what a sweet life." But, he finally concluded, he should banish such thoughts: "This is all air castles," he wrote, "they will fall soon enough."⁵⁸

In one of the most interesting scenes of their courtship, Ward left Lizzie alone with Frederick Hollick's guide to marriage and childbirth, which he

found “interesting and instructive.” Hollick’s guides were among the most popular conduct manuals in the nineteenth century, going through nearly three hundred editions by the 1860s and 1870s. In the spring of 1861 he went for a walk in the woods with Lizzie and claimed to have forgotten that he had brought the book with him. “While we were sitting there she asked me to read her a little from the book. I tried, but failed entirely. I could not either give it nor read it to her.” At this point Ward decided to go off on his own into the woods and left the book with Lizzie. “How much she read I do not know, but she liked it. After that we became more familiar. She told me that she was ignorant like myself, and she wished to have the book, but had not the place to hide it.”⁵⁹

Ward often commented on his hopes of marrying Lizzie. The two often dreamt of married life, which seemed the height of blissful, pure, and independent sexual enjoyment. Most of their relationship took place clandestinely: in small rooms around their homes, in the shops where Lizzie’s father worked, or out on walks. “Sweet girl, how I want so to call you my wife,” Ward wrote in one entry. “To be enfolded against your bosom and kiss the sweetness there. . . . Sweet spouse, kiss me, embrace me.”⁶⁰ Lizzie Vought’s parents expressed some concern regarding the nature of her relationship to Ward. At one point Ward recorded the protests of Lizzie’s mother: “I accompanied the girl home, and she insisted on my staying there . . . she came into [the] room to give me my socks and to kiss me a little, and her mother found her there and she said several things concerning us which made me very angry and I got up and soon left the house.”⁶¹

The frankness of Ward’s diary has provided historians with a unique opportunity to examine male passion and sexual experience in Victorian America. Ward’s biographers, however, have tended to ignore his expression of passion and emotion in his relationship with Lizzie Vought. Ward might have wanted it this way. He rarely mentioned Lizzie at all by the end of his life, and when he did, he wrote that they “studied together instead of courting.” Despite the reciprocal nature of their sexual experience, Ward concluded in 1887 that “through the three years of his struggles . . . in climbing the hill of science it was her joy to strew [my] path with roses.”⁶² Ward’s emotional expression, however, played an important role in shaping his character and his intellect in the years before the Civil War. Ward’s public persona expressed here was not uncommon among nineteenth-century men and women. Although in the past, mid-nineteenth-century Americans have been inaccurately portrayed as prudish and puritanical, it is nonetheless true that public expressions of sexual love and passion were not common. As Karen Lystra has argued, the public character of men was supposed to demonstrate self-control and lack emotional expression. This was not necessarily true for private

expressions, and Ward's diary reflected this dichotomy at the heart of nineteenth-century concepts of romantic love.⁶³

As he neared his twenty-first birthday in the summer of 1862, the traditional age of majority in nineteenth-century America, Ward was still very much a young boy. He had yet to receive an education that he believed would make him fit for independent manhood, and this deficiency made marriage to Lizzie an impossibility. Still, he was in large measure self-made. By strenuous effort, struggle, and determination, he had carried himself beyond the limits of his footloose youth in the Midwest to a somewhat secure position in the industrializing Northeast. Although Ward frequently noted his fears in his diary, he still believed that personal success must surely lay in the near future. This tenacity was one of Ward's most remarkable traits and became a characteristic of his entire intellectual career. But before his success could be achieved, however, Ward's commitment to his Republican cultural and political ideals would be tested. By the early 1860s, it was no longer enough to uphold free labor and the producerist commonwealth as the best examples of social organization and government on earth. They now needed to be defended in battle and bloodshed.

An Equal Chance in the Race of Life, 1861–1870

Lester Ward's common school education and his courtship of his beloved Lizzie were not the only experiences he recorded in his private journal. He was also well aware of the nation's drift toward war in 1861 and remained a firm supporter of the Republican Party and his hero, Abraham Lincoln. The essays he composed while in school reveal Ward's deep engagement with the political issues of the early 1860s. And yet he remained deeply reluctant to join the war effort following the firing on Fort Sumter, perhaps because of his age or his desperate desire to pursue a college education. On 24 April 1861, he recorded his thoughts about the impending conflict: "How can I go and leave my sweet darling? It is for her that I am staying. If I could only go and see her this very night, she would kiss me and say, 'Don't go darling.' I cannot go yet."¹ He was still very much a boy when the conflict first began, not yet twenty years old. In the early days of the war, courtship and education engaged him more than the prospect of battle.

Eventually, Ward did join the Union Army and fought to defend the principles of free labor and independence that he held so dear as a young man. Ward's experiences during the Civil War and Reconstruction changed him. Before the conflict he was obsessively self-interested, but he returned from battle tempered, more mature, and much more concerned with issues beyond his own success. The essays he wrote for the winter and spring terms at the Susquehanna Collegiate Institute reveal Ward's growing concern over the course of national events. Shortly after the Baltimore riots, when residents of the city fired upon Union troops, Ward wrote an essay in which he excoriated the Southern "codfish aristocracy"

and declared that "war was inevitable and let it come . . . these rebels must be put down." He denounced Southern aristocratic character and slavery; he was horrified by those who rebelled against "the laws of country[,] of humanity[,] of God." He advocated enforcement of constitutional law and a crushing of the spirit of rebellion in the republic.² The early days of the war in 1861 and 1862, he felt, proved the brutal character of a slave-owning society. Their treatment of prisoners, of fugitive slaves, and their behavior in battle, "serve to illustrate the character of rebels and their cause." "Such is the degrading influence of slavery," Ward concluded. "Educated to dominance their human feelings are perverted and a brutish barbarism takes their place. They know no sympathy[,] they possess no feeling[,] but their entire ambition is wrapped up in their desire to lord it over their inferiors."³

Slavery was the nation's "great curse," he argued, a blot on the liberty and freedom bequeathed by the founders' republican revolution. Here was the great enemy of free labor, a "slave power" bent on national dominance:

When shall we abolish slavery? I answer Now! . . . Better the nation should be drenched in bloodshed for freedom, than that glorious stars and stripes, boasted ensign of the free, should listlessly wave in mocking hypocrisy forever over millions of bondsmen. Other nations of the globe have abolished the institution—crushed the rebellious and infectious spirit that slavery causes. [B]ut the great nation which boasts of freedom more than any other on the globe whose institutions, life, soul, and essence are pretended to be infused and cemented with the spirit of liberty, is still a disgraceful hypocrite, boasting of freedom while she nourishes slavery.⁴

For many Northerners, especially young radicals like Ward, the energizing force of war could redeem the nation and serve as a test of male, and by extension national, character; war was to pay for a half century of national ignorance and evasion in defining the meaning of nationality, citizenship, and freedom. Although Ward was not a millennial thinker he did view war as a necessity to destroy the South and slavery's threat to the promises of free labor and individual success.

His charge of hypocrisy included the traitorous "Copperhead" faction that he felt threatened the liberty of Northerners. Antiwar sentiment was fairly high in Pennsylvania in 1862, and fears of Northern conspiracies to appease the South were intense in the state. Ward considered the Copperheads a dangerous enemy of liberty; advocates of a negotiated peace with the rebellious South, he declared, destroyed equality and the precious gifts of the American revolutionary past. "If there ever was a faction, utterly devoid of principle, wantonly base and malicious, totally recreant to all the duties which man's maker has enjoined upon him . . . it is the Copperhead faction now howling about our ears."⁵

Throughout 1861 and early 1862 Ward struggled with whether or not to go to war. His siblings did as well. Cyrenus struggled with the responsibilities of caring for a wife and his two young children, while Erastus, like Lester, wanted to get a college education. Rast, as Lester Ward always called him, had been in Ann Arbor, Michigan, since the fall of 1861, and by the spring of 1862 had started to prepare himself to enter the University of Michigan. Like Lester Ward, Erastus was driven to self-education, and, he wrote his brothers, with the preparation that he had undertaken he "can enter the University just as well as though I attended school all the time."⁶

Like his older brothers, Ward did not want to go to war. Despite his political interests in the Union and an abolitionist hatred for slavery, he was still obsessed by his education, his common school teaching, and his growing relationship with Lizzie. He did follow the news of the Union Army's war efforts, recording the failures and successes of the northern armies in battle. In March 1862, Ward wrote that "the President is beginning to prove a man. There are many victories for us, and thousands for our enemies. The war cannot continue long in this way."⁷ Throughout that spring his diary entries reported the news of the war but none of this seemed to move him very much to actually join.

But in the summer of 1862, Ward recorded the great change in the fortunes of war that caused his own conversion. On 22 July 1862, just days after Lincoln signed the Second Confiscation Act and called for a state militia draft of men eighteen to forty-five years of age, Ward noted there had been "a great revolution in the conduct of war and of public sentiment. They will arm the Negroes, I think."⁸ The prospect of being drafted, together with his approval of the employment of African Americans in the war, impelled Ward to finally join the conflict himself. He and Lizzie had grown closer during the year, and on 13 August 1862, a few weeks after his twenty-first birthday, Ward wrote that "I must now go to bed with my wife." He had married and joined the Union Army. "What? I, married? True enough. My heart's darling whom I have loved so long, so constantly, so frantically, is mine! . . . How sweet it is to sleep with her." Their honeymoon lasted only five days. Ward left for army camp on 18 August 1862 as a private of Company I, 141st Regiment Pennsylvania Volunteers: "I must leave the sweetness of her company for the difficulties and fatigues of military camp." He linked marriage and war as aspects of his final arrival at manhood and autonomy, but it was, he confessed, a "terrible change."⁹

Lincoln's call in July 1862 for three hundred thousand more troops prompted the formation of the 141st Regiment composed entirely of men from Bradford County. By then it was clear that the war was not going to be a short one and that the original requisition of seventy-five thousand

troops simply could not meet what had rapidly become a massive war effort. Ward's surviving war letters discuss some of the typical complaints of camp life in the Union Army. Drudgery, boredom, forced marching, and generally poor living conditions are some of the complaints he reported back home in the town newspaper. But they also reflect a camaraderie and love of excitement and adventure that characterized the experience of many Civil War soldiers.¹⁰

The 141st left Bradford County in late August 1862 and headed to Camp Curtin near Harrisburg, one of the worst training camps in the state. John D. Bloodgood, Ward's sergeant in Company I, recalled after the war that he had "no pleasant memories of my stay in Camp Curtin, and I have never heard any soldier who was there speak well of it."¹¹ The Union and Confederate Armies were engaged in a savage and brutal struggle by the summer of 1862. Soldiers had learned by then that this war was not going to be easy. By the time Ward joined the fight, the Union Army was poised for some of its most brutal campaigns through Maryland to Fredericksburg and in the Wilderness Campaign before culminating in the enormous battle at Gettysburg. In late August 1862 Ward wrote his brother Erastus from Camp Curtin. "I've 'gone to be a soldier,'" he began, warning his brother against the hardships of military life. "I expect that you have gone to work but I shall write to Ann Arbor. I am afraid that you would not stand military life, living in tents above the ground as big as our old wagon cover . . . hitched to the ground." Ward's friend, Edward Owen (Cyrenus's brother-in-law) joined with Ward and the two were living in the same tent. Ward struggled to maintain his studies, telling his older brother that he still studied his Greek prose. His intense desire for education and improvement had not abated as he lived the life of the army private. "I shall study as much as possible while I am in the army," he promised his brother, "but you have no idea how awful suffocating dry it is here in this barren dry dusty crowded camp."¹²

In his letters, Ward revealed more of why he joined, wondering what people in his brother's new home state thought of the conflict. Ward believed that Lincoln and the Union had to go further to abolish slavery in the South. "I keep up good spirits but I must confess I cannot see through the great national difficulty. It is my opinion that the south cannot be subjugated by mere military force. We must adopt a policy that will take from under them that great bulwark slavery first. You see conscriptions does not affect the laborers of the south. Negroes do all the work."¹³ Unbeknownst to Ward at the time, this is exactly what Lincoln was planning to do as he prepared the preliminary Emancipation Proclamation in September 1862.

For the first month, Ward's military service was a period of intense excitement, a common experience for the new Civil War soldier. By late Sep-

tember 1862, after just a few weeks of training, the 141st Pennsylvania had made its way down to Virginia to the nation's capital to assist in the protection of the city during the Second Battle of Bull Run. He wrote Erastus, who had just joined the conflict as a private in the 6th Michigan Cavalry Regiment under the command of Captain J. H. Kidd, "Indeed, the brief period of a month and a half had been to me the most eventful of my life." He drilled constantly, more than six hours per day, but he was surrounded by friends and comrades that he knew from home. He had, he said, joined "my country to serve in its hour of peril. . . . I have made the sacrifice and been conscientious."¹⁴

It was the first time Ward saw Washington but he had little time to contemplate the city. His brother Erastus was in the area as well, and Ward asked if he had any opportunity to see the city. Erastus had the good fortune to spend time seeing the sights of Washington, and he marveled in particular at the wonders of the Smithsonian Institution's exhibit halls and its treasures from around the world. It made the younger Ward somewhat jealous (although within a few years Lester Ward was to make the Smithsonian his permanent intellectual home). The two also spoke about the moves Lincoln made to put slavery at the forefront of the struggle against the Confederacy. The two heartily welcomed Lincoln's moves toward emancipation. In a letter written to Cyrenus Ward, Erastus reflected on the brothers' continuing discussions about the purposes of war. As for "Old Abe's proclamation," he concluded, "Three cheers for Lincoln."¹⁵

The 141st Pennsylvania remained in the Washington, D.C., area during most of General George McClellan's Maryland campaign, and Ward often complained about the drudgery and the loss of confidence among soldiers who feared that they might never move against the South. Writing from a camp in White's Ford, Maryland, on 17 October 1862, Ward admitted to his friend W. H. Thompson, editor of the *Bradford Argus*, that the men of the 141st Pennsylvania expressed "murmurs of dissatisfaction" regarding "the idea of our entire forces lying apparently idle."¹⁶

For many months in late 1862, the defensive maneuvers of Confederate General Robert E. Lee pushed McClellan steadily away from the city of Richmond. McClellan's inaction created continuing dissatisfaction with his leadership among the troops under his immediate command—especially since he had failed to smash Lee's army after the Battle of Antietam in mid-September 1862. Ward reported on the forced marches and seemingly useless movement of the Union Army in the fall, and his dimming hopes of returning to the comforts of home life. "When we arrived [at Edward's Ferry] we were in poor condition to capture rebs. I could have neither run nor fought. . . . Possibly three years experience in the military service of Uncle Sam will, along the many greater hardships

recorded in their history, obliterate from our memories the history of that march, but if so, all the more necessity for recording it."¹⁷

Ward was to soon lament the comforts and the drudgery of those first few months in the army. By the time his unit moved it was to participate in one of the deadliest campaigns of the war. After McClellan's departure and replacement by General Ambrose Burnside, the Union Army finally moved against Lee's forces but with tragic results. The company's first "baptism by fire" was in the Union's disastrous Fredericksburg campaign on 13 December 1862. Ward's regimental colonel, a leading member of Bradford County society, Henry J. Madill, wrote after the battle of the difficulties of his fresh young recruits: "It was a terrible ordeal through which to pass new troops who had never been under fire; but they passed it nobly, gallantly, not a man hesitated or faltered, but closed up and pushed on." Ward's regiment was part of Joseph "Fighting Joe" Hooker's Center Grand Division. They stormed the well-fortified Confederate lines at Marye's Heights near the sunken road just over the Rappahannock River near Fredericksburg. Marye's Heights was hell—by the time Ward's regiment became involved there were already thousands of dead Union soldiers lying on the fields. Hooker was furious that his men were to be thrown into the useless task of trying to take the hill from the Confederates. He protested to Burnside but to no avail. After a few hours of trying, his men were easily beaten back. The evening after the battle the survivors listened to the screams of the wounded on the field before finally being allowed to remove them.¹⁸

Ward's baptism was traumatic. For months he had been basically idle, and though he could complain of boredom he was at the very least in relatively safety. Fredericksburg was an horrendous battle. Burnside was crushed by the death and destruction of his forces. Erastus Ward, who had not yet seen any battles since his unit was in service protecting Washington, feared for his brother's survival since the fight was so brutal for the Union forces. Lester Ward wrote his brother in late December assuring him that he survived the battle unscathed and describing how he laid on the battlefield only a short distance from the rebel lines: "Rast, I have witnessed the smoke and confusion of a great battle. I have listened to the thunder of its cannon the roar of its musketry the whistling of its bullets the screeching and howling of its death dealing . . . and the yells shrieks and groans of the wounded and dying. I have beheld acres strewn with the dead and wounded victims of horrible war. I have stood face to face and conversed with warriors arrayed in deadly hostility against me and my country." But, Ward told his brother, he was not fearful or frightened. Instead, he wondered what Washington thought of the war and its progress: "I felt not through the entire ordeal a pang of fear," he concluded. "It was a great battle and I suppose nothing gained; much lost. What do people think of it? What is the tale in Washington about the war?"¹⁹

Ward's regiment spent two more days on the field before Burnside ordered a retreat back across the Rappahannock River. They were then subject to the famous "Mud March" in mid-January 1863 as Burnside tried to move on Richmond. Heavy rains helped to thaw the ground and trap the Union Army in muddy fields; the Confederates watched the comedy from the other side of the Rappahannock holding signs mocking the Union Army. Morale was nearly destroyed and Burnside was soon replaced by Hooker as the commander of the Army of the Potomac.

The unit spent the rest of the winter in camp. These winter months after Fredericksburg were probably the best times for the soldiers since they left Bradford County in the summer. The Union Army finally paid them in February, and they had the opportunity to set up a semipermanent camp with log huts, cook their own meals, and rest before the start of the spring campaign. Hooker even had new clothes for his troops. But the marching and the battles had taken their toll. In Ward's company, originally one thousand men strong, fewer than five hundred men remained by the spring of 1863.

Ward's next surviving letters record his experience following the Battle of Chancellorsville in May 1863 under the command of the beloved Hooker. Hooker helped restore morale among the troops of the Army of the Potomac, and the time they spent in camp renewed the strength of the army, still far superior in numbers to the Confederates. Hooker wanted to crush Lee's forces once and for all, and at the end of April 1863 his units began maneuvers to draw Lee out of his strongly fortified positions in Virginia and Maryland.

Ward's unit was in Hooker's Third Corps under the command of the notorious Union General Dan Sickles. Hooker put his infantry units near the town of Chancellorsville located near an area of dense woods called the Wilderness. The battle began there on 1 May 1863. Chancellorsville was a savage battle, and the 141st suffered particularly severely: of the 417 men who entered battle, over 220 were killed or wounded. It was the worst toll in Sickles's entire Third Corps. Ward was badly wounded himself as he approached the "savage hordes" of Confederate General Stonewall Jackson: "Into this dense mass of gray backed humanity (?) I poured round after round. I was chuckling over this grand opportunity offered me for thinning out the enemies of human liberty, when a silent messenger came, and entering the upper part of my right knee . . . [brought] me to the ground." When he fell, he reported, the color bearer died near him, "and the 'ample folds' of the glorious old flag fell gracefully over me, completely enshrouding me."²⁰

Ward was shot again as he attempted to continue to fight, and the Confederate Army eventually took him prisoner after he spent three hours on the battlefield. Ward's friend, Charles Canfield of Company D, recalled

the experience of lying on the field waiting for the Confederate Army to arrive: "Some of our Doctors were with us, but they had no medicines or instruments. We had nothing to eat. I found my friend, L. F. Ward . . . as helpless as myself. We were not only wounded but prisoners." After the Confederates took them back to their camp they were lodged near Guiney's Station, not far from where the Confederates brought the badly injured General Stonewall Jackson. According to one account, the Union soldiers knew that Jackson had died there. On 6 May 1863, three days after their capture, Canfield recorded that their condition was terrible and "there is very little prospect of our being removed. . . . Our wounds are not dressed, and we have hardly anything to eat. Rebel transportation is very limited and our men cannot get through the lines."²¹

They were finally taken behind Union lines on 14 May. Ward's Sergeant John Bloodgood recalled the fitness of the men who returned from the Confederate prisons, devastated by the conditions under which they were held: "Our ambulance train visited the battlefield on the 13th and brought over all the survivors. They were a woebegone looking lot of men—haggard, dirty, smoke be-grimed. They had been robbed of their blankets and much of their clothing by their captors, their wounds were undressed. They had lain without care or shelter, exposed to sunshine and rain . . . with only the coarsest food scantily supplied. . . . The intense joy felt by the survivors on reaching our lines can better be imagined than described."²²

Lester Ward wrote Erastus as soon as he was able to reassure him of his safety. He said that he had "enjoyed the blessed privilege of sojourning the brief period of 11 days among the denomination of Gray Backs. We wounded prisoners had a delightful time in Dixie." He had fought nearly to the death in the horrible campaign and informed his brother of the gruesome job of killing. He was comfortably back in the North, he told him, "resting under the grim satisfaction that as an offset against all the trouble they made me not less than a round dozen were invited at my instance to take supper with Pluto."²³

Ward's celebration of his role in killing the enemies of liberty in war was not unique by the summer of 1863. Erastus was somewhat jealous of his brother's participation since for most of the war he had remained outside much of the fighting guarding Washington. He wished he could see more. "Frank has seen more of it [the fighting in battle] and heard its music," Erastus wrote in late May 1863.²⁴ Erastus would soon get his chance. Although Chancellorsville was a loss for Hooker's troops, they had at least done terrible damage to Lee's forces. This was to be the high tide of the Confederacy. Erastus's 6th Michigan Cavalry would perform key actions in the next two years in the bruising battles at Gettysburg, Petersburg, and into the last months of the war. Lee's forces would suffer a

devastating blow at Gettysburg, and the Union Army would grow stronger and stronger throughout the last few months of 1863 and 1864.

As the war grinded on, the regiment's doctor sent Ward to the Fairfax Seminary Hospital for the care of his badly damaged legs. By June he had recovered enough to post a letter to his town newspaper describing his company's recent experiences in battle. For the benefit of his readers in Towanda, Ward provided a detailed description of the Confederates who held him. He was especially critical of Southern officers who, he argued, fought a war for slaves on the backs of lower-class men. One officer attempted to engage the Union troops in an argument over the propriety of fighting the war: "He was met by a Yankee argument . . . that came near staggering him. . . . He stayed long enough to discover that all the school-houses in the great free North were not built in vain. . . . The Union Army," Ward concluded, "is an invincible host, from the intelligence and patriotic zeal of its soldiery, as well as its officers. They are all ready to carry on the war against treason and rebellion, without regard to time, till they yield to unconditional surrender."²⁵

Lizzie Ward worked hard to have her husband returned home following the injuries he had sustained at Chancellorsville. Most Civil War soldiers suffered severely from infection during their stays in the field hospitals, and she feared that if he was not properly cared for, her husband might die. She wrote his commanding officer demanding that he be returned home soon, and insisting that his battlefield honors deserved at least a short furlough to quicken his recovery. Lizzie enlisted the support of a friend, George Watkins, who had recently returned to Towanda after suffering his own injuries in battle, to write the hospital: "I am well acquainted with Ward and take a pleasure in bearing testimony to his uniform good conduct as a soldier and gentleman. At Chancellorsville he behaved with great gallantry and lay with me for some time a wounded prisoner."²⁶ The constant requests eventually succeeded, and Ward's return home in August 1863 was a blissful though far too short-lived experience. He spent only a few months in Towanda, as he said, "in the land of civilization and in the house of my sweet spouse."²⁷

Ward was able to recover at home and began to reflect a little on his experience. Despite the infections that set in on his wounded legs, Ward was thrilled to be back among the comforts of home and family. He was able to return to the diary that he had kept (an item he did not bring with him to war). He returned to his studies as much as possible, including work on mastering French and German, and he returned to writing—a few articles even appeared in the local newspaper. It was also the first time that he was able to live with his wife since he had left for war so soon after their marriage. "I feel about the same as I did before I left the hospital," he wrote on 21 August 1863. "I am marvelously happy with

my darling wife. What a sweet life." But he worried for his future, knowing that he would have to return to the war. "When will it have to end perhaps forever."²⁸

Ward followed the news of the war closely, and he also kept abreast of the political machinations in the Republican Party. He listened to speeches by Horace Greeley as well as by local politicians. For the first time in his life he was able to vote, and he supported the Republican candidates for governor as well as other local offices. Describing the local elections he concluded that the vote "brought very grave events into the light. Pennsylvania and Ohio have announced to the world that the rebels must be conquered and the laws sustained. Tuesday was the day of the great election. I was all day at the voting-place, and voted for the first time in my life. There was a great deal of noise and drunkenness there all day, on the part of the Democrats, who finished with a great melee in which several faces were mutilated."²⁹

By early November 1863, however, Ward had to return to his unit. He recorded his fears in his diary, not wanting to return to the danger of the battlefield under the constant threat of death. The bravado he had expressed in his letter to Erastus after his capture vanished while he was at home. It no longer suited the life he wanted to lead. "The dreaded day has finally come," he wrote on 6 November. "I write with trembling hand. I have just enjoyed a sweet, glorious, sublime season with my darling, my beautiful, the life of my heart, my existence. Without her I should not wish to live longer. I am going to leave this morning all that makes me happy, the woman for whom I live."³⁰

Ward wanted more out of his life than the war could give him. There was not enough in that experience to satisfy his desires for improvement and success. What is also evident in these expressions is how deeply he felt that there was a higher faith that might protect him. Ward's religiousness has always troubled historians, who want to see in him a thoroughgoing rationalist and scientist. But even in his staunch anticlericalism developed after the war, Ward still saw religion as satisfying a deep human emotional need. And it served him here as well. "What will become of me?" he wondered. "Let time tell. I shall aim at my duty, and let God care for the rest. . . . We slept sweetly in one another's arms, and our eyes often filled with tears. We were very sad this morning, and we weep a good deal. . . . May Heaven protect us and permit us soon to be reunited in the heart of our eternal love which will never die. Farewell!!!"³¹

Ward returned to the Fairfax Seminary Hospital to complete his final recovery (still occasionally in a wheelchair from his wounds). Fortunately for him, he was offered the option to help in the hospital as a teacher and tutor for the wounded men, and he was given a transfer to the Invalid Corps. The Invalid Corps performed clerical and guard duties for the

Union Army in and around the Washington area. The Union command organized the corps into two main regiments: one battalion reserved for guard duty and other light military tasks; and a second battalion of men too severely injured for guard duty who worked as clerks and nurses in the hospitals. The Union command reorganized the Invalid Corps in March 1864 into the Veterans Reserve Corps because of complaints by soldiers that their sky-blue uniforms and their identification initials, which matched the Union Army's inventory category "Inspected—Condemned," branded them as unworthy soldiers. This did not worry Ward much and he was happy to be in the corps.

Ward's injuries initially placed him in the second battalion of the corps. He spent the next year as a clerk in the Fairfax Hospital and watched the events of the war and the politics of Washington. He spent his time studying and practicing languages, and when he could he visited the city itself. The Union Army allowed Lizzie to stay with him while he worked for the Veterans Corps. She arrived in February 1864 and worked as a nurse in the Union hospitals; the young couple slowly began a difficult but hopeful return to the comforts of home life. Lizzie became pregnant in March 1864 but decided not to keep the child. Homeopathic abortion remedies were common in the nineteenth century, and it is likely that Lizzie Ward was familiar with the methods or at least familiar with whom to approach to secure a way to stop a pregnancy. As many historians have noted, by the mid-nineteenth century abortion was a fairly common practice among middle-class married women. It was a successful way to control fertility and to limit family size. It is not exactly clear what kind of abortion remedy Lizzie Ward used to stop her pregnancy. But given the family's situation it was not surprising that she decided it was not time to begin raising children.³²

The young couple also apparently reached the decision together. The prospect of impending fatherhood without a permanent home or career did not appeal to Lester Ward, who has provided the only record we have of the abortion: "I have the most evident proofs of another strange cause of my wife's illness, and for which I am grateful that it was not worse," he wrote. "The truth is that she was going to have a child, but she took an effective remedy which she secured from Mrs. Gee. It did its work and she is out of danger. . . . The proof," Ward noted, "is the milk."³³ Lizzie Ward must have been a few months along in her pregnancy since lactation began (presumably she became pregnant when Ward returned to Towanda in the fall). Within a few months the couple was apparently trying to find ways to avoid another unwanted pregnancy. Lester Ward recorded in one diary entry that he went to see a doctor for assistance: "Wednesday evening I went to see Dr. M concerning secret affairs between me and my wife. He gave me useful instruction which I plan to put into practice."

Together, the two hoped that they could plan their family rather than have it forced upon them by circumstance.³⁴

During the summer of 1864 Ward was transferred to the first battalion and performed more guard duty. He received a promotion to corporal and was still able to spend time in Washington and with his wife; he was even able to visit the Smithsonian Institution for the first time. Ward was able to watch as the two armies marched once again into the Wilderness where Ward was injured. He was particularly pleased to see the regiments of African American men march through Washington. "For a whole week the grand armies of Grant and Lee fought almost without stopping," Ward noted on May 12, "and they are still fighting. No one can say yet whose is victory. May it be the brave Union army! May this blow be the death of the rebellion. That is the ardent prayer of us all."³⁵

Ward finally received his discharge from the Union Army in late November 1864, and he and Lizzie decided to move permanently to Washington in early 1865, the city in which he would live for the next forty years. Ward's biographers generally have not discussed his war experience, in part because he wanted it entirely forgotten. In his recollections, written years after the conflict, Ward discounted the shaping experience of war in his arrival at manhood. Although he participated in the costly battles of Fredericksburg and Chancellorsville and experienced the hardships of camp life, he wanted the experience left entirely in the past. In his unpublished autobiography his humorless and frankly elitist description of the war effort tells a story much different from his surviving letters and the essays that he wrote in the late 1860s: "[I] sought no honors, wanted none, received none . . . did [my] duty faithfully, fought bravely, and bore [my] hardships manfully. Thrown together with inferior men [I] never allowed [my] culture to excite either the envy or the contempt of even such . . . although such companionship [I] counted among the severest of hardships."³⁶ Ward always displayed little interest in his own past and never was one for easy nostalgia about American life in the war. He wanted his life to be remembered for his ideas alone; historians should turn to ideology if they were to understand the events of the mid- to late nineteenth century. This was a conscious decision on Ward's part, a desire to shape his past and how he would be remembered.

But the shape of his personality and the origins of Ward's later political ideas reflected his wartime participation no matter how much he later wished to have the experience forgotten. Ward did not assimilate the experience of war into many of the more common methods of coming to grips with the experience. He rarely mentioned the war later in his life, participated in no reunions, and generally did not keep contact with the men in his regiment. Charles Canfield was the only member of the 141st who tried to contact Ward after the war. He did not maintain a "soldier's

faith” the way his contemporary Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr., did—reconceptualizing the experience of combat for a late-nineteenth-century audience and leaving the causes and horror of the conflicts as elements of the past. Out of Ward’s experience in the 1860s, however, emerged a number of key experiences that shaped his later work in social theory and political ideology in the Gilded Age: a deep faith in the promises of equality and democracy that the war had supposedly secured; a belief that the nation stood above region, section, and all other parochial institutions; and, finally, Ward was convinced that the nation needed to seek a new basis for a just and liberal politics outside religion, which had defined so much of the antebellum reform impulse.³⁷

Ward’s assimilation of his wartime experience began before the conflict had even ended. The early months of 1865 were a period of deep introspection and expectation for Ward, as he tried to come to grips with his experience in the army. He posted a letter to a Washington newspaper, the *Daily National Republican*, in April 1865. Above the signature, “One Who Has Bled to Punish Traitors,” he expressed his anger at the talk of an easy peace for the South. “Are they any more pardonable after stern necessity compels them to submit than when the tide of success was bearing them on in their career of crime? No! They are not repentant! Let the nation deal out . . . punishment to the guilty leaders, not in wrath nor in vengeance, but in justice, in honor, in wisdom, pardoning only the deluded victims of ignorance and slavery.”³⁸ Lincoln’s death two days after Ward wrote the letter was a crushing blow. He recorded in his diary that the nation mourned this “idol of the people and the saviour of our Republic . . . snatched from us as if in a horrible dream, from which one soon hopes to awake.”³⁹ When the death sentences for the conspirators in Lincoln’s assassination were carried out, Ward reveled in the triumph of the government.

And, even more devastating, he found out in early May that his brother Erastus was badly injured. Although Erastus had not seen much battle during most of his time in the first months after he joined, this soon changed. His regiment was heavily involved at Gettysburg and throughout the campaigns in 1864 and early 1865 to crush Lee’s forces. He was injured at the Battle of Five Forks on 1 April, but Ward did not receive the news until about three weeks later. He was too late to see him. “[T]his Christian, this martyr,” he recorded, died in the cause of freedom. “I took his Bible . . . and left the scene of my first grief, stopping to let fall on his new-made grave a tear of profound fraternal sadness. . . . Can I ever reconcile myself to this great loss,” he wondered. “But his death is an inexorable fact. I must sustain it with patience and profit by it.”⁴⁰

In his search for meaning in his brother’s death as well as his participation in fighting for the cause of abolition and union, Ward felt that he

and his brother had performed an important duty to the country in establishing the principles of equality, freedom, and nation as paramount in the American democratic experiment. When he watched the Grand Review of the Union Army in late May 1865, for example, he saw national glory: "O our country, the glory of Rome is abased to nothing near her! Renewed by the war, cemented with blood, may she march through the ages of the future in a majesty unequalled among the nations of the earth."⁴¹ In an essay written soon after the war he went even further and defined what was distinct about the national struggle against the slave power and the forces threatening the nation's promises of equality and independence in a free labor republic:

The American idea is no morbid appetite for martial glory, no grasping scheme of territorial aggrandizement, no selfish desire for power and pomp and wealth and splendor. Its foundations are truth, justice, honor, and Christianity. It means liberty for all, justice for all, protection for all, education for all. It is freedom of thought, freedom of speech, freedom of press, and freedom of worship. It gives every man of whatever nation or race an asylum and a citizenship. It grants to all men without distinction of race, color, or condition an equal chance in the race of life.

Ward's final phrase was a powerful one in the nineteenth century. Lincoln used a similar phrase at least twice in his speeches, most famously in his message before the Congress in 1861 declaring the war was a "people's contest" offering "a struggle for maintaining in the world that form and substance of government whose leading object is to elevate the condition of men—to lift artificial weights from all shoulders; to clear the paths of laudable pursuit for all; to afford all an unfettered start and a fair chance in the race of life."⁴²

For Ward equality was the great promise of the nation, and it would need to be secured in the peace afterward. In Ward's eyes, the war had saved all the elements of a self-made democratic society. "True culture and manhood" had emerged triumphant from the struggle in a grand moral cause. Emancipation, he declared, expanded the reach of democratic culture in America and "kindled the flame of hope in the breasts of the poor and the oppressed." A self-made democracy, triumphant in the battle against Southern aristocracy, destroyed the last barriers to a truly egalitarian society. The problem was how this would be maintained in the peace after the war and how it could be secured without falling into bloodshed once again.⁴³

Ward had more immediate concerns, however, than the successful peace and progress of the nation in 1865. His first responsibility for himself and his family was to find work—it was only through work that Ward could secure for himself a chance in the race of life. When the Veterans Re-

serve Corps discharged him in late 1864, Ward found himself without a job and without means of support in the nation's capital. He sought a position as a clerk in the growing government offices in the city. For six months, while he tried to come to grips with his war experience, Ward wrote cabinet secretaries, and even President Lincoln, in order to secure work in any branch of the federal government. He first tried to obtain a position in the War Department following the advice of friends who suggested that his military experience and "high moral character" would help him; then he tried the Sanitary Commission, one of the main volunteer organizations of the wartime North, but also failed there. Upset by his treatment by the War Department and the commission, both of which consistently ignored his requests for a position, Ward then turned to a friend, James McWilliam, who recommended an appeal to the Treasury Department.⁴⁴

With McWilliam's help Ward secured the signatures of two congressional representatives whom he hounded for days at their offices—in addition to the signature of his representative from St. Charles, Illinois. He then sought an audience with Lincoln, but failing at that he wrote the president a letter describing his straitened circumstances: "My necessities are great," he told Lincoln in early February 1865, "I have no regular home, am an orphan, have no trade, am physically disqualified for any laborious occupation. . . . My motives are worthy. Though early left wholly dependent upon my own efforts, I have long since resolved to give myself a thorough education."⁴⁵ In May 1865, he was finally appointed to a clerkship in the Treasury Department. "Victory!" he wrote in his diary, "I am a clerk in the Treasury! I have won. I have obtained the object for which I left Penn'a [*sic*], and searched so long for work."⁴⁶ The job was not to begin until the summer but at last it seemed he had achieved a comfortable status for the first time in his life. He was to remain a government employee for the rest of the century.

Lizzie was also pregnant again, and on 14 June 1865 she gave birth to a son, Roy Fontaine Ward. Despite Ward's earlier reservations about fatherhood (and the couple's efforts to avoid pregnancy), the new addition to his home excited him: "Wednesday the 14th was a day which I shall always remember. On that day our blessed infant was born to us. He is in good health, and my dear wife is as well as could be expected."⁴⁷ In a diary entry from 6 August 1865, Ward recorded the hopes for his and Lizzie's life after the tumult of war: "Surrounded with all the good things of life, good work, good lodging, enough money and a prospect of being able to pursue my studies, to enter college, finish my elected profession, to establish myself with my lovable family somewhere on the beautiful new lands of the West where I can live and grow with the people and enjoy marvelously my life with my sweet spouse and my superb son, and make myself wise

and useful. . . . [Lizzie] washes the dishes and does a great deal for me. How good, how sweet she is!" And like most of his diary entries from the late 1860s, he concluded this statement with a reference to the self-education they both pursued: "We shall soon begin to read French."⁴⁸

Ward now believed that with a new son and a position in the government he could finally realize all his dreams for success and education. He became more serious, humorless, hardened, and intensely self-directed. He hoped to achieve, he later said, "all the enduring charms of a perfect home life . . . the highest development of the best faculties of the mind, and the noblest and tenderest sentiments of the heart."⁴⁹

Radical political causes remained close to his heart as he achieved his own individual success. Both Lizzie and Lester Ward remained politically committed to radical causes after the war. Both of them, for example, joined the women's suffrage society in Washington as well as the suffrage societies advocating universal suffrage for the former slaves; they attended all of the suffrage events in the city whenever they could. Ward himself remained a firm advocate of temperance and linked the eradication of drink to the battle against bondage. Temperance was a natural cause for a man committed to the principles of self-improvement and self-control. He often complained that drinking and alcoholism were worst in the army and surgical hospitals, and he declared that the abuse of alcohol was a mark of bad character among Union soldiers. In order to represent properly the "immortal scroll of patriot heroes who offered their lives for the old flag," Ward insisted that the evil of intemperance must be wiped out by force of individual will.⁵⁰

Despite Ward's hopes, however, life was still a struggle for the young couple. The costs of renting a home in Washington and buying furniture for the house, a piano and violin for them to learn and play, clothes, and food were very high; the trappings of a middle-class home were still outside their reach. Debt became a constant problem. They occasionally took in boarders but that hardly helped with the costs of maintaining their home. Moreover, it seemed to him that he would never be able to complete his education without money and without the time because of the demands of his new job. Instead, he and Lizzie decided to educate themselves by extensive reading in classical literature, science, philosophy, and a whole host of other subjects. At one point he wrote in his journal that "I am going to try to finish my chemistry this month. In this way I take up and finish one study after another, until I shall have built my education long before I enter college. Glorious event."⁵¹ Nearly every week, Ward recorded their reading and the progress of their studies: Frederick Douglass's books one month; Victor Hugo's work one month; George Bancroft's history of the United States another; study in mathematics, chemistry, and other sciences; as well as extensive reading in philosophy.

They also followed the political life of the city: attending congressional hearings when they could, participating in voluntary associations for temperance and women's suffrage, and listening to the speeches of well-known social thinkers when they came to Washington. They attended a Unitarian Church as well, although they never wholeheartedly accepted a religious faith as part of their lives. Ward also joined a debating society, the Concordia Lyceum, in order to continue to improve his mind and skills. He was profoundly ambitious and this participation would hopefully lead to a better status in life.

Nevertheless, it was not an easy life after the war. In May 1866 he wrote that "a whole year has gone by and I have not saved fifty dollars! When will I be ready to enter college?"⁵² He complained often of his exhaustion and his lack of interest in the simple clerical work of the Treasury. In an essay mocking his lowly social position in the nation's capital Ward commented on the social world of the lowly government clerk. He complained that the pay was poor and power nonexistent, and he also remarked in an uncharacteristic racism that all the money they did make was paid to the city's Jewish merchants. The government clerks, he wrote, were a "subordinate race" in the city of Washington. Politics was a dirty game that required men of influence and power to assist them: "Great talents, superior skill or depth of learning enter not into this qualification. He [the government clerk] . . . must possess an interested friend whose name stands high upon the scroll of fame to make intercession for him. But most of all he must support the administration, right or wrong. He must be prepared and willing to wink at corruption, praise those in power, excuse official perjury and bow obsequious to usurpation. He must not scruple to compel his convictions of right to take all convenient shades of color, and if necessary undergo sudden and complete inversions to suit the occasion. In short these positions are given in exchange for the soul."⁵³ The tense political atmosphere of postwar Washington, as Ward well knew, made life difficult for the appointed clerk.

Far worse than his difficult social position and his inability to save money for his future, however, were the myriad illnesses that affected both Lizzie and his son throughout most of the winter of 1865–66. Young Roy Ward never seemed to improve and remained critically ill throughout the winter. Throughout the early months of 1866, Ward slowly watched his son slip away from him. On 17 May 1866, Roy Fontaine Ward died from an attack of influenza; he was less than a year old. Ward recorded the cold detail of his son's death in his journal: "Little did I dream three weeks ago that I should have to recount today the loss of my precious baby, my sweet son! . . . It is the duty of this journal to register only cold facts. . . . The little one was sick, and getting sicker every moment. . . . After a great deal of suffering on his part and much care on

ours, the poor dear beloved angel departed this hard life . . . and went to Heaven, where he will live forever the life of endless joy."⁵⁴ Ward took his son's body back to the Bradford County area and buried Roy Ward in Rome Township Cemetery.

The death of their son devastated the young couple, and Lester and Lizzie Ward never had another child. By the summer of 1866, Ward was twenty-five years old, a war veteran, and a lowly government clerk—a position that could never fulfill his large ambitions. He remained hopeful, however, that an education could provide the means of advancement for Lizzie and himself; he hoped it could free them from the debt and from the small home they rented in the city. In an unpublished essay he spoke of the hopes that education and "independence of thought" might offer a young man on the make:

It is not only the most learned or most renowned who are best capable of judging moral truths. The obscure peasant is often wiser than the profound scholar, in his own way. The opinion of every man, no matter what may be his rank, station, or education, is of importance to the world. When all shall learn to take truth and facts and principles for their guides, instead of following after the leadership of other men and blindly gulping down their dogmas and sophistries . . . [then] that nation which stands on foundations of truth and equity, giving every man a voice in its administration, can no more be shaken by incendiary appeals to prejudice and passion, than the rock on the ocean's beach can be washed away by a surge of the billows.⁵⁵

Lizzie and Lester Ward found solace after their son's death in books, ideas, and study; self-education and work continued to be Ward's main activities in the years immediately following the war. By January 1867, the couple's status had improved significantly. First, Ward was able to move from his clerkship in the main offices of the Treasury to a position in the Bureau of Statistics to work in the Division of Immigration and Navigation. The main offices of the Treasury Department, as Secretary of the Treasury George Boutwell recalled, were highly charged politically: a constant target of Congressional anger because of the debt incurred by fighting a war, and for President Andrew Johnson's fiscal policies.⁵⁶ The Bureau of Statistics, on the other hand, offered Ward more protection from these furious political battles and greater chance for advancement. His job was, among other things, to serve as the department's researcher and librarian, which allowed him to do important work cataloging the immigrant growth of the country; it was a far more challenging and interesting job. Second, he and Lizzie moved into a better home on 588 P Street with the help of the salary increase from his promotion. "I am entering the new year with the inestimable gifts of good health for myself and for my wife, and favorable prospects for the future," he recorded on the first day of

1867. "From a certain point of view we shall have quite a change of front. We are going to move as soon as they have finished repairing the house we have selected. We expect to be in paradise there."⁵⁷

Ward's deepest desire was to finally attend college classes. In February 1867 he wrote the president of the University of Michigan, where his brother Erastus had gone for a short time before the war, hoping to borrow money to attend classes (though why he thought this might succeed is not clear). More likely, he felt, were classes at Columbian College (now George Washington University), located not far from his government office in the center of Washington's Mall. Columbian College offered the possibility of an inexpensive college education for the still struggling Ward; long thought of as a central institution for the Upper South, and at one time considered as the possible site for a National University, the college was an ideal place for the young Ward to further his education. It was one of the main places for training the young bureaucrats in the federal offices, an ideal place for the young Ward to network and finally achieve his desire for higher education.

Columbian College's president, Dr. James C. Welling, a moral philosopher and natural scientist, had become an important friend of Ward's by the 1870s, and he was deeply involved in the city's scientific associations—especially the Washington Philosophical Society. It was probably originally through Welling that Ward became acquainted with the many scientific opportunities in the capital city. With the help of several others in government service, Ward persuaded college officials to hold night classes on the weekends to allow government workers and other older adult students to attend. In addition to this work, Lester and Lizzie Ward continued an almost relentless plan of self-education and reading in languages (especially French, Greek, and Latin), classical and modern literature, philosophy, science, and mathematics. Both of them had the characteristics of ambitious autodidacts: driven, self-assured, and firmly convinced of their intellectual ability to succeed. By September 1867, Ward began attending his college classes. That fall Lizzie Ward also was attending classes at a local women's institution, the Union Female Seminary, as well as teaching in a local common school for former slaves.

Although Ward finally achieved his dream of attending college classes, the education he obtained there paled in comparison to his own efforts in the pursuit of knowledge. Ward extended his self-education through his membership in local lyceums. He participated in two lyceum organizations in the late 1860s and early 1870s, the Concordia Lyceum and the Irving Lyceum, where he learned both argumentative skills and more about the scientific and philosophic discussion of the day. Ward's diary provides an almost daily accounting of his participation in this educational experience, an important supplement to the education that he

received at Columbian College and through his own reading. The lyceum lectures were short debates generally formed around some large question such as the influence of literature on science, or the success of arts and culture in the United States. Like his diary, Ward's lyceum speeches are not reflective documents or particularly helpful clues to his understanding of the national issues of the late 1860s. They reveal instead his driving ambition to achieve intellectual success. Ward was already a skilled debater and polemicist, and he relished his victories in debate, a trait that was to remain with him for the rest of his life. The diary entries for the late 1860s consistently record his success or failure in the lyceums' debates. When members of the Concordia Lyceum appointed him critic in late March 1866, for example, Ward was savage and cruel in his criticisms of his fellow members, often mocking their pronunciation of words as well as their reasoning. In reference to one grammatical mistake of a member Ward wrote, "a few more such sentences and we might follow the mangled corpse of grammar to its grave."⁵⁸

Ward admitted privately that these debating societies were not the most intellectually exciting venture of his life, but he hoped that something positive might come of the experience. Small local societies such as the Concordia Lyceum and the Irving Lyceum did much of the scientific work in the mid-nineteenth century, and the lyceum circuit in Washington served as Ward's social introduction to the scientific community of the city. Before the emergence of large-scale research universities, lyceums and amateur scientific societies served as the main forums for discussing scientific and philosophic issues, especially in a provincial city such as Washington.⁵⁹ By the late 1860s, Ward's reading expanded to include works by Charles Darwin, John Stuart Mill, and other English and European thinkers. When he took stock of himself in early 1869, he highlighted the expansion of his studies and his mind: "It is suitable that I should review today the past year, count up its events, take note of the progress that I have made, and resume the result of my labors. I give first place to my studies. The development of the mind is the gate to eternity."⁶⁰ Ward's wide reading in philosophy and science allowed him to connect with a wider trans-Atlantic intellectual community interested in similar questions about science, reform, and national progress.

His work at the Bureau of Statistics also became more challenging and engaging than it had been before. First, he had continually sought promotion and advancement in the office in the late 1860s, consistently moving up among the ranks of the clerks. Second, the bureau offered him the opportunity to work on statistical data related to immigration into the United States, something that he felt promised to offer important information to the nation: "It is an interesting subject," he wrote in his diary, "and one that will demand more talent and versatility."⁶¹ By May

1869, in fact, superiors frequently praised his skills and offered him a promotion within the office. Ward's relentless pursuit of promotion reveals his ambition and drive, as well as his resourceful ability to acquire connections in the bureaucratic world of postwar Washington. For example, when Ward wrote George Boutwell about an appointment as chief of the Division of Navigation and Immigration, he indicated that his "record and antecedents are well known" and argued that he deserved his promotion "as a simple act of justice."⁶² Although he mocked the operations of the government in Washington, Ward was not a neophyte when it came to playing politics and gaining favor in the federal bureaucracy.

Ward's formal classroom education paid off handsomely as well. He continued to attend classes in the spring and fall of 1868 and into 1869. And his confidence in his intellectual abilities led him to try his hand at writing more and more often. One of the subjects that most concerned him was religion and the role of religious faith in the American republic. Ward's reading, as well as his participation in the city lyceums, convinced him that religious faith was unable to explain national ideals. In his diary, he recorded the speeches he heard delivered by the nation's major religious thinkers, and he was not generally impressed. In the late 1860s, his attitude toward religion increasingly hardened, and it included a vicious anti-Catholicism; in fact, he had a vicious hatred toward any form of orthodoxy in the late 1860s. In late 1869, for example, Lizzie and Lester Ward sat down to read the Bible in a number of different languages, not for the purposes of religious revelation but to record what they regarded as "worthy" and "unworthy ideas." Any idea that did not measure up to what they regarded as established historic or scientific fact was relegated to the latter category. In their notes, the list of "wise, elegant, [and] practical passages" was the shortest.⁶³

In an address before the Concordia Lyceum, Ward harshly criticized the American clergy. The church, he insisted, did not take part "in the great drama of transition from moral darkness to spiritual sunlight." American Protestantism, Ward argued, is "since the death of slavery, the most aristocratic institution in our land." He spared no amount of venom in his denunciation of the church's attitude toward the institution of bondage and the oppression of African Americans. When some of the listeners objected to Ward's denunciation he responded that "the impudence of the church is only equaled by its hypocrisy."⁶⁴ Later his denunciation was to be even more stern. In 1868, he declared the church responsible for the evil of slavery itself: "[Of] the great antislavery pioneers whose posterity will rise up to call blessed, scarce one could endure the pent up moral atmosphere of our modern so-called Christian Church. They were too good Christians. While on the contrary the church was the bulwark of slavery both north and south and the last of all our institutions to give up its foul and disgusting idol."⁶⁵

An incident in the Wards' home in late 1869 and early 1870 further illustrates a personal dislike of religion and religious institutions. W. G. Marts, a young student and friend of the Wards living as a boarder in their home, had a sexual relationship with the Wards' African American domestic, Margaret Woodland. Ward had originally hired Woodland for the winter of 1867, but she remained in the home much longer. Lizzie was especially close to Woodland, and the diary records a close friendship especially after the death of Roy Ward: walking in the city of Washington, taking care of the home, and quilting together. At one point Ward recorded that he had received a shipment of grain that he did not need and gave it to Margaret because "she needs it more than the grocer."⁶⁶

Woodland gave birth to a child in the spring of 1870 after Marts had left the Wards' home to study for the clergy at Knox College in Illinois, and she asked Ward for help in locating the child's father. "Your rascality committed in my house has long been known to me," Ward wrote in his letter. He opened with a litany of charges against Marts's character, not for the relationship itself, which seemed to have little interest for Ward, but for his behavior in leaving a "bastard child" alone. "I write to demand on penalty of exposure and disgrace that you begin immediately to do what the law requires of such villains and none but a pious villain like you would do from a sense of honor."

Ward demanded that Marts begin monthly payments to the young woman and insisted that he buy her a house and lot in Washington, D.C., as soon as possible. If he refused this first request, Ward said, he would publicly disgrace the young man until "you pray your God to swallow you up in the earth. . . . Think not," Ward continued, "because she is a black woman you can be allowed to go scot free. In this country there is no distinction on account of color." Ward ended his letter in language reminiscent of the best mid-century sentimental novels:

I will pursue and ostracize you out of the country. You're a fine specimen of a Christian! Member of the YMCA! Always lecturing everybody to get religion! You hypocrite! Religion! Is that religion to seduce your landlord's colored servants and then abscond? Christian! Does Christianity teach you to do such dastardly deeds? . . . I promise you that every person in Washington and out of it too as far as I can proclaim it, who ever heard of you shall know all about your villainy in six months if you don't comply instantly with my demand.⁶⁷

Ward's appeal did not move Marts at all, and Margaret Woodland soon left the Wards' home to care for her child.

If Ward had a distinct hostility toward organized religion, he was not entirely without an interest in religious faith. In fact, he searched throughout the late 1860s to find a place of intellectual and psychological comfort.

He and Lizzie still went to the Unitarian Church, a faith well attuned to someone like Ward who had long been searching for a middle way between piety and rationalism; someone who was long interested in Enlightenment thinking. More important, however, was Ward's continual experimenting with various forms of faith. He was drawn to free thought and spiritualism, finding them especially attractive and interesting. He read the spiritualist journal *Banner of Light* and found it "very interesting."⁶⁸ In late 1868 he purchased a Ouija board and began to hold small séances in his house. "We tried all evening to make the ouija board work," Ward wrote after one party, "but although it runs easily over the paper it does not write, we fear." A few days later, on Christmas Day 1868, Ward recorded that "we enjoyed the ouija board greatly. I showed the scrawlings to Evans [a spiritualist friend of Ward's]. He said the spirits were playing with our hands, and that they would soon learn to write." In addition to experimenting with spiritualism in his home Ward also attended the public performances of well-known spiritualist mediums, in particular the famous Brothers Davenport, who had come to national fame based on the events at Fox farm in Hylesville, New York, in the late 1840s.⁶⁹

This religious experimentation was not unusual among Americans in the middle of the nineteenth century. Many experimented with various forms of religious faith and also accepted a liberal attitude toward inherited religion. Before the Civil War Ward did not see in religious theology a meaningful way to understand the world and his position in it. The experience of battle did little to fundamentally change that belief. In the late 1860s and into the 1870s Ward continued searching for a way to make sense of the world around him. He rejected as a "grave and serious error" the belief that morality and religion could advance the progressive march of American institutions. Instead, he sought a broad-minded and cultivated scientific intellect: "The great panacea for all our doubts and dangers," he wrote in 1866, "is the thorough and universal education of the mental powers. With a lofty and polished intellect, the moral and religious natures will shape themselves right. Show me a man with an intellect, refined, lofty, and ennobled by service in the vast field of science, art, and letters, and I will show you one of exceptional moral character and [a] profound respecter of the sublime and imperishable truths."⁷⁰ But it was not until the early 1870s that Ward finally began to elaborate on exactly how science could serve as a meaningful replacement for religious faith and as a basis for reform in the United States after the destruction of slavery.

If religious faith did not motivate Ward, politics most certainly did. It was, in many ways, the collision of his political and social views with his search for meaning beyond religious faith that would lead Ward into new scientific directions in the late 1860s and early 1870s. Lester and Lizzie

Ward were sincerely interested in the rights of African Americans to share in the privileges of national citizenship, and, in fact, believed that it had to serve as the only basis for reconstruction of the South. Ward was a Radical Republican through and through, arguing, as most of them did, that justice for the former slaves and not peace needed to be the first accomplishment of the government after the war. He was thoroughly convinced that this needed to be a national activity, not one undertaken by the states. Many Radicals expressed the same faith, and in the first five years after the Civil War they undertook a crusade to establish a basis for equality and civil rights based on national power. They eventually failed but these years helped convince Ward that national power was necessary to maintain democracy, equality, and freedom.

Ward was horrified by the prospect that the recently defeated Southern slaveholders would be able to return to power. Bloodshed and war, he argued, would be the only result if the federal government did not act quickly. In late 1865 he wrote about the first postwar elections, "There have been elections in several States of the Union, both North and South. The former have made it plain that they wish to have the rebels kept under military law. The latter have elected Rebels to Congress, and to State positions."⁷¹ Ward declared that the president should leave reconstruction to Congress given his obvious sympathies for the South. When Radicals succeeded in passing the Civil Rights Bill of 1866, Ward rejoiced: "The triumphant event of the week is the passing of the Civil Rights Bill through the Senate over the veto of the President. . . . It is an accomplishment which makes a ray of joy penetrate into all hearts that love the country. . . . The old ship of state seems to be turning back to the port of safety." When the House of Representatives passed the bill as well, Ward proclaimed that "the President is not king of America."⁷²

Ward participated in a number of events celebrating emancipation. He attended speeches of universal suffrage advocates throughout the city and attended the events of the huge emancipation celebration by African Americans in the District of Columbia in 1866. He rejoiced in every Radical Republican victory as the party pushed through measures to ensure the protections for civil liberties and legal equality in the nation. Basic civil rights seemed to him a fundamental component of national life; this was, in part, the reason for his anger toward Marts when he left Margaret on her own with a child. The vote was absolutely essential for African Americans if they were to be able to protect themselves and participate in national affairs. He helped purchase land for the fund to support Howard University, established in Washington for the education of African Americans. He refused to buy groceries from a store that did not treat African Americans equally with whites. He recorded in one entry in his diary that "I had some difficulty in persuading a grocer across the street to take back

a loaf of bad bread which she had sold Margaret, our Negro maid, for a cent more than she sells it to the whites, and she denied that she had sold it at all."⁷³

And, more than anything in Reconstruction politics, Ward hated Andrew Johnson. Ward celebrated every defeat for Johnson, seeing him as a traitor to Lincoln's memory and the memory of all the soldiers whom he believed had fought for the protections of equality and freedom denied by slaveholders. Thaddeus Stevens was his new hero. When Johnson was impeached, Ward and his wife were in Congress listening to the orations. "We went to the Capitol to hear and see everything. There were great orations by Bingham, Farnsworth, Kelley, Logan, and others. The Democrats have to all appearances lost their last hope. It is as obvious enough that the hour had finally arrived when it was necessary to peace and country to bring this wicked and dangerous man to the Senate bar to answer to his accusers."⁷⁴ When Republicans voted for acquittal Ward was horrified: "These seven," he wrote, "must be classed henceforth among the Democrats, the Rebels, the traitors, the scoundrels."⁷⁵

In an unpublished essay written in 1868 Ward considered the question of whether or not African Americans were naturally inferior to whites. His attitudes about social equality reflected the paternalism and "romantic racialism" of Radical Republican ideas regarding race although he was committed to the principles of basic equality. African Americans were decidedly not unequal to whites in endowment or capacity. They were unequal in education and culture, not allowed to progress far enough because of the bulwark of slavery. Ward's cultural history of race was far different from a mid-nineteenth-century scientific racism that saw color determining success. In fact, the idea expressed here flew in the face of what many scientists accepted, whatever they believed about the origins of the human species: blacks were and always would be inferior to whites because of innate characteristics. Although Ward did believe that Western culture was generally superior this was not something determined by nature or permanent in history; it was, instead, accidental.

That the advantages of both these races have not been equal it requires but a superficial knowledge of the facts to render manifest. Allotted by chance to a tropical climate, always enervating to any people; thinly scattered over the country, a circumstance fatal to intellectual progress, and divided into hostile factions instead of united into great nations, which alone can protect and promote learning and the liberal arts, the African race has been debarred from any chance of improving in their native country, while in this country, in a state of bondage so abject that it was made a crime to receive or impart instruction, the only wonder is that they have not sunk lower into barbarism and degradation; and the very fact that they have not, argues well for their inborn talent and their natural mental and moral endowments.⁷⁶

The successful enactment of civil rights laws by Radicals in Congress, Ward hoped, had established a basic civil equality for the nation's African American community and would soon provide a framework for progress. Ward concluded that if Americans looked into the future they would see a revolution coming: "Rise above the mists and prejudices of the present and look forward in the dim vista of the future and behold the black man clothed in the imperial purple and the judicial ermine and basking in the sunshine of literature, science, art. 'There are more things in Heaven and earth Horatio than you ever dreamed in your philosophy.'"77

Following the successful passage of voting rights for African Americans, Ward identified only one great cause left for the nation to solve: voting rights for women. He held radical ideas about women's rights and participated in debates regarding their right to vote: "Women's suffrage is but a question of time," he argued. "It will be followed by the complete mental, moral, and physical emancipation of women."⁷⁸ Ward's feminism is one of the reasons that he had joined Washington's equal suffrage society, a branch of the national Equal Rights Association movement founded by Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony at the May 1866 women's rights convention. Ward was a very strong supporter of women's suffrage and participated in all of the organizing events in Washington, including attending the speeches of the leading women's rights activists such as Lucretia Mott, Stanton, and the famed orator Anna Dickenson. Ward recorded in his diary the agitation in Washington regarding universal suffrage being pushed in early 1869 by feminists in the city: "I accompanied my wife to the Women's Rights convention in Carroll Hall. Several well educated women made excellent addresses. Lizzie visited the convention on Wednesday afternoon and we both went in the evening. The women show a great deal of talent. I hope that they will get what they are trying for. Lizzie is stirred to the depths on the subject of suffrage for women."⁷⁹

As Ward indicated in this diary entry, at least some of his ardor for women's rights came from his wife's own interests. Lizzie Ward had her own strongly felt convictions regarding the radical politics of Reconstruction, as well as the rights of African Americans and women in postwar America. Lizzie was well aware of the plight of former slaves after the war since she taught in a school for freedmen and women. The young couple also subscribed to the radical journal *The Revolution*, called "an organ for a national party for a new America" and edited by Stanton and Anthony. The journal advocated a radical position on the voting rights of women and blacks; its motto was "principle not policy—justice, not favors—men their rights and nothing more—women their rights and nothing less."⁸⁰ *The Revolution* was not the first women's rights journal but

it was by far one of the most radical magazines in the nineteenth century on women's rights. The Wards had a natural attraction to it and were early subscribers to the short-lived publication (which folded after less than three years). In late May 1869, Lizzie wrote an editorial letter to the journal in response to a conversation she allegedly overheard between two black men. The letter recorded in crude language that the two men ridiculed the right of women to vote. "I am willing to give men all their rights—more than willing—but as self-preservation is the first of Nature's laws, it behooves me to be careful that they shall deprive me of none of mine. The argument that the negro *man* requires the ballot to protect himself, applies with greater force to the negro *woman*, for she needs to be protected from two tyrants, her present, as well as her former master." Lizzie's deeply felt radicalism found in the movement for equal rights "the assurance that I shall find something to lighten the cares of life, and give me a higher idea of womanhood, something that shall strengthen my faith in the glorious cause that shall revolutionize the world and make it a second Eden."⁸¹

By the late 1860s, Lizzie and Lester Ward expanded their reading lists to include more works of science and philosophy. Lester Ward purchased an "Index Rerum" to keep notations and lists of the books that he and Lizzie read; it was a practice he was to maintain for the rest of his life. As they read more widely in works of English philosophy and European scientific thought, Lizzie and Lester Ward slowly came to find a replacement for religion as an intellectual system. Increasingly, religion seemed to both of them an inadequate way to understand the forces shaping the modern world. By the late 1860s, the Wards identified only science and governmental reform as the saving graces of the American republic, replacing the "religious bondage" of the human mind. "It is primarily a revolution of ideas," Lester Ward wrote. "It is turning from error to truth, an abandonment of the useless and pernicious notions of the past and a rallying around the great progressive principles of the present, a revolt from faith and authority and an adherence to fact and to reason." He was hopeful that the potential inherent in the American democratic experiment would reform the nation: "The recognition of merit and not condition, of character and not caste, will wipe out the base and unnatural distinctions of rank and blood and titles, of race, color, sex and creed, and place all men (and all women) upon a perfect equality."⁸²

In an essay he wrote on land reform, one of the most potent political issues in Reconstruction America, Ward argued that the study of the laws of property revealed the necessity for regulation by the national government. The only way to seriously change land law, he concluded, was through the national state. "The watchword of the age is individual proprietorship. The spirit of the times is competitive rivalry for possession.

Private enterprise is the keynote of the nineteenth century. Under its magic influence the condition of man and the face of nature have undergone greater and more beneficial changes than under any other system yet tried. But yet it cannot be ignored that there is looming upon the future another mighty system, a system opposed to the present competitive one—the communistic system."⁸³ What Ward gained from his brief study of land tenure was the notion of stages of social development. National history was cyclical, Ward believed; the original proprietorship over land belonged to the entire community and moved successively through stages to the competitive system currently in place. Ward's belief that there was to be a return to community proprietorship became a commonly held idea for late-nineteenth-century land reform, especially among scientists and intellectuals in Washington. This idea shaped Ward's view of land in the West when he worked with the western surveys in the middle of the 1870s. But even more importantly this essay and his others on religion revealed Ward's growing interest in the power of the national state to shape the progress of American institutions. His struggle to find explanations for the pace of national development was to eventually lead him to write his first major book on social philosophy.

Ward finished his classes at Columbian College in 1869 and obtained a bachelor's degree; in 1871 he earned a second bachelor's in law at the school. College officials had admitted him as an advanced student based on his own extensive self-education and his performance on a series of tests that the school administered before his matriculation. He was able to complete his degrees so quickly that in 1872 he returned for a Master of Arts degree, which he received in 1873. Lizzie also finished her studies in the late 1860s, graduating as valedictorian of her class at the Union Female Seminary. For both of them, their long dreams of education had been accomplished, but it remained to be seen if they would profit from their efforts.

In the early 1870s, Lester Ward decided to pursue admission to the District of Columbia bar, which he did receive, but he never practiced law or seriously considered it a possible vocation. Although he grew tired of his position in the Bureau of Statistics, law never seemed to interest him much. He wanted something more—although what that might be still eluded him. In the final entry to his surviving diary, written in early 1870, Ward concluded that "there is really no profession I should like well enough to practice. . . . The more I consider the subject the more I am disposed to feel that my proper field is that of an author. I have made a good beginning on a book, and I find that I derive solid pleasure from it and that I have auctorial qualities. What I need now is to read the great authors and make many scientific experiments."⁸⁴

Ward's ambitions were boundless in the late 1860s and early 1870s. He had achieved much by the late 1860s—a home, a loving wife, and a good

position with the government. Still, this was not enough to satisfy him. He wanted to do more and believed that if he worked hard enough, he could become involved in more important work for the nation. In the ensuing decade he was largely successful. By the early 1880s, he was to become one of the leading spokesmen for a growing intellectual community in the nation's capital city, which had its origins in the years immediately following the war. Ward was just one of a host of men and women who arrived in Washington after the war and initiated a major attempt to remake the city and the nation.

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The Land of Birds and Flowers, 1870–1879

When Lester Ward recalled his experience in Washington during the fifteen years from the end of the Civil War to the 1880s, he highlighted his philosophical and educational awakening to the power of science as a kind of conversion experience. Science, he believed, had become the leading force for progressive change after the war, and it became the primary duty of government in the postwar world to obtain scientific data and information. For Ward, science replaced religion—or rather surpassed religion—as a coherent system of ideas with which to guide the social development of the nation. The conflict between religious faith and scientific rationalism framed Ward’s awakening in the 1870s, and in ruminating over this contest Ward began to form the basis for his ideological reworking of American liberalism. Beginning with a vicious rejection of American religion in the early 1870s, Ward eventually settled into a frame of mind that did not so much reject religion wholesale but historicized it. He placed it in the past history of human society that the nation now needed to break from forever.

Ward was not alone in his convictions. Many intellectuals envisioned science as a major force for social and cultural change in the postwar United States. They hoped that science could provide answers to all of the problems facing the nation in the last decades of the nineteenth century. Ward’s scientific work in the 1870s and early 1880s expanded his intellectual universe and helped to complete his drive for intellectual advancement and success. He became connected to a wider world of ideas, to a trans-Atlantic intellectual community, and his struggle with these ideas ultimately resulted in the publication of his (and the nation’s) first

work of theoretical sociology. "The love of nature . . . which had formed the ruling passion of [my] boyhood," he recalled, "had been smothered through all these years under the combined weight of poverty, war, and conventional education. But those youthful fires had not been extinguished. Ever and anon, in the midst of the long dreary journey, they would flame up and illuminate [my] soul." When he finally found full-time work as a government scientist in the 1880s, he wrote, "[I] had now completed [my] voyage and was at last in full view of the promised land—the land of birds and flowers."¹

Washington, D.C., was a headquarters for this kind of scientific work in the late nineteenth century. In fact, Ward's faith in the government and his faith in Washington as the national city where this work could be centralized were shared by a wide number of intellectuals in the years after the Civil War. This image stands in stark contrast to the traditional portrait of Gilded Age Washington, a city awash in political scandal, corruption, and bribery—hardly a place to make a center of scientific development and reform. Even residents of the nation's capital found little to praise in the city, still very much a sleepy southern hamlet ruled by a very closed politics and a fashionable high society. Henry Adams, like Ward a witness to Washington's growth after the war, described the social scene in his satirical novel, *Democracy*, which mocked the pretensions and sensibilities of the city's provincial politics and cultural life. Adams had no love for the partisan politics and political culture of late-nineteenth-century America. He expressed little hope for an American republic engaged in the intrigues and the "dance of democracy" that substituted for the national government during the late 1860s and 1870s. As a new president entered office, Adams complained, "the two whited sepulchers at either end of the Avenue reek with the thick atmosphere of bargain and sale. The old is going; the new is coming. Wealth, office, power are at auction. Who bids the highest? who hates with the most venom? who intrigues with most skill? who has done the dirtiest, the meanest, the darkest, and the most political work? He shall have his reward." Corruption, scandal, and bribery, Adams concluded, had replaced the cultural and learned elite of the republic's founders (and of his own ancestry).²

Not that this image was entirely unwarranted. Ward and other scientists, in fact, wanted to change the city as well as the nation's corrupt politics and political system. What is striking, however, is how the city became a national center for scientific and reform activity even in the midst of the political problems of Gilded Age politics. Washington's growth in the years after the Civil War was impressive, owing mostly to the influx of war veterans and office seekers trying to feed off the expansion of the federal government that had begun during the war. Government employment remained a very attractive alternative for a large

number of young men after the war, offering comparatively high salaries, solid on-the-job training, and a chance at upward mobility for the citizen-soldiers who had fought the war. Government positions grew fivefold in the 1860s, expanding the opportunities for middle-class employment among young men like Ward.³

By the early 1870s, the city itself had improved as well. Architects and city planners, under the direction of Boss Alexander Shepherd, began to transform the city into a true national center worthy of a great nation. They improved streets from the dirty little roads that hampered traffic in the city, and they also completed national sculptures such as the Washington Monument. The nation's civic architecture took shape during and just after the war with the completion of the Capitol Building, the State and Navy buildings, and the new home for the Library of Congress. Builders and wealthy families replaced ramshackle and run-down homes, constructing grand residences that still stand in many quarters of the city. It was a slow but consistent recovery from the damages of the war, and it also meant making the city a shining example of the nation's glory.

Moreover, the city finally became a national center of scientific and intellectual activity. Both Adams and Ward played important parts in the growth of late-nineteenth-century Washington's scientific and intellectual community. Although Adams was to quit the city by the 1880s and leave the rough-and-tumble of Washington's social and political life, Ward stayed for four decades. He became part of a broad community of intellectuals and scientists including Major John Wesley Powell, geologist, explorer, and the leading member of Washington's scientific associations; Carroll Wright, economist and statistician formerly of the Massachusetts Bureau of Labor who became the director of the federal government's Bureau of Labor Statistics; Simon Newcomb, astronomer and mathematician; Spencer Baird, secretary of the Smithsonian Institution for much of the late nineteenth century; George Brown Goode, scientist and head of the National Museum for much of the 1880s and 1890s; and, by the late 1870s and early 1880s, W J McGee, one of the leading environmental thinkers in the nation and a staunch critic of federal land and water policy.

These men became the central figures in an emerging scientific community that sought to influence the function and operation of government bureaus in the late nineteenth century. Their institutional loyalty was to the role of government science in American public service and to the bureaus that became central knowledge- and data-gathering organizations in America: the United States Geological Survey, the Bureau of Statistics, the Bureau of Labor, and the National Museum, as well as private groups such as the Anthropological Society of Washington, the Washington Philosophical Society, the Cosmos Club, the National Geographic Society, and a whole host of other scientific associations born in

the years after the Civil War. The history of these organizations stretched as far back as the establishment of the Smithsonian Institution in the 1840s but it was not until after the Civil War that they acquired the public support, the scientific knowledge, and a committed group of active partisans necessary to create a thriving intellectual community in the capital city. Outside of the Boston-Cambridge area, where leading intellectuals such as William James, Charles Sanders Peirce, Chauncey Wright, and others worked on similar problems regarding the foundations of modern thinking about science and religion, Washington became a national intellectual and scientific center in America's much maligned "Gilded Age."

Washington's intellectual community nurtured Ward's growth in the 1870s and into the 1880s, and the book that he began in 1869 was designed in part to reflect the importance of Washington and of national government to the progress of the nation. His book and the study of science became his ruling passions for the next decade. He labored on the book whenever he could. He entitled it "The Great Panacea," intending to examine the broad possibilities education offered as a means to national reform. The basic subject of the book was scientific investigation and the meaning of science for the proper education of the mind: "The most healthy condition of the human mind is one of skepticism," Ward wrote as he worked on his book, "that is to say neither belief nor unbelief in the undemonstrated but a desire to investigate. Too much of the investigation of men is for the purpose of establishing pre-adopted theories and not to ascertain the truth."⁴ Ward gained his most important experience in science from his own reading; he did not consider his formal education very helpful for his pursuit of "the great panacea," and was to become very critical of conventional educational approaches in the nation's classrooms. By the end of his life he had concluded that it was this "unofficial work" that remained his most important contribution to science: "From 1865 to 1881," he wrote, "I must insist that the only useful work I ever did, work that counts in any way for the general good of my race—dynamic work—was wholly unofficial."⁵

During the late 1860s and early 1870s the lyceum circuit had helped make him aware of the major scientific thinkers of the nineteenth century, and Ward's diary indicates that he followed the debates concerning evolution and the scientific method in journals such as *Revue des deux Monde*, where he first read articles about positivism and evolutionary theory. Scientific theory and practice was undergoing a revolution by the late 1860s and early 1870s prompted in large part by the publication of Charles Darwin's *On the Origin of Species* in 1859. Darwin's work inspired a rethinking of science, fact, and confidence throughout the trans-Atlantic intellectual community.

The very definition of what constituted science changed over the course of the late nineteenth century in the face of Darwin's challenge to a mech-

anistic conception of the universe. Before the Civil War, science could comfortably “confirm faith, and proclaim religion,” in the search for God’s mysterious plan for the universe.⁶ But the cumulative work of scientists in the nineteenth century gradually eroded this faith, and in the decade following the Civil War scientific work engendered profound and furious debates about faith and meaning, about the nature of the universe, and about the nature of truth itself. Darwin’s great contribution to this debate was not evolutionary theory itself—though he was one of the great theorists of evolutionary change—since many scientists and, for that matter, theologians could agree that the world changed over time. The idea of evolution was hardly new by the mid-nineteenth century. But in his theory of natural selection through heredity Darwin rejected any grand intelligence controlling change, offering instead a probable explanation for change over time in the earth’s history; it was an unsettling revelation for many people to grasp Darwin’s belief that species could change, disappear, and emerge without a directing creative intelligence, driven only by some unknown competitive force in nature that he called natural selection.

Chance, it seemed to many upon reading Darwin, might rule the natural world. God had not created species to exist in time forever. What Darwin did with the theory of natural selection is offer a possible explanation based on probability and observation about why species rise and fall, change and grow, or simply die out never to be seen again. He could not explain *why* certain species won out in this battle for life, since he could not know the mechanisms of genetics, only that there was nothing guiding this struggle for existence. Darwin had “tamed chance,” as Ian Hacking has argued, because he understood that probability is another way of explaining group behavior, albeit without a grand intelligence in control of change.⁷

Darwin had built his idea of natural selection on both his observations and his interpretation of the evolutionary theories of a wide variety of nineteenth-century scientific thinkers such as French natural scientist Jean-Baptiste Lamarck, who argued for changing species in the early nineteenth century, and English geographer Charles Lyell, whose geological uniformitarianism, proclaimed in his famous *Principles of Geology* written in the 1830s, argued that profound physical forces with no connection to a directive intelligence made the earth. But in addition to science Darwin sought explanations in politics and economics as well. Natural selection was in some important ways a theory modeled on the free market of Adam Smith and even more so in Thomas Malthus’s study of population, *Essay on the Principle of Population*. In the nineteenth century, as in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, science had a political basis and a political meaning.⁸

The political and social consequences were not lost on contemporaries, especially to theologians who feared that their authority to explain the world was slipping away from them. The biblical story of creation, where species existed *sui generis* once and forever, now appeared more and more untenable in the minds of many in the nineteenth century. Darwin's work created a storm of opinion and concern in the trans-Atlantic theological community. In Britain, Europe, and the United States many theologians vented their anger and horror in magazines, newspapers, and books at the ungodly interpretation Darwin had provided of change in the natural world. This only became worse with Darwin's publication of *The Descent of Man* (1871); the belief that man had descended from the lower apes was even more horrifying and ridiculous.

Darwin's work did not go unchallenged. It created some of the most profound intellectual debate in the century, and it was this work that Ward read in journals, books, and magazines in the late 1860s and 1870s. As an ambitious autodidact, Ward tackled as many thinkers as he could come across, although he occasionally relied on the secondhand information from magazines for some of his ideas. His wide but unfocused reading gave his learning a unique kind of eclecticism; in no way was his education uniform or consistent. With no clear intellectual models to follow, Ward moved rather haphazardly between topics in science and philosophy, a trait often reflected in his later books. It gave him a wide field of reference, but by the end of his career it also meant little specialization and a rather old-fashioned view of scientific methods. By this time he had not read Darwin himself—though he read about him—nor had he done much of any scientific work.

By early 1870, as Ward completed the first part of his manuscript, it was the scientific debates of the day that most concerned him. He wanted to make an important contribution of his own to these debates and to reflect on the relationship between science and religion. The book consisted of three chapters: "Nature," "Man," and "Mind." Although he examined the key issues facing scientists after Darwin's work, Ward decided to limit his discussion of the scientific and philosophical debates that raged in the early 1870s. He wrote and worked in isolation, he said later, in order to maintain his own clarity of vision and purpose: "[I] purposely resisted entering upon this systematic course of necessary preparation," he recalled, "for fear that, amid all the conflicting views that [I] was certain to find, something might be lost of that original vigor of presentation which must attend the original delivery of [my] unbiased message to the world."⁹ This gives his early work a peculiar kind of quality but it reflects Ward's character even more broadly. Throughout his life he would shun detailed analysis of conflicting ideas, preferring instead to plow through with his own sense of the way nature and the social world worked. For some, it

made him thrilling to read and boldly original in ideas, particularly for the first generation of social scientists who would pick up his work in the 1880s. For others, Ward seemed mired in abstraction, lacked the ability to be introspective about his work, and unable to escape from his own preconceived ideas about the world.

The most important influence on his scientific worldview in these years was Louis Agassiz. Born in Switzerland in 1807, Agassiz was one of the best-known scientists in the world when he arrived with much fanfare in America in the 1840s; for thirty years he was the leading commentator on scientific subjects in the nation, and, after the publication of Darwin's book, he was the leading critic of Darwinian theories of evolutionary change. By the late 1860s and until his death in 1873, Agassiz was a distinguished professor at Harvard, the director of the school's Lawrence Scientific School, and the founder of one of the nation's great museums of natural history, the Museum of Comparative Zoology. Ward first heard the famous naturalist speak in Washington in early 1868, proclaiming his talk on organic life somewhat disappointing but nonetheless "very scientific and rather instructive."¹⁰ After hearing him speak Ward sought out all the scientific work he could by Agassiz and other leading evolutionists and antievolutionists.

Agassiz's great contributions to scientific interpretation in the nineteenth century were his theories of the immutability of species and his notions about the evolution of the human race—in fact, it was his theories about race and human origin that involved him in political debate in the 1850s and 1860s. Already a staunch critic of developmental theories of evolution, especially Darwin's notions of natural selection, Agassiz argued that his function as a scientist and the function of science in general was to discover the patterns in God's plan of creation. Every species had a separate and independent creation, Agassiz argued, scoffing at Darwinian arguments about the development and competition of species over time. Darwin, Agassiz announced, could offer little or no proof for his hypothesis of evolutionary development. Of course, neither could Agassiz offer proof for biblical creationism. He could only reassert God's authority over the natural world and proclaim that He had created the species and placed them on earth.¹¹

Agassiz despised Darwin's hypothesis and spent much of the last fifteen years of his life working on ideas to refute evolution and the theory of natural selection. He was, in fact, the champion of theologians who were trying to counter Darwin's influence in their periodicals. Since Agassiz's stature as a scientist was enormous, he became the darling of a religious community seeking to refute Darwinian ideas at every turn. This also probably attracted Ward to him since he had not yet found an antidote to his religious confusion or accepted a fully rationalistic view of the world.

In the section of his book entitled "Nature," Ward followed much though not all of Agassiz's lead. Science, in his conception, offered order and control where the undirected human eye saw only chaos and confusion. He rejected a wholly naturalistic evolution as a far too mechanistic interpretation of change. Instead he turned to a strict interpretation of Baconian science and the collection and classification of the materials in the natural world. Ward strictly followed the principles of Baconian science as scientists commonly understood them in the middle of the century: inductive reasoning through the accumulation of the "facts" of nature. The inductive method, Ward felt, far surpassed any a priori theorizing: "While the knowledge gained from all speculative philosophy, all traditional history, all ancient records, and all abstract reasoning is burdened with doubt, uncertainty and complexity, that which results from scientific research and inductive reasoning is clear, simple, and positive."¹²

Ward's notion of science rested firmly on this absolute empiricism. Darwin's great challenge to scientific method, knowledge, and practice, as some historians have argued, consisted of the probabilistic elements of his developmental theory. Darwin's theory of natural selection had presented an element of unpredictability and chaos, it seemed, into what was supposed to be the objective knowledge of science. Ward, on the other hand, argued that the study and practice of science proved that "what before seemed chaos now seems harmonious action; what before was complexity now seems simplicity; what before appeared multiplicity now becomes unity. By means of better and better classification, closer and closer analysis and higher and higher generalization we are arriving step by step nearer and nearer the great fundamental truths which underlie the universe itself."¹³ In Ward's mind, progress over time was continual, clear, and obvious to the scientist who collected, classified, and organized the facts of nature.

Ward's thinking at this point in his career thus remained remarkably free of the challenges of Darwinian science. He paid little attention to the developmental theory of species advocated by Darwinian evolutionists in this early manuscript. Instead he followed the theory of the fixity of species, gained through his knowledge of Agassiz's scientific work. When it came to the development of man, for example, Ward again followed Agassiz's lead. Man, he argued, "is but a transient inhabitant of this changing planet. The conditions existed for his creation and he was created. Time was when he could not have survived an hour had Nature sprung him into being. Time will be when, like the races of creatures which have arisen, flourished, and perished from changes which the earth was undergoing, he too must perish and become extinct."¹⁴ Man's creation was a spontaneous act of generation from the force of nature and God and not necessarily the product of long-term developmental changes in species.

In his chapter on “Man,” Ward traced the history of the human races and again followed most of Agassiz’s directives. Agassiz argued for the distinct creation of the separate races. It was not a novel argument in mid-nineteenth-century science, but Agassiz’s fame and authority gave the theory significant influence. In this respect, Agassiz differed with much of the religious community since the book of Genesis offered no support for the belief in separate creation for the races. Still, Agassiz held firm to the idea that each of the races had a distinct creation. He also held that each race was firmly fixed in a hierarchy with whites clearly at the top and blacks on the bottom. Agassiz’s political feelings about social and civil equality for blacks were widely known by the mid-nineteenth century. He never hid his contempt for abolitionists who threatened, he believed, to lead the nation to racial impurity and ruin should blacks be offered any form of equality with whites. Before the Civil War he was a very popular speaker in the American South because he lent scientific authority to this racism.

Ward did follow Agassiz’s idea about distinct creation but despite his approval of this theory, Ward never agreed with Agassiz’s political conclusions about equal rights for all men. He tempered Agassiz’s pessimism with his own political convictions about the basic equality of all humans. In keeping with his political ideals, Ward argued that differences ascribed to the races amount more to the lack of civilization and culture than to innate biological characteristics. As he had said at the end of the Civil War, success was more the result of circumstance than the ability to achieve. Yet Ward still felt that there were differences between “savage” and “civilized” races in the world: “There is . . . the best reason to believe, indeed there is scarcely room to doubt that each of the races which have been distinguished by naturalists, though not of a distinct species is nevertheless the result of a distinct creation.”¹⁵

In essence, Ward took the middle ground in the debate about the origins of species and developmental notions of evolutionary change. He fully accepted the reality of change over time but still doubted the evidence that Darwinian evolution offered. He argued throughout these sections of the manuscript that the changes scientists witnessed were manifestations of a kind of “vital force” in nature. Although he did not suggest that there was a biblical plan for nature, he still did not accept—or really understand—the Darwinian hypothesis about competition and natural selection. There was a “grand universal intelligence” moving evolution. When he studied the development of man, Ward held firm to the notion that there were separate creations of human races. Nevertheless, he argued, the political conclusions drawn from this fact were moral and ethical questions, not scientific ones. Moreover, although the idea of development offered a beautiful and orderly theory of change, Ward felt at this point that the rules of scientific fact

gathering did not support it. Scientists needed to look elsewhere if they wanted to understand the origins of species.

In his study of "Mind," Ward held to notions that he had inherited from his common school training and his education in moral philosophy. Man was preeminently a progressive, rational creature guided by intellect. The human mind was a continually progressing force that shaped the destiny of the world; the mind offered rational control where before there seemed only chaos: "[The] intellect only progresses and causes man's progress. . . . It is the power of collecting materials for advancement and of using them when collected; it is the force that thinks and knows and reasons."¹⁶ What was most important, from Ward's point of view, was an intellect properly trained in the philosophy of science: a mind tuned to the collection, organization, and interpretation of the facts of the natural world. Man's reason allowed him to understand the processes of nature. "In every case," Ward argued, "it has been reason that has broken the links of error's chain and lifted man up step by step . . . to the condition of natural and absolute equality in the exercise of his endowments."¹⁷

When he began to revise his manuscript in the late 1870s, Ward reworked many of his ideas about scientific method, practice, and knowledge. The continual clash of his political and social views as well as his continual education in scientific literature and study helped him reformulate his ideas. His later introduction to scientific positivism and further exposure to Darwinian theory tempered his strict and simplistic Baconianism, and whatever interest he still had in moral philosophy was soon removed from his scientific worldview. He eventually rejected the separate creation of human races for a theory more closely attuned to developmental changes in species and to an ethnographic interpretation relying on historical development and anthropological investigation of various stages of social organization. The ethical content of his ideas remained constant, however, and he held onto his determination to educate the world in scientific knowledge—much as he had educated himself. He ended the first three chapters of the manuscript with a call for the education of all citizens, his "great panacea" for the social and philosophical ills of the world: "The word education embraces all those varied events, influences, fluctuations, and vicissitudes which surround and attend the life of every individual from the cradle to the grave. . . . This is the great truth of the century, the great balm for the wounds of the world, and the entering wedge which is to cleave asunder the mountain of wrath which society has been so long heaping over itself, and lay the foundation for that broad and exalted charity and that liberal and ennobling education which are to go hand in hand and consummate the edenization of the world."¹⁸

When Ward finished the first part of his book in late 1869 and 1870, he quickly became involved with a project that put many of his ideas about

science and social reform to the test, revealing an even more deep-seated hatred of religion than he had earlier expressed. Lester and Lizzie Ward were the main organizers of a small political society called the National Liberal Reform League. They held the first meeting of the organization in their home and soon gained the interest of Lester Ward's friends and colleagues in Washington's federal bureaucracy. In December 1869, with the help of the publisher of the *Boston Investigator*, Ward printed and mailed a circular announcing the purposes of the association for the "dissemination of Liberal Ideas." Ward explained in the circular letter,

The crowning characteristic of this organization is the entire indemnity which it affords every member from the proscriptions of public opinion, the ostracism of society, and all the blows which religious bigotry never fails to aim at the social, political, and business interests of the enemies of superstition, whenever they can be identified. . . . An earnest appeal is therefore made to all who favor the objects above set forth under whatever name they prefer to be styled, Liberals, Skeptics, Infidels, Secularists, Utilitarians, Socialists, Positivists, Spiritualists, Deists, Theists, Pantheists, Atheists, Free-thinkers, all who desire the mental emancipation of mankind from the trammels of superstition, and the dominion of priestcraft.¹⁹

It is not surprising that Ward turned to a Boston publisher for assistance in his project—Abner Kneeland, the original publisher of the *Investigator*, had long been interested in secular movements, and this interest in liberal religious values continued under the direction of Horace Seaver and J. P. Mendum. There were a number of liberal and reform partisans in Boston who were interested in similar projects. By the middle of the 1870s there were at least three main national organizations that sought similar objectives to those of the organization created by the Wards: the Free Thought Association, the National Liberal League (later known as the American Secular Union), and the Society for Ethical Culture. All shared a similar hostility to organized religion, and all sought to establish liberal scientific and moral principles at the center of American politics and culture in the late nineteenth century. Men such as Thaddeus Wakeman, a New York leader of the National Liberal League; Reverend Minot Savage, later Ward's friend and correspondent; Felix Adler, the founder of the Society for Ethical Culture; and others all led an assault on the religious beliefs of the nation in favor of a "cult of science" and scientific rationality.²⁰

After the formation of the society and the mailing of his letter, Ward recommended that the Reform League publish a magazine; the first issue appeared in March 1870. Ward edited the magazine, *The Iconoclast*, for eighteen months, a task that absorbed nearly all of his spare time. It was a short publication—no more than about four folio pages—and consisted mostly of portions of books that Ward, his wife, and members of the

league were reading, including portions of works by Darwin, John Stuart Mill, Herbert Spencer, Francis Bacon, and others, as well as excerpts from newspaper stories that he felt were pertinent to "liberal ideas": sections on Reconstruction politics, religious issues in the nation, the rights of former slaves, the rights of labor unions and striking workers, and other materials. The Wards followed closely the progress of most liberal causes in the nation and the world: the Paris Commune, the International Workingmen's Association, efforts at reconstructing the war-torn South, and so on. Most of what Lester Ward wrote and excerpted dealt with a deep-seated anticlericalism, which he had been voicing in unpublished essays, speeches in the lyceums, and his private letter to Marts. Both Lester and Lizzie Ward wrote editorials for the paper that reveal the influences of their reading in science, philosophy, and religion. Two themes are particularly clear: the influence of a positivist conception of science and a rejection of religion as a philosophical system for answering the needs for national reform and intellectual progress.

Ward's first introduction to philosophical positivism came as he worked on his manuscript in 1869, apparently through an article he read in the French journal *Revue des deux Monde*. During his tenure as editor of *The Iconoclast*, Ward tried to read more widely in the school of positive philosophy, associated with the work of French social thinker Auguste Comte. Born in the midst of the French Revolution, Comte gained his education and training while working with utopian socialist Claude-Henri de Saint-Simon. By 1830, Comte began to work on a massive philosophical project, *Cours de philosophie positive*, which took him nearly twelve years to complete. Comte's philosophical work in *Cours* took two main forms: first, to translate Enlightenment empiricism into the study of society itself; second, to explain social development in terms of increasing institutional growth and complexity rather than individual will. Comte sought clearly defined laws of science to explain historical progress.

His most famous theory of positivist philosophy was the "law of three stages," essentially a philosophy of history that traced development of societies over time through systems of ideas. Each stage represented a clear progressive movement of society. The "theological stage" was dominated by man's need to define society by the guiding hand of a supernatural God. The second stage, "metaphysical," represented most clearly by Enlightenment philosophy, discarded a supernatural God for scientific, mechanistic conception of the working of the universe. The final "positive" stage of social organization was an era dominated by a new religious faith in rigorous scientific thinking, replacing theological beliefs with a faith in facts and the laws shaping the natural world.

Comte embraced all knowledge of science in designing his system of philosophy. Scientific thought was organized in a hierarchy of knowl-

edge, where the study of society represented the highest and most sophisticated development of the human mind. He wrote his next major philosophical project, *Système de politique positive*, between 1851 and 1854. As he became more and more convinced that he had hit upon the central truths of social development, Comte assumed that a scientific religion resembling his French Catholicism would combine theology and metaphysics in his last stage of social growth. His last work lapsed into a religious mysticism as he envisioned a scientific priesthood leading a "religion of humanity" to reform the world.

Positivism had a broad meaning for scientists and theologians in the middle of the nineteenth century, and they had vigorously debated its impact in both American and English periodical literature for at least two decades. Comte's proselytizing for his ideas gained a number of followers in both England and the United States in the 1840s and 1850s. Even after his death in 1857, Comte's ideas were still potent intellectual issues in religious and scientific literature. Throughout the trans-Atlantic world Comte's insistence on the scientific rather than ethical study of social problems, his historicism (especially the idea of the law of three stages), and his antitheological stance attracted considerable attention. Positivism's influence extended far beyond Comte's immediate followers. Many intellectuals debated the importance of positivism even as they rejected the specific doctrines of Comte himself. For example, positivism as a system of social thought deeply interested British utilitarians in the middle of the nineteenth century. Ward had some contact with this body of thought through his frequent reading of British periodicals.²¹

The positivism that Ward eventually settled on supported and extended some of his prewar faith in the democratic achievements of the American republic and in the ability of its citizens to achieve human perfection. Gone was the evangelism and emotionalism that animated antebellum efforts at social change and Ward's own early political and intellectual enthusiasm. In scientific positivism, Ward found an outlet for analyzing the natural world (as well as political and social change) that was not dependent on religious orthodoxy. In this way his thinking resembled that of the Boston mathematician Chauncey Wright. Wright was also a thoroughgoing positivist who simply said that since religion and religious faith could not be proven or observed in the way positivists interpreted science, it could be shelved as part of the world that could not be understood. Ward, for his part, still hoped that the nation could eventually achieve true perfection—only now it required a complete social transformation and not an individual conversion alone: "All shall have a common and varied understanding, broad as the human family and lofty as the sublime faculties which are able to grasp it," Ward wrote in one of his unpublished essays. "When all men know alike, think alike, and believe alike, what need will there be of wars

and strife? This grand consummation it is true, can never be fully realized by imperfect man, but the nearer it is approached the nearer shall we be to that other life where perfection is no longer a chimera."²²

Among the many articles and longer works that he read the most important influence on Ward's knowledge of positivism, it is clear, came from his reading of John Stuart Mill and other English utilitarians interested in positivist thought. Mill's short book, *Auguste Comte and Positivism*, originally published in 1865, was one of the main works to introduce Ward to positivist thought, and he often provided quotes from the work in *The Iconoclast*. Mill was something of a hero for Ward because of his wide knowledge of science and philosophy, his politics, and his strong opinions on matters relating to science. In December 1868, for example, Ward had written an angry letter to the editor of *The American Presbyterian* in defense of Mill's politics. The editor had rejoiced at Mill's loss in a parliamentary election because he was not a religious man. Ward excoriated the editor for a closed-mindedness that pitted theological prejudice against liberal politics: "Whatever may be the philosophy of Mr. Mill you are compelled to admit that it had led him to an advocacy of the great principles of progress and reform which the nineteenth century demands." Mill was a true liberal: open-minded, skeptical, and firm in the defense of freedom and natural rights: "Shall the great principles of liberty, of justice, of education, of progress of every kind be sacrificed," Ward asked, "for the propagation of theology, of creeds, of the church?" Ward feared for the consequences if the same attitudes that defeated Mill became general policy in American political debate.²³

Mill's rendering of the positivist creed attracted Ward to positive philosophy and the challenge it offered to religious thinking. Mill's interpretation of Comte's ideas examined the French philosopher's notions of history and historical change as well as his understanding of natural science. Toward the end of his life as Comte lapsed into religious mysticism and advocated the creation of his Religion of Humanity, a number of social thinkers questioned Comte's clarity and even his sanity. Mill deflected much of this criticism, and Ward, who had not yet read Comte himself, fully accepted Mill's definition of Comtean positivism: there is only phenomena (facts), humans can only know phenomena, and accordingly knowledge itself is relative—dependent on its relationship to other events: "These relations," Mill wrote in defining Comte's ideas, "are constant; that is, always the same in the same circumstances. The constant resemblances which link phenomena together, and the constant sequences which unite them as antecedent and consequent, are termed their laws. The laws of phenomena are all we know respecting them."²⁴

Positivist conceptions of scientific practice and philosophy influenced Ward greatly during his years as editor of the Reform League's publica-

tion. "The rising school of philosophy," Ward wrote in December 1870 for *The Iconoclast*, "is that . . . [best] styled positive. . . . Its aims are all utilitarian and its principles humanitarian. It is neither dogmatic nor visionary, but liberal and exact. Taking nature as its only source of information, and the phenomena of the universe as the material for its deductions, it seeks in the observation of their uniformities in the present, to trace all things back to their true origin in the past, and calculate their true destiny in the future."²⁵ Ward observed that educational institutions formed the cornerstone of the systems built by the positive school of philosophy, which resonated well with his own drive to obtain an education: "Education is the keynote of the sociological system of this school of philosophers, and they intend to ring the changes upon it till all the world shall be awakened to its incalculable importance."²⁶ Positivism's rejection of Christian metaphysics in favor of scientific fact, Ward argued, corrected the deficiencies of moral philosophy and provided an antidote to what he had called a few years earlier "man's mental servitude" to religion.

Ward's sense of the importance of science went beyond the strictly physical discoveries and advancements that science had made in the nineteenth century. He extended the influence of a "scientific" view of the world to the moral universe as well: "There is still another scientific triumph which is as great for the moral world as for the physical world. . . . Science is the only foundation for that broad and unlimited charity, which, if ever attained, will prove itself a redemption of the world. . . . Science so far has proved a grand success. . . . Where now is the persecution, the proscription, the torture, which men were wont to inflict for opinion's sake? They are gone, vanished as all evil will vanish under the rays of truth."²⁷ Science, and science alone, he wrote, "affords the highest and purest intellectual delight."²⁸ In short, although he seemed to discard religious thinking entirely as a useful system for explaining truth and social development, Ward did not see the universe as entirely amoral. What was needed was a new kind of morality based on the truths of scientific observation and natural history.

Ward's attitude toward science, positivism, and religion, however, still lacked nuance and depth. His knowledge remained mainly derivative, and he did not extend his philosophical range until prompted to by his relationship with Major John Wesley Powell in the mid- to late 1870s. Ward directed his celebration of science in *The Iconoclast* toward the denigration of religion rather than toward a thorough analysis of the social and philosophical implications of positivism. He celebrated science in the editorials in order to destroy what he envisioned as the idols and "false impressions" of the public mind toward religion.²⁹ Ward, for example, wrote a number of pieces attacking religious institutions, including articles that mocked the religious conception of creation of the universe and of humanity. He was

especially critical of the notion that God made Eve from the breast of Adam, and he provided a satirical rendering of the rationale behind God's attempt to make man. This kind of profeminist reading of creation—one that mocked any natural understanding about the different capacities of men and women—became a basis for Ward's understanding of the development of human societies, and of human evolution generally. He eventually created out of this nascent idea the belief that women were the centers of social development and that the domination of men over women was essentially an historical accident, a theory he called gynaecocracy.³⁰

Lizzie Ward also contributed some of the most interesting material in the magazine, especially her own feminist readings of social problems and the relationship between science and religion. In a poem entitled "Hope On, Hope Ever," Lizzie wrote of the grand truths of scientific inquiry:

the priests are waning now in power,
and triumph shall they never;
for superstition's veil is rent—
hope on, hope ever

In a longer essay, presented as a letter to the editor, she recounted an apocryphal conversation by two Methodists about the dangers of scientific organizations such as the Reform League. After the Methodists determined that they must destroy such organizations, they prayed to God for vengeance—only to discover, Lizzie Ward wrote, that there was no answer. "The only wonder is that their faith in his [i.e., God's] omnipotence remained unshaken. Yet ignorance always finds excuses for the failures of its idols. By the removal of error truth will prevail, and one of the great sources of error, it seems to me is this belief in the divinity of the Bible. . . . It should be the work of liberals to remove this source of so many false premises, so that we may have truer conclusions, a better and more enlightened people."³¹ Lizzie Ward's liberalism pushed her away from religious explanations, in particular away from biblical orthodoxy, about the position of women in society.

As they worked on the material for *The Iconoclast* it became clear to Lester and Lizzie Ward that science served as a new moral arbiter and determinant of truth in a way that religion could not after the Civil War. Although both of them still attended a Unitarian Church in Washington, any belief in an almighty God they might have harbored had long vanished. The Unitarian Church seemed only a step away from complete naturalism and agnosticism, which made the Wards perfectly comfortable. Throughout the middle of the century Unitarians proved to be the most amenable to positivist philosophy and suffered no threat from "atheistic" science. Neither Lester nor Lizzie Ward suffered many pangs of guilt over their re-

jection of orthodox religious faith; once Americans removed the dogmas of the past, they both argued, then certainty of knowledge and belief was finally possible. Science, they were both assured, provided sufficient answers to all moral and social questions. The nature of the Wards' unbelief rested on their conviction that science could find and apply ultimate truths about the universe.³²

The Iconoclast failed in August 1871, because of a lack of money and a lack of general interest in the publication; the magazine's circulation never extended much beyond members of the league and a few others to whom they gave the publication. The league was never a large organization and had little ideological purpose beyond serving as an outlet for the Wards' writing of polemical articles against religion. Although he dropped out of political organizing after the failure of the league, Ward's participation in the organization widened his intellectual universe. The casual reading he had done in philosophy and science became much more serious as he searched for appropriate material to excerpt in the pages of *The Iconoclast*. This was Ward's real education and training, and he put this newfound material into his own writing after the magazine folded.

What is evident about the nascent political ideology that Ward (and his wife) were developing is that its origins lie in their unbelief and their anticlericalism. One of the hallmarks of modern liberalism is its secularism, and the Wards represented one of the strains of liberal thought that pushed religious views out of public life. This is not to claim that religion entirely lost meaning for Ward. For his entire life he delighted in being terribly critical and condescending toward religious faith, a position that would get him in personal trouble and alienate his friends occasionally. Still, the religious views of his youth survived in some ways in his ethical beliefs about the power of individual will and the perfectibility of the social order. But he no longer believed that religion could explain the natural or the social world, nor should it have any particular place in the public life of the nation. In a letter to a young friend asking about Ward's work on *The Iconoclast*, written just after the publication of his first book in 1883, Ward explained what his magazine and his league had tried to do. "Although I have not changed my convictions since that time I have changed my tactics," he recalled, "and instead of continuing the work of destruction I have been trying my hand at construction. . . . The general tone of liberalism was then not quite up to my key and I quietly dropped out of the ranks of active workers in that field."³³ This would be his driving force as he prepared to publish his first book. He wanted to construct a new way of thinking about nature, society, and the goals of politics.

Only a few months after the collapse of the league and the failure of the magazine tragedy struck Lester Ward. On 25 March 1872, Lizzie Ward, only thirty years old, died from acute appendicitis. He took her back to

Pennsylvania, to be buried near her mother and near their son, Roy Ward. He was crushed. Lizzie had shared so much with him, and she had been a source of enormous intellectual support and creativity in his life. She helped him write, served as a reader and a critic, participated in the same political and social causes as he did. She was more than just a helpmate to him but an intellectual companion and participant in a similar search for meaning in the postwar world. Lizzie's mind and her intellect stirred him in a way no one else ever would in his life. He felt lost without her. Years later Ward recorded in his unpublished autobiography the pain of losing his beloved Lizzie: "This event threw a gloom over [my] life and left a blank never again completely filled. For a long time there was only seeming of life, and the months passed in a kind of unconscious mechanical existence until [my] health was broken, and a determination to rally saved [me] from decline." Books and work, he wrote, remained his only solace.³⁴

In part, a chance meeting several months later with a widow from New York City, Rosamund Simons Pierce, quickened his recovery. Pierce had moved to Washington after the death of her husband. Her father, Frank Simons, and her brothers-in-law all worked for the government, which is probably how Ward met the young widow. Within weeks of their first meeting, sometime in the winter of 1873, Ward wrote an impetuous and impassioned letter to Rose Pierce asking for her hand in marriage: "What I have to confess is something very strange," he began. "I try to explain it by the lacerated condition of my heart from the great shock it had so recently received, and which renders it an unsafe index to my real self . . . the fact remains undeniable that my interest is not confined to your success in what you have undertaken but extends to yourself."

Ward could not stand to be alone, and he hoped he might forget the pain of Lizzie's death by returning to the comforts of marriage. He needed companionship and did not conceal from Rose Pierce his "love for married life or . . . [his] hope one day to be able to resume it under conditions in every respect proper and reasonable." Seeking to restore some sort of equilibrium and reassurance to his life Ward asked Rose to answer quickly his query about her feelings and about their future: "I want to know my fate. I have come to the conclusion that there is but one way to get relief and so I deliberately place it in your hands and abide the consequences."³⁵ Rose Pierce's response was apparently positive. Rose's cousin married the two young widowers in March 1873; for Ward, it was a blissful return to the comforts of home life that Lizzie's death had interrupted. Little is known about Rose Ward's intellectual, political, and social interests. She might very well have shared her husband's interests, and she did assist him in writing and organizing his books and papers. But it is also clear that Ward never shared the same connection with his second wife that he shared with Lizzie.³⁶

After Lizzie's death Ward had stopped writing, but by the time he married Rose he was well under way again. The two built a home on 1466 Rhode Island Avenue in 1873–74, with Rose's money for the most part. The new home provided space for Ward to conduct research and writing, including areas of the house set aside for collection of scientific materials. By the fall of 1873 he had finished the major portions of his book; it was now nearly five sections long and contained almost eight hundred pages. Although Lizzie's death and his work on *The Iconoclast* interrupted progress on the book, Ward moved quickly to expand the range of the manuscript. In addition to the first three sections he had completed before his work on the magazine, he added two new sections that he wrote between 1872 and 1874: "Education" and "Meliorism."

The heart of the book was now his lengthy chapter on education—over six hundred handwritten pages of long, unwieldy, and difficult prose. Ward often seemed to write in a frenzy of activity with little opportunity for reflection, analysis, and contemplation. His emphasis on education was not unusual; the importance of knowledge to social reform was a central aim of most reformers before and after the Civil War. What was unique and what had changed from the schemes of social reform that crowded the antebellum political landscape was the attempt to make science the educational key to developing a program for social change. Religious faith had been a keynote of social change in the reform movements of antebellum America; in the postwar world, however, science supplied the new faith. The last two chapters of his manuscript were Ward's first attempt to define the scientific education that he sought for achieving social progress.

Ward's advocacy of educational reform was commonplace during the 1870s. The politics of Reconstruction and the effect of the growing national depression of the middle 1870s created heated debate over educational issues, a debate that reiterated many of the arguments of the antebellum generation of common school advocates. Ward's manuscript responded in part to the national debate over the utility of public schools and whether or not they warranted funding. Many partisans of common school education, however, betrayed a deep distrust of labor and working people—hoping that a common education might forestall a potential labor movement in the country. Ward did not share this prejudice, and his manuscript reflected both his antebellum experience with labor and reform as well as his newfound commitment to science and scientific thinking.³⁷

Ward's lengthy treatise began where he had ended his chapter on "Mind": education must stand at the center of all social development and social change. It was the only means available for genuine national progress: "Progress is in great part the work of design," Ward wrote. "It is

by human foresight that most of the steps are taken toward a higher state."³⁸ He defined education simply as the imparting of truth to all students—truth that students could only understand according to the definitions of positive philosophy. It was an element deeply embedded in Ward's own character; he believed he could achieve truth and advancement through a thorough and complete education. But the individual observation of nature and collecting of facts could only go so far in educating the individual. Ward's own life was a testament to that observation. Instead, he argued that there needed to be more attention paid to the *process* of education if the nation hoped for continued improvement. The central subject of study in Ward's curriculum was natural history and science. Science and nature alone had the power to excite young minds and offer beauty, truth, and symmetry as distinct from a conventional and dull education that offered little for individuals in the modern world.

Ward was highly critical of the way students learned science in school. Although he never precisely indicated what schools did wrong, Ward's language suggests that his complaint was directed primarily against the teaching of moral philosophy in place of true positive science: "Society has wandered away from nature and substituted in its stead fashion, conventionality, affectation. The love of truth has been supplanted by the love of money, the airy independence which is the natural sentiment, has given way to mawkish propriety, and the sprightly animation which belongs to freedom, is bartered away for respectable inertia."³⁹ He wanted to replace all metaphysics and moral philosophy in the future curriculum: "The metaphysics of the future," he wrote, "will no longer be *meta*-physics, but a branch itself of physical science, and the laws of *mental force*, the chemistry of organized matter."⁴⁰ This language recalled Comte's definition of the "social physics" that studied cultural events in human society. The science of society was just like all other physical sciences, and not mere moral philosophy or theology. This was also partially a critique of Victorian gentility generally. Ward offered an early criticism and condemnation of the obsession with money, propriety, and conventionality that later social theorists were to see as the foundations of Gilded Age culture. Although Ward aspired to rise above his origins in poverty, he never felt comfortable with the notions of those whom historian John Tomisch labeled the Gilded Age's "best men." Ward distanced himself from the ideas of these genteel intellectuals.

When Ward turned to the question of whom to educate, his answer was scarcely surprising given his inherited political convictions and his own experience in acquiring an education. Education was to be broad-based and as varied as possible. Ward had only the vaguest notions of what his educational system consisted of, but he was sure it was entirely meritocratic. Although he acknowledged that the capacity to learn and assimilate

knowledge differed among all individuals, he did not envision any a priori rejection of anyone. He held firm to the principle that the capacity for intelligence was equal among all classes of people—regardless even of race and gender. Society currently produced citizens who lacked intelligence and knowledge of the forces shaping society; differences among classes of people, he argued, were not natural. Degradation was fundamentally the result of ignorance and the lack of intelligence, the products of a social system that offered education and knowledge to only a few. “We are lauding circumstance, we are rewarding wealth,” he complained. “We are condemning the unfortunate victims of social imperfection. We are punishing wretched victims for being what we have made them.”⁴¹

Ward relied most heavily on his ideals of political equality and freedom when he discussed the panacea of universal education. Much of what he had to say was orthodoxy among Radical Republicans and advocates of free labor in the years before the war. His own language reflected his experience in the political world of antebellum reform; universal and widely available education, he argued, revolutionized and expanded the social order. A firm faith in the power of education carried throughout Ward’s manuscript: “The great mass must always labor. They must expect to perform labor which does not call out their intellectual faculties. . . . The time is coming when it will no longer be a disgrace to labor, when every order of intellect will perform mechanical operations . . . when labor will be recreation instead of drudgery, when at the lathe and the plow will be digested and organized the ideas which will be received from the library and the lecture hall.”⁴²

Ward’s vision was a producerist ethic writ large for the republic. It recalled his father’s experience as a struggling yeoman producer on the frontier, and the faith that the individual worker possessed the capacity for advancement. He did not reject the free market, seeking a socialist alternative to the nation’s economic arrangements, but neither did he believe that laborers were well treated in the nation’s current economic system. For now, Ward was content to leave education as the basis for his analysis of society. By the time he came to revise and publish this manuscript, however, he became far more critical of the nation’s politics and political economy.

Ward extended these ideas to include the education of women as well. This is not surprising given his (and Lizzie’s) dedication to feminist causes, particularly women’s suffrage, in the 1860s. Ward wanted to see a radical shift in the roles and aspirations provided for American women. Although he still argued (as many feminists did as well) that women had a special duty and role as mothers, Ward firmly believed that there was no reason to deny women basic social and civic equality. And education was a basic component of that faith: “This immense subject [women’s education] has

so long weighed upon me that I am happy to seize an opportunity even [thus] incidentally and briefly to raise my voice in its earnest advocacy. I am tired of this one-sided civilization, of this half-built society, of this false chivalry, this mock-modesty, this pretended regard which one sex assumes for the other, while loads of putrid prejudice hang upon women's neck."⁴³

Ward never provided a detailed examination of his curriculum except to suggest that all students should receive the same information. He refused to offer, he said, "any Comtean schemes. . . . I do not wish to be a founder of any system of education."⁴⁴ The main point of any educational system was to provide all students with a general knowledge of the world's truth. All individuals, regardless of social class, gained from an education organized and ordered in this way. In his discussion of his curricular ideas Ward revealed his ethical notions about the productive value of labor: "There are those who see the great evil of the existence of so many without any trade or technical profession. . . . I unite my voice with theirs, though rather in the interests of production than of social order. But if I am to appeal, I prefer to appeal to principles still deeper down in society. If I am to raise my voice, I prefer to raise it for education, for intellectual culture, for knowledge, which is capable of multiplying the power of physical labor to profit mankind. With it the artisan becomes an artist."⁴⁵

These ethical concerns were deeply rooted in Ward's philosophy and remained close to his heart in all the work that he did. He intended the education section of the manuscript as his grand statement of political and social principles—a faith resting on the scientific ideals he outlined in his first three chapters. "Let us get rid of the delusion that we are gods and humbly take our places in the universe," Ward concluded. "Teach us such facts as will destroy our concepts, humble our pride, remove our jealousy, and make us understand our insignificance. Thus only can we realize our true significance and begin the pursuit of happiness for ourselves and for others. . . . By such a universal increase of general knowledge the whole mass of mankind will become individualized."⁴⁶

Ward's final chapter, "Meliorism," offered a statement of the social idealism that he hoped might serve as the basis for the reform movements of the future. Most important, Ward criticized the notion that social development should be left to the forces of nature alone. Positive government action and state interference in education, he insisted, were the only ways to ensure progress. Ward remained reluctant to examine these ideas fully at this point in his philosophical studies. Much of this chapter was unfinished, and Ward left his ideas only half-formed, undeveloped, and generally unorganized. The manuscript remained in this unfinished form for more than three years before he returned to it.⁴⁷

In the two years after his marriage to Rose in spring 1873, Ward's career took a dramatic turn. First, he began a series of nature excursions in order

to study and learn botany as a way of supplementing his work at the Bureau of Statistics and training himself in the actual practice of science. Second, Ward met and quickly befriended Major John Wesley Powell, director of one of the four competing land surveys of the West. Ward's relationship with Powell and his expanded scientific activity widened his intellectual universe beyond the local societies and lyceums that provided him with an intellectual and social outlet in the late 1860s and early 1870s. Between 1874 and 1880, Ward published a number of scientific essays and finally began revising the lengthy manuscript on which he labored for so long. By the late 1870s, he had seriously rethought the meaning of science and the purpose of the large manuscript he had left on his shelf. Although he retained much of the ethical and political content of his work, his vision of science and positive philosophy changed significantly.

Shortly before Lizzie Ward's death and extending into the early 1880s, Ward began training himself as a botanist. While Lizzie was still alive they both tried to study the local flora while taking walks in the parks and forests in the Washington area. In a diary entry for 12 April 1868, Ward wrote that "Lizzie got a botany for herself. She is suddenly beginning to study." It was Lizzie, it seems, who was first attracted to the science.⁴⁸ Although botany was slowly undergoing professionalization in the mid-nineteenth century, and becoming more and more the province of men, it still retained an identification with women. Flower collection was a "feminine science," in many ways, and it offered women the opportunity to write and publish scientific work at a time when many avenues of publishing science were denied to them.

After Lizzie's death, Ward began in earnest to train himself in the science, believing that in a wide-open field he could make a name for himself. Moreover, it helped him return to a boyhood passion for nature and natural history, something that the Bureau of Statistics did not offer him. He began keeping extensive botanical notebooks, which record over a decade of work in carefully preserving and cataloging the flora of the District of Columbia and the Chesapeake Bay. Throughout the 1870s and the early 1880s, he traveled all over the Chesapeake Bay region, sometimes alone but often with Rose, her brother-in-law, John Comstock, and her father, Frank Simons; he was also occasionally accompanied by James Welling, the president of Columbian College. Ward spent hours collecting his specimens and with Rose's help he cataloged, named, and preserved each one. This interest in taxonomy and classification was essentially the business of science in the mid-nineteenth century, and for his entire career taxonomy remained Ward's main preoccupation as a scientist. Nearly twenty years later, in a lecture for women's college graduates in the mid-1890s, Ward recalled the impact that his early scientific practice had on his life: "The first nine years of my botanical life . . . were the beginning of my

real existence. They were my release from an imprisonment . . . during which I had been condemned . . . [by] what the world was then pleased to call an education."⁴⁹

In his botanical notebooks Ward carefully recorded each flower and plant he came across. Slowly he began to construct a botanical history and catalog for the District of Columbia. He was now convinced that botany was a promising science in which he could make a serious intellectual contribution. "Botanizing" was a common practice among nineteenth-century Americans, and it was not surprising that the science attracted Ward. Botany had few professional practitioners, and most of what scientists knew about the flora of North America they gained through a network of amateur collectors and the very few university professors interested in the young science. "Botanizing" was also an activity easily connected to self-improvement and self-training, both of which were aspects that originally attracted Ward to the practice. Armed with a portfolio for collecting specimens and a book on the classification of flowers and plants, Ward trained himself in the identification, classification, and proper procedures for preservation.

Here was scientific training that engaged his mind in a way that his work in statistics never did. It was genuine experimental fieldwork, and education and training in scientific practice that he could find nowhere else. Statistics, Ward felt, involved only recording and collecting numbers while botany offered the chance to commune with nature as well as collect specimens and explain the relationships among flowers and plants. It was his work in botany that first introduced Ward to the actual practice of science, and botany became his vocation for the rest of his life.⁵⁰

The job in the Bureau of Statistics began to bore him, at least compared to the work he was doing in the field of science; it offered little excitement and no intellectual stimulation. Not that this work was wholly unimportant, after all some of the most important government agencies conducted the work of gathering data for social analysis and in the late 1870s Ward argued that establishing a network to centralized statistical information was an important function of the government. But statistics still seemed too abstract for him in a way scientific fieldwork was not. The study of nature and natural history—with its fieldwork, its connection to nature, its connection to the great debates about evolutionary change and the history of the earth—had a real passionate importance for him; there was a sense of adventure in it that is hard for a modern-day reader to fully recapture. From his room in the bureau's offices, he could see the red brick tower of the Smithsonian Institution building located not far from the halls of Congress. The Smithsonian Institution was already a major scientific center in the 1870s, and it attracted a number of the nation's leading scientists for research, work, and public lectures. Ward had visited it frequently, marveling

at the massive collections and the work of the scientists who created exhibits from materials around the world. The building seemed to be the greatest place on earth—a center where men performed important work for the nation. He would “oftentimes look wistfully at the Smithsonian towers and imagine its inmates the happiest of mortals.”⁵¹

The trips to the country and in the parks were a great boost to his health and self-confidence alike. By mid-1874 the entries in his botanical notebooks became progressively longer and more detailed—indicating not only the name but the condition of the flora he located, the difficulties he encountered in properly identifying them, and the careful preservation required to maintain his specimens. The books he had to work with, he often complained, were frequently wrong in their identification of certain specimens. Shortly after he began “botanizing,” he joined the local Potomac-Side Naturalists Club, which provided him with connections to the local scientific community that neither the lyceums he joined nor his job at the Bureau of Statistics supplied. City scientists founded the club in 1858, one of the oldest scientific associations of the capital, disbanded it shortly after the Civil War, and revived it again in the early 1870s. It boasted a prominent membership including scientists associated with the Smithsonian such as John Wesley Powell, Ferdinand V. Hayden, Spencer Baird, and many others.⁵² Powell became more important in Ward’s life than any other person. They were close friends from the mid-1870s on, and the friendship they formed based on common experiences and common ideas reshaped Washington’s intellectual community and helped establish a new way of thinking about American politics, science, and the role and purpose of government in American life.

John Wesley Powell, known simply as “the Major,” was already a well-known and powerful member of the Washington scientific community when Ward met him, most likely while participating with the activities of the Potomac-Side Naturalists Club. Powell was a remarkable man whose meteoric rise to power and influence in Washington was already legendary by the mid-1870s; in 1875 he was running the most successful of the four surveys of the American West, commissioned by Congress in the early 1870s. It was not unusual that Ward found Powell to his liking; his social and intellectual path to Washington was remarkably similar to Ward’s own. Both men were from the Midwest, both were veterans of the war, and both had a passionate interest in the applications of science and the scientific method to solve national problems. They shared a devotion to nature and natural history, and both had come to largely reject religion as an effective method for understanding the world. Ward’s friendship with Powell was to help reshape his career. He found in Powell a mentor and intellectual companion, someone who helped focus his scientific work. Powell found in Ward a deep thinker devoted to the social implications of science and scientific policy in the United States.

Powell was born in Mount Morris, New York, in 1834, the son of a staunch abolitionist and devout Methodist preacher, Joseph Powell. Joseph Powell, much like Ward's father, moved his family West in the early 1840s—settling first in Jackson, Ohio, then living as a farmer in Wisconsin, and by the early 1850s settling in DuPage County, Illinois, arriving shortly after the Ward family had left the area. Young Wes Powell spent most of his life in these parts of the Midwest, and he inherited his father's reforming zeal and passionate interest in social development. His schooling, like Ward's, was erratic. Although he obtained some college education at the Illinois Institute (later Wheaton College), Illinois College, and Oberlin, Powell was essentially an autodidact; his wide range of philosophic and scientific interests reflected his eclectic education. From his boyhood and college years, Powell developed an intense interest in the environment and natural history. He spent much of the 1850s traveling the rivers of the Midwest and slowly trained himself in the natural sciences, especially geology. He became a self-taught naturalist, rejecting the religious worldview of his Methodist parents in favor of a vocation in science. By 1860, he was already an accomplished collector, and naturalists in Illinois admired his extensive collection of plants gained from his trips down the rivers and in the countryside of the nation's middle border.

But national problems intervened before Powell could move very far in his life of science. In 1861, Powell heeded Lincoln's first call for troops and joined the Illinois infantry. He was devoted as anyone to crushing the nation's slave power, believing (as did Ward) that the nation's small producers and the democratic promises of American life had their greatest enemies in the South. His scientific training and quick mind helped him in learning military engineering, and he rose quickly in the army, reaching the rank of captain by early 1862. Powell lost his left arm at the Battle of Shiloh but after a few months of recovery he returned to his unit and eventually rose to the rank of major, a close confidant of Union General Ulysses S. Grant.

Powell came back to Illinois after the war and tried to restart his career in science. His father assisted him by helping him land a teaching position at Illinois College. His range of courses was remarkable: geology, biology, zoology, botany, human anatomy, among others. These were fields not yet fully professionalized and Powell's encyclopedic and universalistic interests made him an impressive and popular teacher. But science and teaching were not his only passions. Powell's most compelling desire was to explore the Rocky Mountains, especially the region of the Colorado River. Powell had dreams of adventure on his mind and this blank spot on the nation's maps (a region that had not yet been mapped and explored by more than just a handful of Americans) had a powerful hold on him for the rest of his life. He arranged an exploratory party in the summer of

1867 through the Illinois Normal University, the Smithsonian Institution, various railroad companies, and his own modest funds. Two years later he obtained enough funding for a party to descend the Colorado River and record the information they discovered. Newspapers across the country covered the difficult journey with much fanfare. By the autumn of 1869, when he emerged safely from the river, Powell was a national hero. On the strength and popularity of this voyage he secured government funding and approval for a "Geological and Topographical Survey of the Colorado River of the West." Commonly known as the Powell Survey, it was one of four nationally funded surveys competing for the right to catalog and map the land in the West.⁵³

Thus Powell was in a powerful position by the time Ward met him in 1874–75. He had already made a number of return trips to Colorado and the Utah Territory and published some of the results from his investigations. The other three competing surveys generally held publishing to a minimum, and when they did publish, most of the material was highly technical and not meant for a wide, popular audience. Powell's publications, on the other hand, were more accessible and much more widely known. He needed well-trained scientists for his survey, and the fact that Ward had a background and passionate interest in botany, and already worked for the government, probably attracted Powell to him.

Powell's influence on his associates was profound; his intellectual magnetism attracted a wider range of scientists to his survey over all the others: "He was extremely fertile in his ideas, so fertile that it was quite impossible that he should personally develop them all, and realizing this he gave freely to his collaborators," geologist Grove Karl Gilbert recalled. "The work which he inspired and to which he contributed the most creative elements, I believe to be at least as important as that for which his name stands directly responsible. As he always drew around him the best ability he could command, his assistants were not mere elaborators, but also made important original contributions, and the ideas which he gave to the world through others are thus so merged and mingled with theirs that they can never be separated."⁵⁴ Powell liked to have kindred spirits around him, men who shared his ideas for science and for the future of American land policy in the West. The men of the Powell survey worked toward common goals of expanding the base of scientific knowledge about the West. In the early 1880s, just a few years after their first meeting, Ward also wrote a sketch of Powell, which indicates some of what attracted him to the famous explorer. Powell, Ward wrote, "is a pattern of the American self-made man, and well illustrates in his life and achievements what may be accomplished with honest, steady adherence, to a definite purpose. . . . He was eager for knowledge, and used every opportunity to pursue such courses of study as were accessible to him."⁵⁵

Sometime in 1875, when Powell asked him if he wanted a job with his survey, Ward jumped at the chance to leave Washington. It was not an easy position to obtain. Many young men wanted to join Powell's survey—some of whom had better training, better education, and better connections to get a job working for Powell. It is not clear why Powell chose Ward over some others who might have been better trained, but the close experiences and the similarity of ideas certainly helped. Although there was some difficulty in obtaining permission from the Bureau of Statistics, Ward eventually left Washington in June 1875. It was the first time he had been West since leaving St. Charles in 1858.

The survey's task in the mid-1870s was to continue mapping and recording information from the southern and central Utah Territory, in part because the government wanted the work for an exhibit at the Philadelphia Centennial the following summer. Powell assigned Ward to the task of collecting trees and flowers for the survey, shipping them back to Washington for study and eventual display at the Centennial. Ward was ecstatic; the trip was a chance to escape Washington, gain more scientific knowledge, and possibly make a name for himself in the city's scientific community. Almost as soon as he arrived in the West in June, he began writing letters from the camp at Gunniston, Utah, to record the activity of the survey party, and he sent them off to the *New York Daily Tribune*. He wrote a total of eight letters, each of them describing a different aspect of the landscape in what was commonly known as Mormon Country. The letters covered botany, zoology, geology, and an even little ethnographic anthropology. The *Daily Tribune* had interest in only the first letter, but Ward preserved the rest as a record of his experiences on his first scientific trip.⁵⁶

The letters offer a travelogue for a still uncataloged region of the United States. Scientists and officials in Washington considered mapping the West one of the most important scientific tasks facing the nation in the 1870s and 1880s; much of the country in central and southern Utah, for example, remained largely unknown to Washington officials. Mapping the land and gaining an understanding of the vegetation and plant life in the region offered some kind of control over the U.S. possessions. Science was absolutely central to American national growth after the Civil War. Without scientific understanding there was no way to understand western lands or western settlement. The nation could not continue its haphazard patterns of growth and westward expansion, Powell and others in his team believed. Although in the 1870s what Ward contributed to this work was small, knowledge of flora and fauna of the region, it was still part of a grand vision for scientific understanding.

Ward wholeheartedly shared the conviction that the work he performed with the Powell survey was important. Botany was destiny, he

suggested, and the only way to understand national destiny was to understand the national landscape and natural history. American nationalism depended on the knowledge of science. "The vegetable world," Ward declared in the only letter the *Daily Tribune* published, "contributes [the] most to mold the character of mankind. . . . Living creatures hide away from human gaze. . . . The rocks and the streams are comparatively stationary. . . . But the forest and the meadow, the flowers and the fruits, possess the life of the former without its uncertainty, and the permanence of the latter without its monotony. They are ever present yet ever changing."⁵⁷

Ward described the land in Utah as "hopelessly barren and picturesquely wild." All his letters highlighted the beauty and power of the untamed landscape. He often characterized the camp's excursions into the mountains as dangerous and brave expeditions conducted by pioneers in the struggle to understand nature. When they reached the top of one peak in the region of the Dirty Devil River, Ward reported that the area "exceeds in beauty and picturesqueness of landscape any spot I have yet visited in this country. The peculiar wildness of its solitude produced an impression on my mind . . . which I expect to carry with me through life." What Ward found in his short walks around the District of Columbia, beauty and the pure delights of nature, were in even greater abundance for him in the West. He continued to keep his botanical notebooks and recorded each new species of flower with care. The purity and beauty of the landscape offered him solitude and an opportunity to reflect, he wrote, that no citizen should be without. The scene from the top of one plateau "filled me with an inexpressible feeling of mingled wonder and delight. Inwardly I exclaimed, Ah! Nature. I have at last found thee unmixed with art. No house, no curling smoke, shall here remind me of the presence of man. No bells shall break the silence of this virgin spot."⁵⁸

Ward was torn between the solemn beauty of the region and the need for the civilization and cultivation of the land. Much of the area, he concluded, was too difficult to cultivate given the lack of rain in the region. It was an arid land, without the good soil needed for crops and cultivation.⁵⁹ When he examined the Native Americans in the region, Ward realized that the problem of land ownership was almost impossibly confused in the American West. The Paiute Indians felt the land and water resources of the Utah Territory were theirs by "a sort of prescriptive right." Arrogant about their property rights, Ward argued, Paiutes had no interest in offering land to settlers and explorers. Ward admitted that this attitude came from a justified fear of the previous damage done by white men. But he still felt that it was unfair to the scientific party he worked with, and the important scientific purpose of their visit.⁶⁰ Land was, after all, the central problem of western life. Who owned the land and how was it to

be farmed? How could this arid region support the nation's expansion? These problems occupied much of the American policy in the West during the late nineteenth century, and the complications of ownership continue to plague policymakers today.

In his letters, Ward honored the region's Mormon pioneers. Knowing the bitter hatred still directed at Mormons in the middle of the nineteenth century, Ward nevertheless celebrated their achievement in taming portions of the Utah Territory. "We are compelled for the sake of truth alone to confess that personally there exists in their character and life a degree of manliness and nobility, simple and rude it is true, but frank and sincere." What attracted Ward, Powell, and other scientists studying the West to the Mormon settlements in Utah was their cooperative planning in treating water and land problems. This was an example of the democratic commonwealth at work, even if it was under the religious system of the Mormons. Cooperation had to be the key to life in the West, and there needed to be a central agency that provided direction to cooperative life. It was these qualities, Ward suggested, that all emigrants (and the government) needed as the settlement of western lands proceeded throughout the rest of the century.⁶¹

Ward returned to Washington in the fall of 1875 energized and ready to begin serious study of the science of botany. Following his return from Utah, he plunged into the most significant scientific work of his early career. Within a few years, he joined the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS), and all the major scientific associations in the city of Washington. He met major figures in the Washington community through his work on the survey and the activities of the associations he joined. In 1876, for example, he assisted Spencer Baird, the secretary of the Smithsonian Institution, in assembling some of the botanical exhibits for the Philadelphia Centennial. The plants, flora, and trees he helped collect in the Utah Territory were among the major scientific exhibits at the celebration.

On the basis of his work with Powell, and with Baird at the Centennial, Ward considered making science his full-time career. To that end, on 23 September 1876, he wrote Dr. Daniel Coit Gilman, the first president of the newly established Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, Maryland. Hopkins was the first institution of exclusively graduate studies in the United States, modeled after universities in Germany, and was to eventually revolutionize higher education in America. It had just opened its doors when Ward wrote Gilman in hopes of becoming a natural scientist. He asked if it was possible for him to pursue an advanced course of study in biology and botany at the university. Since his graduation from Columbian College in the early 1870s, he wrote, "I have devoted my spare time in great part to the science of Botany for which I have a special taste

and in which I have secured a recognition by all the botanists in Washington." He wanted to "perfect" himself in the science and hoped that he could eventually secure a professorship in an American university.

Gilman did write Ward back. Although he could not offer Ward immediate admission based solely on his interests and desire, he requested that Ward come to see him in Baltimore to arrange an interview. Perhaps then they could work something out for matriculating at the university. Ward never did go to see Gilman. He still had no money for further education, and he never pursued Gilman's offer of an interview. Instead, Ward's career was to take a remarkably different path from what he envisioned in his letter to Gilman. He did not receive a professorship for thirty years. But as a member of Washington's intellectual community, he made important contributions to the development of science in the United States. And from this position he wrote one of the nation's most important books on politics, science, and government policy.⁶²

Throughout 1876 and 1877, Ward continued his botanical excursions; for example he accompanied a Texas survey party organized by the AAAS in 1877 to catalog plant life in the Southwest. With Rose's help, their home became a major collection of botanical materials; the two of them spent hours not only collecting material but carefully preserving it, and marking it down for a planned work on botany in the District of Columbia. Rose contributed as much to these activities as Ward did himself, patiently helping her husband organize his scientific work. Ward also began to seek publication for his botanical studies in well-known scientific journals and to extend his reading in science and scientific philosophy.

But science also had an impact on society, and this relationship was never too far from his mind. He finally added the volumes of Auguste Comte to his library in 1876 and began to grapple with the deeper epistemological and scientific questions raised by positive philosophy. Ward also returned to the work of Mill, Herbert Spencer, and Darwin with more critical scientific questions gained from his training in botany and the study of the evolution of plant life. After years of dormancy he also thought of returning to the book lying half-finished on his shelf. Ward was to eventually change his manuscript as he gave new attention to the philosophical issues of positivism and Darwinian science. The scientific publications he wrote in the late 1870s demonstrated his engagement with a wide variety of scientific issues. During the day at his office at the Bureau of Statistics, he kept a notebook handy to jot down ideas and record thoughts that seemed important to him. At night, he read extensively and wrote with Rose's help, trying to remake his manuscript and publish widely in order to establish his authority in the fields of science and philosophy.

Powell also helped Ward with publication of his work. When Powell released the second edition of his well-known *Report on the Lands of the Arid*

Regions, which offered a program for the social development and national control of western lands, he published Ward's findings on trees and grasses in the Utah Territory, undoubtedly gaining Ward attention in the scientific community. Powell's book was a warning in the optimistic Gilded Age. He did not believe that that arid lands west of the hundredth meridian would easily yield to settlement patterns established for the wetter eastern areas of the United States. Instead, this region required national action if the small farmers and landowners of the country were to survive and not be taken over by private monopolies on land and water. And only federal legislation on irrigation, pasturage, and ownership could possibly help. Powell's report largely fell on deaf ears when it was initially released in 1878 but it established an agenda for his work for the rest of the century.

In addition to helping him with publication, Ward's work with Powell led to his first major article on science. Ward's first published article on botany appeared in *The Popular Science Monthly* in October 1876, a detailed study of plant life and evolutionary theories of adaptation based in part on work he had done with Powell's survey as well as in his botanical excursions in the District of Columbia. Ward was proud of the essay. It was the first piece he wrote for a major national publication, and his first work in science that tried to come to grips with the variety of evolutionary theories debated in the 1870s.

The essay reveals Ward's engagement with Darwinian science. Ward now rejected Agassiz's notions of fixity of species, which no longer seemed to fit the data he gathered as a scientist. He still argued that in addition to change and development in nature there was some kind of "vital force" within every individual species shaped by environmental conditions—a pre-Darwinian notion that something other than natural selection somehow drove evolutionary development (though Ward never quite described this "vital force"). But nonetheless Ward now accepted the Darwinian idea that nature was a sea of chaotic change and development, haphazard and without direction. Given favorable conditions all individuals could (and, in fact, should) survive, but of course in nature that never happened. The influence of his expanded reading in works by Darwin, Mill, American botanist Asa Gray, as well as Auguste Comte and others, was evident in his discussion of the laws of plant life: "Each individual [plant] is where it is, and what it is, by reason of the combined forces which hedge it in and determine its very form. Each species is the perpetual and inexorable antagonist of every other. The 'struggle' is not only 'for existence,' it is also for *place*."⁶³ Ward's deepest belief was that nature was wasteful and inherently chaotic. Ward never believed that competition in nature was beneficial to evolutionary development, something that was fundamental to Darwin's idea of natural selection. Competition

improved the species. Although Ward agreed that competition did rule in natural evolution, he refused to believe it was the best way to progress and growth.

Ward still had to explain how he could accept the reality of constant evolutionary progress in the face of nature's waste and chaos. His reading of Herbert Spencer's volumes greatly influenced him on this question, and in an essay he published in *The Popular Science Monthly* in October 1877 he discussed the merits of Spencer's volumes on social philosophy.⁶⁴ Spencer was born in England into a lower-middle-class family in 1820, heavily influenced by the rapid industrial growth of England in the nineteenth century and the impact of utilitarianism and positivism in English thought. As a leading member of a generation of what one historian has called the English "public moralists," Spencer's contributions to history, law, and social philosophy, among other subjects, were large. His books, especially his *Synthetic Philosophy*, began to appear in the United States after 1860 and quickly became subjects of major debate and discussion in intellectual circles all around the country. They became major subjects of the Washington intellectual community's scientific meetings after the Civil War. Many of Ward's later books and essays were responses to Spencer's formulations of social science, natural science, and philosophy. Strongly opposed to the expansion of the state, deeply devoted to individualism and liberty, Spencer became the (often reluctant) spokesman for laissez-faire economics in the United States. To protect liberty and freedom, the state needed to leave society alone.⁶⁵

From Spencer, Ward gained the insight that evolutionary forces always moved progressively forward from chaos to order; or, as he borrowed the terms from Spencer, "the universal tendency of all matter is from the indefinite and homogeneous to the definite and heterogeneous; from a state of unstable to a state of stable equilibrium."⁶⁶ Ward continued to focus almost exclusively on scientific rather than social questions, but from his discussion of organic versus cosmic evolution it was only a small step to larger issues of social reform: "Although the dissolution of the individual aggregate takes place," he argued, "the work of evolution which has been going on within it is passed on to a new generation, to be there continued and again transmitted. The individual, therefore, becomes of comparatively small importance. The real organic aggregate is the race."⁶⁷ One could accept a radically probabilistic philosophy on an individual level but on a cosmic scale, Ward felt, stability still reigned.

Ward never really answered the epistemological and scientific questions raised by his scientific work until he completely rewrote his manuscript. He did redefine the purpose of his unpublished book, however, and discarded the notions that had shaped his early chapters on nature and man. The book even had a new title, *Dynamic Sociology*, inherited from his

reading in Auguste Comte's and Herbert Spencer's volumes. He wanted to examine a "taxonomy of knowledge" and provide the best methods for imparting that knowledge to the world. It took him a few more years to fully address this issue, but by the late 1870s he began the long process of rewriting.

In many ways, Ward's published essays in 1877 on German biologist Ernst Haeckel marked his scientific arrival and demonstrated at least briefly some of the changes he was to make in his manuscript. In 1876, Ward learned of Haeckel's work and sent for it from a local bookseller who had recently procured the Comte volumes for him. Ward set out to write a lengthy review of Haeckel's *Anthropogenie*, translated in English as *The Evolution of Man*, but was unable to find a publisher. *The Popular Science Monthly* rejected the articles in August 1876, and he was unsure where to turn after this rejection. Powell again assisted him, advising Ward to try a small publication called *The Penn Monthly*, which accepted the three essays in 1877. Ward even sent the reviews to Haeckel, who responded and praised Ward's fairness and his understanding of his thought. Ward soon wanted a larger audience for his work: "The *Penn Monthly* had a limited circulation and not chiefly among scientific men," Ward recalled. "I began to be desirous of placing my review before a larger and better selected audience."⁶⁸

Ward convinced a small publishing house in Philadelphia, Edward Stern and Company, to publish the reviews as a small pamphlet at his own expense. The pamphlet, released in 1879, enjoyed a small print run of about seven hundred copies, most of which Ward sent to scientists and social thinkers around the country. This was to become his common practice: he kept long lists of well-known social thinkers, scientists, and social reformers, and whenever he wrote an essay or book he mailed copies to as many people as possible. In this way, he hoped, his ideas could have wider circulation, and in an age when there were no institutional networks for publication of scientific and philosophic work, no professional associations, journals, or meetings, it became an effective tool for popularizing his ideas. Most significant for the work on Haeckel was New Yorker Thaddeus Wakeman, an ardent admirer of both Comte's and Haeckel's work and proselytizer for Ward's ideas about both thinkers; Wakeman often used Ward's work in speeches and in writing about Haeckel's philosophy.

Ernst Haeckel, born in 1834, was a German biologist, zoologist, natural historian, and philosopher who spent most of his adult life teaching biology at the University of Jena. Haeckel was the leading proponent of evolutionary theory in Germany and a well-known positivist philosopher in the mid- to late nineteenth century.⁶⁹ His statement "ontogeny recapitulates phylogeny" remains something of cliché among scientists, but for

Ward, and many in his generation, the scientific insight provided a way to connect two competing branches of biology: study of the developed (adult) and the undeveloped (embryonic) forms of animal life. Darwin was the great biologist of developed life-forms; Haeckel, Ward argued in his review, was the biologist of embryonic life.

Haeckel's ideas on natural evolution initially developed from his work on cell morphology. For Haeckel, the publication of Darwin's work in 1859 helped him crystallize his thoughts about evolutionary theory, and by the early 1860s he incorporated natural selection into his science and philosophy generally. His work on Darwinian theory gained him immense fame in Germany and abroad as well, and he became a kind of apostle for Darwinian theory in Europe. But his scientific studies also demonstrate the complex uses of "Darwinism" in the mid-nineteenth century. Many scientists incorporated Darwin's theory into their own but they never fully accepted all the implications of Darwinian evolution, or fully believed that natural selection was the mechanism of change in nature. Haeckel's work was typical in this respect combining elements of Darwin's theory with his own interpretation of evolution, built very much on the earlier theories of French thinker and zoologist Jean-Baptiste Lamarck. Moreover, Haeckel believed in the linear and continual progression of evolution, offering a sense of purpose in the ways of nature where Darwin offered no purpose at all. This philosophical monism—which Haeckel later raised to a pseudoreligion—has marked him according to some historians as one of the early predecessors of totalitarian thinking, but what attracted Ward to Haeckel's work was his work in science and his broad positivism.⁷⁰

Haeckel, Ward felt, was even "more Darwinistic than Darwin himself."⁷¹ It was Haeckel more than any other scientist who perceived the connection between Darwin's theory of development in the animal kingdom and the development of humans. Ward's pamphlet surveyed the history of evolutionary theory as it affected Haeckel's work beginning with Erasmus Darwin (Charles's grandfather) and tracing a story of increasing knowledge and understanding throughout the nineteenth century. Haeckel was also a strident critic of religion and religious theories of creation and Ward fully accepted Haeckel's version of evolutionary development. Haeckel's monism, Ward argued, was "a cosmogony that is bound together throughout by an unbroken chain of mechanically dependent phenomena. . . . This class [of philosophers] has formed in all ages and countries the progressive and reformatory element of mankind."⁷²

In addition to the identification of cause in natural development Haeckel helped Ward to understand the theory of Lamarckian evolution. Jean-Baptiste Lamarck, born in the midst of the French Enlightenment in

1744, was a renowned French naturalist, one of the leading thinkers of the later Enlightenment. In the early nineteenth century, he published important biological studies arguing that organisms passed on changes that occurred in their lifetime to their offspring. Lamarck's argument was one of the earliest evolutionary theories and one of the earliest theories of genetic transmission. In the late nineteenth century, Lamarck's ideas became central to debate about germ theory, genetic science, and evolution in general. Ward always remained a supporter of Lamarck in the many debates he participated in during the 1880s and 1890s. Instead of an entirely naturalistic competition as envisioned by Darwin's theory of natural selection, Ward's reading of Lamarck and Haeckel helped him to conclude that the right environmental conditions produced stable and continuous evolutionary progress—regardless of competitive forces. The combination of Haeckel and Lamarck offered Ward a Darwinism without the probability inherent in natural selection; it offered change with purpose rather than the potential for chaos. Moreover, it meant that what scientists witnessed in the chaos of nature had no place in social development. The connections that scientists were beginning to make between nature and culture could not adequately be drawn, according to Ward. Man had the ability to control environment and hence shape evolutionary development. This connection to social development and change was inchoate at this point in Ward's career but it was clear, and he would make it one of the driving forces of his book as he rewrote the manuscript.

By the late 1870s, Ward had established a minor career for himself as a scientific writer and botanist. He continued to work with Rose on a botanical guide for the city of Washington and hoped to secure wider publication than he had with his work on Haeckel. Through his connection to Powell, he gained increased access to Washington's scientific and intellectual leadership; some of those he befriended became his companions on the "botanizing" excursions around the Washington, D.C., area. Even more important than these friendships, however, was Ward's participation in the organizational activities of the scientific community in Washington. The Potomac-Side Naturalists Club was just the first of a long series of associations established by intellectuals in the city: literary societies, scientific and intellectual organizations, and social organizations frequented by members of the scientific community. A wide range of scientists and intellectuals in the city decided in the 1870s to form associations designed to further scientific work in the city. Ward joined the Washington Philosophical Society and listened at the group's meetings in the old Ford's Theatre to the speeches and papers delivered on a wide variety of scientific and philosophic subjects: the work of Darwin, Spencer, Mill, Comte, and others; ethnographic essays on foreign civilizations and national customs; philosophical debates about individualism, socialism,

democracy, and other subjects. Major Clarence E. Dutton, one of the city's leading geologists in the late nineteenth century and Ward's and Powell's close friend, recalled that these meetings were places of great intellectual accomplishment despite the bare surroundings of an uncomfortable and infamous old theater. Another member of the city's scientific associations, Henry S. Pritchett, recalled that the scientific men of the city were a hard-working and committed lot: "There were no rich people," Pritchett recalled, "everybody had his daily work in some department of the government."⁷³

In November 1878, Powell invited Ward to his home at 910 M Street in Washington to join a group of city leaders, scientists, and social reformers to discuss the possibility of forming another scientific society. The Washington Philosophical Society, they felt, did not fully encompass enough of the city's scientific work. It was an auspicious occasion for Ward to be invited to Powell's home; in addition to Powell, many of the other major intellectuals in the city were involved in the meeting, including Henry Adams, John Hay, Grove Karl Gilbert, Dutton, and others. Shortly after this first meeting, the group formed the Cosmos Club as a social organization to tie together the national capital's scientific associations. It was to become one of Ward's major social organizations for the rest of his life, the place where he sought conversation, study, and the chance to let others hear his ideas.

Under John Wesley Powell's leadership the scientific associations of Washington, D.C., became major voices for scientific policy and major sources for the production of scientific work in the nation. Before the emergence of research universities, which were just forming throughout the country, Washington's scientific community represented one of the nation's major training grounds for science and scientific policy in the late nineteenth century. Washington was becoming a "national seminary of learning." Ward recognized the importance of the scientific work being done in the city, and he joined all of the organizations that formed the core of the city's growing scientific establishment. In an essay he wrote in 1877 on the subject of the federal government's legislative responsibilities, he briefly outlined the contributions of state involvement in economic and social affairs. He advocated the creation of a central collecting agency that was to serve as the center for all the nation's production and distribution of goods and resources. "The true function of legislation," he insisted, "is to remove all obstructions from . . . social movements and to cause their free operation to effect the least possible injury to public and private interests."⁷⁴ Enlarge the functions of the government research bureaus, Ward argued, and the nation can reform its social ills.

Invigorated by the work he had done in science since the middle 1870s, Ward longed to become a major participant in Washington's scientific

community. He continued to work on his manuscript throughout the late 1870s in hopes that it would provide the means to reach the city's scientific and intellectual establishment; he wanted the book to define his growing commitment to the principle that the national government served as the nation's intellectual and political center. Ward told Powell about his book in January 1879, just after the creation of the Cosmos Club, because he knew that he needed Powell's assistance if he was to secure a publisher for the lengthy manuscript.

Powell invited Ward to accompany him to the annual meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science held in St. Louis in the spring of 1879, an honor for the young scientist to be able to travel again with the well-known Powell. Ward's friendship with Major Powell was key to establishing his relationship to the Washington scientific community as a whole. It was his entry into a world of power and influence in Washington, one that did not depend on wealth or lineage to prosper. This was an elite of knowledge and training and intellect. Ward wanted his work to speak to these scientists, intellectuals, and reformers but he still desperately desired a more secure place in this scientific community, away from the work of the Bureau of Statistics. By the early 1880s he got his chance.

With the work of the surveys officially over, Congress decided to combine their efforts into one uniform civilian division in 1879. Powell suggested that this new United States Geological Survey be directed by one of the four survey leaders, and one of the nation's leading scientific intellectuals, Clarence King. In addition, Congress had given Powell the power and money to create the Bureau of American Ethnology in order to study the Native American peoples of North America, and Powell situated this bureau within the confines of the Smithsonian Institution. Within less than two years Clarence King, never much for the management work of a major federal agency, tired of the work and wanted out. In 1881, Powell took over the reigns at the United States Geological Survey. Soon this high place of American science was to become Ward's intellectual home for most of the rest of his life.

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Restless Skepticism, 1880–1883

By 1880, Lester Ward had settled comfortably into the intellectual life of Washington, D.C., joining all the scientific organizations that he could, participating in the forums and discussions about science, philosophy, and social reform that they held each and every week. Although for the moment he was still tied to his job in the Bureau of Statistics, Ward's relationship to the intellectual community in Washington had altered his career since the middle 1870s, driving him to scientific work and prompting him to rewrite the book that he had laid aside for nearly five years. Washington scientists clustered around organizations including the Smithsonian Institution, the Philosophical Society, the Biological Society, the Anthropological Society, and the Cosmos Club, all dedicated to the production, discovery, and expansion of scientific knowledge. Ward was a member of all these organizations.¹

The scientists in Washington, men like Ward and John Wesley Powell, believed they were following in the footsteps of the Revolutionary generation and were deeply committed to what they believed were the republican goals to expand and disseminate knowledge to the entire country. Earlier plans, such as George Washington's and Joel Barlow's vision of a national university, and John Quincy Adams's proposal for centering educational activity at the nation's capital, had long been neglected. But with the powerful centralizing forces of the Civil War, Washington scientists' felt, it was now possible to bring these early visions to reality. In the post-war world and the aftermath of Reconstruction, no question seemed more important to these scientists than gathering data to record the growth of the nation and point the direction for the future. Rapid economic

expansion, conflict between capital and labor, industrial growth, corporate organization—all the hallmarks of America's Gilded Age—justified the expansion of government power in various fields: science, economic regulation, land distribution and management, irrigation in the West, protection for Native Americans, and national funding for educational initiatives. George Brown Goode, director of the National Museum in the 1880s and 1890s, recounted the history of these developments, highlighting the uniqueness of Washington's scientific community in the years immediately following the Civil War: "No one will question that the results of its work have been far wider than those which its annual reports attempt to show forth. . . . The material results of the scientific work of the Government . . . undoubtedly surpass in all extent all that had been accomplished during the previous hundred years of the independent existence of the nation . . . the attitude of our Government toward scientific and educational enterprises is every year becoming more and more in harmony with the hopes of the Founders of our Republic."²

Powell was the acknowledged leader of these scientists. More than any other member of the intellectual community in the capital city, Powell defined its purposes and provided the political leadership needed to gain a foothold in the growing government bureaucracy of postwar Washington. And it was Powell who most clearly defined the connection between the production of knowledge and government. In 1879, the year the Congress established the Geological Survey and named Powell as the director of the Bureau of American Ethnology, Powell had defined the purpose of science and philosophy as asking how and why about human behavior and institutions. "In the production of philosophy, phenomena must be *discerned, discriminated, classified*. . . . A philosophy will be higher in the scale, nearer in the truth, as the discernment is wider, the discrimination nicer, and the classification better."³

In a speech at the Anthropological Society of Washington in the winter of 1882, "Outlines of Sociology," Powell discussed the kind of organizational efforts in which the Washington scientists engaged. Sociology as a science of human society had three main branches of study: the constitution of the state, the structure of government, and the regulative function of law. He defined the state as broadly as possible and made it synonymous with "society"; the connection between state and government was a "plexus of organizations." These organizations served as integral parts of an ordered society: "Men are organized into societies for religious, charitable, educational, industrial, and other ends," he concluded. "These organizations . . . do not constitute a part of government, but they form part of the state and must necessarily be considered in the plan of the state." The lines between the government and these quasi-public research organizations, he argued, were permeable and ever shifting. The job of so-

ciology as a science was to understand the regulative functions of the various organizations composing society.⁴ But Powell had little interest in writing sociology. He gave his attention to ethnography, anthropology, and geology, and dedicated himself completely to these projects in the early 1880s.

This connection between government and the state had important uses in political ideology in the late nineteenth century. By arguing that these organizations and the government were part of the same broad organization, Washington intellectuals believed that these organizations could be regulated by the government. Since the state was composed of various organizations, only the national government could offer a centralizing hand for information gathering and coordination of efforts at reform. Anything less would be a haphazard, inconsistent, and ultimately unsuccessful effort at reform and would halt the progress of American democratic institutions. Powell knew this to be true about western lands, and Ward as well as others in Powell's charge recognized that there were broader implications for this view of the state for a whole host of reform objectives in the late nineteenth century.

In many ways, in fact, it was Ward more than any other Washington intellectual who taught Powell about sociology and this new view of the state and its politics. Ward was to go much further than Powell in defining sociology and in providing the kind of taxonomy and classification for the forces that shaped social development. He hoped to define sociology even more clearly than Powell and give it the structure he felt it needed to function as an important part of reforming society. As he rewrote his lengthy manuscript, Ward increasingly directed his work to the scientists and reformers in Washington. The original manuscript lacked this critical perspective; it also lacked a specific audience for its message of education and knowledge as the foundations for social reform. But the scientific associations of Washington comprised a group of intellectuals dedicated to this idea, and Ward wanted his work to speak to their interests and concerns.

He made his first public remarks about it at a meeting of the Anthropological Society of Washington in April 1880. In front of a crowd that included Powell, Spencer Baird, and other luminaries in the Washington intellectual community, Ward delivered a paper entitled "Pre-Social Man" based on his reading of Charles Darwin's and Ernst Haeckel's interpretations of human descent. Ward revealed the changes he had made in his scientific ideas as he discussed the evolutionary development of the human race, a view no longer dependent on the views of Louis Agassiz. The paper impressed Powell. In the presidential address delivered before the society later that year, Powell discussed the members' lectures. He suggested that the kind of work Ward did in this short paper indicated the

true test of evolutionary philosophy: "It is the test of a true philosophy that it lead to the discovery of facts, and facts . . . can only be discerned and discriminated by being relegated to their places in philosophy. The whole progress of science depends primarily upon this relation between knowledge and philosophy."⁵

In the summer of 1880 Ward made his first remarks about the application of scientific knowledge to social reform, indicating the new direction of his book. In mid-August he left Washington to attend the annual meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) held in Boston. Ward delivered two papers on widely different topics at the conference: first, a paper on the evolution of plant life based on his observations of fertilization read before the Biological Section of the AAAS; and, second, a paper analyzing the classification of "forces" in social science read before the Anthropological Section of the AAAS. Colleagues in the scientific community praised Ward's first paper, particularly Dr. Edward Cope, the well-known University of Pennsylvania scientist. Ward impressed Cope with his scientific work and asked him to publish it in the journal he edited, *The American Naturalist*. The friendship between the two men would not last long, however, since Cope despised Powell and wanted to destroy the power of the Geological Survey. But for now, Ward was pleased by the recognition he received for his work in natural science.⁶

It was Ward's second essay, "Feeling and Function as Factors in Human Development," that allowed him to provide public comments about his book. This essay dealt with the classification of social forces as they influenced the development of human society. His work in botany and paleobotany, which identified science as primarily the classification and organization of observed data, strongly influenced his interpretation of social development. He borrowed from Auguste Comte the term "social physics" to describe the duties of the scientist examining human development and society. The science of society, Ward argued, consisted in creating the correct taxonomy of social forces influencing social development. Ward emphasized the difference between "function" in nature and "feeling" in society. Function, and nothing more, structured evolution in nature. In the natural world species only sought objects necessary for their own survival.

But, Ward continued, there was a radical break between these forms of natural evolution and cultural life. Both feeling and function structured evolution in human society, and the social scientist needed to identify what "feeling" meant in human development. Ward made only tentative attempts at this meeting to identify these forces of feeling and merely argued that perhaps the mind must in some way be part of the process of evolutionary change in human societies. Social scientists at the very least

had to extend their realm of inquiry to include feelings and motivations as a categories of analysis: "With man . . . whose actions transform the entire face of the planet and lift him by rapid steps from one place of activity and life to another, it becomes of the utmost importance that the true nature of his motives be scientifically understood."⁷

Ward read the essay from the manuscript pages of his book. Edward L. Youmans, editor of *The Popular Science Monthly* and one of Herbert Spencer's active supporters in the United States, also attended the Boston conference. Youmans already knew Ward's scientific work since he had published some of Ward's botanical essays in his magazine in the 1870s. When the two men met, Ward asked Youmans if he wanted to read the entire book. Youmans was interested and took the manuscript with him when he left the Boston conference. Ward's work so impressed him that he offered him his assistance in securing a publisher for the manuscript. He suggested trying two publishing houses in New York City: Henry Holt and Company and the more established D. Appleton and Company. When Ward left Boston, he hoped his first book would soon be published.⁸ In a letter that he wrote to Youmans shortly after their meeting he asked about the status of the book and explained that he had even more ideas for future studies. "I may now say that the present work is not all that I have contemplated writing. Indeed, it is properly only an introduction. . . . I have already begun collecting the materials for another work to be devoted to the fundamental concepts of social and political science."⁹

Later that year Youmans sent him the bad news concerning his manuscript. The publishing houses in New York regarded the work as too "philosophical" a venture for them, too long and too radical for an unknown writer such as Ward. Ward agreed that his book was different from most current work in science and philosophy in the United States, but hoped that Youmans and the publishers could put aside their objections to the manuscript. Ward knew that there was similar work in England and Europe being done by social philosophers on the problems of scientific analysis of society and social structure. America, he believed, needed its own commentator even if he was a relative unknown. "My work is in one respect wholly unlike anything that has thus far made its appearance on this side of the Atlantic," he wrote in response. "[Both] the objection that my 'peculiar views have not become matters of criticism or any public cognizance' and that they 'should have been promulgated in part at least and brought under fire so as to awaken some preliminary interest before issuing so comprehensive a system' . . . I am quite unable to satisfactorily meet." Ward pointed out that he had tried to publish his ideas in *The North American Review* and in *The Journal of Speculative Philosophy* but both journals had turned down his work. The large publishing houses were his last chance to express his ideas publicly.¹⁰

Despite the disappointing rejection of the book, Ward continued to improve his manuscript, and at least in some ways tried to meet the questions and criticisms that Youmans raised. Instead of abandoning the project, he decided that he needed to expand its analysis even further. He was helped in this effort by changes at the Geological Survey. In 1881, Powell replaced Clarence King as the director of the Survey. He soon brought Ward on board to study botany and paleobotany at the Survey and serve as honorary curator of the National Museum's collection of plants. Ward thus became one of the first scientists to study the fossil history of plants in the United States, a "fossil hunter" as he and other paleontologists were known, and his studies and the collections he gathered over thirty years of work provided the foundation for the discipline's future. By the late 1880s, he was a recognized and widely admired expert in his field, often consulted by scientists across the country and in Europe for nomenclature and identification of collected specimens.¹¹

Ward was ecstatic to leave the confines of the Bureau of Statistics, finally obtaining a position as a scientist working for the national interest. He accepted Powell's offer with great anticipation and excitement; he had left, he said, "the treadmill of statistics . . . [for] the greatest scientific organization that has ever existed on American soil."¹² Since the mid-1870s he had sought a secure position in science and scientific inquiry and a secure place within the capital city's intellectual community of scientists and reformers. He had finally succeeded when he moved over to the Survey. "The change was so intensely agreeable to me," he recalled, "that I plunged into my new work and almost forgot about the old book."¹³ He did not forget for long. The move to the Geological Survey offered Ward the time (and the company) that he needed to revise his manuscript and find the appropriate avenue for publication. Within a year of his arrival at the Survey, he was ready to publish his now massive tome.

The Geological Survey offered a nurturing environment for Ward's work and his ideas. From there, he could make more connections in the scientific community and test his ideas about science. In 1881, for example, with the help of Spencer Baird and the Smithsonian Institution, he finally published his catalog of the flora of the District of Columbia based on the botanical work he had done in the 1870s. The book covered the methods of botanical collection and cataloging and provided the amateur collector with a guide to local flora. Rose Ward had done so much work with him, patiently cataloging and preserving the flowers they collected, that Lester Ward considered making her a coauthor, but she politely refused.

He aimed his guide at the scientists in Washington, reflecting the important popular need for scientific information: "The popularization of science is now a leading theme of scientific men. To accomplish this cer-

tain branches of culture must first become a part of liberal culture. . . . It should be the acknowledged work of educationalists to make science fashionable and call to their aid [the] powerful social sentiments in demanding the recognition of its legitimate claims."¹⁴ He emphasized the importance of Washington to national science when he read parts of the guide to the members of the Washington Philosophical Society in January 1881. "The city of Washington," he concluded in his botanical guide, "is coming more and more a center, not only of scientific learning and research, but also of art and every form of liberal culture. . . . Science and culture must go hand in hand. Culture must become more scientific, and science more cultured."¹⁵

Ward's friendships with Washington scientists such as Powell, Baird, and Goode, as well as his contact with the scientific organizations of the city, also helped him to reformulate his ideas. His office at the Smithsonian's second building, known as the Arts and Industries Building, recently built to house the collections of the Philadelphia Centennial and the staff of the National Museum, stood next door to the red-brick tower of the main building. He was only a short walk from the Library of Congress where he could do research and reading in science and philosophy for the major revisions of his manuscript. He was located in the middle of a community of common thinkers all dedicated to the idea that the nation's capital must be the center of intellectual and scientific work in the United States.

In the summers of 1881 and 1882 Ward traveled in the West, conducting his scientific work for the Survey in botany and paleobotany. This was important work for him and for the nation since the scientists at the Survey believed that the natural history of the whole continent was their responsibility to discern. Whenever possible he continued to work on the book bringing notebooks with him to jot down ideas as they came to him. Powell's liberal policy of letting him work on his manuscript even while on Survey time was a great help. "Major Powell was very liberal in his ideas of official duty," Ward later recalled. "With him it was all for science and the public good."¹⁶

It remains something of a mystery exactly why Powell was quite so liberal in his attitude toward Ward. Some members of the Geological Survey who knew both men were to later complain of Powell's indulgence and favoritism toward Ward. They complained about the time Ward spent on activities outside the scientific work of the Survey but none of this ever bothered Powell. He appreciated Ward's philosophical work: "He knew I was preparing my manuscript there," Ward later remembered, "and would come into my room and discuss all matter of subjects."¹⁷ The two men were quite close personally and intellectually. Powell liked Ward's synthetic notions of science and his belief that knowledge could play a key role in shaping public policy in the United States. The depth of their

friendship is clear in an essay Ward read at the Anthropological Society in March 1881, "Politico-Social Functions." The essay extended some of the work that he had done the year before on "feeling and function," and it went further than Powell had gone in discussing the study of society a few years before. He tackled inherited notions of government in the United States and challenged reformers to reconsider the nature of their understanding of social science.

Ward attacked what he called the war between theory and practice in American social reform. In doing so, he entered into a debate that had torn apart the Financial Division of the American Social Science Association (ASSA) over the nature and purposes of political economy. American reformers, especially those involved in antebellum reform movements, had founded the ASSA in 1865 as a way to gather all kinds of social thinkers and intellectuals in one national organization. The purpose was to apply practical techniques of data gathering to solve social problems such as poverty and the problems of the "laboring classes." The organization was divided into a variety of divisions including Finance, Education, Social Economy, Jurisprudence, Public Health, and others that were added as the association saw fit. The ASSA represented an early form of professional development for the social sciences before the establishment of professional training in universities. Established in the age before academic disciplinary specialization, the ASSA was to eventually collapse in the late nineteenth century because of the creation of new and more specialized professional organizations in the social sciences such as the American Economic Association, the American Political Science Association, and the American Sociological Association. But in the early 1880s, ASSA was the main organization for those interested in social science and the ways society might solve the problems of postwar America.

These men and women were the "genteel reformers" of the Gilded Age: well-bred, well-educated, and dedicated to liberal reform causes. They included among their number the leading lights of late-nineteenth-century political thought, such as civil service reformer George Curtis, journalist Richard Watson Gilder, and Harvard College president Charles Eliot Norton, among others. They were above all reformers who despised corruption in government, believed that civil equality should reign in American politics, and argued that free labor had to be the basis for the economic and political progress of the nation. But their commitments to laissez-faire individualism and their fears of the growing power of labor and working-class movements in the late nineteenth century checked their tendencies to seek broader social reforms. Moreover, as far as Ward was concerned, they were all wrong when it came to fears about labor and their beliefs that economic competition in the unregulated market could possibly achieve the national progress that they professed to support.

Ward was never a member of the ASSA, in part because of his dedication to the natural sciences and contact with groups such as the American Association for the Advancement of Science. He was convinced that natural science served as the basis for the study of society. But he knew of ASSA's work and followed the debates and arguments that took place within the organization. By the 1870s, the ASSA Financial Division served as the headquarters for laissez-faire economists such as William Graham Sumner, one of the leaders of the section for most of the decade, who generally rejected any innovation or interference by government and reformers as tinkering with the natural balance of the economic system. The arguments between laissez-faire economists and younger colleagues such as Henry Carter Adams and Richard Ely, who believed in a "historical economics" arguing that history (not the invisible hand of the marketplace) shaped economic practices and the state, created deep discord among ASSA's members.¹⁸

Gilded Age economic and social theory, as these young insurgents well knew, was a rather sad affair in the late 1870s and early 1880s. The influence of laissez-faire conceptions of economic practice not only dominated the leadership of the ASSA's Financial Division, it also filtered into the public mind through popular magazine literature such as E. L. Godkin's *The Nation*, which provided a forum for these individualist interpretations of social change. It was a major strain of liberal social thought in the late nineteenth century and one that has had a profound impact in shaping the liberal tradition in the twentieth century; in particular, the support for corporate capitalism as the foundation for national success. These liberals did fear monopoly power and corruption in business but they still believed that the path to national power and success for the United States after the Civil War lay in the direction of marketplace competition.

The younger economists challenged the economic and social basis of the laissez-faire economist's work. In their critiques of these genteel reformers, the younger economists frequently caricatured laissez-faire as dominant within their work, and the reformers themselves were characterized as desiring no social reform at all. Still, the younger economists were correct in challenging the basis of their reform commitments in the face of the rapid economic and political changes in the 1870s and 1880s. A number of critical voices had already added to this growing chorus of criticism in the late 1870s. Books such as Henry George's *Progress and Poverty* offered a harsh critique of the current state of American monetary and social conservatism. The growing Social Gospel movement also provided an evangelical alternative to the laissez-faire faith in letting society alone, offering a religious alternative to competitive capitalism and the hope of faith and social betterment for suffering humanity.

Ward's essay entered into this fray, opening with a close examination of efforts at government regulation in Europe. Since the United States was

part of a broader trans-Atlantic world, he argued, reformers should seek to examine what contemporaries in Europe were trying to achieve. He argued that the hostility toward regulation in the United States was unique in the Western world. "Reform with them [i.e., genteel reformers and laissez-faire economists] means simply a halt and reversal of prevailing tendencies." Although they believed that their ideas were innovative, laissez-faire advocates essentially clung to antiquated notions of political economy and social development. Ward recommended an activist approach to government: "Society needs less to be told that it is doing wrong," he admonished, "than to be shown what it is really doing."¹⁹

The basic problem with political economy in the United States was a definition of government that focused on the individual rather than the larger social purposes of regulation. This was the basic problem with the liberalism of the genteel reformers and their economic thinking. Since they based their notions on protection of individual freedoms from the tyrannical hand of government, they had no idea what was actually happening in contemporary America. What is really happening in society, Ward argued, "[is] that the immediate creators of wealth—the bone and sinew of labor—are, in nearly all cases, poor, while princely fortunes fall . . . to the class, who, far removed from all the objects of production or exchange, busy themselves solely with the medium of exchange, with the mere transfer of entries representing the value of commodities produced and exchanged."²⁰ This rendering of the value of labor was deeply felt. Ward could not understand the hostility to the poor and defenseless that so many reformers seemed to display since Ward viewed a fight against monopoly power as the heritage of the antebellum fight against the slave power.

Ward sketched in brief form his version of a producerist commonwealth—one that differed significantly from classical political economy. His producerism was essentially an ethic of self-reliance, a celebration of labor and the value of work writ large for the national stage. The ideal originated in his understanding of an older artisanal republicanism and his experience with manual work and poverty in the years before the Civil War. Antimonopoly was his leading theme—efforts at reform, he told his audience, should certainly be directed to preserve a level of self-reliance within a larger social system. But in direct contrast to laissez-faire contemporaries, Ward warned that the old liberal ethic of individualism and self-reliance was no longer enough in the postwar world. Although he did look back to an older free labor definition of the value of work with some nostalgia, Ward added to this democratic faith a collectivism inherited from his experience in the bureaucratic world of postwar Washington and his service to the country in the Union Army. What society needed was planning, clear direction for the wayward tendencies of rapid industrial change. This

is what was happening in Britain and Europe. This was the direction of late-nineteenth-century social and political thought.

The word he coined for the new kind of government and political economy required by postwar America was “sociocracy.” Sociocracy differed from both individualist democracy and socialism yet preserved the best of both worlds. “Sociocracy stands opposed only to the absence of a regulative system, and is the symbol of positive social action as against the negativism of the dominant *laissez-faire* school of politico-economic *doctrinaires*. It recognizes all forms of government as legitimate and, ignoring form, goes to the substance, and denotes that . . . it is the duty of society to act consciously and intelligently, as becomes an enlightened age, in the direction of guarding its own interests and working out its own destiny.”²¹ This is why the relationship between state and government was so important to the Washington intellectuals. All of the nation’s social organizations needed to be part of this effort to act together to achieve social change and progress. And the only part of society that could adequately lead this effort was the national government.

Members of Ward’s own family also shared in this faith in knowledge, reform, and the productive value of labor. Erastus Ward was an abolitionist like all the Ward family and he died in fighting for slavery’s destruction. Cyrenus Ward carried the family’s reform heritage and interest in social causes even further than Lester. After the failure of the wagon-hub factory in Towanda, Cyrenus Ward worked as a mill hand, factory operative, and farm worker in northeastern Pennsylvania. He also tried to serve in the Union Army—just as his brothers Lester and Erastus did—but was unable to because of a factory injury to his hand. By 1862–63 he made his way with his family to New York City, originally hoping to get a position in the Union Navy. He eventually found work as a dockman for the Brooklyn Navy Yard. In Brooklyn, Cyrenus became heavily involved in the politics of labor unions and working-class reform, potent issues on New York’s docks in the 1860s. By the mid-1860s, he was a leading member of the young socialist reform movement in New York City, the New Democracy. His writing for labor publications, and his active organizational work, attracted the attention of Horace Greeley, editor of the *New York Tribune*, who soon asked him to travel to Europe to cover working-class politics and the formation of the Communist Party by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels.

By 1870, Cyrenus Ward joined Marx and Engels in the International Workingmen’s Association (The First International); and while he was in Europe, French officials arrested him as a spy during the Franco-Prussian War, activities that Lester Ward reported on in his magazine, *The Iconoclast*. At the Hague Congress of the First International, delegates elected Cyrenus to the Council, one of the few Americans given the honor. After

the demise of the First International, he ran as a Social Labor Party candidate for Congress from Brooklyn in 1878. In his books, *The New Idea* and *A Labor Catechism of Political Economy*, both published in the 1870s, Cyrenus Ward sketched a commonwealth of state-owned industry and production offering all the laborers of the nation the hope of wealth and fortune; the ethical basis of his producerist paradise shared a similar origin to Lester Ward's own and also shared a similar outlook to the socialist collectivism of later radical leaders such as Eugene Debs. In the early 1880s, as Lester Ward rewrote his own book, Cyrenus Ward published a Socialist newspaper in New York City, *Voice of the People*, until he ran out of money in 1884. Lester Ward used his connections in Washington to get Cyrenus a job first at the Geological Survey and then at the Bureau of Statistics, where he remained until the turn of the century.²²

Another brother, Lorenzo Ward, the eldest of the Ward children, also shared in this democratic reform tradition. Lorenzo had remained in Iowa after Justus Ward's death, married, and maintained the land that his father had tried to cultivate so unprofitably. Lorenzo Ward was quite successful in the years following the Civil War. He wrote to Lester Ward appreciatively about his scientific approach to social problems and social philosophy, but he also had his own strongly felt political convictions. He was a leading member of the Greenback Party in his county in Iowa, heavily involved in farmer's cooperatives and the politics of farm finance in the 1870s and 1880s. Local residents found him "a man of great ability and a leader in his community, in an intellectual point of view. He is not only one of the first citizens in the county in point of time of settlement but [also] in point of citizenship."²³ A fourth brother, Justin Loomis Ward, also gained from the reform tradition in his family, gravitating toward Methodist evangelism and temperance reform. He became a leading Prohibitionist Party candidate in local elections in Illinois. The inherited zeal for causes, which Lester Ward demonstrated in all his writing, was a shared family tradition.

In many ways, when Ward wrote and spoke about labor, knowledge, and reform, he preached to the converted at the Anthropological Society of Washington. Most of the members of the society belonged to government bureaus fully engaged in collecting scientific and social information from around the country. Most were hostile to notions that their kinds of innovation in scientific governance were futile and wrongheaded, and they were equally hostile to the laissez-faire economists' reliance on classical political economy and the evolutionary philosophy of Herbert Spencer. After taking control of the Geological Survey in 1881, Powell quickly assembled a group of men who slowly developed ideas about the extensive uses of science in making government policy and expanding government power.

Ward's "sociocracy" fit well with their ideas and their experiences. At the meeting where Ward read his paper, Powell spoke at length about Ward's ideas, demonstrating their close intellectual kinship. "Former attempts at government regulation were impracticable, because they sought to control opinion," Powell responded. "The form of control now exercised is of a very different kind, and it is practicable and effective." Powell utilized his own notion of the organizations that composed the state, praising Ward's criticism of the older political economy and his understanding of the new needs of the postwar world. Uncontrolled development of industry was appropriate, Powell argued, until it became monopoly: "[Ward] showed that the natural evolution of industry was legitimate and harmless so long as it was confined . . . to simple differentiation, but when the differentiated parts commenced to become integrated, there arose grave social evils. [Ward] was not hostile to corporations, but held that they were the instruments through which nearly all the operations of society would eventually be performed. But they require regulation. . . . [T]he principal work of legislation would ultimately be the adjustment of the relations of corporations to the public and to each other."²⁴

The kind of social science Ward advocated was far different from the simplistic Baconian empiricism evident in his early scientific work and in the first three chapters of the unpublished manuscript. In an essay on Immanuel Kant's philosophy, which he published in 1881, Ward identified a "vague consciousness" in society that rebelled against the arbitrary and impossible moral codes imposed by theological and teleological thinking. Social and natural development, he argued, were "the product[s] of fixed mechanical laws," and the job of science was to identify them.²⁵ Classifying and cataloging the knowledge of scientific discovery had to take place within a grand systematic scheme of philosophy. Science was "marching relentlessly forward, and re-claiming one field after another that had so long been given over to dogmatic conceptions, until there is now scarcely room to doubt that its conquest must ultimately be complete."²⁶

Throughout 1882, Ward read portions of his work to the Anthropological Society and participated in debates about the nature and purpose of social knowledge, government regulation, and political economy.²⁷ He also participated in other scientific societies showing off his debating skill and the knowledge of social science he had gained in the preparation of his book. At a May 1882 meeting of the Washington Philosophical Society Ward challenged a paper on the classification of sciences because of its ignorance of Auguste Comte's ideas. He wrote in his diary:

Professor [Charles] Shields, a guest of Dr. Welling, gave us an elaborate paper on the classification of the sciences which was really nothing but Comte's

hierarchy clothed up but scarcely improved. I took Spencer's little book along [on the *Classification of Sciences*], but it was of no use. At the close of the paper, after the chair had announced that remarks were in order, there was a long pause, no one seeming to have the courage to say anything. At length I got up and made probably the very best extemporaneous speech I ever made. Being perfectly *au fait* with the subject, I showed them that the system presented was essentially Comte's, pointed out Spencer's inconsistency, and made two telling criticisms on the paper itself. The speech was very warmly received and brought out Powell, Antisell, and others. At the close Dr. Welling congratulated me warmly and asked the privilege of introducing me to Prof. Shields. Dr. [Frank] Baker and I took a long walk. . . . He thought my speech was a magnificent take down."²⁸

Ward also published an essay that elaborated on his remarks made at the Anthropological Society, extending his commentary on the nation's political economy. In "The Scientific Basis of Positive Political Economy," he explicitly took on laissez-faire economics and again called for the development of a "positive" economic science. He distinguished between what he called an "animal (natural) economics" and a "human (social) economics." As a practicing scientist, he said, his work demonstrated that a competitive natural selection ruled development in nature. Moreover it had previously been the practice of society to follow the same competitive system: "In short, all the functions of society are performed in a sort of random, chance manner, which is precisely the reverse of economical, but wholly analogous to the natural processes of the lower organic world."²⁹ These practices were not only harmful but a great waste of energy. The argument that natural law was the governing force of social growth, Ward scoffed, "take[s] the form of a sort of *nature worship*."³⁰

In the place of this nature worship—a "primitive sort of religion"—Ward suggested that scientists study the development and place of the mind and feeling in human society. It was the actions of what he called the "conative faculty"—the active mind—that had the power to direct evolutionary development in human society. The job of a positive political economy was to identify and classify the forces of conation in social development. Ward made a tentative effort in this direction by identifying direct and indirect conation as the basic categories to follow. The first represented the power of human feeling and emotion. The second, and more important, was indirect conation. Ward defined this force as the power of intellect and reason to control the first force. The most important principle to gain from studying the evolutionary development of society was that the mind offered control over all social forces. Human interference, or "artificial invention" as Ward often called it, was the only method of success: "It is by artificially directing the otherwise random and useless, or harmful forces of nature into channels of human advantage that all wealth

is created.”³¹ Nature and natural law simply did not have absolute control over social growth. “All true progress springs from that restless skepticism which dares even to question the methods of nature.”³²

Ward impressed Powell with his rethinking of the relationship among science, economics, and the study of social evolution. In late 1881 or early 1882, Powell wrote D. Appleton and Company recommending that they reconsider their decision about Ward’s book. The publisher finally agreed when Ward offered to pay for the costs of production.³³ He was able to afford publication because of the sale of the family house to Rose Ward’s sister, Sarah Comstock. Lester and Rose Ward remained in the house but paid rent to Sarah; this arrangement provided him with the cash he needed to publish the book—by the time he finished, the book had cost him over two thousand dollars. By the spring of 1882, Appleton finally began production on Ward’s lengthy manuscript.³⁴

On 6 November of that year, Edward L. Youmans asked Ward to attend a dinner honoring Herbert Spencer during his visit to the United States. Youmans asked if Ward could at least send a short essay if he could not attend the dinner, held at the famous Delmonico’s Restaurant in New York City. The cost of the dinner was twelve dollars plus the cost of train fare to New York City. Although he and Rose still struggled with debt despite the promotions Ward received at work, he did not want to miss this major intellectual and cultural event, especially since his lengthy book was finally at the publisher.³⁵

It was Spencer’s first and only visit to the United States, and he was scheduled to leave just days after the high-profile dinner party. When Spencer arrived in the United States on 21 August 1882, his admirers immediately took him on an extensive tour of the country. Crowds honored him in grand fashion at every stop during his trip. In New York, a few hundred of the most well-known American intellectuals gathered to honor him on the night of 9 November 1882. Youmans asked a number of Spencer’s admirers, including Professor William Graham Sumner, Carl Schurz, Professor Othniel C. Marsh, Professor John Fiske, and Reverend Henry Ward Beecher, to speak about the importance of the English philosopher’s work. Ward was in distinguished company.

The dinner finished around 9:30 P.M., and, as a *New York Times* reporter described the scene, when the “cigars were lit,” the speeches in honor of the English philosopher and social scientist began.³⁶ Spencer spoke for a short time about the American character and his general impression of the pace of life in the country. The rest of the speeches honored Spencer as the founder of sociological theory and paid homage to his “genius” in organizing social thought in the nineteenth century. The great variety of participants indicated the importance of Spencer’s work to a broad range of Americans. Sumner, professor of political and social science at Yale University, spoke first and

honored Spencer as a mentor and the founder of sociology as a science solidly grounded in the principles of empiricism and fact gathering. Despite this praise, Sumner was no blind follower of Spencer's work and did not share Spencer's faith in synthetic scientific inquiry: "I have the feeling all the time, in studying and teaching sociology that I have not mastered it yet in such a way as to be able to proceed in it with good confidence in my own steps." Sociology was still an infant science, Sumner told the audience, not yet ready to comprehend all social evolution and development. In the meantime, he admitted, Spencer remained our best guide and the starting point for all discussion of the subject.³⁷

The rest of the after-dinner speeches did not have Sumner's seriousness of purpose; most of them were tributes to Spencer and no more. Carl Schurz, former secretary of the Interior under Rutherford B. Hayes and the editor of the *New York Evening Post*, spoke of the progress of science as a result of Spencer's work. Othniel C. Marsh, one of the country's leading paleontologists and also a professor at Yale, discussed Spencer's impact on evolutionary theory. John Fiske, professor of philosophy at Harvard and probably the most devoted follower of Spencer's work, gave a speech about the relationship between evolution and religion. Finally, Henry Ward Beecher, pastor of Plymouth Church in Brooklyn, spoke about the impact of Spencer and evolutionary theory on the ecclesiastical community. The dinner party ended shortly after these tributes because each of the speakers had taken so long. Ward was never able read his speech.

It must have been difficult for him to sit through these speeches. For the last two years, he had been voicing stern criticism of laissez-faire ideas as he rewrote his book. Youmans, who was also unable to deliver any after-dinner remarks, agreed to publish Ward's short speech in a volume celebrating Spencer's visit to the United States. Ward's dinner speech, "The True Philosopher—The Highest Product of Evolution," paid homage to Spencer as the founder of sociology and praised him as the most eminent social theorist of the second half of the nineteenth century. Spencer always remained an important influence on his thinking and was a constant presence in all of the work he did. He felt a kinship with Spencer and argued that they were both quite similar. Neither Ward nor Spencer had come from an esteemed family or distinguished lineage, nor did either of them possess any special privileges within their society. They were both self-made and self-trained intellectuals: "He represents no royal line of ancestors, bears no titles of honor from great states or institutions," Ward said of Spencer, "but occupies his present exalted place in the eyes of the world purely and solely through the force of his intellect."³⁸ Ward might as well have described himself. Spencer's own eclectic educational background and successful intellectual labor were attractive qualities to Ward. As he himself had struggled against odds to achieve his own education, so too had Spencer.

The dinner guests must remember, Ward admonished, that they were there to honor Spencer's mind and not the successes of the man. Spencer's true influence as a philosopher was an attempt at "the synthesis of extant knowledge." But perhaps Spencerian evolution was not the end product of social theory in the nineteenth century. Maybe, Ward argued, there was more that social thinkers could say about the application of science to the solution of social problems. "May it not be [that] in telling us what society is, and how it became such," he concluded, "[Spencer] had unconsciously pointed out the way in which it may be made better." In building the science of sociology, Ward said, Spencer had pointed the way to the "art of Sociocracy."³⁹ In tone and purpose, Ward's speech differed significantly from Sumner's. Used in the correct ways Spencer's philosophy pointed toward solutions to social problems, not toward ignorance of them.

The "restless skepticism" that Ward had advocated in approaching reform and social science formed the core of his philosophic system in *Dynamic Sociology*. He intended the book to correct the mistakes made in American social thinking after the Civil War and to "derive certain fundamental principles of social action . . . [that] guide the interference of man in the direction of social affairs and to the accomplishment of social ends."⁴⁰ The manuscript had by now been thoroughly rewritten and reworked since Ward began writing in 1869; it barely resembled the original unpublished version, "The Great Panacea." Ward still retained the ethical imperatives he set down in the unpublished volume, especially his unswerving dedication to the education of all citizens in science and the universal application of scientific thinking to social problems. The foundation of cultural life, Ward argued, was knowledge. Only a system of thought that offered the possibility of understanding, organizing, and cataloging the knowledge of the world could offer the assurance of continued progress and growth.

Ward offered the most complete critique of liberal individualism and a vulgar social Darwinism published in the United States in the early 1880s. By the 1890s, many readers were to find the book the only voice systematically crying out against the problems facing a nation emerging full blown into the industrial age. It also represents an ignored contribution to the literature on new liberalism in the United States. Ward continued his dialogue with the genteel reformers' ideas about political economy in this book, expanding the analysis of sociocracy that he had elaborated just a few years before. The book represents a tradition of social thinking that saw all the natural and social world as part of its purview; it was a polymath's outlook on the relationship between social science and natural science.

Dynamic Sociology reveals two key aspects of Ward's thinking. The first was highlighted by the Spencer dinner in 1882. Ward's book served as a

challenge to the strict empiricism and well-known liberal individualism of men such as Sumner. Ward and Sumner offered American social thinkers competing definitions of the possibilities of social science in fixing the problems of an industrializing democracy. Ward's ideas confused some readers, especially those who believed that laissez-faire and evolutionary philosophy went hand in hand in explaining American social life. Shortly after the book's publication, for example, a friend wrote William Sumner complaining about Ward's interpretation of social science and evolutionary philosophy: "To my surprise I find a writer whom I have supposed to be a follower of Herbert Spencer and an evolutionist writing a thoroughgoing argument in favor of the paternal theory of government. Where does he get any support for this theory in the doctrine of evolution?"⁴¹ To those who read Ward's work closely and knew his political ideas the answer was clear.

Ward's book also reveals the deep-seated ethical imperatives of self-reliance he gained from his experience in antebellum political culture; just beneath the surface of his science still lay a perfectionist faith in social reform and an optimism about the possibilities for social change. The key to his project was defining the relationship between government and social progress, and demonstrating the uses of social knowledge. The postwar generation felt that the war between capital and labor was the great problem of a democratic America—even as they differed on the solutions. In the same year that Ward published his book, for example, Henry George published *Social Problems*; Sumner published *What Social Classes Owe Each Other*; and a well-known Washington insider, John Hay, one of the original founders of the Cosmos Club, published a bitter antilabor novel entitled *The Breadwinners*. The problems of labor and capital received even more national attention with the hearings before Congress in mid-1883. The Senate Committee on Capital and Labor heard months of testimony from employers, managers, and workers on trade unions, the national economy, and the problems of corporate monopoly. Moreover, the rise of national labor organizations, first in the National Labor Union (which Cyrenus Ward participated in) and later the prominence and power of the Knights of Labor proved the importance of dealing with the relations of capital and labor for the nation. The problems of an industrializing democracy were absolutely central to all political and social discussion of the early 1880s.

Social science needed systematizing, Ward argued. In the hands of the ASSA and kindred organizations the science did not offer much for social change. He was hostile to the "mere fact-gatherers" of the scientific world, arguing that "classification, or 'systematization,' is . . . a less trivial operation than some persons have intimated. It is the essential process of organization, and has for its real object to arrive at the true *order* which ex-

ists in the universe . . . [it] is the domain of law, of order, and the fertile field in which the great systematizers, theorizers, and organizers of the world find congenial employment."⁴² Ward believed that what postwar America needed was an organized way to understand, catalog, and use social knowledge; the accumulation of such knowledge could serve as the foundation for the science of sociology and for solving the problems of an industrializing society.⁴³

Ward's personal experience and faith in the power of scientific knowledge appeared throughout *Dynamic Sociology*. He later recalled that a burden had been lifted from his shoulders when his ideas finally became public. He had had a powerful sense of mission in writing his book that was evident throughout the entire manuscript. "No longer to be strained up to [the] pitch required in competing with the intellectual giants of the age. No longer to feel the responsibility of the world's progress," he recalled. "I have uttered my thought, my warning, my protest; if society now fails to take its affairs into its own hands, if it relapses, I am no longer responsible as I should have felt . . . [if] I left my thought unuttered."⁴⁴

Printing the book took a long time, in part because Ward insisted on making extensive changes on his page proofs. Ward's advocacy of a new political economy, and his criticism of laissez-faire economic theory, greatly worried the publisher. Appleton's editors approached Youmans to ask Ward to tone down some of his ideas, but Ward refused to change his argument. Youmans expressed similar concerns and wrote Ward that "what I have some fear of although it cannot probably be helped is that certain parties will be on the alert to make the most of some of your bolder and more extreme positions and thus create a prejudice in advance against the work."⁴⁵ The book finally left the printer in late May 1883. "The great end which I have had in view for fourteen years is at last achieved," he wrote in his diary. "It is certainly the proudest day of my life."⁴⁶

A certain "labor of love" and necessity infuses Ward's two-volume tome. He had worked on the volume for over fourteen years. The experience of trying to gain an education as well as his years of service to the federal government were evident throughout the book. It also revealed the deep debt Ward owed to Powell both for his ideas and for his policy of allowing him write while he worked at the Geological Survey. He dedicated the book to Powell, writing that his "generous aid, warm words of encouragement, and friendly intercourse have sustained me in my prolonged effort."⁴⁷

Ward was convinced that an "essential sterility" pervaded all work in social science, arguing that his book established the principle that science existed for the benefit of all human society; a proper understanding of social progress and reform could only be derived from scientific study.

Social progress was the theme that ran through both volumes. His perfectionist goals for mankind and society rested on the wide distribution and expansion of the knowledge of science and nature. The directive force of scientific intellect, if imparted to "suffering humanity" ameliorated social ills and created social happiness. What social reformers needed to understand was the radical break between nature and culture, the break between competition in nature and cooperation in human society. "It will be shown . . .," he wrote in his introduction, "that this swarming planet will soon see the conditions of human advancement exhausted, and the night of reaction and degeneracy ushered in, never again to be succeeded by the daylight of progress, unless something swifter and more certain than natural selection can be brought to bear upon the development of the psychic faculty. . . . The resources of the globe are not inexhaustible unless zealously husbanded by the deliberative foresight of enlightened intellect." The only essential element of systems of social change, Ward concluded, was "the firm and unshakable conviction in the minds of the great mass of society that its success will have the effect of increasing human happiness and diminishing evil."⁴⁸

The work opens with a history of philosophic and scientific debate, focusing on Auguste Comte's and Herbert Spencer's systems of philosophy and science, the background the reader needed in order to follow Ward's discussion of the principles of social science. The problem with previous discussions of social philosophy was the lack of a true scientist among those who wrote on social issues; social scientists needed to discover the proper ways to classify knowledge and order scientific facts. Ward uses many terms in the book to describe what sociologists study—animal versus human economics, natural versus artificial selection, genetic (unguided) versus telic (guided) evolution—but the thrust behind all of them is the divide between evolution in nature and evolution in society. The data that social science gathered are not derived from natural law but from social facts, things, and objects. The foundation for human knowledge rested on this scientific view of nature; the sociologist needed to provide the proper taxonomic categories to study human life.

The goal of social science is to provide the state and government with the data necessary to the proper functioning of the social order. Ward called this principle "attractive" or "progressive" legislation—terms he defines very broadly to include all the functions of state, local, and national governments. In some ways, Ward recognized that this had been the function of government for a long time despite the arguments of laissez-faire advocates to the contrary. Indeed, the recent discovery by historians of the history of government interference in the economy and the everyday lives of American citizens was well known to Ward. In addition, England and especially European governments had also begun to take over

the reigns of various social responsibilities. State-run enterprises were common in all industrialized nations; public administration of postal affairs, police and fire departments, and other municipal systems was a commonplace activity in nineteenth-century America. He remained harshly critical of laissez-faire theorists who suggest that society should simply be left alone; man, Ward warned, must control the progress of society. Government legislation “is an effort . . . to control the forces of a state as to secure the greatest happiness of its people.”⁴⁹ But without the proper understanding of the forces shaping social and cultural evolution—forces that his book illuminated—all efforts at reform were doomed to failure: “Before progressive legislation can become a success, every legislature must become, as it were, a polytechnic school, a laboratory of philosophical research into the laws of society and of human nature. No legislator is qualified to propose or vote on measures designed to affect the destinies of millions of social units until he masters all that is known of the science of society. Every true legislator must be a sociologist, and have his knowledge of that most intricate of all sciences founded upon organic and inorganic science.”⁵⁰ The only proper way to achieve this knowledge is through national education—a state-run public school system centralized at the national capital. Ward dedicated the rest of his work to providing the scientific foundation for social science, and it became his benchmark in this first volume for examining the systematic philosophies of Auguste Comte and Herbert Spencer.

Ward inherited from Comte the complete rejection of a compatibility between theology and positive science (i.e., knowledge of phenomena), as well as his doctrine of the hierarchy of sciences. Moreover, and perhaps more important, Ward gained the conviction that social progress required order. Science, not theology, provides the necessary direction for controlling and understanding social progress. The hierarchy of sciences, as Comte defined them, became the defining characteristic of the scientific and educational system Ward constructs in *Dynamic Sociology*. In positivism Ward found fixity and assurance, “that which is . . . established as certain truth. It is the real, the known, the tangible or sensible in nature. The positive may be briefly defined as that which really exists, that which is positively true—what is. . . . All that has been gained toward the elevation of society and toward securing the comforts and enjoyments of life has come from this source. . . . The essential accuracy of all this . . . can not now be doubted, and, for both the fact and for the form of its presentation, the world owes to Auguste Comte a debt of gratitude which its long neglect and tardy acknowledgment . . . have poorly repaid.”⁵¹

Comte’s progressive hierarchy of sciences followed an increasing order of complexity, each a step in a series that constituted the building blocks of knowledge: mathematics, astronomy, physics, chemistry, biology, and, the

highest of all sciences, sociology. Knowledge was the unification of each step in the hierarchy so that the lower sciences provide the natural phenomena, or raw material and facts, that sociology utilizes for the creation and implementation of laws of social progress. Comte's mysticism and his Religion of Humanity, which seemed to be the ideas of a man who had lost his sanity and intellectual clarity, never really attracted Ward. He preferred instead his Comte filtered through John Stuart Mill and argued that a properly interpreted Comtean science rejected laissez-faire philosophies of governance. Previously, social reformers rarely had used the knowledge of science and the hierarchy of sciences. The political result for society is "an ill-defined notion of the power to modify future events by means of legislation."⁵²

Since sociology, the science of society, embraces the operations of nature as well as the actions of human society, combining both branches of sociological data produced a science of politics for social use: "Comte . . . insists that the time will yet arrive when all the branches of sociology will be founded on the known and positive laws of its accurately observed and systematically co-ordinated phenomena, by the aid of which all the events of the future can be predicted with certainty, and all the true avenues of human progress laid out in advance."⁵³ Comtean categories of analysis provided Ward with the assurance he wanted from natural and social knowledge. Positivism attracted him not merely as a method for science but as the certainty of system and fact.

In addition to positive and objective knowledge of science, and the hierarchical order of the sciences, Comte's interest in education offered Ward a systematic philosophical basis for the "panacea" that dominated the first version of his book. It provided a firm scientific basis for his ethic of self-reliance and artisanal idealism: "Among the most eminently sound of all the doctrines contained in the works of Comte must be classed those upon the subject of education. . . . First of all . . . insisting that all education be positive in its nature, he demands that it be extended to all mankind, and no longer restricted to an imaginary aristocracy . . . the lower classes have greater need of a public education which their private means can not supply." Moreover, Comte stressed that the acquisition of knowledge, the way students actually learn information, proceeds in the order of the scientific hierarchy—with sociology, the most difficult and complex of the human sciences, having the highest and most important place in the system.⁵⁴

Ward's own educational experience and his faith in the power of education as a panacea for social ills led him to reject one key element of Comtean positivism: the ideal of a scientific priesthood. Comte's scientific priesthood not only seemed part of a mystical element of his thinking but also a fundamentally aristocratic notion. Ward called the creation of a sci-

entific priesthood a “chimera.” Their “spiritual power to rule over all questions” is an element of Comte’s thought easily discarded. Instead of accepting an aristocratic ruling class educated with knowledge, Ward argues that “education and labor cannot be divorced.” The idea that a “priesthood” alone mastered the ability to gain knowledge infuriated him.

Political life, Ward said, “when properly appreciated [is] the highest and most refined of all the scientific professions. . . . On that high plane let the theoretical and the practical mind meet, and no one need fear the result.”⁵⁵ Rather than supporting a spiritual ruling class, Ward emphasizes the creation of an egalitarian and democratic social order through universal scientific education: the goal was not to create universal equality but to allow for the most complete opportunity for every American to rise above his or her station (women’s participation in the social order was a given in Ward’s vision). Politics in this scheme is the practice of directing sociological knowledge toward the amelioration of social problems; as a result, American democracy requires universal distribution of knowledge for social improvement: “Education thus defined is the available means of setting the progressive wheels of society in motion; it is, as it were, the lever to which power must be applied. Give society education . . . and all things else will be added.”⁵⁶

Although Comtean classification and systematization attracted Ward, he could not accept Comte’s hostility to the biological sciences. Comte never sought explanation for the causes of natural phenomena nor did he ascribe to any early version of evolutionary theory—clinging instead to notions of fixity in nature. Ward turned to Herbert Spencer’s system of science based on evolutionary theories of change as a supplement to the insights Comtean categories offered for the study of society. The omission of explanation and causation in Comte’s system, Ward felt, ignored “the great principle, which even Bacon recognized, that the most important phenomena of Nature lie deep-hidden within her and are not seen by the average observer.”⁵⁷ He considered Spencer’s formulation and understanding of evolutionary theory the proper corrective to Comte’s scientific system. It allowed for causation, rational explanation, and a properly formulated account of a society’s movement through history.

Progress and change, in nature as well as in society, are the twin pillars of Spencer’s formulations: “The elements of all phenomena are perpetually changing their position,” Ward writes. “This change is in a fixed direction, and not arbitrary. The direction is from the confused and homogeneous toward the definite and heterogeneous. This is the test of progress. It is the progress of evolution.”⁵⁸ More than just the knowledge of phenomena, as recommended by Comte, Spencer’s formulation of a theory of evolution offered Ward an explanation for the relations between both social and natural events.

An acceptance of Spencerian method and theoretical explanation, however, did not mean an uncritical acceptance of Spencerian doctrine. Ward explicitly rejected Spencer's *laissez-faire* ideals, arguing that he did not make a distinction between animal and human evolution. Spencer maintained that neither human society nor individual effort could hasten evolutionary progress—the social order could (and should) be left only to a natural, infinitely progressive evolution. Ward, on the other hand, discarded Spencer's pessimistic assumptions about individual effort, offering instead a "dynamic" system of social change directed by institutional growth and facilitated by education. "Feeling" and individual passion are the motive forces of all social progress in Ward's system. Sociologists must shape their systems to these undeniable facts.

Ward devotes much of the discussion following this interpretation of Spencer to a lengthy description of evolutionary change in nature, or what he called the "law of aggregation." He traces his story through three stages of growth as he followed the evolutionary track from chemistry through the emergence of biological life. As a working natural scientist, unlike most other social theorists in the late nineteenth century, Ward felt that any system of social philosophy must be based first on the known facts of natural science. Even as he worked on his manuscript, Ward still performed his duties to the Survey, examining the fossil plant history of North America and Europe. He also came in close contact with the entire core of Powell's scientific team, and as an obsessive autodidact he sought out all the information he could on the entire evolutionary history of the earth.

Before he reached the origins of humans, however, Ward paused to examine the evolutionary development of mind as a key change in the life of animals. By the time of the origin of man, the evolutionary development of the mind had reached its highest stage. In the animal kingdom the power of the mind lay dormant. Unable to fully use the power of reason, the animals functioned on instinct and competitive behavior alone for survival. But for humans over the course of evolutionary time, the mind was unleashed and reason could offer rational control over all aspects of social life. The final stage of evolutionary growth was the human development of social evolution. Ward outlines the stages of social progress resulting from man's mind, knowledge, and labor: first, the chaotic and anarchical stages of primitive man; second, forced organization into loose communities for protection; third, the formation of rudimentary forms of government and eventually nation-states for further protection of the social order. The final stage of society has yet to be reached: a time in the future when all governments achieve universal integration in sociocracy.⁵⁹ Human desires move the social forces producing

each of these stages; harnessing these desires could finally move society to the last stage of social progress.

The problem with the current state of American society, Ward argues, is the separation between "getting and producing," between the parasitic classes of society and the producing classes. At this point he finally arrived at his reason for an activist social science: the need to secure protection for the nation's individual producers, protect society from the power of financial monopoly, and provide for universal education in the face of possible class warfare in the late nineteenth century. Class warfare was inevitable without major changes in the way politics and progress worked in American life.

Ward's criticism of contemporary America began with a passionate outburst at the current state of social progress, which was weighed down by the influence of laissez-faire theory. In his interpretation of the conflict between capital and labor, he gave great prominence to workers, arguing that man reigns supreme over nature and society and can control the development of both. Unlike many contemporaries, and in particular genteel reformers, Ward did not fear labor. "If I were to employ a single word which could be made to convey the whole notion of man's supremacy over nature and his superiority over all living things, I should choose the word *Labor*. His labor of mind, seconded by his labor of body, have made him conqueror of nature and master of the planet."⁶⁰ The concerns that led his brother Cyrenus to Marxian socialism were just below the surface of Lester Ward's scientific approach to labor and class. Lester Ward's ideas were a form of middle-class radicalism; revolution was not necessary, he wrote, but the nation did have to repair a system that placed too much of a social and economic burden on the producing classes.

Ward is at his best in this first volume as a polemicist, attacking laissez-faire advocates who relied on antiquated negative theories in the place of social change. His political economy rested on an artisanal, antimonopolistic critique of a social order left to the mercies of Darwinian competition: "The combinations, co-operations, and monopolies already established by shrewd distributors of wealth have become so extensive and complicated," he warned, "that it may require a general social revolution to overthrow them."⁶¹ The life of the individual laborer is one of unremitting toil and degradation; a life Ward knew well from his own struggle for work and money both before and after the Civil War. The monopolistic conditions of transportation, of exchange, of finance, and even of labor have elevated a parasitic class above the nation's more worthy producers. Only a recognition of the laborer's general interests can remedy this "evil" situation: "Labor must retain possession of its products . . . making the processes of distribution wholly dependent upon and subservient to those of production. But this can only come of greatly increased intelligence,

particularly on the part of the producers themselves, and for a long time to come we may expect that the whole train of monopolies will go on as they have gone on from time immemorial."⁶²

Ward attacked defenders of laissez-faire doctrine who were content to leave society to the operation of natural forces, arguing that although society has made great progress in the nineteenth century it has done so predominantly by accident. Social progress still suffers under the burdens of poverty, ignorance, and degradation. Could a system be devised to rid the social structure of these evils? Was it possible that society could achieve true progress and liberate the passions and feelings of individuals for betterment? Ward concludes the first volume of his study with a plea for an activist social science designed to repair the problems of American democracy:

We have seen, in the latest period of depression, an example of how evil can accrue on a vast scale . . . this proves that the great necessity is the maintenance of a standard of intelligence corresponding to the degree of civilization, and that . . . intelligence must increase at a much more rapid rate than does material and social organization. . . . Thus far, social progress has in a certain awkward manner taken care of itself, but in the near future it will have to be cared for. To do this and maintain dynamic condition against all the hostile forces which thicken with every new advance, is the real problem of Sociology considered as an applied science.⁶³

The second volume of his book took up the task of constructing a plan of social development and a science of progress based on sociology. Ward's personality comes through most clearly in this second volume. His autodidacticism is evident throughout since his attitudes toward a science of politics and progress, the basis for scientific education, and the improvement of society through the adoption of a universal education system were in many ways nationalized versions of his own experience. Ward gained his knowledge from self-training; all the nation required was an organized form for this education. He had a democratic optimism—some would even call it naïve faith—that all people could easily learn the same essential material and put it to good use. As he wrote in the preface to the second printing of the book, "The whole tenor of *Dynamic Sociology*, its leading thesis and paramount contention, is the necessity for universal education as the one clear, overshadowing and immediate social duty to which all others are subordinate."⁶⁴

The key to constructing this system of progress and education was classifying the data of social science. Ward invented terminology for the science in the hopes that it could serve as the foundation for the future study of society. "Men think in systems," he wrote early on in the second volume, "most systematic treatises are un-intelligible unless followed from

the beginning and grasped in their entirety." Ward instructed his readers in how to interpret his work, reproaching anyone who might mistake his purpose: "There is a tendency . . . to allow the reader's individuality to crowd out that of the writer, and thus so far to mingle the subjective with the objective as to leave the latter imperfectly assimilated. For the reader's own good, this tendency should be restrained."⁶⁵

The system-building emphasis of Ward's scientific work was widely shared among the Survey's scientists and among social theorists generally in the 1880s. In this task, Ward shared a common faith that organizing knowledge could provide an avenue to understanding the causes of social development and change, and harnessing them in the directions that benefited the most people. Other scientists and philosophers in the late nineteenth century believed that constructing these systems of thought was the essential project of social thought. Charles Sanders Peirce, among many others, thought similarly about the construction of systems of thought. Later scientists and historians have criticized this kind of broad and occasionally abstract thinking. And in a sense these criticisms were on target—these all-encompassing systems of thought left many details of scientific and social thought obscure if not entirely ignored. But in the late nineteenth century it was a widely shared project and at the forefront of thinking about the connection between nature and culture.⁶⁶

The second volume outlines the ascending steps leading to the ultimate end of all human action: social happiness. These steps were fixed "in a series not admitting any alteration": progress, dynamic action, dynamic opinion, knowledge, and education.⁶⁷ In order to achieve progress and happiness, society must deal with its most important motive forces: feeling and ideas. "At the base of every philosophical system involving the interests of man lie the phenomena of *feeling*. . . Life without feeling is essentially *passive*, and its capabilities are limited by the nature of surrounding circumstances. Life with feeling is *active*, and either directly or indirectly reacts upon the environment, modifying the face of nature."⁶⁸ The first element, feeling, which Ward also called "dynamic action," can either emanate from an emotional force or from rational judgment. Ward adopts evolution as his metaphor to explain the power of feeling: since individuals possessed an intellect—the highest achievement of evolution—rational judgments increased with the improvement of society through education; feeling became progressively higher and more controlled. The second element in Ward's classification of social forces is "dynamic opinion," or the power of ideas. Ideas were conscious manifestations of feeling controlled by the intellect. "The truism that ideas rule the world simply means that opinions determine action. In a general sense, what men do depends upon the views they entertain."⁶⁹ Feelings and ideas motivate individuals to take control of social change and progress.

Ward argued that a social intellect could direct these passions and ideas toward the progress and expansion of social institutions. The scientifically educated intellect directs feelings and ideas to the proper social ends: "Everything progressive comes from the intellect. . . . If a change is to be really made in the conduct of men, it must be brought about by the adoption of some rational scheme which the wisdom of the age shall foresee to be certain to secure this end. To say that this can not be done is to admit that the social forces are not capable, like other forces, of being directed to human advantage—to deny that there exists a science of sociology."⁷⁰ Science serves a human purpose. A democratic faith in science motivated Ward's hostility to laissez-faire idealism. Reform of government, for example, depends on society's awakening to the fact that politics was an art meant for human control: "It . . . becomes the interest and the duty of society, throwing off the *yoke* of government in the odious sense of this ill-conceived term, to establish a truly progressive agency which shall not only be a product of art, but shall be itself an art."⁷¹ The purposive direction of individual effort achieved social happiness, organized on the basis of action, opinion, and progress.

Scientific knowledge serves as the basis for social change in Ward's scheme. With the proper knowledge, individuals could direct the system of social change and reform. Knowledge of science, of the basic facts of natural phenomena and the environment, represents the essential knowledge of society: "To know one's environment is to possess the most real, the most practical, the most useful of all kinds of knowledge, and, properly viewed, this class of information constitutes the only true knowledge."⁷² Organized truth in the form of scientific knowledge leads the masses of society to progress and happiness. He again stressed the difference between the nation's parasitic classes and the producing classes: a small elite group of men currently maintained a monopoly over knowledge. Only by correcting the unequal distribution of knowledge could society achieve progressive social change. "Superior intelligence, now as throughout man's career, is the attribute through which success is achieved in the pursuit of wealth and the gratification of desire, by whatever mode. It follows that, as a rule, the inequality of *condition* among the members of society is due to the inequality of intelligence, or, what is the same thing, to the unequal distribution of the knowledge of the world."⁷³

Society's purpose was to direct action and opinion through the organization and distribution of scientific knowledge. Education became society's directive agency for this change. First, Ward distinguished among five educational types assembled in order of importance: education from experience; the education of discipline; the education of culture; the education of research; and the education of information. Education from experience alone was simply a return to laissez-faire doctrines; acquiring

knowledge merely from one's experience was a wasteful and inefficient process. Ward's own education on the frontier in the 1840s and 1850s proved the difficulty of acquiring a proper education under the current system. Only the wealthy and nonproducing classes could afford an experiential education while "the masses need the real, solid meat of education in the most concentrated form assimilable. They have strong mental stomachs and little time. They cannot afford to take slow, winding paths; they must move directly through."⁷⁴ Education from experience, he concluded, leaves the project of social change to natural and inefficient forces alone.

Ward also dismisses education for culture, education for discipline, and education for research as similarly unrelated to the real practical concerns of modern life and social progress. Education must be directed to social ends and to the proper progress of society as outlined in his system of social development. Although culture, discipline, and research are components of any scheme to educate the public they do not of themselves further social progress or institutional growth. Ward settled on the education of information—scientific information—as the most important function of his system: "Education [of information] may therefore be defined as a system for extending to all the members of society such of the extant knowledge of the world as may be deemed most important. . . . The object is to fill the mind with truth."⁷⁵ Only by imparting to the masses of society the existing scientific knowledge of the world can social progress and social happiness be properly achieved. The education of information should also include both intellectual and manual instruction; the utilization of scientific resources required inventive or manual faculties as well as the ability to perceive relationships between mechanical phenomena. Moreover, manual and intellectual instruction lessened the existing class distinctions between laborers and nonlaborers, creating a unified social order.

On the basis of his earlier section on progressive legislation, Ward argued that government itself must carry out the educational enterprise. "The system of private education all things considered, is not only a very bad one, but, properly viewed, it is absolutely worse than none, since it tends still further to increase the inequality in the existing intelligence, which is a worse evil than a generally lower state of intelligence would be."⁷⁶ Only government has the power to undertake the comprehensive education of all its citizens. Individuals in a competitive social order cannot be entrusted with the distribution of knowledge—particularly in a society divided between parasites and producers: "If society ever collectively realizes what the ultimate end of its being is . . . it will necessarily regard the distribution of knowledge as the one great function . . . which it is specially constituted to perform. It will concentrate its entire dynamic

energy upon it, to the neglect of all those ends which . . . must follow from this one initial motive power."⁷⁷

Finally, Ward argued, education must be universal and extended to all members of society. Society will never achieve social reform and progress so long as it labored under the burden of general ignorance. The intelligent classes will continue to exploit the ignorant classes just as the parasites exploit the producers of wealth. Moreover, "the distribution of knowledge underlies all social reform. So long as capital and labor are the respective symbols of ignorance and intelligence, the present inequity in the distribution of wealth must continue." In the second volume, Ward continued his assault on the differences between genteel views of the laboring and nonlaboring classes in the social order: "With advancing intelligence higher views of the dignity of labor will prevail." Shall society continue to leave its operation to the forces of nature and "drift listlessly on," he asked, or rather "be made much superior to nature" and direct social progress? His reply was that educated individuals must take hold of the dynamic forces and begin the progressive improvement of the social order.⁷⁸

Ward never addressed exactly how he intended to carry out the process of educational and social reform; it was an omission reviewers did not miss. Ward's purpose in this volume was the classification and organization of the data that social scientists needed to study. In the ten years following publication of *Dynamic Sociology* he began to fill out the agenda he set in this work. This book set him on a path directed toward the establishment of a National University based in Washington, a project he shared with many members of the Washington intellectual community including Powell, Goode, and others. It was a long-term interest in American history, dating back to the Revolutionary generation. But the problems of postwar life gave the idea a new import. "The only absolutely independent institution . . .," he argued, "is the *state* or *national* institution."⁷⁹ Only such a national institution could represent the needs of an entire society and not the local and parochial interests of few. The city's rapid growth as a scientific center provided the essential background to Ward's work in social theory. A "national seminary of learning" based at the capital could offer the United States a center for the study and analysis of social problems. It could also provide the government with the data it needed to solve the problems of a growing industrial democracy: conflict between capital and labor, the revolt of rural Americans against institutions of finance, the rise of corporate growth and power in American industry. All the problems of the republic seemed capable of repair by the proper organizational efforts of a national government.⁸⁰

This was the project that occupied much of the next three decades of Ward's life. He believed that the nation could establish a national philos-

ophy of social reform if only intellectuals could take up the challenge of understanding social progress. *Dynamic Sociology* set an agenda for Ward and for others who read the book. In many ways it was an early salvo in the efforts to redefine American liberalism in the 1880s and 1890s. This project lay in the future, however; for the present, Ward still had to deal with the reviews and reception of his book.

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A True National Philosophy, 1883–1887

Lester Ward left Washington in the summer of 1883 to travel in Yellowstone National Park and navigate the Missouri River with paleontologist Charles White. He could not wait for the reviews of his book to arrive since work at the Survey had to continue. Ward and White traveled in a flatboat for nearly one thousand miles conducting scientific work for the Survey and gathering specimens for the National Museum. Although later critics would portray Ward as an armchair scientist, he was in reality a major participant in the fieldwork of the Survey. His Yellowstone excursion, to one of the most beautiful and wondrous areas of the nation's landscape, was one of the Survey's major efforts at local fieldwork in the early 1880s. As always travel in the West and fieldwork in science was a wonderful respite for him. Although anxious to hear of the reception of his book it was a joy to leave the heat and dirt of Washington's summer and leave the daily bureaucratic grind of his office.

Throughout the summer, Rose Ward remained in Washington and patiently collected the reviews of her husband's book as they appeared. She placed them in a file for him to read on his return. In his absence that summer, there appeared only one severely critical review of the book. The anonymous reviewer for *The Catholic World* chided Ward for his agnosticism and his general ignorance of the impact that religion had on social life in the United States. For the most part, however, the reviews praised Ward's systematic philosophy and regarded his work as an important contributions to social and scientific debate.¹

Dynamic Sociology initially sold well—a little over 125 copies in the first month after publication. Nonetheless, upon his return to Washington,

Ward acted as his own promoter in getting his ideas before the public. In the Washington *Capital, Star*, and other city papers, he placed reviews and notices of his book and wrote each one of them himself as if they came from a different reviewer. He knew many of the city editors because of his well-established position in Washington's intellectual community, and they allowed him to write the notices introducing his book. In one review, for example, he wrote that the "great toiling proletariat" will find in his system that "their interests . . . [are] clearly and fearlessly laid down."² Ward also purchased copies of the book from the publisher and mailed them out to prominent intellectuals in the United States, England, and Europe, including E. B. Tylor (one of the leading anthropologists in the world), Richard Congreve (one of the leaders of the English positivists), and Herbert Spencer.³

Edward L. Youmans also helped Ward with a notice in *The Popular Science Monthly*. "[Ward] takes radical issue with his philosophic predecessors, and arrives at new results for which he claims the sanction of science and reason . . . the drift of his reasoning is toward a great extension of coercive agency and government control in the work of social progress." Although Youmans had helped Ward in the years before he published the book, after this notice he wrote Ward privately, asking to have nothing further to do with promoting it. Youmans was Spencer's leading supporter in the United States and could not tolerate Ward's efforts to replace the English thinker's scientific system with one of his own. "As for the *Popular Science Monthly*," Youmans wrote, "we have a peculiar position in regard to your work, and are entirely committed against its fundamental conception."⁴

The book had its most immediate effect, not surprisingly, among scientists and intellectuals in Washington, D.C. William H. Holmes, a scientist and artist with the Geological Survey, wrote Ward several letters about the book and the argument for education and science in national reform. The most extensive examination came from Powell, who wrote a lengthy review of *Dynamic Sociology* in the journal *Science*. In a set of four essays written in the summer of 1883, Powell considered the entire structure of Ward's book, proclaiming it "America's greatest contribution to philosophy." Powell's extensive review carried high praise for Ward's achievements and emphasized that what he had done was offer a rationale for the increasing use of government-sponsored programs to guide the nation's economic and social development. "*Dynamic Sociology*, as presented by the author, is the philosophy of human endeavor," Powell wrote, "and the justification of man in his effort to improve his condition. Those persons, and there are many, who are actively engaged in the promotion of institutions and regulations for the benefit of mankind, will find in it philosophic hope; while those who are opposed to the course of practical

events appearing in public affairs cannot afford to ignore their strongest opponent.”⁵

Ward’s classification of the sciences profoundly impressed Powell. He could not agree more with Ward’s approach to human dominion over nature. In a speech that he gave to the Washington Philosophical Society at the end of 1883, Powell outlined the methods of evolution. His discussion of nature and culture showed a clear reliance on Ward’s work: “By his arts, institutions, languages, and philosophies [man] has organized a new kingdom of matter, over which he rules. The beasts of the field, the birds of the air, the denizens of the waters, the winds, the waves, the rivers, the seas, the mountains, the valleys, are his subjects; the powers of nature are his servants, and the granite earth his throne.”⁶ Powell shared Ward’s faith in and experience with nature as a tutor, as well as his belief that the classification of social thought remained the paramount duty in social theory. In Ward, Powell had found a kindred soul, someone who could express aspects of a grand vision for planned social development and social change he hoped could become the main project of national government in the late nineteenth century.

Powell did criticize Ward’s understanding of the development of human societies, however, and his notion that there was a fourth stage of social organization creating “sociocracy.” Powell was a far more practical-minded man than Ward—it was Ward’s synthetic, encyclopedic interest in social philosophy that so attracted the Major to him. Powell, on the other hand, was more attuned to the nation’s historical growth and took Ward to task for his ahistorical rendering of the history of human social organization. Powell’s knowledge of ethnographic anthropology was much more extensive than Ward’s own. He challenged his friend’s lack of attention to anthropology and used his review as a way to criticize Ward’s inadequate anthropology as well as that of Lewis Morgan’s *Ancient Society*. Powell argued that Morgan’s use of technological development as the key to understanding the increasing complexity of human social organization was wrongheaded. Instead, he used Ward’s notion that it was knowledge, mind, and intellect that moved social organization and development. The problem was that Ward thought too much of his principles and less of the process of organization constituting the stages of social growth.⁷

Powell’s objections pointed to some of the serious problems with Ward’s rendering of social science. Ward was never much of a process-oriented thinker; he never indicated the ways society might actually implement his educational ideals. And he did possess a naïve belief that if scientific knowledge was made available to the nation, social reform would proceed along the lines he believed that it should. He remained interested in principle alone, and at least one reviewer strongly challenged this basis of

Ward's book. Grant Allen, an English scientist and active popularizer of Darwinian natural selection, wrote in his review that perhaps Ward should have entitled his book "practical purposes for a short cut to Utopia." Allen argued that the book was ultimately unsatisfying as an interpretation of social growth and social change, "vitiating throughout by the deliberate and dogmatic reiteration of the astounding Jeffersonian paradox, that all men are created equal." Allen asserted that "by adopting this pre-Darwinian figment, Mr. Ward throws overboard a great part of all modern biological truth, and utterly ignores the overwhelming value of hereditary influences."⁸ Finally, Allen concluded, the impracticality of Ward's "education" was even more obvious when it came to the book's final section. In the end, he wrote, Ward's book "revolves aimlessly, and leaves the real work of evolution to be still performed by the much despised agency of natural as opposed to teleological causes."⁹

Allen was not the only one to recognize these utopian aspects of Ward's thinking. After receiving a copy of Ward's book, Herbert Spencer wrote him a letter praising his achievement but noting the significant differences in their ideas:

I infer that you have a good deal more faith in the effects of right theory upon social practice than I have. The time may come when scientific conclusions will sway men's social conduct in a considerable degree. . . . [But] I regard social progress as mainly a question of character, and not knowledge or enlightenment. The inherited and organized natures of individuals, only little modifiable in the life of a generation, essentially determine for the time-being the type of social organization, in spite of any teaching, in spite even of bitter experience.¹⁰

Spencer's criticism was important to Ward because he desperately wanted intellectuals to interpret him as a serious scientist and philosopher, not dismiss him as a simplistic "utopian" thinker. It was a problem he addressed briefly in *Dynamic Sociology* when he wrote that "it is impossible to construct a logical and symmetrical edifice of thought without going both below and above the familiar range of common experience, and enunciating propositions . . . which the popular mind, or even the general sentiment of the most enlightened portion of the community, will refuse to accept, and will pronounce Utopian."¹¹

It was a slight, therefore, to dismiss his lengthy and thorough examination of social and natural evolution by classifying it as "utopian." Soon after Ward read Allen's review, he wrote an angry response calling his ideas "typically English" in their understanding of the possibilities for rising above class. He never sent it to a publisher. Spencer's comments, on the other hand, remained on his mind for his entire career. By the 1890s, Ward took on Spencer again when he made extensive changes to his under-

standing of social change. He remained extremely sensitive to criticism throughout his entire life, never wanting to hear negative comments even from friends who supported most of his work and ideas.¹²

Allen's review, however, was not even the most critical commentary on Ward's work. Ward believed that he had arranged for a friend to review the book for the *New York Times*. The reviewer was supposed to have been his childhood friend William Owen, Cyrenus Ward's brother-in-law and now a professor at Lafayette College, whom Ward had known since his days in Towanda, Pennsylvania. At the end of his life, Ward incorrectly recalled that the *Times* review was "highly complimentary," remembering fondly his friendship with Owen. But the review was not the least complimentary. The *Times* decided to send the book to William Sumner, who wrote a harsh review of Ward's work that questioned the entire basis of his science of sociology.¹³

Although both Sumner and Ward came from similar low and rough circumstance in antebellum America, the social and intellectual paths of their lives could not have been more different. Sumner was an urban easterner born in October 1840, the son of an English immigrant laborer, Thomas Sumner, in Paterson, New Jersey—the town founded by Alexander Hamilton's pet project, the Society for the Establishment of Useful Manufactures. Thomas Sumner had emigrated to America in the late 1830s strongly influenced by an interest in free trade economics and temperance reform. He eventually found manual work in Hartford, Connecticut, as a railroad mechanic. By the later 1840s and 1850s he had established a successful business building houses in the Hartford area, but he lost the business in the frequent depressions and boom-and-bust cycles of the American economy in the antebellum years. He died penniless after the Civil War. William's father was an important educational influence in his life, but his most significant experience, he later claimed, was during his reading and study in the local libraries. He often read books on political economy, moral philosophy, and natural science, works by moral philosophers such as Francis Wayland and others. From these books he discovered the basic tenets of his later scientific interests: morality, progress, free trade economics, and laissez-faire went hand in hand. "[M]y conceptions of capital, labor, money, and trade," he recalled, "were all formed by those books which I read in my boyhood."¹⁴

In 1859, Sumner was able to matriculate in Yale College with the financial help of a Congregationalist minister in Hartford. Yale was well suited to his early intellectual training and interests. The basis of Yale's curriculum was the principle that the natural world revealed divine inspiration and power, an intersection of Baconian science and moral philosophy popular in antebellum America. The desire to infuse the natural world with religious meaning ran throughout all intellectual work at Yale College in the

middle of the nineteenth century. The New Haven Scholars, men such as Noah Porter and Theodore Dwight Woolsey, seriously objected to developments in evolutionary theory and were determined to demonstrate that there was no conflict between natural science and religious faith. Although Sumner later rejected the connection between nature and religion, his early education in Baconian science and moral philosophy deeply influenced his worldview. Unlike Ward's reading of Darwinian evolutionary theory and Comtean positivism throughout the late 1860s and 1870s, Sumner never explicitly engaged evolutionary ideas in any of his work. Although he became famous for his "social Darwinist" view of competitive social change, Sumner's intellectual outlook was the product of an education in classical political economy, moral philosophy, and Baconian science, not Darwinian evolutionary theory.¹⁵

Sumner's political experience and education also differed significantly from Ward's. He never shared his father's deep interest in reform causes. Before the Civil War he cared little about slavery as a political or moral issue, and he never served in the military. His family and friends helped him purchase a replacement for service in the Civil War after he was drafted in early 1863. He left the country for a cosmopolitan education in England and Europe, attending classes in Geneva, Göttingen, and Oxford in a wide range of subjects including languages, classics, and theology. After the war he returned to Yale to serve as a tutor in classics. In 1867, the Episcopal Church ordained him as a deacon, and for the next five years he worked in churches in the New York and New Jersey area. Despite his interest in the politics of the church and in the relationship between theology and science, Sumner did not remain in the clergy for long. The church could not sustain his growing interest in science and philosophy. He was increasingly unsatisfied with religious explanations for the events of the modern world. In 1872, he left his position as a minister and accepted an appointment to become professor of political and social science at Yale. He never completely discarded his religious life, he later said, he only left it in a drawer to never use again. From his position at Yale, Sumner became one of the leading commentators in the nation on social science, political economy, and the perils of social reform.

Sumner's intellectual path directly crossed Ward's only once—at the dinner honoring Herbert Spencer in the late fall of 1882. What he thought of Ward's published version of his speech is unknown, but the review he wrote of Ward's book indicates that he probably disagreed with him. Sumner apparently read *Dynamic Sociology* in early July 1883 and published his review in the *Times* while Ward was traveling in the West conducting his work for the Geological Survey. Sumner opened his review with a backhanded compliment for the amount of work that must have gone into the book and its immense length. He devoted the remainder of

the review to smashing what he regarded as Ward's mistaken notions of natural science and social science. Sumner still maintained, as he had a year before at the Spencer dinner, that sociology had not yet achieved significant enough knowledge to allow for any kind of reform. Ward's use of the Comtean system of scientific classification mystified him. What possible use could this systematization be to the scientist of society, he asked? Comte's philosophy amounted to the creation of a "scientific Pope instead of an ecclesiastical one." Ultimately, Sumner concluded, "all who talk about the State as an available agency for social improvement are involved in self-contradictions."¹⁶

Sumner also harshly criticized Ward's ignorance of method and process. To Ward all science seemed fully capable of application to the social ills of industrial life. But if society was in such despair and difficulty because of the lack of scientific analysis of social problems, how would the miraculous transformation take place to the proper system of government? "While we cordially agree with all that Mr. Ward says about the value to us of knowledge of the earth on which we live, and in criticism of existing ignorance and prejudice, yet we cannot understand how Mr. Ward thinks his project practicable in face of the very facts which he alleges." Sumner, relentless in his attack on Ward's ideas and in a characteristically caustic style, ridiculed the possibilities for successfully using the knowledge gained from sociological analysis to fix modern social problems: "A demand is made on scientific men that they shall put their results into convenient pills, coated with sugar, and flavored with stimulants, in order to make them attractive and easy to the popular assimilation."¹⁷

Sumner had no interest in such a program nor did he believe it even possible. Science could not offer a solid basis for social evolution or offer an adequate program to tinker with the social system at all. "Here then is the ground for laissez-faire," he concluded. "Since we cannot persuade the colleges and schools of today to teach the laws of nature and the discipline of science, since popular indifference and stupidity cannot be broken . . . since the sages themselves are not agreed upon the creed of an orthodox science . . . true wisdom lies in leaving the natural forces to their own development." Sumner felt that Ward's "positive science" of government and economy could never replace laissez-faire as the central theory guiding American political thought and social growth. "The assumption which stands at the end of Mr. Ward and others in his way of thinking is that there is intelligence at hand to form ideals and to guide the forces of nature. It is plain that there is no such intelligence, but that State interference would be now just what it always has been—ignorant meddling."¹⁸

Sumner's dismissal of his argument deeply frustrated Ward. The same year Ward published *Dynamic Sociology*, Sumner published his book, *What*

Social Classes Owe Each Other, covering much of the same ground from a entirely different perspective. The nature of Sumner's education and political convictions are readily apparent in the book. It was a slim volume, only one hundred and fifty pages long. Each of the chapter headings, unlike Ward's lengthy descriptions, was a catechism to piety and individualism. Many of them read like the titles of a minister's sermons: "it is not wicked to be rich; nay, even, that it is not wicked to be richer than one's neighbor," and "on the value, as a sociological principle, of the rule to mind one's own business," and his most famous, "on the case of a certain man who is never thought of."¹⁹

The assumptions that lay behind Sumner's formulation of political economy and government were radically different from Ward's own. The state, for Sumner, was not the highest product of social organization but a "little group of public servants," obscure clerks on whom the nation depended. His most famous formulation of his principles and indictment of "do-gooders" spoke to his background in stern individualism: "Their schemes . . . may always be reduced to this type—that A and B decide what C shall do for D. It will be interesting to inquire . . . who C is, and what the effect is upon him of all these arrangements. In all the discussions attention is concentrated on A and B, the noble social reformers, and on D, the 'poor man.' I call C the Forgotten Man, because I have never seen that any notice was taken of him in any of the discussions."²⁰

Employers, Sumner continues, had no power over the employed, capital had no official power over labor, the only issue for society was individual success or failure. "Society . . . does not need any care or supervision. If we can acquire a science of society, based on observation of phenomena and study of forces, we may hope to gain some ground slowly toward the elimination of old errors and the re-establishment of a sound and natural social order." Sumner calls any schemes of social amelioration "paternal government," rejecting them out of hand as against the principles of an empirical social science. "Root, hog, or die," said Sumner; natural competition adequately described the struggle for life in modern society.²¹

Ward thoroughly rejected almost all of Sumner's arguments about the social classes. He read the book in early January 1884, just a few months after his return from his trip to the West, and immediately decided that he wanted to publish a response. The "savage nature worship" of one of the leading minds of this country troubled him. Science should be broad and humanitarian and "embrace the synthesis of facts, the classification of phenomena, and the establishment of truth."²² Sumner's social classes and social philosophy infuriated Ward with its cry of "*Laissez faire, Laissez passer.*" He felt that Sumner made a key error in assuming a link between nature and culture and in ignoring the evolutionary development of the

mind. "The laboring class and the 'poor,'" Ward wrote in his critical review, "in general are handled with especial severity. These are given no quarter, and one is inclined to believe that they are regarded as sheer intruders and cumberers of the earth. The whole book is based on the fundamental error that the favors of this world are distributed entirely according to merit. . . . It would be wholly profitless to attempt to meet such an argument . . . he thinks that social phenomena form a complete exception, and are not a domain of practical science such as can be put to any use. If so pray, why waste time in cultivating such a pseudo-science."²³

Ward reminded Sumner of the principles set forth in *Dynamic Sociology*. In contrast to Sumner's natural social development, Ward had advocated an applied science of politics and sociology: "Applied science is essentially humanitarian; applied sociology must be especially so. . . . The sociologist must also teach that, just as each member of society legitimately seeks his individual welfare, so society as a whole must seek its collective welfare. . . . It is the duty of society . . . to regulate the phenomena of the social aggregate as to prevent, as far as possible, the advancement of a small class at the expense of a large one."²⁴ Sumner's antiquated notions of economy and society, individualism, the law of contract, and the sanctity of individual ownership, threatened all future social improvement and progress. Ward sympathized in part with the plight of the Forgotten Man, but it was a leap of logic to reject all forms of state interference and activist government as enemies to the Forgotten Man's life. Sumner simply had no understanding of, and no faith in, the potential power of progressive legislation.

These arguments between Ward and Sumner framed a debate that would continue throughout the late nineteenth century and into the twentieth. Although most Americans had no knowledge of the heated debates between the two men in print, they were familiar with the wide range of political argument on the nature and uses of government power. Those debates would become commonplace in state and city governments, political party organizations, and town meeting halls into the next century. In the years following the publication of the two books, social scientists debated frequently about the nature and purpose of social knowledge, and many of them looked to Ward or Sumner as the starting point for their arguments. The central problem from Ward's point of view was a lack of attention to the proper philosophy of government and politics needed to spur on social reforms. Social scientists needed to understand human capability to change the social environment and reshape the direction of national progress. The work of Washington scientists was testimony to this faith; their work in gathering data about the West and about the entire geological history of the continent provided the information citizens needed to shape irrigation, land settlement and distribution, and

later for the establishment of protected parks and landscapes. This was the work that occupied Ward in the years immediately following publication of his book.

In the spring of 1884, Ward continued his attack on critics of his work, setting out an intellectual agenda that occupied most of the next two decades of his life. In "The Mind as a Social Factor," he examined the nature of the human mind and the impact of the intellect on social development. Ward gave the essay as a speech to the Anthropological Society in March 1884, speaking to the assembled scientists of his own intellectual community. In April he delivered a revised version at the Metaphysical Club of Johns Hopkins University, an institution founded by Charles Sanders Peirce and other professors at the graduate institution. Just a few years after Ward tried to attend Hopkins to receive graduate education, he was now speaking before an audience of social thinkers that would reshape the ways Americans thought about American politics and social life into the twentieth century. Many intellectuals attended the meetings of the Metaphysical Club at Hopkins, including young professors and students such as Richard Ely, John Dewey, Herbert Baxter Adams, among many others. Ward was among good company for the ideas he was expounding in his book.²⁵

Ward argued that the worship of natural evolutionary methods and forms of natural competition was "a gospel of dirt." Laissez-faire theorists claim that "the natural method is always the true method, and to find it out is the aim of all scientific investigation. . . . Those dissatisfied people who would improve upon the natural course of events are rebuked as meddlers with the unalterable. Their systems are declared utopian."²⁶ Instead, Ward felt that the development of the mind as an evolutionary force offered man power over nature: "If nature progresses through the destruction of the weak, man progresses through the *protection* of the weak. This is the essential distinction." It was human invention that created institutions of justice, morality, and charity, and these offered control over social events. "The truth thus comes forth from a rational study of nature and human society that social progress has been due only in very slight degree to natural evolution as accomplished through the survival of the fittest." The scientist of society must study the "true nature of mind," Ward told his audience, and for the next two decades he was to define how the social scientist and reformer could best accomplish this task.²⁷

Dynamic Sociology had added to a growing chorus of social critics and reformers seeking to rid American politics and political rhetoric of the adherence to laissez-faire individualism. Critics increasingly questioned what they regarded as a simplistic belief in progress, especially from social thinkers such as William Sumner who argued that little could be done to correct the social problems of late-nineteenth-century America. The

“social problems” of American democracy were topics of constant discussion in the 1880s and 1890s. Labor unrest, or as nineteenth-century Americans called it the “labor question,” became a major issue in the nation especially after the economic downturn in the mid-1880s; the brutal violence involving employers and workers (especially in the thousands of strikes in 1885 and 1886) symbolized an economy in need of serious repair. Farmers, especially those in the Midwest, organized in opposition to railroads and banking institutions in an effort to take control of the politics of states and, in the later Populist movement, the nation. Rapid population growth in American cities threatened to fracture the urban social fabric; urban spaces became battlegrounds between old-time city bosses and liberal reformers determined to wipe out corruption and take control of all the functions of urban government.

The question for Gilded Age social reformers was whether there was any governmental power that could do anything to solve these problems. Ward’s book was only his first attempt to define the ways in which reformers could fix the damage of industrial growth. Beginning in the mid-1880s and 1890s in essays, lectures, and finally in a second book, Ward continued to develop his ideas, remaining deeply committed to his faith in education and in the power of organized research based in Washington, D.C., to seek solutions to the problems of rapid social growth.²⁸ He knew, despite the arguments of many genteel reformers and laissez-faire economists, that there was absolutely enough foresight, information, and power within the hands of the national government to solve any problems confronting the republic.

The work that Ward did in expounding on the themes of his first book was complemented by his participation in the expansion of government power in the late nineteenth century. The background to Ward’s later essays and his intellectual work into the twentieth century was the work he did for government science. Ward’s “official work” in government science occupied an enormous amount of his energy. He had, he later wrote, “dropped philosophy for the most part during a number of years and devoted myself almost exclusively to science, for the pursuit of which my connection with the United States Geological Survey afforded such a splendid opportunity.”²⁹ Ward’s scientific output with the Survey was amazing. By the end of his life, his scientific bibliography contained hundreds of reports, essays, and commentary in his chosen field of study (not counting any of the work he did in social philosophy and political theory). The success of his work in paleobotany gained him the nomination as professor of botany at the Columbian University’s Corcoran School of Science in 1884. Led by President James C. Welling, the Corcoran School expanded Columbian University’s role in Washington’s scientific community, and it counted among its teachers the leading scientists of the

city's research bureaus. In addition to Ward, the faculty included anthropologist Otis T. Mason, who also held an appointment at Yale, and mathematician and astronomer Simon Newcomb, the former secretary of the Smithsonian Institution, among many others. John Wesley Powell, although he did not teach at the school, maintained a close association through his role as unofficial leader of the city's scientific community, and even gave the school's opening address.³⁰

From 1884 to 1886, Ward taught courses in botany and paleobotany at the Corcoran School, supplementing his duties at the Geological Survey and as the honorary curator of plants at the National Museum. His summers were spent in lengthy field trips to the West to study the flora and fauna of the arid lands, joined by scientists such as W J McGee and C. D. Walcott, as well as providing general assistance to the Geological Survey's project in mapping the entire United States. He built an extensive library of books and articles for the Survey on paleontology, botany, and geology. In 1885, much to the delight of current Smithsonian Secretary Spencer Baird, he donated his extensive personal collection of flowers to the National Museum. The preserved flowers, kept in a room set aside for his collections in his home, numbered nearly fifteen thousand specimens in all.³¹

Ward was also a consistent supporter of Major Powell's plan to improve irrigation in the West. Irrigation, in Powell's expansive vision for the public lands, was a major mission of the Geological Survey in the mid-1880s and early 1890s. In a brief essay for the journal *Science*, Ward fully agreed with Powell's plans for national action on the West, a vision of an American commons controlled and developed by the national government. Ward, Powell, and most members of the Geological Survey wanted the government to take on the job of reclamation engineering and land control, a project currently left to private individuals and corporations. The danger of corporate ownership of land, a topic of constant debate among the nation's farmers, was similar to the corporate control of transcontinental transportation. Ward did not want to eliminate the market. He wanted to control it. "The only unobjectionable plan, as it seems to me," Ward wrote in 1884, "is *national* action. The nation is the largest of all capitalists, and, at the same time, has no tendencies toward monopoly. If we could obtain the same degree of collective foresight in the general government as exists in the average capitalist, nothing could be easier than for the United States, acting as a corporation that seeks only its own interest . . . to develop its own resources, and increase its wealth and prosperity in numberless other directions."³²

The notion that the nation was the main capitalist would resonate for years in the arguments about western irrigation and other aspects of land settlement. Powell had recommended that irrigation districts be estab-

lished in the western territories in his *Report on the Lands of the Arid Region*, and the task of constructing a survey of available water in the West became a main Survey responsibility by the late 1880s. When Congress offered Powell the money to establish the Irrigation Survey, he and his scientists were essentially given charge over all the settlement of the West. And they took this responsibility with the utmost seriousness. As Ward argued in his essay on irrigation, the great fear among many in Washington was the possible power of private monopolies to dominate land and water in the West. Powell's vision of a small commonwealth of producers settling lands in the arid region that could be profitably farmed was under a serious threat if corporate monopolies totally dominated the region. Only national ownership could protect that land for the people.³³ Although an Irrigation Survey was a few years in the future, the scientists of the Geological Survey had already made the problem of water and land part of the scientific studies. This is why Ward went to Yellowstone and the Missouri River Valley the summer after the publication of *Dynamic Sociology*. Indeed, Ward's work on the subject was among the earliest materials published by Survey scientists, appearing years before a formal Irrigation Survey became an official part of the Geological Survey's tasks.

Of course this also meant a certain hostility to local interests. As the Survey's power over land and water grew, it was to run into deep problems with local interests who felt left out when it came to influencing federal power. The faith that knowledge and national control could lead to better directions in western settlement was not shared by all. It was an area that caused greater and greater controversy for the Survey and for the power of Washington scientists to make their vision of scientific politics a reality for the nation.

In late fall 1884, Ward completed his first major scientific project for the Survey, "A Sketch of Paleobotany," a lengthy examination of the history and theory of this burgeoning new science. Ward's report reflected his broad interest in systems of science and philosophy; the systematic organization of scientific work was the most important task for intellectuals—the task he had tried to accomplish in his book: "The true scientific method is still and must ever be the systematic method. The real cause for the present disdain of systematists, lies in the mistaken spirit in which system-making has been so commonly conducted. Systems of classification had come to be regarded as the end of science, when they are at best only the means." Classification was essential in order to understand the true facts of nature, "neither without facts nor without system can we ever arrive at truth."³⁴ System building was still the essence of Ward's scientific work, and it remained so for his entire career.

Major Powell recognized Ward's important contributions to the Survey's scientific tasks. He always praised Ward's technical contributions to

botany, to irrigation works, and his efforts in social science. The close intellectual friendship of the two men cannot easily be followed since they rarely wrote one another or left a record of their frequent conversations. But in their shared ideas about national government, revealed in their speeches and essays throughout the 1880s, their genuine fellowship is clear. In Powell's annual reports to the Congress as well, he always praised and complimented Ward's contributions. His scientific classifications, Powell concluded in one of his annual reports, were essential parts of the process of scientific fact gathering.³⁵

Correspondence with a wide variety of amateur and professional collectors interested in botany and paleobotany occupied much of Ward's professional time—notably with Alfred Russel Wallace, the famed English biologist and cocreator of the theory of evolution with Charles Darwin, as well as amateur scientists such as collector Walter Deane of Cambridge, Massachusetts, and collector M. S. Bebb of Illinois (also a former member of the Potomac-Side Naturalists Club).³⁶ Despite his lack of professional training, Ward had become the leading expert in the country on the flora of the Washington, D.C., area by the mid-1880s; his work on plant nomenclature in the District of Columbia was highly praised by his colleagues. Amateur collectors and academic scientists alike considered him an authority on the classification of plants, frequently seeking his advice on plant nomenclature.

Wallace, for example, fondly remembered Ward as both a scientist and a social thinker. When Wallace visited Washington in 1887, he accompanied Ward on trips to examine the local flora: "As soon as the earliest flowers appeared he took me on Sunday walks in the wild country round Washington our first being on February 13, through the stretches of virgin forest called Woodley Park, now, I believe, a botanical and zoological reserve, where many interesting plants were gathered to send home. . . . During these excursions we had many long talks and discussions while taking our lunch. At that time I was not a convinced Socialist, and in that respect Lester Ward was in advance of me, though he could not quite convince me."³⁷ Wallace received Ward's call for national action on social reform as part of his personal conversion to socialism, although Ward himself never accepted the socialist label.

In the late 1880s and 1890s, Ward also took over the work of defining plant names for the *Century Dictionary*, the central work on scientific nomenclature in the late nineteenth century. It was the kind of scientific work he enjoyed—classifying, organizing, and cataloging the facts of science. The organizational process of science he had outlined in his Comtean scientific system was part of his daily professional experience. All the scientists under Powell's direction at the Bureau of Ethnology and the Geological Survey engaged in a similar practice. As historian Michael Lacey has argued, an in-

terest in taxonomy was nearly a prerequisite for scientific practice in the Washington intellectual community, the necessary first step in seeking to study social development and social problems.³⁸

Despite Ward's prodigious output in the natural sciences, other issues never lay far from his mind: scientific government, educational policy, and the social problems facing American democracy in the late nineteenth century. "Echoes of my book kept coming to my ears," he later remembered. "The apparent dullness of the critics in failing to comprehend the simplest principles [of my system] somewhat exasperated me."³⁹ When he finally resigned his position at the Corcoran School of Science in 1887, he wrote his friend and colleague James Welling that the work took far too much time. "I have resolved not to abandon my philosophical career, and [I] am taking every possible step that will help me to resist the temptation to give myself up exclusively to my special scientific work. Indeed, it was largely this [work] which threatened to absorb all those precious hours that I had consecrated to social science."⁴⁰

In addition, the duties as curator at the National Museum became so much of a burden that he had his assistants do as much of the daily correspondence as possible. Ward was ably assisted in his scientific work by two academically trained botanists: Frank H. Knowlton and David White. Both of them worked with Ward at the National Museum and both accompanied him on trips to the West to study flora for the Geological Survey. They also went on to productive careers as scientists and botanists—major contributors to the field of paleobotany. Ward nominated Knowlton in 1887 to take over his teaching position at the Corcoran School.⁴¹ White also eventually became an active university teacher and researcher after his stint as a government scientist. Despite Ward's love of and interest in the daily work of science, it was philosophy and social science that most engaged his mind.

When Ward quit his teaching position at the Corcoran School, he also asked Welling to establish a chair in political economy. "There has never been a time when there was so great a need that this branch be taught as part of the university course. I have just returned from a meeting of the American Economic Association. . . . I there made the acquaintance of many of the first economists of the country. . . . I found them enthusiastically studying the advanced and living questions of the times . . . [and] I thought of Columbian University and its central position in the political geography of the country, its magnificent facilities for becoming the center and rallying point of a true national philosophy."⁴² Ward, always a self-promoter, hinted in his letter that Welling might consider him as a possible nominee for the chair in political economy. Welling never established the chair, but Ward continued to argue for the rest of his life that Washington needed to be the center of American intellectual life.

Ward's faith in the establishment of a true national philosophy came from his participation in the work of government science. He saw the possibilities that a national approach to the nation's ills could bring as early as the abolition of slavery in the Civil War, and that faith remained unshaken, in fact it grew only stronger, as he witnessed the expansion of the nation in the years following. He hoped for a different kind of republic in the late nineteenth century—a republic governed by the principles of social science. Ward's political vision included a greatly expanded role for government in the American political system, especially in the formulation of national economic policy. Informed by the experience of working in the scientific bureaucracy of Washington, Ward and other intellectuals in the city envisioned a centralized and organized process of information gathering based in the nation's capital, and a system to put this information in the hands of the nation's policymakers. The Washington scientists and intellectuals looked to a structure of scientific research based at the seat of the national government, rather than scattered across the country in the many universities and voluntary professional societies of the growing nation. Organizing scientific work in this way, they argued, was absolutely essential to begin solving the American "social question." By the mid-1880s, it seemed that their quest made important gains in the knowledge of national development.⁴³

The power of Washington's scientific community was remarkable by the middle of the decade. By this time, John Wesley Powell had assembled one of the leading scientific organizations in the United States at the Geological Survey, developing extensive alliances with major scientists throughout the country whether or not they worked for him. At the Survey, the Smithsonian Institution, and the host of scientific societies founded in the capital city, scientists and intellectuals discussed and debated the scientific and social problems facing the nation.

The growth and power of science in the capital city was so extensive that Congress launched an investigation of the practices of the scientific community in 1885; these were, after all, organizations provided appropriations from public funds. The Joint Commission of the House and Senate on the role of scientific bureaus in American life heard weeks of testimony from a variety of well-known scientists and intellectuals. Their hearings were only the first attempt to analyze the role of science in the federal government. Throughout the last two decades of the nineteenth century, Washington scientists came under increasing scrutiny by congressmen, and they were constantly put on the defensive for their ideas about centralization and the uses of expansive public government.⁴⁴

Congress created the Joint Commission, popularly known as the Allison Commission, after its leader, Senator William H. Allison of Iowa, in order "to secure greater efficiency and economy of administration of the

public service."⁴⁵ For over a year, the commission devoted most of their work to dull fact gathering, but the hearings became much more heated when the one member of the commission openly hostile to government science, Representative Hilary Herbert of Alabama, asked for a report on government scientific work from Professor Alexander Agassiz, the son of the famed scientist Louis Agassiz, and a frequent contributor to studies of the United States Coast and Geodetic Survey.

Herbert and Agassiz made strange comrades in their battle against government science. Herbert was a conservative southern democrat, the son of a wealthy planter and former slave owner, and a scion of Alabama's plantation society. He served during the Civil War as an officer in the Confederate Army, becoming a congressman after the "redemption" of his home state in 1877. He remained in Congress until 1893, when he left office to take over as President Grover Cleveland's secretary of the navy. Herbert also later authored *Why the Solid South?* (1890), the preeminent tract of southern redeemers, which argued that the South had been saved from the supposed horror of Reconstruction government once the federal authorities simply left the southern states alone. He was staunchly opposed to almost all expansive powers of the federal government. "I am radically democratic in my views," Herbert once said, "I believe in as little government as possible—that government should keep its hands off and allow the individual fair play. This is the doctrine I learned from Adam Smith & Mill & Buckle, from Jefferson, Benton, and Calhoun."⁴⁶ Herbert was a direct threat to the expansive vision of government science and government power that Ward, Powell, and others in Washington's intellectual community envisioned for the nation's future. The kind of social reform Ward hoped would spring from understanding social evolution was an anathema to men like Herbert.

Agassiz, on the other hand, was an immigrant, born before his father came to the United States in the 1840s and educated in European schools as a young man. Trained in science, natural history, and philosophy in universities in Europe as well as under his father's tutelage at the Lawrence Scientific School at Harvard University, Agassiz counted among his acquaintances William and Henry James, Charles Sanders Peirce, and other luminaries of the Cambridge, Massachusetts, intellectual community. For many years, Agassiz helped his father supervise the scientific work at his offices, comfortably housed in the rarefied intellectual atmosphere of Harvard. Moreover, Alexander Agassiz made a fortune in copper mining in Michigan and believed the government should not interfere in the market. He opposed government involvement in any kind of enterprise: land distribution, western irrigation, regulation of transportation, and all economic practices. Agassiz shared Herbert's enthusiasm for laissez-faire political ideals and his distaste for the government-funded projects of the Geological Survey.

In November 1885, Herbert wrote Agassiz arguing that "Major Powell is transcending the rule you lay down, that Government ought not to do scientific work which can properly be accomplished by individual effort."⁴⁷ Agassiz also strongly disapproved of government science, except the work of the Coast Survey, and regarded Powell as far too powerful in his unofficial role as leader of the Washington scientists. Agassiz wanted the federal government out of the business of science entirely and could not understand why science should not be left to companies, universities, and private individuals. He regarded government financing of scientific work as terribly extravagant. "I do not see why men of science should ask more than other branches of knowledge, literature, fine arts, etc."⁴⁸ Both Agassiz and Herbert offered a vision of government science diametrically opposed to the vision of Ward, Powell, and most members of the Washington scientific community.

Agassiz was partly motivated by a profound personal animosity toward Powell. Powell, as director of the Geological Survey, believed that all scientific work lay essentially under his purview and had little interest in the work of the Coast Survey. In addition, in his testimony before the commission, Powell suggested a complete restructuring of government science. He recommended organizing all the "informational bureaus" of the government under the control of a board of regents appointed by the Smithsonian Institution and the National Academy of Sciences. Both Powell and the National Academy also wanted to create a National University dedicated to training members of the government to work in the nation's burgeoning informational organizations—a goal Ward had long championed as well. Members and leaders of other bureaus were often frustrated by Powell's success in securing funding, his ability to obtain some of the best scientists in the country to participate in his organization, and his general disregard for the duties of the other bureaus.

In addition to Agassiz's testimony, the commission also heard of complaints against Powell from other quarters—notably from University of Pennsylvania scientist Edward D. Cope and government geologist E. M. (Fred) Endlich, both employees of the competing western surveys before they became consolidated into the United States Geological Survey in 1879. Cope and Endlich did not like Powell, and they liked even less his total control over the topographic and reclamation work of the U.S. government. By 1885, they circulated among scientists and government officials a wide variety of complaints against Powell. Hilary Herbert listened. Herbert wanted to destroy the Geological Survey, and he was opposed to any and all "wasteful and extravagant" government support of science. Herbert was especially critical of paleontology, the basic work Ward was engaged in while he studied the fossil history of North American flora. Although Herbert specifically mentioned only the studies of Otis Mason,

whom Cope hated, he had no interest in funding any fossil studies in this country and did not see how it assisted the mapping duties of the Geological Survey.

Powell's lengthy response to this criticism pointed out the discrepancy in the visions of government science among scientific intellectuals and politicians in Washington. Powell was an adept politician, and he handled the criticism of himself and his scientists with grace and style. In his response before the commission, he defined an economics of knowledge for the country. His testimony spoke to the general concerns of all Washington scientists and echoed some of Ward's own interest in scientific education and expansive public government. Ward himself was to refer to these hearings in his essays and lectures in the late 1880s and early 1890s, especially as he further outlined his conception of "sociocracy," and his words there reflected Powell's tutelage. Powell's response is worth quoting at length for its clear expression of the Washington scientists' faith in knowledge:

Possession of property is exclusive; possession of knowledge is not exclusive; for the knowledge which one man has may also be the possession of another. The learning of one man does not subtract from the learning of another, as if there were a limited quantity of unknown truth. Intellectual activity does not compete with other intellectual activity for exclusive possession of truth; scholarship breeds scholarship, wisdom breeds wisdom, discovery breeds discovery. Property may be divided into exclusive ownership for utilization and preservation, but knowledge is utilized and preserved by multiple ownership. That which one man gains by discovery is the gain of other men. And these multiple gains become invested capital, the interest on which is all paid to every owner, and the revenue of new discovery is boundless. It may be wrong to take another man's purse, but it is always right to take another man's knowledge, and it is the highest virtue to promote another man's investigation. . . . While ownership of property precludes other ownership of the same, ownership of knowledge promotes other ownership of the same, and when research is properly organized every man's work is an aid to every other man's.⁴⁹

Powell won this round of political attacks on the Survey's scientific mission in 1885. The commission ignored Herbert despite his evident anger over Powell's domination of the testimony. In his closing remarks, Herbert quoted from English historian H. T. Buckle on the importance of laissez-faire policy: "Buckle is right. Government patronage shackles that spirit of independent thought which is the life of science. Who can say that the views of that chief who thinks and speaks for all, before a Commission of Congress will not unduly preponderate in the consideration of scientific questions." Powell countered that he hardly controlled the work of the bureau's scientists and that there were no men more "independent

and self-poised as those who are engaged in original research."⁵⁰ Despite Powell's admirable defense of his coworkers and employees, however, this was not the last time that he would be forced to defend the work of government science.

All of this debate and argument was not lost on Ward, who worked closely with Powell at the Geological Survey. Ward was more than just one of Powell's staff members. More than any other member of the Survey, Ward had the intellectual ability and interest to write about the philosophical issues affecting government science. Where Powell was the consummate politician, able to use his abilities to gain favor and obtain federal funding, Ward was the theorist, prone to speculation but still more willing than Powell to explain the philosophic background of the work of government research bureaus. Even in his congressional testimony Powell did not theorize or speculate; he was statesmanlike, thorough, and well aware of the precariousness of his position in front of a hostile Congress. In Ward, Powell found a fellow scientist willing to put in print the ideas of government planning that were at the heart of the Washington scientific community; he also had the intellectual grounding to establish the theoretical ideas between the vision of expanding government power as a whole.

Ward was deeply troubled by debates over the legitimacy of government science and the continued attacks by laissez-faire advocates on the Washington scientists' ideals. In an address given at the Anthropological Society of Washington in 1885, Ward outlined the forms of social progress he identified as key elements of the study of society, echoing Powell's congressional testimony in the conception of a political economy of knowledge. Ward began by examining the moral progress of mankind throughout history and argued that those who favored the "let alone" course of natural development assumed much more than they knew. Man's moral progress had actually been very slight, despite the celebration of democratic revolutions, economic progress, and the throwing off of tyranny in the eighteenth century. "In the great ocean of moral action so nearly equal are the tidal ebbs and flows that only the stoical philosopher whose vision ranges back into the remotest past or forward unto the remotest future, with utter contempt for the conscious present, can perceive the minute increments of secular change." Ward likened the study of man's moral progress to the geological study of the earth's surface—only the very long view of history can provide any sense of growth and change over time.⁵¹

If moral progress was slow to develop, checked by what Ward called "the waste of competition," then human material progress provided the direct contrast. Material progress—human artifice, technological achievement, and invention—was the result of conscious human effort, the product of the discovery and application of laws of social development to

man's needs. Guided by reason and intellect, man's material development proceeded through successive stages of progress from savagery to civilization. He had learned from Powell's criticism of his anthropology in the review of *Dynamic Sociology* that the Major had written a few years earlier. Ward followed the system of evolutionary change he outlined in *Dynamic Sociology* and he now combined this with the work of Washington anthropologists under Powell's direction. These anthropologists argued that that the functional application of human technology and artifice were keys to the development of society and the solution to all human social problems; these were problems led by the powers of the human mind and reason, conscious decisions shaping social developments. For these anthropologists, material progress of man through stages of social development proved the power of thought and invention in human history. Building on these ideas, Ward argued that "natural" forces of progress played little role in social development; man's mind and artificial progress through his own creation proved to be the most important force in social change.⁵²

For the modern social scientist the question was whether moral and material progress ever converged: could human action and the human mind be utilized for moral ends? Ward's answer fell squarely within the ideals of the Washington intellectual community: "Knowledge, ingenuity, skill, and industry need to be applied to moral ends and directed to the attainment of social well-being. At present science and art are only potential factors in civilization. The need is that they be converted into actual factors. . . . Intelligence, far more than necessity, is the mother of invention, and the influence of knowledge as a social factor, like that of wealth, is proportional to its distribution."⁵³ Hence, Ward believed, this is why government needed to be fully involved in the political economy of the nation not only for knowledge but also for other aspects of the nation's social order.

The problems of industrial society thus directed Ward's attention to the connection between moral and material progress. Inequalities of production and consumption in modern industrial society prove "that the industrial system is out of order, and that we live in a pathological state of society. The vast accumulation of goods at the mills avail nothing to the half clad men and women who are shivering by thousands in the streets while vainly watching for an opportunity to earn the wherewithal to be clothed. The storehouse of grain held by the speculator against a rise in prices has no value to vanished communities who would gladly pay for it in some form." Possession of both the wealth and knowledge of the world depended too much on the "thousand accidents of life—the conflicting wills of men, the passions of avarice and ambition, the vicissitudes of fortune, the circumstances of birth and social station, the interests and

caprices of nations and rulers."⁵⁴ These were the fruits of competition without the guiding hand of the nation. The intellect was simply not taking part in the nation's transformation from a small-scale economy to a large-scale industrial giant.

Ward's essay, as his friend James Welling argued, was a kind of jeremiad against the lack of social foresight and intelligent action to control and direct the distribution of wealth and knowledge available in the world. Ward's assumptions about labor and value structured his vision of the conscious use of human thought for social ends: "It is the paralysis of the strong hands of science and art as they cooperate with labor in the production of value. It is the stubborn, protracted resistance which the moral forces of society offer to its material as well as its moral progress."⁵⁵ Ward left no doubt that progress could not simply be left alone.

As he became more and more interested in the subject of political economy, Ward made the problems of the nation's industrial and social transformation in the late nineteenth century the central subject of a series of popular essays expanding on the themes of *Dynamic Sociology*: poverty, industrialization, rapid social and political change, partisan strife, and corruption. These were the same issues that provided material for a wide range of social reformers in the 1880s and 1890s who fashioned their own criticisms of the modern industrial republic. Conventional social theory, especially the influence of laissez-faire assumptions in political economy and government, many social reformers argued, threatened any attempts at national change and reform. Traditional American social thought did not seem to offer any way to solve the mounting social problems of American society. Ward wanted to change how Americans thought about the way their government functioned in social evolution.

Although *Dynamic Sociology* had enjoyed quick sales in the first month after publication, it languished soon afterward and had sold only some five hundred copies by the end of the decade. It is not surprising that the sales of Ward's book were limited. *Dynamic Sociology* was lengthy and difficult. Ward's language and style hardly lent themselves to a large readership. He was always at his best in lectures and the short essay format of periodicals. In the ten years following publication of the book, Ward turned more and more to these venues for the presentation of his ideas—writing many essays on public philosophy, science, and the social problems of American life. "The central idea of all my popular writings," he later wrote to his friend Edward A. Ross, "has always been to extract the practical essence from scientific teaching. They are philosophical and scientific, but they are practical. They generalize and put things together in new ways to teach something not thought of before."⁵⁶

In these short essays, Ward gained a popular following and his book found an audience far beyond what the volume of sales indicated. He be-

came especially popular among young intellectuals and reformers in the emerging social sciences. In the seminar rooms of Johns Hopkins, Columbia, the University of Wisconsin, and, by the 1890s, the University of Chicago, in the settlement houses emerging in the 1880s as key arenas of urban reform, as well as in the newly formed professional organizations of social science (especially the American Economic Association), professors and reformers read Ward's work, assigned it to their students, and recommended it to their friends. When *Dynamic Sociology* finally went into a second printing in the late 1890s, Ward was well known and well regarded in the emerging professional societies in social science and in reform circles among such thinkers as Charlotte Perkins Stetson, Franklin Giddings, Richard Ely, Albion Small, Simon Patten, and Edward Ross. Sociologist Albion Small, one of the founders of the so-called Chicago School of sociology, best captured what these men and women felt when they first discovered Ward's sociological treatise and recognized his deep interest in scientific and social reform. When the Russian government banned the translation of *Dynamic Sociology* in 1891 as "too socialistic," Small wrote Ward celebrating the publicity: "If the report is true that *Dynamic Sociology* has been glorified in the flames of Russian inquisition you should be a happy man. Surely the two volumes contain enough to make absolutism tremble, but few men have the satisfaction of seeing their own ideas produce such effects." Small concluded, "At last Americans will discover . . . that an epoch-making book has been before their eyes since 1883, and only a handful of them have had the wit to discover it."⁵⁷ From the late 1880s onward, many American, English, and European social thinkers would discover Ward's work.

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The Great Social Problem, 1886–1893

Throughout the middle of the 1880s and 1890s, Lester Ward's intellectual work found a wide audience outside the circle of Washington scientific associations. Beginning in the mid-1880s, he published essays in popular magazines examining the social problems of American democracy. Many of these essays resembled an early form of muckraking journalism, which was to become standard reporting fare in the early 1900s in the work of journalists such as Ida Tarbell, Lincoln Steffens, and others. As early as the 1880s, a magazine publishing revolution radically changed the character of journalism in America, allowing for cheaper printing and a much larger circulation. This revolution affected older, staid journals of opinion such as *The North American Review*, *Harper's Weekly*, and *The Nation*, but it also created a market for more confrontational magazines such as *The Arena*, *McClure's*, and many others. Ward's essays were not as aggressive and confrontational as the later muckraking journalists, but he did seek to explain to a popular audience the causes of national social change and to analyze the contemporary social scene.

Although the social problems Ward examined in these essays had roots in the nineteenth-century development of market capitalism, industrial expansion, constant population movement, and urbanization, they took on a new import for young social scientists trained in graduate programs in the emerging American university. By the mid-1880s, the first generation of professionally trained social scientists—in economics, social work, political science, and history—aggressively tackled what they called the "American social question." When these young social scientists and reformers read Ward's book, they found in it a theory of social evolution,

national progress, and reform of American institutions. His book and his essays served as Ward's introduction and clarion call into expanding intellectual communities in the late nineteenth century. Despite the changes and alterations he was to make in his system of social science over the next twenty to thirty years, Ward's remarkable consistency in relying on the set of principles established in *Dynamic Sociology*—positive science, expansive education, and a producerist interpretation of government policy—remained hallmarks of all of his intellectual work.

His most frequent outlet for publishing these essays was in the mass circulation monthly magazine, *The Forum*, established by Isaac L. Rice in March 1886 under the editorship of Loretus Metcalf and, by the late 1880s and early 1890s, under the direction of the well-known editor and journalist Walter Hines Page. The editors quickly established a magazine that examined the American "social question": problems of labor unrest, the farmers' revolt, socialist politics, and other similar subjects became the main topics of discussion in the magazine's pages. The editors excluded fiction, trying instead to develop a magazine based on debates on similar questions or problems, a style that prefigured much of what the later professional academic journal published. Metcalf summed up the vision of the magazine when he wrote Ward a letter shortly before the appearance of his first essay. Most important, Metcalf argued, it was "the great middle class of intelligent, but not necessarily educated men, that I am anxious to reach."¹

In these shorter essays, Ward found a critical voice that gained him a much larger audience than the initial sales of his first book. By the late 1880s and early 1890s, sales of *The Forum* reached into the tens of thousands every month; it was, according to magazine historian Frank Luther Mott, probably the most important journal of national opinion in the 1880s and 1890s. Moreover, in the words of Page's biographer, "education was the *Forum's* hobbyhorse," an editorial interest that fit well with Ward's professed social philosophy.²

His first contribution to *The Forum*, "Broadening the Way to Success," appeared in December 1886. In this essay, Ward continued his attack on false assumptions concerning government and policymaking in the late nineteenth century. The essay originated as a "Saturday Lecture" sponsored by the Smithsonian Institution, a format designed to allow scientists to give talks to a wide audience; it was a perfect essay for the pages of *The Forum*. Originally entitled "Heredity and Opportunity," it proved to be one of Ward's most enduring essays and lecture topics; throughout the 1880s and 1890s, he gave it to audiences of African American school teachers in Washington (introduced by the only African American member of the U.S. Senate, Blanche K. Bruce), to the members of the Social Science Institute in New York, to students in classes at the University of Chicago

and West Virginia University, and to women's clubs in a number of American cities.

The subject of the essay was the recent popularity of English social thinker Francis Galton's ideas about hereditary genius and the question of nature versus nurture as factors in human social development. Galton, born in 1822 (and Charles Darwin's cousin), had received close attention in the United States and England since the publication of his popular book, *Hereditary Genius* (1869). In a lengthy study of the genealogy of famous men, he argued that individual inheritance rather than the surrounding environment affected all human mental and physical characteristics. Genius, and hence success, was simply a product of having the right ancestors. Moreover, man could control the future of the human race by what Galton called eugenics, a science of heredity that sought to rid society of undesirable characteristics through proper breeding.

Ward, not surprisingly given his own background and struggle to achieve learning and success, found Galton's idea of hereditary genius abhorrent. The proper goal of any society should be to "abolish the god Genius," he said; Americans should "dethrone the monarch success," and establish "a true democracy of ideas, based upon an equal chance for all."³ In many ways, Ward spoke of himself, his fears as well as his successes, as he described the struggle of self-made men against notions of hereditary privilege: "The fact that many do struggle up out of obscurity does not so much show that they possess superiority, as that they happen to be less inextricably bound down than others by the conventional bonds of society. And those who have succeeded in bursting these bonds have usually done so at such an immense cost in energy, that their future work is rendered crude and well-nigh valueless. Such is the character of most of the results accomplished by so-called self-made men. To attain a position where they can labor in any great field, they must carry on a life long battle against obstacles."⁴

Ward's own life might have served as his guide in this vision of self-made men: he had struggled up from obscurity and was fiercely ambitious, hardheaded, and often stubborn. In his unpublished autobiography, he described himself as friendless for the most part because his intellectual labor and work left him little time for social interaction. His only friends, he said, were "plodders like himself," men like John Wesley Powell, and later in the 1880s younger social scientists like Edward Ross, who also struggled to gain their own education.⁵

In an unpublished essay, "The Enlargement of State Functions," written just after his first contribution to *The Forum* in late December 1886 and January 1887, Ward commented on the fears of enlarging government's role in American life, maintaining his firm belief in the power of education to free citizens from poverty, hardship, and Galton's vision of hereditary

privilege. The current labor crisis, represented most horrifically by the violence in Chicago's Haymarket Square in May 1886, was never far from Ward's mind in his analysis of social problems. This essay suggested that state power was the only way to solve American society's mounting social ills in the late nineteenth century. Looking back to the closing days of the Civil War, when unfounded fears of a tyrannical government and military rule gripped the public imagination, Ward argued that "all this [talk against government] reminds me of certain classically educated persons whom I heard talk towards the close of the war, when the great armies of Grant and Sherman occupied . . . parts of the Southern territory. . . . These intelligent and well-read individuals likened . . . these armies and their leaders [to] those of Caesar and Pompey, and confidently predicted that the next great trial of strength would be between the army of the Potomac and the army of the Cumberland for the mastery of a great empire on this continent."⁶ It was a foolish mistake, as foolish as the current fear of expanding federal government.

The state must play a central role in social developments affecting the entire nation—especially in areas where monopolistic corporations threatened to control all social progress. The antimonopoly theme again reveals Ward's debt to antebellum categories of political and social rhetoric, particularly the key moral elements of his producerist idealism: free labor, the dignity of work, and the value of individual production. He even read back into the nation's republican revolution to seek justification for the expanding role of government in American life. The establishment of republican government itself, he wrote, represented an expanded role for the state, "the first blow aimed by society at individualism." No one currently argued against the municipal government's function in forming police units and fire companies to protect urban citizens, developing municipal water supplies, or punishing crime in city and state courts. In the national arena the problems were just as pressing and just as desperately in need of state efforts to control them. Telegraph and communication lines did not belong in the hands of private corporations that might lord their power over the individual citizen. Ward listed other problems that required national control: the ownership of railways, which dominated American commerce; the need for a system of national savings banks without which it was a "cruelty to the working classes of this country" to leave their money in the hands of speculators; and finally, "the most important of all national enterprises," public schools must be under government control.⁷

Explaining the connections between the nation's liberal commitments to individualism and liberty and his desires to see more national and collective solutions to social problems remained close to Ward's heart in the mid-1880s and 1890s. As he mulled over the possibilities for a new book,

he commented on the fears of social degeneration in the country in his second contribution to *The Forum*. Ward outlined a politics of philanthropy to improve the conditions of labor. The wealthy classes should work for the benefit of society. Borrowing from the meritocratic ideas of classical republicanism, Ward argued that “as men of state, far removed from partisan strife, they should draw their principles direct from history and from science, and lay the foundations of ideal government.” But Ward argued even more forcefully that this philanthropy did not complete the social obligation to protect the nation’s needy citizens. “Wealth alone does not make true manhood. Birth, rank, social position—none of these can alone make useful men. Not even genius . . . can suffice. Culture alone can make these possessions real. Industry alone can make them count as social factors.”⁸

The key to his producerist faith was not a bitter and unending conflict between capital and labor. Ward never advocated revolution or class conflict, or felt that there was a need for the overthrow of American democratic traditions. Instead, he maintained a faith in steady progress guided by scientific intellect that could in time create a producerist paradise inside an industrial republic: “The revolutions of the future are likely to be social, not directed against the state, but against a power higher than the state—the power of wealth—producing great monopolies and sustaining a large non-producing and idle class, or caste, sheltered behind the forms of law, but odious to the changing spirit of the age.”⁹ The social revolution Ward referred to was essentially a transformation of the way Americans thought about the operations of politics.

It was a common strain in producerist thought he shared not only with a group of “middle-class” radicals but also with a variety of working-class organizations as well; it was preached by such radicals as Eugene Debs, Terence Powderly and the Knights of Labor, and even the rural Americans (like his brother Lorenzo Ward) belonging to the Grange movement and the later Populist Party. Like Ward, these radicals shared a belief in the fundamental primacy of labor and toil as legitimizing claims for political and social power against wealth and privilege. For Ward, the producerist ethic paved the way for a more scientific investigation of social problems and the operation of a truly democratic political system. His comments about labor and class were widely shared in reform circles: “No right-minded artisan begrudges the millionaire his millions,” Ward wrote. “The manufacturer, the merchant, and even the railroad king are stirring, industrious men. They organize the production, exchange, and distribution of wealth, and are essential to society.” What distinguished Ward’s view from those of the genteel advocates for social reform was his focus on the dignity of labor and the importance of the producers’ position in society: “Honest and industrial people, those who with hand or brain labor for society, create its wealth,

and effect its proper distribution—all, in fact, who really work—have a right to complain that so much of the wealth of their creation has fallen into the hands of idle persons who despise every form of labor, even the ennobling pursuit of science, art, and authorship."¹⁰

The clearest expression of his faith in a new scientific politics came in his third essay for *The Forum*, "False Notions of Government," published in June 1887. Government for Americans had often meant either a "power essentially hostile to the people" or a necessary evil "fastened on them by fate." But government could ideally serve as a social guardian; it did not guard against hostile outside forces but from "the evils of organized aggrandizement, the abuse of wealth, and the subtle processes by which the producer of wealth is deprived of his share in it."¹¹ Government did not threaten individual liberty, as it did when the American Revolution took place. Those fears of government tyranny no longer fit the reality of a growing urban and industrial society. The nation could no longer go on with a distrust of government. National power was necessary for continued progress.

The "irrational distrust" of the government by many Americans must be remedied, especially in light of the needs of the country's working people. American workers have no need of "revolutionary schemes of socialism, communism, or anarchy," Ward concluded, suggesting that "the government was their own . . . [and] they should learn to look upon it as a creature of their will." His call for a "people's government" was a testament to his enduring faith in the democratic republic—even if it suffered from the effects of industrial change:

The true solution to the great social problem of this age is to be found in the ultimate establishment of a genuine people's government, with ample power to protect society against all forms of injustice . . . coupled with a warm and dutiful regard for the true interests of each and all, the poor as well as the rich. If this be what is meant by the oft-repeated phrase "paternal government," then were this certainly a consummation devoutly to be wished. But in this conception of government there is nothing paternal. It gets rid entirely of the paternal, the patriarchal, the personal element, and becomes nothing more than the effective expression of the public will, the active agency by which society consciously and intelligently governs its own conduct.¹²

This general call for the people to take control of politics became Ward's rallying cry when it came to discussions of political and social change. He had a generalized faith in the power of the people, if properly educated by a national system of instruction, to solve the problems of a rapidly industrializing republic. This meant, of course, that local officials and local politics needed to be receptive to the nationalized control Ward and his supporters believed the nation needed. And, as they had discovered

when it came to irrigation, this was not always to be the case. Nonetheless, Ward's political vision found a receptive audience among workers and others in the social reform movements of the late nineteenth century. By the turn of the century, in fact, socialists and populists in particular celebrated Ward's ideas, counting him among their key intellectual supporters.

In a fourth contribution to *The Forum*, Ward reported on his fact-finding tour of the public schools of Washington in the spring of 1888, led by William Powell, John Wesley's brother and the superintendent of schools for the District of Columbia. He once again argued that the power of formal educational training could lift up all students and provide them essential opportunities for their success. The public schools, he insisted, should teach a combination of manual and intellectual training useful to all citizens. "Education furnishes opportunity," he wrote, and public schools allowed all individuals access to science and technology. "It is hoped that in the near future the artisan as well as the engineer may not only receive a good education . . . but may also have such training of the eye and the hand as will enable him to perceive and to effect all possible reforms in his chosen field of labor." The broad international movement for public schooling, he concluded, "is the first effort by society to lift the work of civilization out of the empirical groove and place it upon the high plane of systematic science."¹³

Ward's first four essays for *The Forum* attempted to reach sympathetic readers interested in the social, political, and economic problems of an industrializing society. His casual form of muckraking journalism appealed to a wide range of Americans in a way his book could not. The essays also revealed his strong political and social attitudes toward government policy, which his philosophic system sometimes seemed to obscure. One of the major audiences receptive to the range of ideas in Ward's essays were the members of the women's reform movement. In addition to the social problems of the laboring classes, and the unwillingness of government policy to attend to them, Ward's examination of the "woman question" reflected his general interest in the problems of social change; his notion that his vision of government "gets rid entirely of the paternal, the patriarchal" found a wide audience among social activist women in the late nineteenth century. Ward had long advocated for the independence of women in the United States, dating back to his suffrage activities of the 1860s. The new political culture he envisioned for the republic meant that the relationship of gender and politics was an important part of his philosophic system.

Ward had only briefly discussed women's reform in *Dynamic Sociology*. Ward shared with a wide variety of social thinkers many of the common late-nineteenth-century assumptions about women's nature: women

were passive, for example, and their social roles were still defined by their reproductive duties. Yet many members of the women's movement held these assumptions as well and believed that they could be turned to the advantage of reformers in asking for more educational opportunity as well as more power for women in the public sphere.

In his fifth essay for *The Forum*, "Our Better Halves," Ward outlined what he was to call later a "gynaecocentric theory" of evolution. He argued that the female sex had always been superior in nature, and that only in human society had this superiority been reversed. Men were secondary evolutionary elements—not elements of progressive change: "Accepting evolution as we must, recognizing heredity as the distinctive attribute of the female sex, it becomes clear that it must be from the steady advance of woman rather than the uncertain fluctuations of man that the sure and solid progress of the future is to come. . . . Woman is the unchanging trunk of the great genealogic tree; while man, with all his vaunted superiority, is but a branch, a grafted scion. . . . True science teaches that the elevation of woman is the only sure road to the evolution of man."¹⁴

What made Ward's argument important to those interested in women's reform was that it ran squarely against the grain of late-nineteenth-century scientific thought about human nature and Darwinism. Historian Cynthia Russett has argued that much of nineteenth-century scientific thought formed a basis for opposition to the women's movement. Most male social scientists in the late nineteenth century did not support women's reform, and Darwinian evolution was a powerful source for their opposition. In a response to Ward's article, Grant Allen, the English biologist and disciple of Spencer who had written one of the most negative critiques of Ward's first book, followed the traditional line of scientific thinking in denying women the power of independent intellectual activity. Allen argued that women possessed only a power of intuition, rather than a genuine power of mind and reason, an instinctive function that was provided them by their essential role in reproduction. Education, he concluded, only led women away from their traditional roles as mothers. Although Ward agreed that women might have some kind of an intuition that men lacked, he suggested in his response to Allen that any lack of intellectual power resulted only from insufficient educational experience rather than innate ability.¹⁵ Women, he announced in a speech to an association of women's college graduates, must take active roles as thinking forces of social progress, and education played a key role in the expansion of women's place in society.¹⁶

The response to Ward's essays and lectures on women's intellect was proof enough for him of the error most social thinkers made when they used Darwinian and Spencerian ideas to defend social conservatism.

Mary Phelps Dodge, a well-known women's suffrage activist and writer, thanked Ward for the ideas he expressed in his essays and also informed him that Mrs. James G. Blaine, wife of the late senator, liked his ideas as well.¹⁷ A professor at a small college in Macon, Georgia, Ms. E. F. Andrews, wrote Ward that his work "contains more sound sense and sound logic than anything that has been written upon this much vexed question."¹⁸ Ward's essays prompted other readers to turn to his first book, including Professors Carrie Harris and Ellen Hayes of Wellesley College, who used his work in their classes and regarded him as a key figure in social reform.¹⁹ Hayes, a professor of mathematics and one of the most radical feminists on Wellesley's campus, often referred students and friends to Ward, predicting that women were soon to realize the importance of his work for reform. She likened his chapters in *Dynamic Sociology* on the subject of women's education to John Stuart Mill's *The Subjection of Women*. When speaking of Ward's book, she wrote later, "I do not readily think of any other book to which I owe so much, or without which I would be more reluctant to part."²⁰

There was more at stake in the debates about the women's movement than the importance of women's education alone. The bases for many arguments against women's reform were false assumptions about Darwinian science and Spencerian evolution; the same mistakes, Ward suggested, made by laissez-faire political economists and the opponents of labor reform. There was a clear connection between the language of political economy and assumptions about gender. Ward always felt that the human capacity for progress and change was limitless when the social forces came under conscious control. Women's social condition was not somehow simply a natural or a given function of social change incapable of alteration; it was instead the result of definable forces and causes in evolutionary history that were within human capacity to alter, understand, and reshape.²¹ Ward's forceful arguments against the critics of women's education endeared him to a number of women reformers during his lifetime. In the late 1880s, one of the first to support his arguments, and eventually introduce him to a wider audience of readers, was Helen Campbell.

Helen Campbell was born in 1839 and became a prominent journalist and reformer in the 1880s and 1890s with wide interests in poverty and welfare reform as well as the movement to establish domestic science as a field of study in American universities. With the assistance of economist Richard Ely, she earned a position as professor of household economics at the University of Wisconsin's school of sociology in 1894 and later worked at the State Agricultural College of Kansas. Unhappy with her position in Kansas she returned to journalism and an active career as a publicist and reformer in the late 1890s and 1900s. Although she was a longtime activist for the poor and for national welfare reform, Campbell

remained rather cautious about women's suffrage—much more so even than Ward. Still, she was an active supporter of Ward's work, and she counted among her friends some of the leading suffrage activists in the women's reform movement.²² Campbell wrote Ward about his essays in 1889: "One thing delights me in books and pamphlets—the refusal to consider the 'woman question' in the light chosen by the ultra-suffragists . . . the elevation of man must come through the ennobling of woman. . . . I hug your pages to my heart, as the coolest and most scientific putting of the faith."²³ In her popular treatment of domestic science, *Household Economics* (1896), Campbell offered even more lavish praise for Ward's work: "No sharper arraignment of the inadequacy of women has ever been made, nor any more inspiring demand upon her highest faculties. The faith in what woman is to do is tremendous, and the call to higher action like the sound of a trumpet."²⁴

Over the rest of his career Ward continued to make analysis of sex and gender central to his evolutionary theory and to his ideas about social change. His belief that the female was superior and original in nature helped to reverse a deep bias among scientists and social reformers about the biological inadequacies of women; his belief that examination of the place of women in the social order was central to all sociological analysis was rare among late-nineteenth-century social thinkers (and even some twentieth-century intellectuals as well). His ideas also struck at the heart of all biblical justifications of inferiority, a justification Ward had long ago rejected and now attacked more forcefully in his scientific interpretation of evolutionary history. In the 1890s and 1900s Ward turned to these ideas again and again, and they also attracted one of the most important feminist intellectuals in American life, Charlotte Perkins Stetson (later Charlotte Perkins Gilman). Ward's friendship with Stetson in the 1890s was sparked, in part, by the contributions he made to mass circulation magazines.

In essays published in other magazines in the 1880s and 1890s, Ward continued to examine the problems facing the American nation, especially the two major interests of government reformers in the late nineteenth century: tariff legislation and civil service reform. He argued that the traditional American political education—directed through party organizations alone—was woefully inadequate. In a partisan political system no national election had yet expressed the true will of the people. The nation's genteel civil service reformers, men such as George Curtis and others, too often invested their cause with political rhetoric rather than the patient logic of science and fact; moreover, he argued, they naïvely misunderstood the nature of reform and the structure of American political institutions. They overstated the extent and nature of corruption within the national political system.

Instead, Ward wanted "true civil service" reform rather than the series of tests and examinations for public work recommended by conventional genteel reformers. "There is an evil, remediable by true civil service reform, which affects all the issues in the country. This is the recognition of the question of holding office as a political issue. It is not using too strong language to characterize this as political debauchery." By considering elective office only as a political issue, rather than a duty and responsibility in a republic, reformers confused interest with principle and "destroy[ed] the honesty" of any true political conviction. "It is here that reform is needed," Ward wrote. "By the side of this great national demoralization the peccadilloes of office holders sink into insignificance . . . unless the present tendencies are checked there is a danger that all great questions of human rights, as well as the business interests of the country, might be seriously neglected and American politics degraded into a disgraceful scramble for office."²⁵

The complaint that a "disgraceful scramble" in political life corrupted American institutions was a common refrain among social reformers in the late nineteenth century, and it is no surprise that Ward rejected political parties and partisan strife. Ward's simple faith in the objective power of scientific investigation, as many later critics charged, made him somewhat utopian in approaching the hard political questions of the late nineteenth century. The managerial system he believed in did not seem to protect democracy, and in the hands of twentieth-century efficiency experts it led some to completely reject democratic participation. But Ward did not see a contradiction. True civil service reform, he argued, should focus on the creation of a national academy to train government officials, an institution recommended not only by Powell and the National Academy of Sciences but also by Secretary of the Interior Lucius Q. C. Lamar and Commissioner of Education William Torrey Harris. The institution should create "a national system of instruction in the science and art of government, and the diffusion in the most liberal manner of correct information relative to the methods by which public business is transacted, and the nature and magnitude of governmental operations. The civil service academy should form a part of this . . . system, and might well be a special 'school' of the great national university recommended by Washington, Adams, Jefferson, and Madison."²⁶

The establishment of a national university would train legislators and government staff interested in the operation and practice of sociology applied to social problems and not party spoils. An issue such as tariff reform could easily be studied by just such a national organization and taken out of the partisan arena and the hands of classical economists who argued a priori for free trade as a national economic panacea—the basis of all ideas of classical liberal political economy. As far as Ward was concerned, protectionism in tariff legislation was a positive use of government power

that induced citizens "to put forth exertions which are foreseen to be beneficial to the society at large."²⁷ This was "artificial" or progressive legislation; it was the most important way government could play a role in ensuring social progress.

The national university could serve both as a superstructure to guide the research of the federal government's scientific bureaus and as a graduate school in the art of government and legislation. In the years following the Civil War, John Hoyt spearheaded the movement for the creation of a national academy, a frequent advocate in the 1880s and 1890s for a congressional bill to establish a national university. Ward was one of Hoyt's good friends in the movement, and Hoyt counted on Ward's support and friendship when he came to the city to lobby Congress.²⁸ It was no surprise that Ward supported the movement since it fit so well with the purposes of his social science. In a Saturday Lecture at the Smithsonian in 1888, Ward referred to the hostility of some members of the Allison Commission toward the creation of such a university, insisting that the current scientific organizations already provided the basis for its establishment. Washington as the national center was the best place for the establishment of a central education institution. Knowledge was the most important factor in social development and "the chief engine of civilization." The success of any social system required the "increase and diffusion of knowledge among men."²⁹

In 1891, when he spoke to the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) in Washington, Ward further argued that "nothing short of a national institution, created and authorized by law to teach the science and art of government, could successfully carry out this scheme of [national] education. As a safeguard to our institutions, not less than as a means of national progress and enlightenment, no other educational scheme is equal to it in importance."³⁰ The university must be "distinctly national" and "the creature of the American people . . . devoted to their use and needs." Only an institution that was the product of the national government, one that could teach "all that serves as true statesmanship" and the practical workings of government bureaus, could solve the social problems of the late nineteenth century. The foundation was already in place with the existing scientific organizations of the city—all that was required was to complete the organization with a capstone systematizing the connections between the government's research bureaus and private scientific associations.³¹ As Ward had indicated in his letter to Welling when he resigned his teaching position in botany at Columbian University, the economists and social thinkers interested in political economy engaged in a mission to construct a national philosophy of government and reform necessary to the continued growth and progress of the republic; a national university served as an essential part of this mission.

Ward's contributions to *The Forum* and other magazines enabled him to reach a much wider audience far beyond the initial readers of his first book. Powell continued to offer him the time to write on social issues outside the confines of his daily duties to the Survey. Ward still conducted his scientific work, however, compiling the yearly reports of his division and writing many articles on botany and paleobotany. In 1887, for example, he completed the second half of his historical examination of paleobotany, entitled "The Geographic Distribution of Fossil Plants," a major examination of the fossil findings of plant life in ancient Europe and North America.

Far more important than his scientific work, however, were the relationships he established with young social scientists emerging from European academic training and embarking on careers in the American university. It was the essays he wrote in the 1880s to which many of these scientists first turned, but soon they found Ward's book as well, helping him to become a major participant in the intellectual formulation of social science in the late nineteenth century. Four men were most significant in shaping his intellectual concerns in economics and social science in the late 1880s and 1890s: Richard Ely, Franklin Giddings, Albion Small, and Edward A. Ross.

Although all of these men were slightly younger than Ward—for example, none of the four men were old enough to have served in the Civil War—each had social experiences remarkably similar to Ward's own; they were "plodders" like Powell, men whom Ward found congenial to his personality and his thinking about society and politics. These younger social scientists did have one major advantage in their educational experiences: all of them had advanced educations. Three of the four men were trained in German universities, members of the broad generation of young intellectuals in the late nineteenth century who sought training in German research methods and scholarship. Their vision of a higher scholarship and their advanced education in fields such as economics, political economy, history, and philosophy differed from Ward's haphazard and eclectic self-education and the little training he received in college. Moreover, these younger social scientists learned in Germany of the perils of "English economics" and the devotion to classical liberal and laissez-faire ideas about economic practices. Already old enough to witness the social dislocations of American industrialism, trained to criticize classical economics, and seeking cohorts and followers for their ideas, the young social scientists discovered a prophetic voice when they read Ward's book and his essays on society, science, and progress.³²

Richard Ely, born on 13 April 1854, was the son of a stern Presbyterian preacher heavily involved in the political and social causes of the antebellum era. But Ely enjoyed a more settled education than Ward's autodidacticism.

In the 1870s, he attended Dartmouth and Columbia, and, with a fellowship in hand, he eventually left the United States for three years of university training in Europe. Ely had originally been interested in the study of philosophy, but his dissatisfaction with the work, and his chance meeting with Simon Patten, another young American studying in Germany, led him to choose economics as his field of study for university training. Ely worked with Karl Knies, a German economist interested in historical economics rather than the abstractions of classical economic theory. In the words of Ely's biographer, Knies argued that "Man . . . rather than the abstract mechanical laws of the classicists, should stand at the center of all economic study. Economic science should attempt to prescribe formulas which allowed man to square his ethics with reality."³³

Ely combined the ethical interests in reform he inherited from his family with the academic training he received in Germany. Like Ward, he had no interest in classical *laissez-faire* economics, and his training in the German school of historical economics further strengthened his resistance to it. Ely returned to the United States in 1880 and, after seeking work and "tramping" in New York City for a year, as well as writing a few articles for newspapers and magazines, finally won an appointment as an instructor at Johns Hopkins. Although at first he had difficulty teaching at the university, his courses and seminars slowly grew in popularity. Ely became one of the leaders of the "new economics," and, again like Ward, battled the theorists of classical economics throughout his career.

Ely sought an economic science that lent support for reform causes, a social vision shaped by his family's commitment to evangelical Protestantism. In the 1880s and 1890s, Ely carried this early religious zeal into the social problems of the Gilded Age. In 1885, along with other economists and social scientists such as E. R. A. Seligman and Herbert Baxter Adams, he helped found the American Economic Association (AEA) with a "proclamation of emancipation," a revolt against the classical economists of the American Social Science Association (ASSA). The circular, written by Ely, announced that "we regard the state as an educational and ethical agency whose positive aid is an indispensable condition of human progress . . . we hold that the doctrine of *laissez-faire* is unsafe politics and unsound in morals; and that it suggests an inadequate explanation of the relation between State and citizen." It is no wonder that when Ely read Ward's book and his essays, he thought he found a fellow-traveler in the debates over American economic policy.³⁴

Ward first came to know Ely as a correspondent. Always his own proselytizer, Ward had for years kept lists of social scientists, reformers, and leading intellectuals to whom he mailed his essays, books, and notices. Ely was one of the men most impressed with Ward's work—especially his arguments about enlarging the functions of the federal government. Ely

asked Ward to join the AEA and “take part in our work” against the prevailing economic theory of the 1880s. The two often exchanged their books and essays, and by 1887, when Ely was getting ready to publish his *Introduction to Political Economy* (1888), he felt deeply indebted to the ideas expressed in *Dynamic Sociology* for helping him to clarify his own theories about economics, socialism, and the social problems facing an industrializing democracy.³⁵

At Ely’s prompting, Ward joined the AEA and presented a paper at the annual meeting in late December 1888. The essay, entitled “Some Social and Economic Paradoxes,” again emphasized Ward’s interest in expanding the role of government and using legislation to solve social problems: “Social activities,” he argued, “may be artificially regulated to the advantage of society.”³⁶ He was inspired primarily by the work of amateur economist George Gunton, *Wealth and Progress* (1887), but also by Henry George’s *Progress and Poverty* (1879). Gunton, much less well known than George, was a friend of Ward’s from New York City, a former labor leader and a eight-hour-day advocate, who had served as an editor for the socialist publication *The Labor Standard*. His book was originally the work of labor leader Ira Steward, completed by Gunton after Steward’s death. Ward’s older brother, Cyrenus, who was now working in Washington thanks to his brother and writing his own lengthy history of the laboring classes “from antiquity to the adoption of Christianity by Constantine,” also knew Gunton through his participation in the New York City labor movement.³⁷

Ward argued once again in favor of a producerist interpretation of capital. He was no socialist, unlike Gunton or his brother Cyrenus, nor did he go so far as to deny that the condition of labor had generally improved over time. But he did argue in this address that “society is to be regarded as a great cooperative institution,” especially in the social production of wealth where capital and labor worked jointly in fostering its growth: “To the power of production there is practically no limit . . . all that is needed to place in the possession of every member of society every object of his desire is the power to purchase it. . . . The problem is, therefore, no longer how to increase production, but how to increase consumption—not the desire to consume, for that already exists, nor the ability to render an equivalent, which is also abundantly possessed, but the chances to exercise that ability in the gratification of desire; in a word, *the opportunity to earn.*” The nation needed to heed to the demands for labor protection, for an eight-hour day, for the right to strike, all popular reforms with labor advocates such as the Knights of Labor. Labor in this country needed power and protection because capital already had the means available to protect itself.³⁸ The response to his paper was positive. As he recalled in his notebooks: “The hall was full and everything most propitious. I did

my 'level best' and was perfectly composed. In fact my wits were somewhat stimulated, and I put in several excellent things not in the manuscript. One could have heard a pin drop, so perfect was the attention. . . . The applause at the conclusion was vociferous, and I received many warm congratulations. I have many reasons for believing that it was a complete surprise to most of them."³⁹

Ward's relationship with Ely, his association with the AEA, and the essays he wrote for popular magazines helped him gain a foothold in new intellectual communities. In addition to Ely, Ward also met Franklin Giddings, who later became a longtime champion of Ward's contributions to American social thought, through his connection to the AEA. One year younger than Ely, Giddings also came from New England evangelical stock; his father was a respected Congregationalist minister in Connecticut. Giddings was educated at Union College in New York. Unlike the other three men Ward met in the late 1880s and early 1890s, Giddings never pursued a European education, turning instead to journalism after receiving his college degree in 1877. For most of the 1880s, he worked as a journalist for a variety of newspapers in Connecticut and Massachusetts, but he also discovered economics and social science.

Giddings's newspaper articles focused on economics and the "labor problem" confronting the late-nineteenth-century republic. His introduction to formal sociological theory came through his reading of Herbert Spencer, as he recalled in a reflection on his professional life: "My interest in sociology, as I have on various occasions told, began while I was yet a youth, when accidentally a copy of the first number of the *Popular Science Monthly* fell into my hands a few days after its publication, and I read the first chapter of Spencer's *The Study of Sociology*. Before I entered college I had read a lot of Darwin, Tyndall, and Huxley, and nearly half of what Spencer had then printed. At college, and during ten subsequent years of newspaper work, I kept up my interest and my reading in sociology."⁴⁰ Giddings entered the academy in 1888, replacing Woodrow Wilson as a lecturer on politics at Bryn Mawr College. In 1894, he was invited to occupy the newly established chair of sociology at Columbia University, where he spent the rest of his career.

Giddings and Ward first met at the AEA in 1887, when Giddings read a paper on "The Sociological Character of Political Economy," which Ward praised highly in his comments after the lecture. Giddings wrote Ward soon after the meeting to thank him, and to offer some ideas for the further study of social science that he had been contemplating. "I have read with great interest and profit one of the articles you so kindly sent me," Giddings began, "and shall read the others at the first opportunity. . . . Your views on government and education interest me exceedingly though I hardly agree with you on all points. If I can possibly find

the time for it I am going to re-read *Dynamic Sociology*. The truth is, that my economic studies are not the ones that most interest me. I drifted into them because that kind of work was demanded of me as a daily journalist. Philosophy in the broader sense was my first love and I hope sometime to return to it."⁴¹

Giddings increasingly turned to the study of sociology in the late 1880s—the subject remained the focus of his intellectual output for the rest of his life. But he was far less sanguine about the possibilities for social reform than Ward. Giddings's early reading of Spencer convinced him that social evolution was a slow process not in need of man's intervention. Moreover, his early interest in economics marked a significant devotion to quantification—by the end of his life he had established a group of students who took this interest into far more statistically sophisticated investigations of human development, econometrics, and community studies, subjects that held no interest for Ward. Despite their differences on some sociological questions, however, the two men became fast friends and kept an extensive correspondence throughout most of the late 1880s and 1890s. Ward always sent Giddings his books and essays, and for years Giddings made them required reading for his classes at Columbia.

Even more important than the professional friendship and intellectual exchange that Ward forged with Ely and Giddings in the late 1880s, however, was the relationship he established with two of Ely's students: Albion Small and Edward A. Ross. In his classes at Hopkins, Ely frequently used Ward's book and essays, and he introduced both Small and Ross to Ward personally. Small's path to professional academic work was similar to Ely's own. Born in 1854, Small was also the son of a cleric, a Baptist minister in Maine, and, even more than Ely, was strongly interested in the religious life. He pursued a career in the clergy before embarking on teaching and research in the 1880s. After his own college education and extensive clerical training at the Newton Seminary, Small went to Germany to study history and economics in the late 1870s and early 1880s, returning to his native Maine to teach the subjects at Colby College. But his interests in social science were broad, and he eventually sought a Ph.D. at Johns Hopkins in 1889 under the direction of Ely and Herbert Baxter Adams, another faculty member familiar with and receptive to Ward's ideas.

Small might have known of Ward before his tutelage under Ely, but he certainly became a devout follower during his graduate study. Ely introduced Small to Ward when he wrote him that the young professor was using Ward's work in his classes at Colby College. When Ward wrote Small asking for his syllabus, Small was thrilled: "I can heartily say that I regard your work as a challenge to sociological study more important than any

other single work of American scholarship. . . . I esteem it . . . not only a privilege, but a scholarly duty to call attention to your work, wherever I have the opportunity, among students of social relations."⁴² The syllabus itself reflected the influence Ward held over Small's ideas about social scientific study. Small's introductory note said that "Mr. Ward deserves a rank among social philosophers which his contemporaries have apparently failed to concede."⁴³

After his training at Hopkins, Small quickly became well known in social science circles. When William Rainey Harper, president of the newly created University of Chicago, sought a professor for the first chair in sociology in 1892, he hired Small—partly because of his intellectual abilities and partly because of his Baptist background. Small became one of the leading commentators on social science and sociology and a mentor for numerous early-twentieth-century students of social science. Chicago also eventually became one of the leading universities in the country, an important place of intellectual support for Ward in the 1890s and 1900s.

Ward's most important friendship, however, was with another Ely student, Edward Ross. Ross's life might be regarded as something of a carbon copy of Ward's. Born on the Iowa prairie in December 1866, Ross was the youngest of the social scientists Ward befriended in the 1880s and 1890s. Like Ward's own parents, Ross's parents were frontier pioneers; his father, William Carpenter Ross, was a yeoman farmer who searched for gold in California before returning to the middle border for a more settled farm life. Edward Ross's mother, Rachel Ellsworth, was born in southwestern Pennsylvania. She went West like many young women before the Civil War to teach school, eventually making her way to the Iowa prairie. Ross's mother died when he was only eight years old, and he was raised by his father's relatives in Iowa until he left to attend Coe College in Cedar Rapids. The educational institutions in the middle border region had grown tremendously since Ward's youth, and Ross profited from this institutional expansion in his much more extensive formal education. He graduated from Coe College in 1886 and taught in country schools in Iowa for two years before embarking on academic training in Germany. Although he had originally planned to study comparative literature, he soon turned to economics and social science as fields better fitted to study the problems of modern industrializing societies. After his return from study in German universities, Ross applied for graduate education, finally accepting an offer from Richard Ely to study at Hopkins.⁴⁴

It was probably the similarity in their backgrounds, both from the Iowa prairie region, both "sons of the Middle Border," that made Ward so enamored of the younger Ross. It was in Ely's seminars that Ross probably first heard of Ward's sociological opus. Ross recalled the experience years later in his autobiography. After a party in the spring of 1890, during

which he contracted food poisoning, Ely told him to consider reading Ward's book and essays. He spent his recovery reading *Dynamic Sociology*: "The magnificent sweep of Ward's thought made me almost forget my internal misery," he recalled. "I stirred up others to read it and soon Hopkins had a little band of Wardians. At the next gathering of economists in Washington there was a reception at the Cosmos Club which several of us attended. A mate sought me out and whispered excitedly, 'Come have a look at Lester F. Ward!' I beheld a stooped man of fifty with thick iron gray hair and strongly molded features, every inch the Thinker. I gazed with awe."⁴⁵ Many later critics of Ward's work and place in American social thought forgot just how large he stood for some of these young intellectuals. In the world of social theory and argument, Ward was one of the few voices in this country arguing for more reform.

At the same time as his meeting with Ward, Ross also met Rose Ward's niece, Rosamund Simons, who lived in Washington. Ross courted and soon married Rosamund, and called Ward his "Dear Uncle" for the rest of his life. When Ross embarked on his teaching career, after receiving his Ph.D. in economics in 1890, Ward remained his intellectual father figure and a constant correspondent. Ross felt so close to Ward that he named his son after him.

Ward's relationship with these four men came at an important time in his life. He was thinking more and more about the possibility of another book—one that investigated issues of social reform, education, and the mind in a way that engaged more people than his first book; a book that he believed could tackle the problems of politics, economic growth, western expansion, and social unrest in late-nineteenth-century American democracy. The other factors influencing Ward's decision to write a second book were new developments and debates in professional science, which he confronted in the scientific associations in Washington and his daily work at the Survey.

During 1889 and 1890, Ward served as president of the Biological Society of Washington, one of the city's major scientific groups, and as president he was responsible for delivering the society's annual address. Although his addresses were ostensibly aimed at the technical problems in his field—such as the nature of plant evolution, arguments about periodization in geological history, and the problem of nomenclature in botanical science—Ward also demonstrated his extensive interest in social problems. Science and social thinking were always closely linked in Ward's mind. This was no less true for most of those in his audience as well.

His first address, delivered in January 1890, examined "the course of biologic evolution," and covered the rather technical ground of paleobotanical evolutionary change. He later regarded the address as "one of my

most important contributions to science." But he closed the speech on a much different note, claiming that studying the evolutionary development of the mind remained one of the most important and most neglected fields of scientific analysis. Psychology and psychological motivation, he argued, were natural sciences demanding attention to the same laws of study as any science. Without paying attention to the mind, scientists could not cover one of the most important problems of social development.⁴⁶

In his second presidential address, delivered in January 1891, Ward returned to a theme that he had highlighted in the essays he had done on Francis Galton and the role of women's education in America: nature versus nurture in human character and the impact of heredity or the environment on social evolution. He returned to this subject because of a renewed attention to competitive "social Darwinism" prompted by the work of German biologist August Weismann and his followers, dubbed the Neo-Darwinists. In the late 1880s and early 1890s, Weismann developed a theory of a germ plasm while testing the belief in acquired transmission of characteristics: hereditary characteristics, he concluded, were free from any environmental effects. Jean Lamarck, whom Ward had read while he worked on "The Great Panacea" in the 1870s, was the French natural scientist most closely associated with the theory of acquired characteristics. Lamarck argued that changes to an organism as a result of environmental forces were passed on from generation to generation. The most famous example, although Lamarck himself only referred to it in passing, was that the giraffes' long neck and legs were the result of generations of giraffes reaching upward and straining their bodies to reach leaves at the tops of trees. It was a theory of species change over time that held firm throughout the nineteenth century—Darwin himself supported the general idea that an organism's efforts to change could be passed on over the long course of evolutionary history.⁴⁷

Weismann, however, suggested that the germ plasm was entirely separate from environmental effects on the body and could in no way be altered by specific individual changes within an organism's life. It was an early theory of genetic transmission, one developed before the knowledge of Gregor Mendel's studies of transmission in cross-breeding peas. In short, Weismann argued, the Lamarckian doctrine that acquired characteristics from an adult organism could be passed on to offspring from generation to generation was simply wrong. Although Weismann himself did not make heredity the sole determining factor in evolutionary change—he actually argued that environmental factors belonged in a category entirely separate from genetics—followers often invoked him to support arguments in favor of heredity alone. Although this biological debate might have seemed remote from the social problems of the United States,

it became deeply embroiled in debates about theories of social change. Weismann's work challenged the notion that even cultural changes in society could be passed on from generation to generation. Thus, his work gave *laissez-faire* social Darwinism a new impetus in the early 1890s. It now seemed obvious to some that the effort to interfere with the natural process of evolutionary growth had no effect whatsoever. If this was true in nature, why bother to interfere with social development or social growth?

The renewed attention to metaphors of struggle had a particular resonance in the United States in the early 1890s, especially on the debate over the continuing struggle between labor and capital. The American economy seemed a site of constant struggle, and the Darwinian notion that the survival of fittest explained social evolution, even if Darwin himself doubted its application to human society, seemingly defined modern economic life. In the face of such arguments, Ward defended Lamarckian science and the doctrine of acquired characteristics. As a Lamarckian, Ward feared the results of applying these pessimistic biological arguments of constant struggle to social change and reform. His faith in universal education as the instrument for social improvement absolutely required the transmission of acquired characteristics from generation to generation—how else, he asked, could society move progressively forward? His biggest problem with Weismann's conclusion was that his supporters tended to follow the same lines of argument as classical economists, those who placed the world firmly in the grip of natural forces of social development. "In fact," Ward argued, "the whole burden of the Neo-Darwinian song is: cease to educate, it is mere temporizing with the deeper and unchangeable forces of nature."⁴⁸

Ward was not alone in his faith in Lamarckian biology. Many of the leading biologists in the United States supported the Lamarckian idea of the transmission of acquired characteristics. Many scientists assembled evidence of experiments (although now known to be faulty) that demonstrated change from environmental effects: tails cut off of rats, for example, eventually produced a breed of rats without tails.⁴⁹ Darwin always supported Lamarck's ideas, as did Spencer and numerous other English and European social thinkers. The debate over Lamarckian genetics was not settled until after the turn of the century, when European biologists rediscovered Gregor Mendel's studies. Modern genetics had carried the day by the early 1900s, when biologists were unable to replicate the alleged studies of rats and other organisms with induced environmental changes.

In the late nineteenth century, however, Ward's commitment to Lamarckian principles was not unusual within the American (or European) scientific community. Lamarckism had a special resonance with American scientists, especially with those interested in social evolution such as the Washington

anthropologists. Ward's Lamarckism was strongly influenced by work done within the Washington intellectual community, especially by Powell's emphasis on the cooperative nature of knowledge, which he had so forcefully explained in his testimony before the Joint Commission in 1885. Powell's anthropology, and the anthropology of his associates in the Bureau of Ethnology, emphasized the cooperative power of man freed from the effects of natural selection; a struggle for existence, these scientists found in their ethnographic studies, did not define human destiny.

In an essay published in 1891, "The Transmission of Culture" (based on his second address to the Biological Society), Ward wrestled with the Neo-Darwinian argument against Lamarck, and, in Ward's view, against the very possibilities for systems of social progress. Ward hated the essay's title. He wanted to call it "Is Education Hereditary?" but succumbed to an editorial suggestion by the editors of *The Forum* to change it. Ward admitted that knowledge itself was not transmittable from adult to offspring—but he did believe that the ability to learn was passed on from generation to generation. By focusing on social development rather than on the biological characteristics so many Neo-Darwinian scientists analyzed, environmental changes passed from generation to generation seemed obvious, however unclear the evidence might be to scientists. Intellectual, ethical, and aesthetic concerns, Ward argued, "have arisen, grown powerful, and been attended with intense emulation" from generation to generation. These faculties, despite the denial of Weismann and the Neo-Darwinists, must be transmittable in order to improve society. Ward concluded that "if they [the Neo-Darwinists] are right, education has no value for the future of mankind, and its benefits are confined exclusively to the generation receiving it. So far as the inculcation of knowledge is concerned, this has always been admitted the case, and the fact that each new individual must begin at the beginning and acquire all knowledge over again . . . is sufficiently discouraging."⁵⁰

Ward equivocated rather than reject the arguments for heredity; perhaps the popular suggestion that the development and strengthening of the mind could somehow be preserved through heredity was not all wrong. Until scientists could find sufficient evidence and sufficient exactness in the laws of heredity, society must "hug the delusion" that transmissibility of characteristics is possible or the defense of a system of social change seemed impossible. Many American scientists praised Ward's criticisms of Weismann's ideas. Samuel Langley wrote Ward that his ideas provided the basis for stronger criticism of Weismann's supporters, and Cornell University biologist J. H. Comstock suggested that "it is a magnificent treatment of the subject and pricks the Weismann bubble."⁵¹

Unknown to Ward at the time, the Neo-Darwinian argument against Lamarck and against acquired characteristics prefigured a much larger

debate in American biology about genetic transmission. It also signaled a more modernist interest in experimental biology as distinct from the systematic, philosophical science of Ward and many Washington scientists. By the turn of the century, developments in university biology outpaced the kind of work federal government scientists like Ward and Powell did and set off research in entirely different directions. Yet Ward chose to cling to his Lamarckian faith and his faith in universal education for social progress. His contribution to the Neo-Darwinian debate did not become the focus of his science, however, and he essentially dropped the subject after his addresses to the Biological Society. But it did help to convince him that another book was needed; a study that focused on social problems and social growth was absolutely necessary in order to extend his system of social science first proposed in 1883.⁵²

In the summer of 1891, still thinking about the possibilities for a second book, Ward received word that his first book had been burned by Russian and Polish authorities. He heard the news from his friend George Kennan. Kennan spent seven years in the 1870s and early 1880s in Washington, D.C., as the assistant manager of the Associated Press. An avid natural scientist with wide interests in plants and flowers, Kennan often participated in the meetings of Washington's scientific associations, which was probably how he met Ward. He traveled extensively in Russia in the mid-1880s, writing a well-known and popular book on the Russian prison system, *Siberia and the Exile System*. In the late nineteenth century, Kennan was easily the most well-informed and knowledgeable American about Russian society and culture, and a good friend to a variety of Russian radicals and reformers.

Kennan informed Ward of the popularity of his work among Russian liberals and radicals in the 1880s and 1890s. Ward's faith in social reform and his belief in a scientific and collective approach to solving national problems found a ready audience in Alexander III's and later Nicholas II's Russia. With the rising tide of protest against czarist oppression in late-nineteenth-century Russia, and the wide participation of the Russian intelligentsia in this protest, Ward's work remained quite popular among social thinkers. The most prominent of these Russian intellectuals was the renowned Russian thinker M. M. Kovalevskii, a liberal political theorist and evolutionary sociologist. Kovalevskii championed Ward's work in Russian intellectual circles even during long years in exile from the czars, and in the twentieth century when he returned to Russia after the Revolution of 1905 he remained a strong partisan of Ward's. The two met and spoke during international conferences in the early twentieth century.⁵³ Polish sociologist Ludwig Gumplowicz was another champion of Ward's ideas abroad, and he too would strike a very close friendship with Ward in the late 1890s and early 1900s. Gradually Ward's ideas were becoming

more widely known, part of the international movement of ideas in the trans-Atlantic intellectual community of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

But Kovalevskii's support, and that of other liberal political intellectuals in Russia, could not save Ward's book from the czars. In July 1891, Kennan wrote Ward that "Once before I had the pleasure of giving you some news with regard to the reception that your book *Dynamic Sociology* had met with in Russia. . . . I most heartily congratulate you. In this prosaic and indifferent age, it is not every man who achieves the distinction of having his books burned by order of a council of ministers. . . . I have tried in my humble way to serve the course of liberty in Russia, but I haven't been able to do it with ability to get my writings burned. You are evidently a very dangerous man."⁵⁴ Ward was in some ways thrilled with the rejection. It testified to the power of ideas (although the czars did ban many books during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries).

Ward began writing his new book on 1 January 1892, working in the evenings when he returned home from his office. In mid-August that year he attended the annual meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) as vice president of the section on economics and statistics. There, he presented some of his first ideas for his new book. Ward was unsure whether this essay, "The Psychologic Basis of Social Economics," belonged in the manuscript and wanted to test his ideas in front of an audience of fellow social scientists. Expanding on his earlier concern about the relationship of psychology and biology to social phenomena, Ward asked whether man's social experience arose from strictly biological processes or psychological ones?

His answer was obvious to those who had read his work of the previous decade. Echoing the arguments he had been making about the power of mind and intellect over social reform, the necessity for the expansion and diffusion of the world's knowledge, and the wastefulness of natural versus human economics, Ward concluded that the laws of biology and nature were separate from the laws of mind and could be expressed in a general law for sociological study: "The environment transforms the animal while man transforms the environment." Nature's processes were enormously wasteful, and much of the creative energy of nature was expended in attempts at mere survival. But forces other than natural competition shaped human social and cultural life, he concluded, and did not involve the same waste of energy. When he left the AAAS meeting to attend the Chautauqua meeting of the AEA in late August 1892, Simon Patten, an economist and good friend of Richard Ely, asked Ward for a copy of the essay for possible publication in the *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*.⁵⁵

At the same time that Ward read the essay to the members of the AAAS, he began a subscription to Edward Bellamy's nationalist paper, *The New Nation*. Although Ward never formally joined one of the nationalist clubs that emerged after Bellamy's publication of his utopian novel, *Looking Backward*, in 1888, Ward sympathized with the ethical goals of the movement. He was a fan of Bellamy's short novel, a "sugar coated bomb" he called it, and liked the novel when he read it in the late 1880s. "I do not, like so many well meaning people, take his *utopia* seriously, any more than I do Thomas More's or Plato's, or any of the rest. Still I consider that he has done the world a real service in setting up in such an admirable manner an ideal so high and so pure and in awakening thought on the sublimest of all themes, the possibilities of humanity."⁵⁶

In the early 1890s, when Ward read a poem of writer and women's reformer Charlotte Perkins Stetson on Bellamy's book, he penned an additional verse adding to her interpretation of the conservative opponents of social reform. He sent the verse anonymously to E. L. Godkin, the editor of *The Nation*, who had recently written a harsh critique of Bellamy's novel. The verse mocked Godkin's liberal individualism and extended Stetson's vision of the nation's future commonwealth based on Bellamy's novel:

There once was a Yankee romancer, a poet and a seer,
 who told some pretty stories that the ladies loved to hear
 One night Prophetic Genius transported through time
 And set him down in Boston in nineteen ninety-nine,
 And bade him then look backward to nineteenth century days
 And contrast our awkward doings with wisdom's better ways.
 And when at last he wakened from his vision fresh and green
 He wove into a romance all the wonders he had seen.
 Said he: "In one short century there's going to be a change
 That will exceed your wildest dreams in the grandeur of its range.
 We're going to banish poverty, and idleness, and gain,
 We're going to have equality in fact, as well as name.
 We're going to have abundance in this rich land of ours,
 And none will need to labor beyond his natural powers."
 But the wise men and philosophers, the millionaires and kings,
 Declared it was all nonsense to talk about such things.
 Said they: "If all were equal who'd do our menial work?
 And but for competition all *except us* would shirk."
 "To realize," said Godkin, "your nationalistic scheme,
 you must alter human nature!—it is nothing but a dream."⁵⁷

Stetson loved the doggerel. "Nothing has ever pleased me more in relation to my work," Stetson wrote when she heard about the stanza, "than the use which I heard you made of 'Similar Cases' in a recent lecture."⁵⁸

Edward Bellamy also read Ward's essays and addresses. He wrote Ward in January 1893 about his AAAS address: "I have just read your altogether admirable address . . . upon 'The Psychologic Basis of Social Economics,' and cannot refrain from congratulating you upon so masterly a statement. It would be extremely beneficial to the cause of social reform if some way could be devised to give it general circulation."⁵⁹ Bellamy included sections of the essay in his paper on 25 April 1893, under the title "The Psychologic Basis of Nationalism": "Our readers will do well," he wrote, "to read somewhat carefully the article reprinted in the present number from Lester Ward. It will bear study as furnishing the best of ammunition for replying to the 'survival of the fittest' argument against nationalism."⁶⁰

Bellamy was not the only nationalist partisan of Ward's ideas. Albert Chavannes, an obscure nationalist from Knoxville, Tennessee, used Ward's ideas as the basis for his utopian novel, *The Future Commonwealth; or, What Samuel Balcom Saw in Socioland* (1892). Chavannes was an immigrant farmer with intense interests in Bellamy's nationalism, utopian socialism, and sociology; from 1883 to 1885 Chavannes published a small journal, *The Sociologist*, which included numerous quotes and excerpts from the work of major social theorists, especially Ward. Chavannes actually retained a wide regional popularity in the upper South and Midwest during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, a minor social thinker who popularized a number of reform ideas.

His utopian novel follows protagonist Samuel Balcom's future travels to the Commonwealth of Socioland in 1950, based in the appropriately named fictional town of Spencer, Africa. Sociologists founded the commonwealth after fleeing the problems of the American republic, designing the town as a planned community based on scientific sociology. Balcom's guide through the wonders of the new society, Mr. Walter, was a fictional portrait of Lester Ward. Chavannes even became an occasional correspondent of Ward, telling him of the reception of his ideas from the local nationalist societies, and criticizing some of Ward's theories of sociology and psychology. In 1895, Chavannes again drew on Ward's ideas for a second utopian novel, *In Brighter Climes; or, Life in Socioland*, which traced more of the development of a nationalist commonwealth made by sociological laws. Ward, however, never seemed to have much interest in Chavannes's utopian socialism.⁶¹

Ward never published his AAAS essay on economics and psychology in separate form. Simon Patten, although he supported Ward's ethical and moral idealism, did not accept Ward's vision of economic study and prevented its publication in *The Annals*, a rejection that later colored Ward's relationship with the prominent economist. Patten was long opposed to the sociological turn in economic study and the attempt to model the so-

cial sciences on Comtean schemes of scientific classification. Because of the positive response to the essay at the conference, however, Ward decided to include it in the book manuscript and expand the argument into an entire chapter on the economy of nature and the economy of mind.⁶²

The burning of his book in Russia and Poland, the renewed interest in Darwinian ideas and genetics, and his growing audience among reformers and young social scientists prompted Ward to reconsider *Dynamic Sociology* while he wrote an entirely new book. In a brief essay about his first book, "Sociology in its Relation to Modern Socialistic Tendencies," he tried to connect his philosophic system to the "living issues" of the modern American republic. He published it in April 1892 in the journal of the Anthropological Society of Washington, *The American Anthropologist*. Ward agreed with his critics that his first book presented no clear "schemes of social reform." Previous schemes of reform, he argued, have involved "a more or less radical revolution in the nature . . . of organization." Instead, his understanding of social development recognized no social polity, no particular political agenda, but only the "coolest intellectual processes." The great social movement in the nation toward reform "is crude, ill-digested, and sporadic, making unreasonable and often impossible demands which are calculated to repel the sober judgment of the conservative element and ultimately bring about a reaction." What social scientists needed to do, and what he felt his work in sociology actually did, was to help "check these wayward tendencies" and keep the movement within "normal channels of safe and healthy development." He concluded that if this is not done, "those who are likely to suffer by its ravages are certain to resist its whole current until, no longer capable of restraint, it will burst forth in open revolution. . . . The problem of today is how to help on a certain evolution by averting an otherwise equally certain revolution."⁶³

Ward decided that his second book should attempt to outline in more detail the kind of government and social reforms he envisioned for an industrial republic. He struggled throughout 1892 to prepare the manuscript, called "The Social Forces and Their Direction; or, the Psychologic Basis of Sociology," constantly keeping Ross updated on his progress. He found his title cumbersome, however, and with Ross's help finally settled on *Psychic Factors of Civilization*, in order to show the importance of the mind in the study of social reform. In early 1892, he wrote Ross that "would it not be more taking, sound more original, look more as if I were doing something new and not threshing old straw? Nearly every point I make in psychology is, so far as I know, altogether new. . . . I am at work on the grand trunks to show how mind came into existence. It is an untrodden field. . . . My point of view is so different from every one else's that I rarely find anything I can use."⁶⁴

He spent many months finding all the references he needed to support his argument and decided to show the connection between the first book and the second by including many quotations from *Dynamic Sociology* at the opening of each chapter. Most important was the dedication of the manuscript since he hoped to show its relationship to American historical development. In his final version he dedicated the book to the nation as a whole: "To America, the experimental ground of civilization, this book, written wholly within the quadricentennial year of its discovery and published in that of the great Columbian Exposition, is dedicated, and consecrated to the cause of social progress and mental enlightenment on American soil."⁶⁵

Ward's book was not his only concern in the early 1890s. The political animosity toward science in Washington again threatened the work of the bureaus, and Powell was forced to defend the work of all the members of his staff. Continued attacks from Congress, concerned with funding the scientific work of the bureaus in the face of another depression cycle in the nation's economy, threatened to halt all work of the Survey. The Irrigation Survey, formerly undertaken in 1888, angered a wide range of interests in Congress, since nearly all public land sales and distribution in the West were halted to wait for the results of watershed and topographic studies by Powell's scientists. In 1890, William Hosea Ballou of *The New York Herald* provided a forum for Edward Cope, who had long opposed Powell's work. "Scientists wage bitter warfare," the headlines blared, sparking a fury of publicity over the issue of scientific research and government funding. Cope and his protégé, Henry Fairfield Osborne, hated Powell and the domination of his scientists over the study of paleontology and geology. False charges that the Survey's work was poor science and badly managed forced Powell on the defensive.

Ward remained distant from this specific battle, which concerned Powell's personal animosities, but it nonetheless hurt the image of government science in Congress. By 1892, the pressure became even more intense. In that election year, which would see the rise of Democrat Grover Cleveland and attacks on wanton government spending, Powell had to defend his agency, its spending, and the purposes of the work he and his scientists were performing. Hearings before the House Appropriations Committee again brought out Hilary Herbert's ire against Powell, and this time Powell's budget for the work of the Survey was cut severely; he lost more than \$200,000, including support for much of the work done on paleontology, one of Ward's subjects of interest. In fact, Ward's job was slated to be cut out of the Survey. Powell saved Ward's job from the congressional ax. In July 1892, Ward recorded in his notebooks that "Congress [has] cut down the appropriation for the geological survey so as to necessitate a general re-organization and many removals. Major Powell called

me over to see him and offered me one of the two positions as Paleontologist . . . until further changes could be made. I accepted it."⁶⁶ Ward's assistants, however, had to resign because of the budget cuts. Others had to go as well. The spirit of the Survey remained shaken for years.

Congressional opposition to science eased in 1893—despite the efforts of a number of congressmen to further cut the budget—but Powell was noticeably tired. Losing interest in the geological work and complaining that his health was suffering as well, Powell eventually resigned as the director of the Geological Survey in the spring of 1894. He decided to devote his energies to the Bureau of Ethnology, and at the same time he began a lengthy book on the philosophy of science, a project he mostly had abandoned since the mid-1880s.⁶⁷

His job fully secured, Ward finished his manuscript and sent it to Ginn and Company, the young Boston publishing house, in the summer of 1893. With his manuscript safely at the publisher, he left Washington for Chicago in the summer of 1893. He had been asked by the planners of the Chicago World's Columbian Exposition to serve as a member of the advisory board for two intellectual congresses held in conjunction with the world's fair. The fair was also the site for a family reunion with his siblings, nieces, and nephews. He spent a happy summer traveling in the Midwest and West conducting scientific work for the Survey as well as meeting with far-flung correspondents from the region. He was happy to be away from the turmoil of Washington and out of the political firestorm.

In October 1893, Ward gave a lecture at the People's Church in Washington, "The Solution to the Great Social Problem," introducing his book just before its publication. Much of the lecture quoted from *Dynamic Sociology* and from a recent issue of Bellamy's *The New Nation*, recounting the problems of American society in the early 1890s. "The evils of society," Ward told his audience, "are the result of the unregulated action of millions of independent individual wills each seeking its own ends in its own way and leading to endless and hopeless conflicts and collisions." What was essential for social progress, and the only way for Americans to solve social problems, was "in the assumption by the great ganglionic center or brain of society—the state, nation, or government—of the controlling functions of consciousness, will, and intelligence." Society must have knowledge of social principles in order to progress; without such knowledge the nation would continue to drift directionless: "The great social problem must be solved by society itself, when it shall have become conscious of itself, conscious of its power and sufficiently intelligent to exercise that power, in the execution of its own will."⁶⁸

The Psychic Factors of Civilization finally appeared in early November 1893. When Ross received a copy he wrote Ward that "I am sure no book I shall ever publish will ever give me the great pleasure I have received

from seeing those oft talked over thoughts in print. It is indeed a beautiful book. . . . When I read it I seem to hear the heavy regular tread of battalions. The weight and momentum of ideas is irresistible. It cannot but plough [*sic*] its way through all opposition. It is too good and too finished a book to become instantly popular. But it will march steadily forward and be as much in demand in ten years as in one."⁶⁹

In *Psychic Factors of Civilization* Ward answered those critics who portrayed his social thinking as too theoretical and even utopian. This was his contribution to a new science of politics for an industrial age; in this book readers were to find the forces that shaped modern society laid out for their understanding. He was not alone in his quest for a new American politics in the late nineteenth century. By the 1890s, a trans-Atlantic intellectual community engaged in the process of redefining the social policy needs of the modern world. Using broad-based government initiatives to reshape social policy in England, France, and Germany, these reformers attacked the problems they saw hindering the development of society. American reformers and social scientists learned from the English and European examples, sharing in the interest to fix the ills of the growing urban nation. Some of these men and women, including Edward Ross, Helen Campbell, Albion Small, and Richard Ely, had already discovered Ward's work but more began to read him as well; women reformers such as Charlotte Perkins Stetson and economists such as Simon Patten found in Ward's work important contributions to the developing efforts to repair social dislocation. By the time a second edition of *Dynamic Sociology* appeared in 1897, Ward had garnered significantly more readers than he had with the first edition.

Ward believed that this book would help him be recognized as one of the leading thinkers on the international scene of social reform and social philosophy. *The Psychic Factors of Civilization* incorporated all the work Ward had done in the decade following the publication of *Dynamic Sociology*. All the essays on poverty, social reform, and expanding public government came together in this slim volume, a book much more lively and compact than his first massive study. His primary goal was to ground sociology in psychology rather than biology. Too often, as Ward had been arguing for years, metaphors of Darwinian biological struggle defined systems of social thought—especially in the hands of theorists like William Sumner. If his first book sought to define an agenda for social science by synthesizing the work of Comte and Spencer in the creation of a philosophic system encouraging expanded education, this second volume defined the goal of social reform itself. The end purpose of Ward's social science was a new understanding of politics or what he called "sociocracy."⁷⁰

Ward inherited his understanding of psychology from the moral philosophy of the mid-nineteenth century, the field in which he received his

earliest intellectual training. The human mind was separated into a hierarchical series of branches developed over the course of evolutionary history: a mechanical branch instinctive in operation and having no control over external events (associated only with the simplest of organisms); the animal branch of instinctive feelings and emotions representing the selfish desires to survive in competition with others; and a rational branch of conscious control of individual desires and external events—a product of the human mind and reason.⁷¹ Ward studied the dual nature of the rational mind, which he separated into two faculties: the subjective, concerned with feelings and emotions, and the objective, concerned with intellect and reason. Feelings in this system motivated social action, as Ward had argued in *Dynamic Sociology*, but now he concerned himself with the ways society might control passion and feeling—seemingly without direction in a competitive and partisan political system. The works Ward relied on to develop his ideas reveal his debt to the old faculty psychology although he did update these studies with his knowledge of evolutionary theory. A glance at the bibliography he provided with the book shows his interest in the works of Scottish moral philosophy, particularly Francis Hutcheson, David Hume, and Sir William Hamilton.

Ward's faculty psychology again demonstrated his debt to antebellum habits of thinking. In his early life and intellectual training, the qualities of human character, education, and hard work framed his understanding of faculty psychology; they were, in fact, key elements of psychological thought in the mid-nineteenth century. Although he discarded the emphasis of moral philosophers on religion and theology, Ward retained the basic structure of their psychology of the mind, an emphasis that went against the grain of most of the major psychological thinkers of the late nineteenth century. His interest in these older categories betrayed his devotion to taxonomy and order in scientific classification. In his rather haphazard training in science and philosophy, he missed some of the major developments of recent social thought, especially the new changes in academic psychology and philosophy.

By the 1890s, especially in the studies of William James and John Dewey, psychology had undergone a functionalist revolution. James's *Principles of Psychology* was the major text in the field in the 1890s. Although James shared with Ward an interest in the active possibilities of the mind (a teleological agent in the works of both men), as well as an interest in the implications of Darwinian theory for the study of human thinking and society, he was much more attuned to the nature of social experience and human personality than Ward. James was harshly critical of the simplistic faculty psychology dominating much of nineteenth-century thought. Instead, he turned to the idea of a "stream of consciousness" framing human experience. In one of the most famous phrases from his book, James wrote that

"consciousness . . . does not appear to itself chopped up in bits. Such words as 'chain' or 'train' do not describe it fitly as it presents itself in the first instance. It is nothing jointed; it flows. A 'river' or a 'stream' are the metaphors by which it is most naturally described."⁷² Human psychology was no longer considered a fixed component by the 1890s, and psychological studies of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries eventually turned to the socialization of the individual as a key process of social change and development. Moreover, James strongly opposed organized systems of social thought. "The reader will in vain seek for any closed system in the book," he wrote in *Principles*. James's view of psychology was probabilistic: no system of social thought, he argued, could fashion a clear blueprint for social reform or an explanation for the ways human personality might be shaped by experience.

The implications of James's insights into the nature of human thinking became central to psychological study in the twentieth century, but Ward gained little from the volume. Ross had originally prompted him to read it, mentioning the chapters Ward should concentrate on, but he never absorbed much of it. James's volume examined the paradoxes of human psychology—the nature of the individual self, the capability of positivist science to elucidate the science of psychology, the role of free will in the formation of personality—but Ward made only a few scribbles in the margins and collected a few quotes without absorbing more of James's work.⁷³

It was not that Ward was completely ignorant of the developments in psychological theory—or that his lack of interest put him so far behind the times. Given his concern for character and self-improvement as elements of his own life and educational ideals, it is not surprising that he remained devoted to the basic categories of moral philosophy and faculty psychology. They fit well with his interest in systems of scientific thought, in the organization of scientific knowledge, and taxonomy—something that the experimental and experiential ideals of functionalist psychology did not consider. But he was nonetheless dated in the changing landscape of understanding human personality. Here Ward demonstrated that those antebellum categories of analysis might no longer fit the modern industrial world. And many younger social thinkers were to take him to task for these problems in his social thinking.

Ward's psychology was clear in his examples of the ways the mind related to experience. Unlike James's insight that human relationships to experience were not sequential, simplistic responses, Ward argued that the departments of the mind related to experience in separate ways. "When the end of the finger is placed against any material object two results follow. There is produced a *sensation* depending on the nature of the object, and there is conveyed to the mind a *notion* of the nature of the ob-

ject. The sensation and the notion are not one and the same but two distinct things, capable of being contemplated separately."⁷⁴ The sensation is first experienced by a subjective side of the mind; the notion of what the sensation might be is interpreted by the objective department of the mind. Ward updated the categories of faculty psychology by focusing on the stages of social evolution and the evolutionary development of mind and soul. In his opening chapters, he traced this development and explained that "the soul is the great transforming agent which has worked its way up through stages of savagery and barbarism to civilization and enlightenment, the power behind the throne of reason in the evolution of man."⁷⁵

In the first third of the book, Ward examined social action and social friction as aspects of the subjective side of the mind's development. Feeling and desire motivated social action: "Nearly all the activities, and especially the substantial achievements of man fall under this head. The great variety and intensity of human desires, all finding expression in those actions which are intended to secure their satisfaction, has . . . wrought [great] changes in man's environment."⁷⁶ Human desires represent the "transforming agency" of society. Understanding subjective psychology, Ward concluded, provides a "heart and soul" for a philosophy of action and "a key . . . to past history and future progress."⁷⁷ Unlike moral philosophers, who constantly sought to check passion and control its expression, Ward reveled in the free play of passion and desire as the true social forces and objects of social progress.

The object of these feelings and desires is universal happiness achieved through individual action, the fundamental belief of utilitarian philosophy. All individuals seek to secure their own happiness and direct their feelings and desires to whatever can accomplish that fundamental goal. For society, however, the result of progress based only on subjective feelings and desires has generally been social friction: the goals of society and those of the individual are in constant conflict. The argument of "individualists," whom Ward equated with conservative laissez-faire social thinkers, failed to recognize this most important fact. Social progress cannot result from the operation of these individual demands for happiness: "So long . . . as society remains under the unconscious product of the individual demands of each age, so long will the organized social state continue to be found out of accord with and lagging behind the real spirit of the age, often so intolerably so as to require more or less violent convulsions and social revolutions."⁷⁸ It was this kind of individualism that most frustrated Ward. The only way to escape the destructive forces of individual competition, he argued, was to focus on social interests, social needs, and social desires. "Evil is merely the friction which is to be overcome or at least minimized. This cannot be done by exhortation. It must be done by perfecting the social mechanism."⁷⁹

The key to controlling the process of social development is the second department of the mind: the objective faculty (i.e., the intellect and reason). The objective faculty of the mind evolved from the subjective side through the course of human history. Ward traced through successive chapters on "inventive genius," "creative genius," and "speculative genius," the evolution of the objective mind into its highest faculty: the reasoned intellect. This perspective, Ward felt, provided sufficient ammunition against the Neo-Darwinist's attack on the notion of acquired characteristics. Succeeding generations of humans throughout evolutionary history acquired each of the "derivative faculties" constituting the intellect through a kind of cultural transmission—despite the fact that they had "the least value in rendering its possessor capable of survival" in the struggle for existence. "The fortuitous commingling of favorable germs . . . offered by Weismann and his disciples as an explanation, is unintelligible and wholly inadequate, and we are forced to conclude that these biologically useless acquired characters are really transmitted."⁸⁰ Having dispensed with his scientific critics Ward demonstrated how the intellect directed passions and reduced social friction. "It is of prime importance to distinguish the intellect from the dynamic agent of the mind. . . . The principle object of this work is to show that while the subjective factors of mind furnish the true social forces the objective forces furnish the guide to those forces."⁸¹ Man is primarily a rational being, Ward argued, and could direct into rational and purposive avenues the progress of society.

The question occupying the final section of the book is how to combine subjective desires with objective reason to develop a comprehensive and frictionless program of social change: a "social synthesis" of the factors of mind affecting society. In a lengthy chapter on "The Economy of Nature and the Economy of Mind," Ward examined the competitive forces affecting the social system of the republic. He drew heavily on his earlier work in *Dynamic Sociology* and his essay "The Psychologic Basis of Social Economics," arguing that nature is wasteful, unthinking, and uncaring in operation. Animal economics demonstrated the competitive struggle for place in nature.

Human economics, on the other hand, should be entirely different. The rational faculties of intellect and mind placed man above the brute forces of competitive behavior, creating the ability to establish social structures capable of mitigating the forces of competition. Unfortunately, according to Ward, most social philosophy had ignored this fact. This was what Ward meant by focusing sociology on psychological phenomena instead of the competitive forces of biological change—even though his model for the study of psychic factors remained natural science. "[A]ny system of economics which is to deal with rational man must rest upon . . . a psychologic and not a biologic basis . . . but the only system of social eco-

nomics that we possess, and the only social philosophy [we have] . . . completely ignore it and treat the human animal only as an animal. . . . A system of so-called 'political economy,' in which the *political* aspect, i.e., the relation of state to society, is for the most part ignored, has grown up and been reduced to a series of dogmatic canons which until recently it was considered next to sacrilege to question or criticize."⁸²

Ward argued that the defects of the current social system, unremitting and wasteful competition and conflict between capital and labor, "can only be properly considered in the dry light of science." He called the study of social problems and their solutions meliorism, "the science of the improvement or amelioration of the human or social state."⁸³ Most important in Ward's understanding of political institutions and social relationships is his assumption that this improvement could not be undertaken solely by individuals in a partisan and competitive party politics. He had an old republican fear of partisan interests that he believed a scientific understanding of politics could overcome. Since he was entirely meritocratic as well there did not seem to be any threat to democracy in this vision of American political life (though many would not agree with Ward that democracy was not threatened by his scheme of planned government). Ward wanted an extraparty, administrative government that prevented the domination of competitive individual interests for the good of a social whole: "[The individual] will always pursue a narrow destructive policy, exhausting the resources of the earth, caring neither for the good of others now living nor for posterity . . . if this is ever to be prevented it must be by society putting itself in the place of the individual and seeking its interests . . . caring for the welfare and comfort of all its members."⁸⁴

Ward's chief objection to the current reform ideals was the exclusive focus on individual efforts. In fighting for change after the Civil War, genteel social reformers—the "moralists" as he liked to call them—made faulty assumptions about the ability to improve the social state: "The moralists have undertaken the impossible task of removing the so-called evil propensities of man. [The science called] meliorism teaches that there are no such."⁸⁵ The need, instead, was for scientific legislation put into practice by an administrative-oriented government. Only the national government represents the collective will, conscience, and intellect of society. "Government is becoming more and more the organ of social consciousness, and more and more the servant of the social will. Our declaration of independence which recites that government derives its just powers from the 'consent' of the governed has already been outgrown. It is no longer the consent but the positively known will of the governed from which government now derives its powers."⁸⁶

Here Ward finally arrived at the whole point of his argument, calling the social system that developed from a proper understanding of evolution,

mind, and nature "sociocracy." Although he had coined the term more than a decade earlier, he never clearly laid out what he meant or described in any detail what such a society might look like. It was a neologism that he developed to distinguish the ideal society from a wide variety of competing social theories and ideas about collectivism.⁸⁷

In his chapter on sociocracy, Ward traced the social evolution of modern government—a terrain well known to most Americans—from monarchy and aristocracy to democratic revolution. But nineteenth-century American democracy, he argued, had become too dependent on a plutocracy of wealth and knowledge, "which thrives well in connection with a weak democracy . . . and aims to supersede it entirely." The problem is the American distrust of strong national government. Ward's producerist ideals were most evident in his conception of the social problems facing the modern industrial republic. It is a powerful statement of his reform ideals:

Under the system as it now exists the wealth of the world, however created, and irrespective of the claims of the producer, is made to flow toward certain centers of accumulation, to be enjoyed by those holding the keys to such situations. The world appears to be approaching a stage at which those who labor . . . will receive, according to the "iron law" formulated by Ricardo, only so much for their services as will enable them "to subsist and to perpetuate their race." . . . These are great and serious evils, compared with which all the crimes, recognized as such, that would be committed if no government existed, would be trifles. The underpaid labor, the prolonged and groveling drudgery, the wasted strength, the misery and squalor, the diseases resulting, and the premature deaths that would be prevented by a just distribution of the products of labor, would in a single year outweigh all the so-called crime[s] of a century, for the prevention of which, government alone exists. This vast theater of woe is regarded as wholly outside the jurisdiction of the government, while the most strenuous efforts are put forth to detect and punish the perpetrators of the least of the ordinary recognized crimes. This ignoring of great evils while so violently striking at small ones is the mark of an effete civilization, and warns us of the approaching dotage of the race.⁸⁸

The same forces directing the individual must be harnessed by government and directed by society to the end result of all action, human happiness. In one of his most often quoted phrases Ward defined his view of the new liberal tradition that he and many others were working to define, a vision that would command attention in American political life into the late twentieth century. "The individual has reigned long enough," he proclaimed, "the day has come for society to take its affairs into its own hands and shape its own destinies." Liberty and freedom had nothing to fear from government. Sociocracy differed from all previous conceptions

of planned and collective government by representing the known will of the people, the "social consciousness" or "social mind" of all members of society. Moreover, "sociocracy will differ from all previous forms of government that have been devised . . . [but] that difference will not be so radical as to require a revolution."⁸⁹

Ward attacked the partisan political system characteristic of American party democracy. In partisan political systems the winning of elections becomes the primary goal of all social action. The interests of the people are lost in the political battles led by professional politicians. The losing party in any election "regards the government as something alien to it and hostile, like an invader, and thinks of nothing but to gain strength enough to overthrow it" at the next election, resulting only in social stagnation. "Sociocracy," Ward concluded, "will change all this. Irrelevant issues will be laid aside. The important objects upon which all but an interested few are agreed will receive their proper degree of attention, and measures will be considered in a non-partisan spirit with the sole purpose of securing these objects."⁹⁰

In an unpublished section of the manuscript, Ward recommended the nationalization of certain industries as essential to the improvement of labor and the political independence of the voting public. "Capital is naturally conservative . . . capitalists and employers have a special reason for wishing to maintain a weak government, and one which shall take no step toward the disturbance of existing monopolies." Instead, he called for the national government to compete with capital for labor arguing as he had when he discussed the government's role in irrigation that only the nation could be totally disinterested in pursuing the interests of society. "What is needed is a disinterested competitor. . . . At present the state only employs comparatively few and these only in a few kinds of business. . . . But so far as it goes it sets up a standard of wages and of hours of labor which has a wholesome effect upon all industries that come into competition with it. If its sphere could be enlarged so as to embrace most of the industries in which people engage . . . its beneficial effect would become general, and would, as it seems, greatly improve the condition of the laboring classes."⁹¹ Ward was angry when the publisher, in his words, "suppressed" this argument in the published manuscript, but he was able to make a similar call for nationalization in another context. When he reviewed economist John Commons's *The Distribution of Wealth*, an essay written the same year as the publication of *Psychic Factors*, Ward also highlighted the necessity of a large state power in the public administration of the nation's economy.⁹²

The science of sociology serves as the basis for Ward's sociocracy. Sociology as a science of politics and government concerned itself only with the investigation of the "facts bearing on every subject" rather than the

passions (and partisan spirit) that surrounded them. The recognition of the "social consciousness" of people, Ward believed, created cohesion between members of society and erased the current class distinctions in the existing social order. Just as the objective faculty of the mind controlled the subjective desires of humankind, friction between members of society (i.e., those pursuing their subjective feelings) could be controlled by the scientific government of sociocracy (i.e., intellect and reason). The educational system Ward described in 1883, supported by the uniform distribution of scientific knowledge and the creation of a national university, was to establish the rational basis of social consciousness. Ward concluded that "in order to elucidate social problems it must be the dry light of science, as little influenced by feeling as though it were the inhabitants of Jupiter's moons, instead of those of this planet, that were under the field of the intellectual telescope."⁹³

Ward's sociocracy was a managerial system that was to find expression in the recommendations of many American reformers in the 1890s. Ward's attention to the money power and the plutocracy of wealth in the world found similar advocates in the Populist Party and Ignatius Donnelly, in Henry George and the Single Taxers, and in Edward Bellamy's nationalists. It also found expression in John Wesley Powell's conception of the controlled settlement of the western lands. These plans all sought to harness the social consciousness of the people without the system of partisan politics. *Psychic Factors of Civilization* was by far Ward's best book, the only one where he captured the same vigorous spirit as his essays and lectures of the 1880s.

Sociocracy as outlined here combined all of Ward's long political interests: in the promises of producerism and free labor for success and economic growth; in the expansion of opportunity for all citizens regardless of wealth, class, sex, or race; in allowing the national government to harness the forces shaping the direction of social evolution and not leave it all to the mercy of competition. There is a genuine note of democratic optimism in Ward's work that should not be forgotten. But, in addition, any managerial system of political culture such as this also bore a certain hostility to individual participation, to local politics and local decision making, and to those who might be hostile to decisions made by the agencies and bureaus charged with developing policy. Powell had confronted this undeniable political fact with the Survey's work on irrigation. Ward felt these problems would be overcome in time if planning and foresight became the work of government agencies in solving the nation's social problems. Despite his best efforts, however, it was still not clear how this might happen.

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Spencer-Smashing at Washington, 1894–1900

In January 1894, just two months after the publication of his second book, Lester Ward attended a meeting of the Washington Society for Philosophical Inquiry, where he listened to a lecture on agnosticism and philosophy in the work of Herbert Spencer. After the lecture, Ward commented on the criticism of Spencer's work emanating from many quarters in the late nineteenth century, especially from his own community of intellectuals in Washington, D.C. "This society since its organization a year ago," he said, "has been engaged in an almost uninterrupted onslaught upon [Spencer's] doctrines." And yet, he continued, Spencer's work demands the close attention of all philosophers and social thinkers. He created a formidable system of thought that was not easy to overthrow. Attacking Spencer required the creation of a scientific system equally as comprehensive and as commanding as the English social thinker's cosmic philosophy. "Spencer-Smashing at Washington," as Ward called the efforts of the intellectual community in the capital city, required an attempt to define a science of positive government and social policy that fit the needs of a rapidly industrializing and disorganized society, a systematic philosophy that departed from antiquated laissez-faire assumptions about governing the social system.¹ What the nation needed was a new science of politics that allowed for the enlarged functions of the state and still protected individual freedom.

This is precisely what Ward had tried to do with *Psychic Factors of Civilization*. The reception of his book was remarkably positive at first. Most of the early reviews were highly complimentary. And although he included coverage of previous essays and ideas, he connected his broad scientific

philosophy and political ideals to current social problems. Ward arranged to have his friend from Pennsylvania, William Owen, review the book in the *New York Times*, and Owen gave it a glowing recommendation. Alfred Russel Wallace wrote Ward a letter of hearty congratulation, although he did fear that his work might not reach a broad and popular audience. In addition, Edward Ross agreed to review the book for *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* and promised to give it the favorable treatment he felt it deserved.

Despite Ross's best efforts, however, he was never able to publish his review. On 8 April 1894, he wrote Ward that "it looks as if I am not going to be able to serve the interests of the new book after all. I prepared at the suggestion of the *Annals* people a review of the book of about ten pages in length and sent it on for the March number. It did not appear, however. Prof. Patten pronounced it unsatisfactory and sent it back."²

Patten's interference infuriated Ross. He informed Ward that Patten himself had decided to review the book for the *Annals* instead. The treatment of Ross's review "astonished" Ward, and he complained to his nephew that Patten had done the same thing to his essay on "The Psychologic Basis of Social Economics." "Patten, with all his learning and his many good qualities, is apt to think that he possesses all the wisdom worth anything in economics. . . . I am not afraid of Patten's attacks, although they will probably deter most of his followers from reading the book. He is utterly incompetent to criticize the psychical part and probably will not do so."³ Patten did criticize Ward's psychology, however, and challenged him on his understanding of scientific method. Patten's review, and his relationship to Ward generally, revealed the changing nature of the intellectual landscape of the 1890s. The intellectual lives of academic social scientists like Patten markedly differed from Ward's life in government science; the forces shaping academic social science in the late nineteenth century did not lead to the establishment of formidable systems of social thought. Instead, these scientists defined the clear boundaries of professional discourse in social science, a science in which all-encompassing systems of social philosophy had little value.

Simon Patten was another product of the middle border, born in Illinois in 1852 and raised in the midst of the Civil War crisis of the republic. His father was an ambitious farmer, a New Englander who, like so many other antebellum pioneers, traveled westward seeking success and independence on the frontier. He served as a Republican in the Illinois legislature in the tumultuous 1850s and organized a military unit when the Civil War began. Simon Patten, however, benefited from a thorough academic training, first studying law and philosophy at Northwestern in the 1870s before setting off for a European education. Like so many academics of the late nineteenth century, Patten was trained in German universities, and during

his study there he became intensely interested in historical economics. He was instrumental, for example, in Richard Ely's decision to study economics instead of philosophy.

Patten had a keen mind but suffered from an almost pathological shyness and had great difficulty keeping close friends his entire life. Following his German university training, he taught in a number of American colleges before finally settling in a teaching position at the University of Pennsylvania's Wharton School, where he remained for the rest of his career. Patten and Ward might have been good friends given the similarity in their backgrounds, and the two actually did genuinely admire each other's work. But their personalities clashed. Ward's own reluctance to accept criticism, and Patten's stern belief in providing it, obscured their general intellectual kinship. Ward never accepted criticism well, and Patten had little regard for the hurt feelings of those with whom he disagreed.

Patten and Ward actually shared a similar producerist ethic and a faith that reform of national social problems was possible with the right kind of social theory. Patten's first major book, *Premises of Political Economy* (1885), argued strongly in favor of the rights of American working people, producerist cooperatives, and reform of the nation's working conditions. But Patten was a member of the professional ranks of academic economists and deeply interested in defining the professional role of economics as social science. His education made him far more concerned with the problems of rationality and relativism in scientific thinking, subjects Ward never considered seriously. Unlike Ward with his interest in systematizing all science in a Comtean scheme, Patten did not believe that scientific thinking evolved toward a predetermined end. Social science and social scientists should concentrate on change, in the conditioning role of experience shaping social systems.

William James's psychology deeply influenced him, and the relativism inherent in James's approach to human experience and personality shaped Patten's approach to the economic problems of a modern industrial democracy. Patten's most important contribution to social science came in his conception of the surplus economy and the psychology of market consumption. Patten's interest in consumption was not only an aspect of economic theory, it also represented a new psychology for the modern citizen, a new way of thinking about the relationship of citizen and market, government and the economy. Although he shared Ward's ethical concerns and assumptions about the American producer and the moral value of work and labor, Patten's concern for an abundant consumer society marked a sea change in the social approach to personality, a shift that was to deeply influence all the fields of social science by the early twentieth century.

In Patten's review lay the seeds of Ward's later demise as a popular social theorist, the first time he was seriously challenged by someone who

nonetheless shared his political and ethical goals. Although he liked Ward's politics and was pleased with Ward's visions of a new government and a new science of politics, Patten did not think that Ward's conception of the mind or the psychological basis of sociology furthered the development of sociology and economics.

Patten's essay-cum-review, "The Failure of Biologic Sociology," did not actually refer to Ward's book very often. Instead, he classed Ward with "biologic sociologists" who applied biological analogies to the study of society, even as they supported reform goals rather than classical *laissez-faire* economic theory. Patten knew that Ward intended his book to place the study of social phenomena on a psychological basis. But he also knew that Ward's model for the study of society and the mind came from natural science and from his understanding of the Comtean hierarchy of positivism. Patten had his own theories of social change built on a faith in the liberal progress of American institutions in market competition with one another. Synthesizing Comtean positivism and Spencerian evolutionism did not advance social philosophy, Patten argued. It merely perpetuated the same mistake made by social conservatives who applied analogies of struggle to social theory, despite Ward's reform-oriented political ethics. "I believe that the biologic bias creates erroneous notions of social phenomena and stimulates activity along fruitless lines of investigation," Patten wrote. "Moreover, I hold that the only entrance to sociology and to psychology as well, lies through the economic studies which have already proved so fruitful of results in an adjacent field."⁴ Patten had a strong case against Ward. Since Ward relied so heavily on natural science categories for his analysis he missed the larger epistemological problems with his ideas. The problem, for Patten, was not simply the ways in which scientists interpreted and applied Darwinian categories. The problem was that the biological basis itself was deeply flawed for social analysis.

Patten criticized Ward's very notion of the scientific hierarchy in positivism, arguing instead that it is economics, a science of man even older than sociology, that contains the true inductive method of science for the study of society. Sociology in Ward's hands offered only what Patten called a Comtean "ghost science" with no ability to clearly articulate the study of human social development. How can the science of man be left to generalization and abstraction? The study of society, Patten concluded, should rest on empirical economics as a science and resist the biological turn. Ward's emphasis on the study of desire betrayed his unfortunate dependence on biological method and theory. If he really wanted a more concrete psychological study he needed to focus on psychological impulses: "It is impulse and conviction that leads the members of society to act together and thus increase the utilization of the general environment."⁵

Patten wrote Ward a few weeks after the review in order to explain his position in more detail. The two men had known one another casually through their common acquaintances—Patten was friendly with Ely, Ross, and Giddings—as well as their mutual interest in the activities of the American Economic Association. “I hope you will regard me friendly even if outspoken in the criticism of ideas with which I do not agree,” Patten wrote. “You have made a fine start towards the discussion of the fundamental problems of sociology. If it can be followed up by discussion of particular points we will soon have the science on a sound basis.”⁶

What made the animosity between Patten and Ward so mystifying is just how much they admired each other’s work. Ward reviewed Patten’s book, *The Theory of Social Forces*, in 1896, and he became one of Patten’s leading advocates in the late 1890s and 1900s, one of the few admirers Patten actually had among leading American intellectuals. Ward liked parts of Patten’s book, especially his arguments about the nature of the pain and pleasure economy, arguing that Patten’s book examined “the most pressing of all the problems of practical philosophy” when he wrote of the meaning and function of the social forces. It is no wonder Ward approved of much of *The Theory of Social Forces*. Patten’s language, style, argument, and ethics were close to Ward’s own. Still, Ward harshly criticized Patten, calling him ignorant of most modern philosophy and opaque in style, concluding that “Dr. Patten may be mad, but he certainly has lucid intervals.”⁷

It was Patten’s vision of a “social commonwealth” that most attracted Ward to the economist’s work. By the turn of the century, Ward often borrowed terminology from Patten and encouraged a number of social theorists to pay closer attention to what he had to say about modern economics. Patten was thrilled when the second edition of Ward’s *Dynamic Sociology* appeared in 1897: “Quarrel as we may over details,” Patten informed him, “sociology has come to stay and for this part the science owes to no one more than you.”⁸ The two men, however, were both rather thin-skinned and easily annoyed; they never became close despite the connections in their social ideas.

Ward later remembered Patten’s review of *Psychic Factors* as “showing a complete failure” to understand his work. But Patten’s attack on Ward’s scientific methodology was not the only substantial criticism he received. The other critical review, which dealt much more directly with Ward’s book, was written by John Dewey, then a young philosopher who had just left the University of Michigan to teach at the University of Chicago. Dewey was in the process of rethinking his own social philosophy and psychology—influenced in part by the work of William James and his own concerns about the direction of his thinking about science, psychology, and social reform. Initially under the powerful influence of Hegelian

idealism, Dewey moved away from this metaphysical abstraction over the course of the 1890s. In doing so, as biographer Robert Westbrook has pointed out, Dewey began a process of reshaping American liberalism and became the nation's most prominent and dominant public intellectual into the 1950s.

In the 1890s, Dewey was just beginning this process of rethinking his philosophical idealism. He had already made a name for himself in psychology with the publication of his own textbook on the subject in 1886, and he had become even more well known as he challenged some of the basic arguments of nineteenth-century psychological thought (including some of James's ideas) in such essays as "The Reflex Arc Concept" (1896), which criticized the simplistic psychology of stimulus-response. Dewey thought of psychology as a conditioning process to the environment—an ongoing series of nonsequential stimuli and responses shaping the human mind and social experience. Moreover, Dewey believed that individual personality was itself socially created, an idea that radically differed from Ward's faith in the established faculties of the mind through evolutionary history.

These issues must have been prominent in Dewey's mind when he read Ward's book. If there was unremitting conflict between individual goals and social goals, as Ward suggested, Dewey asked how Ward could see any progress of society through history. He challenged Ward's faculty psychology as well, complaining that "Mr. Ward is so under the spell of an old psychology of sensation that he fails to relate the radical psychic fact . . . [of] impulse . . . without which we cannot go." Ultimately, Dewey argued, with the sharp break between culture and nature advocated by Ward, an increase of intelligence through education could only "bring the [social] conflict into clearer relief," benefiting neither individual nor social progress.⁹ Moreover, where was reform to go with Ward's belief that education could carry it forward. Something more complex needed to happen, Dewey believed, in the American understanding of politics, individualism, and social reform. Dewey made his career out of these problems of political thought but in the 1890s he had not yet formulated his answers. But like Patten he had hit on a difficulty with Ward's social philosophy, one that Ward never really adequately addressed.

It was unclear whether Ward gained much from Dewey's criticism of his book. He did write James McKeen Cattell, professor of psychology at Columbia University and one of the leading commentators in academic psychology in the late nineteenth century, shortly after reading Dewey's review: "[Dewey] is the only one of my reviewers thus far who to my knowledge has even touched upon what I regard as not only the most original but also the most important part of the book, viz., Part II, in which I have offered, so far as I know, the only scientific theory thus far

proposed on the origins of intellect."¹⁰ Ward made little other commentary on Dewey's ideas, and he never seriously answered the issues raised by either Dewey's or Patten's reviews of his book.

The criticism of his social thought by Patten and Dewey pointed more to a methodological and epistemological debate rather than an argument over social or political ethics: the purpose and detachment of modern economics and philosophical study against Ward's notion of a generalized social and political study of the economy and its functions. The debate reflected the development of professional methods of study within the social science disciplines, trends that were far removed from Ward's intellectual life and interests. It also pointed to a slow changing of the guard in social science and reform circles in the mid-1890s. Ward remained important to all the debates and developments in American social thinking into the twentieth century but he nonetheless seemed more and more out of touch with the main lines of thinking about political economy, government, and the social problems of the republic. He did try to respond to these changes but by the end of his life it became apparent that his attempts did more to obscure his contributions to American thinking about social development and social philosophy than they helped.

By the middle 1890s, despite the criticism of his second volume, Ward turned more and more frequently to the study of social philosophy in his professional life. In essays written from 1894 to 1896, including another contribution to *The Forum*, Ward examined key issues facing social scientists and the American republic. For example, when he studied social scientific ethics, another contribution to his "Spencer-smashing" efforts, Ward noted the impact that modern social change had on the world sociologists studied. He had always abhorred Spencerian ethics, and now he severely criticized Spencer's volume on the subject in a lengthy review written in 1894. Spencer had little understanding of the function of the modern state, ignoring the important factors of mind and psychology. Spencer's ethics rested too much on biology and demonstrated "no bond of mutuality between government and the citizen." Spencer's volume on ethics deeply disappointed Ward—his views had moved backward from those of a revolutionary social theorist to those of a social reactionary. "Mr. Spencer's sociology . . .," Ward concluded, "which would minimize government to the utmost, and even hints at its ultimate elimination, is an essentially destructive, and in no sense a constructive system. His political ethics which denies the right of society to adopt ways and means for its own improvement and advancement, is a censure of the whole course of human history." His work now "stands in the way of the accomplishment of an urgent social demand."¹¹

Unlike the ethics Spencer recommended, and in contrast to the study of ethics as a philosophical problem unrelated to current social issues, Ward

recommended a more activist ethics as a branch of professional sociology, a reformist theory designed to reduce social friction:

Now the moral progress of society has consisted, and must continue to consist, in a . . . series of steps in reducing the friction of society. When we look back over the history of the world and realize how much better it is than it once was, especially in public life, it looks as if we had come a long way; but when day after day we scan the heads of newspapers and note the ever recurring horrors of our present state, we are compelled to admit that the moral world is still in the stone-boat stage of its history, dragging its heavy body over the rugged field of human life with the utmost friction and the smallest ethical economy. It is the painfulness of this feature of life that so arouses the quickened sympathies of mankind and lends such an intense interest to all ethical questions.¹²

The issue of moral progress and the bond between the citizen and the government served as Ward's subject in his sixth contribution to *The Forum*, "Plutocracy and Paternalism," published in November 1895. He opened the essay with a reference to the issue of Populist Party politics, an especially pressing concern just a year before another national presidential election. Since the end of the Civil War, farmers in the Midwest, West, and South organized political opposition to monopoly capitalism. Ward's brother Lorenzo had himself been a member of Iowa's Greenback Party. By 1892, the Populist Party was fully capable of challenging Democrats and Republicans in state-level elections, winning a number of congressional seats, governorships, and state legislative seats, and national elections as well. The party platform of 1892 became a rallying cry for the nation's rural citizens, and the demand for coining silver became a constant refrain of local Populist politics.

Ward's essay spoke directly to these concerns, one of the few times in his career that he was to address a specific political issue. "To judge from the tone of the popular press," he began, "the country would seem to be between the devil of state interference and the deep sea of gold."¹³ Ward's essay harshly criticized a vision of government that offered support to the wealthy citizens of the state without offering protection for the nation's poor. Protections for monopoly and privilege were just the sort of the problems that led to unrest in the republic: "[The government] legalizes and promotes trusts and combinations; subsidizes corporations and then absolves them from their obligations; sustains stock-watering schemes and all forms of speculation; grants without compensation the most valuable franchises, often in perpetuity; and in innumerable ways creates, defends, and protects a vast array of purely parasitic enterprises, calculated directly to foster the worst forms of municipal corruption." Complaints against laborers and artisans from the wealthy and privileged, Ward in-

sisted, deny the “claim of the defenseless laborer and artisan to a share in this lavish state protection.”¹⁴ In short, the nation already had government and state interference in the economy and in political life. The problem was that it was all biased in favor of those with capital, wealth, and power.

The general crisis of the republic in the mid-1890s lay behind this criticism of government policy and ethics. By the early 1890s, the nation had descended into a deep depression that lasted until at least 1897. The depression of the 1890s hit both cities and rural areas very hard—creating an unemployment crisis and poverty across the entire nation, and prompting a profound reconsideration of American progress and growth. The worst year was 1894, when Jacob Coxey marched on Washington at the head of a mass of unemployed and angry farmers, workers, and artisans, a “Commonwealth of Christ,” protesting against inaction for the poor and downtrodden of the nation. Many recoiled in horror as Coxey’s army neared the nation’s capital. But Ward watched this army as it marched into the nation’s capital and commented to a local reporter that he did not fear Coxey’s army (unlike many middle-class residents of the city). Instead he suggested that Americans must understand the difficulties that poverty created in individuals who only seek work in a broken economy. The America of the mid-1890s, it seemed, required a much more scientific politics than it ever had before.¹⁵

In addition to the unrest in America’s cities and factories, the Populist revolt in the countryside interested Ward even more—from personal experience as well as a problem of scientific political policy. Ward’s older brother Lorenzo had purchased a half interest in a Populist newspaper, *The Farmer’s Alliance*, published in Independence, Iowa, shortly before his death in September 1892; the lead quote read “Labor for the Laborless, Money for the Moneyless, Homes for the Homeless.” The political interest in better government was a familial and a personal concern. When Ward heard of his nephew Edward Ross’s popular pamphlet on the coinage of silver, one of the key elements of the Populist Party’s platform, he wrote his young friend about the problems of Populism and rural politics: “I understand that you are acquainted with Bryan and desire his election. Have you read [the] two recent addresses by Andrew D. White? He sent them to me. He appeals to patriotic Democrats to support McKinley on non-partisan grounds. . . . Can you tell how a gold king is worse than a silver king? . . . I would probably go farther toward true populism than you. No one is more anxious to throttle the money power, but is ‘free silver’ the panacea? I am very dull on matters of finance, but I have been through one inflation period and I do not want another.”¹⁶

Ward did not vote in the pivotal election of 1896. He had not voted in a national election since Reconstruction. He never explained his decision to

avoid politics, but part of his reasons must have been his frustration and the partisanship and corruption of party politics in the 1870s and 1880s. Many Radical Republicans from the days of Reconstruction felt that the party had largely abandoned their concerns and the response of a few was to abandon political life altogether. Moreover, the scars of political battle suffered by the Survey scientists did little to enamor Ward of political life. Nonetheless Ward remained deeply interested in the reform issues that the Populist Party advocated, interpreting them as the beginning of the nation's political reorganization. In a long letter to his friend Andrew Dickson White, the president of Cornell University, Ward commented on the issues confronting the nation in the presidential election campaign. White was one of the major commentators on science and religion in the late nineteenth century and had been interested in Ward's books and essays since at least the 1880s. White referred to Ward's scientific work in his famous study, *The Warfare Between Science and Religion*, and the two men remained friendly although they shared different political ideals. In 1896, White wrote a number of essays and lectures asking "patriotic Americans" to support the Republican Party against the agitation of Populism.

When White asked Ward to support the Republicans, he responded that he did not see the Populists as a true danger to the country's institutions. "In politics I have always been a Republican," he wrote White. "In fact, as a boy I was simply an abolitionist, and I served 27 months in the army not at all from patriotism—I had got beyond that and had no pride of country so long as slavery existed. . . . But, although a Republican, I have been alarmed at the rise of the money power, and my matured sympathies have been transferred from the negro to the proletariat in general including the negro." For Ward, the issue of slavery and race in the United States had never gone away; in fact, this older antebellum interest had been transferred to the problems of class. He never officially left the fold of the party of Lincoln but his interests in labor and the poor in general did not have much of a voice in the party battles of the Gilded Age. The rise of Populism was a challenge to the domination of parties who many felt had little concern for anything more than the spoils of electoral victory.

And yet, despite his support for the views of the Populists, he did find the party and its followers somewhat ineffectual and naïve, "too inexperienced, not wise enough, to come into power." He did not fear the new political party. Instead, he saw it as the product of unconscious forces shaping society toward collectivism. "I think you must see . . .," he told White, "that there is a trend toward something. It looks like socialism, but I believe it will be very different from any of the schemes that have been drawn up by reformers. I call it *sociocracy*." Moreover, Ward concluded, "We are apt to underrate the influences that are at work upon the public mind in producing social reforms and revolutions. . . . The Chicago con-

vention [of the Democratic party] has shown that one of the great parties of the country, though unwilling to admit it, has been honeycombed with populist doctrines. . . . They do not any of them seem to know what they are about, but the whole storm is the crude, chaotic product of these half unconscious agencies at work in the land. . . . I shall not draw the rash conclusion that it is all a temporary craze. I shall regard it as but the foam from a deep current that has not ceased to flow and will not cease until it is strong enough to carry the world with it, albeit this cannot happen until it assumes a form that will command the respect of statesmen."¹⁷

The problems of rural politics and the nation's money power recalled for Ward the antebellum battle against slavery and the slave power. In addition to the economic concerns that led Ward to examine politics in the 1890s, he also extended his interests to the relationship between gender and the American political order. He was deeply involved in women's suffrage, a major social and political issue in the mid-1890s. Helen Campbell, Ward's friend and correspondent from the middle 1880s, introduced him in 1896 to one of the country's leading feminist thinkers and suffragettes, Charlotte Perkins Stetson.¹⁸ Charlotte Perkins was born in 1860 into the well-established New England upper class; she was the granddaughter of the famed minister Lyman Beecher and counted among her aunts and uncles Harriet Beecher Stowe, Catharine Beecher, and Henry Ward Beecher. She married Walter Stetson in 1884. After their marriage, a disastrous relationship for the young Charlotte Stetson, she went through a deep depression and nervous breakdown after the birth of their daughter and their later divorce; she wrote of these difficult experiences and her controversial diagnosis of "neurasthenia," which demanded complete bed rest, in her famed story, *The Yellow Wallpaper*. Stetson, despite her difficulties, became one of the leading activists and reformers for women's rights in the country—an extensive list of publications followed her name by the middle 1890s.¹⁹

Stetson and Ward first met at the National Women's Suffrage conference held in Washington, D.C., in 1896. Ward already knew of Stetson's work and during the conference the two quickly became friends. After Stetson's speech to the suffrage convention, Rose and Lester Ward held a lavish reception at their home for her, inviting most of the Washington intellectual community to join them. Stetson was touched by the Wards' party and later wrote a letter thanking them for the party and for sending copies of Lester Ward's essays and books: "I take great pleasure in your work, it is so clear, so direct, so simple, and so unavoidably true."²⁰ At the end of her life, she recalled that Ward's early article in *The Forum* on women and education was "the single greatest contribution to the world's thought since Evolution." Ward, she concluded, was "quite the greatest man I have ever known."²¹

Stetson's well-known *Women and Economics: A Study of the Economic Relation Between Men and Women as a Factor in Social Evolution*, first published in 1898, depended heavily on Ward's terminology and arguments for expanding public government and improving the downtrodden position of women in the modern world. Stetson's book is a remarkable examination of the subjugation of women to men. She relied heavily on Ward's categories of social analysis, particularly his gynaeocentric theory from his essay "Our Better Halves," in her examination of the ways in which women (white women specifically) needed to be given power in advanced civilizations. The most important problem of modern cultures, she argued, was the economic power of men over women, a situation that crushed women's independence and threatened the advance of civilization. As historian Gail Bederman has shown, Stetson relied heavily on racial imagery in her portrait of white women's degradation, a common view among late-nineteenth-century Americans regarding the advancement of the Anglo-Saxon race. Ward did not share this level of racial language or superiority. His publications never revealed this kind of strong sense of racial superiority, carrying as he did the legacies of Radical Republican political goals during the Civil War and Reconstruction. He did continue to see gender as central to the examination of social problems and he made it a significant part of his final books. Stetson eventually dedicated her second major book, *Man-Made World; or, our Androcentric Culture* (1911), to Ward for his work in support of women's reform. Stetson was one of Ward's most influential friends, and she remained a sincere advocate for his ideas throughout the early twentieth century.²²

Despite his interests and expanding circle of admirers in the mid-1890s, Ward's position in Washington increasingly troubled him. He seemed to sense that he was on the margins of the intellectual community of sociologists, set apart by his role as a government scientist. But he also felt isolated in Washington as well by the mid-1890s, less involved in the work of government science, which became a largely technocratic activity after Powell left his leadership position. Petty squabbles with friends had disenchanted him with the community of intellectuals in the city. It began as early as 1892, when members of the Geological Society of America, which had wide support from the members of the Geological Survey, refused to accept one of Ward's papers for their annual meeting. Angered by this treatment, Ward resigned his position in the society and refused to participate in any of their activities. Herman Leroy Fairchild, a member of the society's central committee, tried to placate Ward but to no avail: "I believe you are very sensitive," Fairchild wrote, "and that your reserve and sensitive nature have together made you feel all the un-pleasant colder side of your contact with the society."²³ Fairchild's plea was to no avail and Ward remained angry.

He also maintained an ongoing argument with ornithologist Elliot Coues, which at least partially soured his connection to the city's intellectual community. Coues, one of the nation's leading ornithologists and a longtime member of the Washington scientific community, had asked Ward to serve on the advisory council for the Psychical Congress at the World's Columbian Exposition in 1893. Apparently not realizing that the intention of the Congress was to study psychic phenomena and spiritualism, rather than psychology as a science, Ward reacted bitterly when he read about the Congress's work in an article Coues published in the *Religio-Philosophical Journal*. Coues, he complained, had not been honest, and had badly damaged Ward's reputation in scientific circles by connecting him to the work of psychics. Coues, trying to soothe Ward's damaged ego, agreed to let him off the advisory council, but their subsequent relationship never improved.²⁴

Another squabble, this time with the leadership of the Smithsonian Institution, bothered him as well. On the advice of the secretary of the Smithsonian, George Brown Goode rejected one of his lectures, "The Status of the Mind Problem" (originally delivered as a lecture at the Anthropological Society of Washington in 1894), for publication in the annual report of the Smithsonian Institution. Goode, the editor of the annual report, told him that the essay was "too speculative," and "public opinion was becoming too critical" to include it in the publication. Other essays, including the controversial environmentalist essay by W J McGee, "The Earth, the Home of Man," were also left out of the publication.²⁵ Still concerned with congressional funding, leaders at the Smithsonian like Goode decided to leave controversial or what they regarded as superfluous philosophical material out of the annual reports. Ward was hurt by the rejection, and fears of funding did nothing to soothe his growing isolation.

Ever since John Wesley Powell decided to resign as director of the Geological Survey in 1894, Ward felt less and less interested in his scientific work for the organization and his participation in the city's scientific associations generally. Although he remained on the Geological Survey's payroll until 1905, most of his intellectual energy became devoted to social philosophy after the mid-1890s. Washington grew more and more distant in his intellectual life, and the project to centralize information gathering in the nation's capital also slowly slipped away in the years to come. "The Geological Survey had fallen into the hands of small men, and was no longer the grand institution that it was in the days when Major Powell was its Director. The policy seemed to be to set up captious criticism and obstruct the scientific work of members of the staff. It was a case of bureaucracy. There was no longer any *esprit de corps*, and no one was certain that his work would be approved by petty officers at headquarters."²⁶ The

problem was that no matter where he searched he never really found the same spirit.

Over the next ten years he gradually lost interest in the activities of the Washington intellectual community, and he spent less and less time working with the Geological Survey, the institution that had nurtured his many years of work and study. The bureaucratic managers, the red tape, and the daily work of federal scientific projects that had previously enlivened him became drudgery. He seemed to spend all of his time merely compiling reports and writing agency letters rather than doing scientific work in the field or writing about important social issues and social philosophy, the work he considered by far the most important in his life (and which Powell had always encouraged).

The mid-1890s were thus a watershed in Ward's life. He had finally achieved some of the influence and reputation he had sought ever since the publication of his first book in 1883. He could also finally add the title "Doctor" to his name when Columbian College gave him an honorary Doctor of Laws in 1897. Although the title was symbolic it was an important honor for him. His friendships with Small, Giddings, Ross, Stetson, Campbell, and Ely, among others, connected him to a wide community of common believers—men and women dedicated to the promotion of an activist social science in the service of solving social problems. Friends and admirers counted Ward among the most important social thinkers in the country in the late nineteenth century. When Small reflected on *Dynamic Sociology's* importance, he remarked on the role the book played as a tool for young social scientists in the newly emergent graduate programs in social science: "It certainly anticipated all the questions of any consequence that have been discussed by sociologists since its publication and so far as sociological contents are concerned the trend of opinion has steadily accredited Ward's prescience."²⁷

By 1899, Ward resigned his membership in the Washington Philosophical Society because it had become, he felt, strictly a physical and mathematical organization with little interest in the broad connections between all the fields of scientific endeavor. By the early 1900s, Ward decided that he had enough of the geological work and went on a per-diem salary; this freed him to write and do what he wanted with little concern for the daily work of the Survey. He spent most of his working hours on the project he had undertaken for the editors of the *Century Dictionary*, and on a second dictionary project, covering botanical entries for the supplement to *Webster's Dictionary*.

With his growing stature as a social scientist and an intense desire to add substantially to his system of social philosophy, Ward turned to teaching, lecturing, and the promotion of sociology as his main activities. As he wrote Ross in 1901, "the more I work in sociology the richer the

field seems, and I think it a great privilege to be in the midst of such a young promising science, trying to help it get on its feet."²⁸ Ward finally had the opportunity to put his faith in education and scientific reform into practice. Nearly every summer from the middle 1890s until his death in 1913, he taught at colleges and universities throughout the country, and during the year he lectured at local civic clubs, women's organizations, and social reform groups, summarizing and promoting a lifetime of work and ideas.

If it were possible, he wrote to Franklin Giddings in 1896, "I would drop everything else and devote the rest of my life exclusively to sociology." Teaching was a calling he had not earlier recognized as a professional career. In many ways he found in teaching and lecturing the venue he had long searched for in the promotion of his ideas; and the relationships he had already established with his younger friends provided his entry to the growing academic world of social science, research, and writing. Ward spent the last few years of the nineteenth century and the opening decade of the twentieth slowly leaving the confines of Washington's federal science program, embarking on a new career as both a popularizer of social science and a professional sociologist.²⁹

Teaching was a natural outgrowth of Ward's interest in social questions, and it was not entirely new to him; he had taught as a young man in the common schools in Pennsylvania and spent a short amount of time in the mid-1880s at the Corcoran Scientific School teaching botany. But he had never taught social science and sociology. C. D. Hartranft, a social activist and director of the Society for Education Extension in Hartford, Connecticut, offered him an opportunity to teach his first sociology classes in the fall of 1894 and again in 1895. The teaching was immensely productive for him—a surprise, he felt, for someone who had essentially been a lifetime bureaucrat. It refreshed him in a way the daily grind of the Washington scientific bureaucracy did not.³⁰

In addition to the teaching, Ward also became interested in forming a professional sociology association. The history of Ward's interest in such an organization dates to the early 1890s when a number of his colleagues tried to create a society, the American Institute of Christian Sociology, connecting the growing sociological community with the Social Gospel movement in American religion. The evangelical background of a number of the younger social scientists such as Small and Ely made the organization seem a natural outgrowth of the development of social science itself, but it was an idea that struck Ward as profoundly wrongheaded.

Richard Ely and Reverend George Herron, professor of applied sociology at Iowa College (later Grinnell College), founded the American Institute of Christian Sociology at a Chautauqua meeting in 1893. It was essentially a Social Gospel organization—an offshoot of Herron's interests

in the connections between religion and the criticism of capitalism emerging from the social sciences. But the organization quickly succumbed to internal fissures. Ely was very uncomfortable with the institute's work and the criticism of Herron by the American clergy, academic social scientists (especially Albion Small), and even Herron's own college. Ely never did any formal work for the organization, and it never became a major association for American social scientists. Critics increasingly saw Herron as far too committed to his belief in the Christian aspect of sociological work. "Either a religious movement, producing a revival such as the prophets dimly or never dreamed of," Herron said in 1895, "or blood such as never flowed will remit the sins of the existing order."³¹

Christian sociology in Herron's (and Ely's) terms became a topic of frequent conversation among social theorists in the mid-1890s, especially with the popularity of Social Gospel reform. When the journal *Bibliotheca Sacra* asked Ward to offer his own definition of "Christian Sociology" in 1895, he offered the following response: "I am in the habit of considering sociology to be a science, not a religion, cult, or programme of action, and therefore 'Christian Sociology' sounds to me about as would 'Christian Mathematics,' 'Mohammedan Biology,' or 'Buddhistic Chemistry.' If it is no better than Christian Astronomy, Geology, and Geography used to be in the days when such things were recognized, it is a rather poor article."³²

One year later, in a review of Franklin Giddings's book, *Principles of Sociology* (1896), Ward again argued that the so-called Christian sociologists should read Giddings's study and correct their misplaced faith in theology. These men and women, he wrote, have placed upon "the word sociology a burden of unscientific and half-charlatanic applications . . . that threaten to sink it as deeply into obloquy and contempt as a similar procedure sunk that etymologically better word *phrenology*."³³

Ward did support an attempt to revive the organization but lessen the influence of Christian theology. The ethical ideal of applying the methods of sociological study to national problems still held great appeal for him, and a national organization seemed to offer the best possible way to provide organizational coherence for sociological work. In 1895, Giddings introduced Ward to the Reverend L. T. Chamberlain, who asked Ward for his support in the creation of an American Institute of Sociology and Social Ethics. Although Ward had remained friendly with Ely, he never really supported his heavily evangelical social philosophy, and Chamberlain assured Ward that "the names of Ely and Herron are not to appear on the New Council. We cannot afford to have that flavor about the organization."³⁴ One of the key schemes Chamberlain had in mind for his organization was the creation of a new journal to popularize sociology. Ward did not fully support Chamberlain, however, and quickly gravi-

tated toward his old friend Albion Small's newly established sociological journal, *The American Journal of Sociology* (*AJS*).

Small organized the *AJS* at the University of Chicago, and, following its creation, one of the first people Small turned to for assistance was Ward. Small wrote Ward in May 1895, "You know that Chicago men move rapidly when an idea seizes them. . . . They have, almost upon the spur of the moment, authorized me to organize the instructors of my department into the editorial board of *The American Journal of Sociology*. . . . I want to have associated with us 'advising editors' or 'consulting editors.' . . . I hope that you will be willing to allow the use of your name under one of the designations suggested above . . . and I hope that you will be willing to advise, counsel, and criticize with as much freedom as though you were one of the local managers of the publication."³⁵ The journal eventually became (and still remains) one of the leading organs of social scientific study in the United States, serving as a central instrument for defining the profession of sociology and the boundaries of the social sciences into the twentieth century. Throughout the late 1890s and 1900s, the *AJS* served as the main forum for social scientists debating methodology, organization, subject matter, and the epistemological questions surrounding social scientific data.

At the same time that American social scientists defined their fields of study and founded journals such as the *AJS* to publish their ideas, European social scientists were also organizing major sociological associations, groups founded to popularize social science to a wider audience. Ward joined one of the earliest of these associations, the Institut International de Sociologie (IIS), based in Paris (and still in existence to this day). The IIS's founder, René Worms, approached Ward to join the society in 1896. Throughout the late 1880s and 1890s Ward's theoretical sociology was gaining an audience among social thinkers in England and Europe; he had translated much of his published work himself and because he knew a number of languages (especially French and German but also a passing knowledge of Russian, Italian, and Spanish) he kept a wide correspondence with scientists and theorists he befriended. His work was already well known among a number of Russian intellectuals, most of whom worked in exile in universities across the continent. In addition, his practice of mailing his work to well-known social thinkers helped him gain the attention of a number of social thinkers already well attuned to the idea that social reform could be directed and controlled by the state. Ward's work was part of a trans-Atlantic community's efforts at reconfiguring the meaning of liberalism, democracy, and the role of government.³⁶

The IIS bore a striking resemblance to the scientific community in Washington; it was a comfortable place for Ward as he drifted away from the activities of Washington science. Worms was a career civil servant and

a longtime admirer of Ward's work, which had been translated into French during the 1890s. Worms's career was a French equivalent of Ward's, and his goal was to create an international forum for sociological work. He founded the journal *Revue internationale de sociologie*, the IIS, and the Paris Society of Sociology in the early and mid-1890s as ways to further the development of social science in Europe. Unlike that of his fellow countryman and social scientist, Émile Durkheim, Worms's career (like Ward's) lay outside European universities and colleges. Durkheim's supporters and the network of scientists who wrote for his journal *L'année sociologique* came from the career academics and university teachers in Paris and other European capitals. Worms's cohort, on the other hand, bore a striking resemblance to the scientists in Washington: professional civil servants, teachers, and intellectuals often outside the realm of major universities. Worms's association "attract[ed] people from a variety of academic, theoretical, occupational, and national backgrounds . . . [the] circle was more heterogeneous than the rival Durkheimiens . . . [and] combined promotion of sociology with the career of a civil servant and the role of occasional teacher and lecturer."³⁷ For the rest of his life, Ward served as an advocate for Worms's association and encouraged the participation of all his friends in the association's activities.

Armed with a renewed interest in sociological work and seeking a wider audience for his ideas, Ward left for Europe in the summer of 1897. The tri-annual meeting of the IIS was to be held in Paris that year, and Ward prepared a paper to deliver to the group of European social thinkers. He practiced his French for days before his arrival in Paris, hoping to impress the audience with his presentation. His paper on the pain and pleasure economy restated the arguments he had made in the past about economic motivation and also praised the ideas of his friend and critic, Simon Patten, whose books were just reaching Europe in the late 1890s.³⁸ The address, published in English as "Utilitarian Economics," lavishly praised Patten's work, although Ward actually misrepresented Patten's vision of economic study, using it for his own purposes. Ward essentially interpreted Patten's economics as aspects of his own philosophic interest in happiness and progress. Patten, Ward argued, "presents us with two very different kinds of economy—a pain economy and a pleasure economy. This puts the whole question [of the purpose and meaning of human life and society] in an entirely new light, and opens up novel and promising lines of discussion looking to its solution."³⁹ Ward also introduced his own division of the social forces into positive and negative ones controlled by the operation of the intellect. In this way he was able to introduce his ideas to a wide circle of European social scientists who had not read his previously published work. The meetings helped him establish relationships with a number of European social thinkers to whom

he later sent his publications; always his own promoter, Ward added the names to his mailing list for future books and articles. These trans-Atlantic networks proved helpful to Ward in the next few years and energized him to work further in social theory as he tired of the continued problems with the politics of Washington.

When he returned from Europe, Ward spent the remainder of the summer and part of the fall of 1897 teaching courses in social theory and sociology. In May, at the invitation of Franklin Giddings, he gave a series of ten lectures at Columbia University, and that same month accepted an invitation from Small to teach at the University of Chicago. "University lecturing is all new to me," he wrote Ross, "and I am afraid I may fail to give satisfaction. It is not the lecturing that bothers me, but the pedagogic part—assigning tasks, examining, quizzes, etc. . . . Dr. Small says I must make them work."⁴⁰ At age fifty-six, it was a daunting task for him to undertake what amounted to a new profession. But it kept his hand in the field of sociology, and it proved much more rewarding than the bureaucratic work in Washington.

When he arrived in Chicago all his fears were quickly allayed; the teaching thrilled him. His lectures dealt with the history and theory of sociology, mostly spoken from notes based on his major books and essays. "I am really having a grand time here and it would be egotistical in a high degree to attempt to give you any idea of my reception. They gave me a banquet at the Wellington Hotel the other night which would have spoiled me entirely if there had been anything to spoil. The lecture courses are certainly a grand success and I am amazed at the number that have come from all parts of the country to hear them—about sixty. The interest is intense, and so far as one in my position can learn, the satisfaction is complete."⁴¹ Ward spent August, September, and early October teaching at the university. It was, he wrote Ross, the "most inspiring summer of my life."⁴²

When he left Chicago in the fall the students presented him with yet another banquet and gave him a engraved cane, a gift that he cherished for the rest of his life. He was somewhat startled by the reception. He had worked his entire life in the insulated community of Washington mostly in relative obscurity and always in the shadow of much more powerful and well-known colleagues including Powell. Although he had always desired national recognition as a social theorist, when it finally seemed to arrive he was startled: "It began to dawn upon me that I was popular! I was astonished to see how well I was known." Ward's time in Chicago revived his spirits. As he distanced himself from the Washington intellectual community, still suffering from congressional attacks on the scientific bureaus, Ward found an outlet for his intellectual energy in teaching.

Later in the fall of 1897, he went on a geological excursion to Kansas where much to his surprise he was also recognized and popular. "I was

induced to give two lectures [at a local college] to the priest-ridden people of puritanical Kansas," he recalled, "in which I tried to wake them up out of their theological slumbers."⁴³ When he told Ross of his personal reawakening because of his teaching and lecturing, the young social scientist hoped it would become permanent: "In bringing such a man as you in contact with the picked body of students most capable of appreciating such ideas, the University of Chicago is doing a great service and 'deserves well of the republic.' If the National University is founded at Washington as seems quite possible," he concluded, "I trust they will put you at the head of the Department of Sociology."⁴⁴

Ross always remained Ward's champion, defender, and close intellectual companion, his most frequent correspondent when Ward began writing a final set of books after the turn of the century as a capstone to his system of social philosophy. Ward's relationship to the younger Ross was the closest he ever came to having a true student and follower; their friendship was as deep and important to Ward as his friendship with Powell. It was Ross who provided Ward with important encouragement for his teaching and research. In one letter, written shortly after the appearance of the second edition of *Dynamic Sociology*, Ross remarked that "it has made me indignant to feel that in assemblages of economists you were not awarded the appreciation I knew you deserved. I am so glad that the groups of sociologists who know your writings and appreciate your personality are increasing so rapidly in American universities."⁴⁵

But the path Ross followed in academic social science after Ward's death took him far afield of his uncle's original ideas. Ross liked Ward and remained devoted to him for most of his life, but he never had the same shared goals as Ward had with Powell. Ward never fully understood the intellectual forces shaping the development of the American university in the late nineteenth century, an experience that was not a part of his social or intellectual worldview. Ward still believed that scientific work remained a social and government duty, one of the reasons that Worms's society so attracted him. For the present, however, it was Ross who constantly encouraged Ward's attempt to continue to pursue a grand system of social philosophy.

The lectures that Ward delivered at the Hartford School and at the University of Chicago also excited Small's interest. Between 1894 and 1898, while he taught at Hartford, Columbia, and Chicago, Ward constantly rewrote his lectures, reorganizing his thoughts on social science from the accumulated work he had done in *Dynamic Sociology*, *Psychic Factors of Civilization*, and the short essays written for opinion journals throughout the 1880s and 1890s. In 1895, he published the first of a two-and-a-half-year series of articles for the *AJS* under the general heading, "Contributions to Social Philosophy." The series provided summaries of Ward's major ideas

from his first publication in 1883 through his later essays and covered the major topics he had been concerned with for the last fifteen years: the meaning of sociology as a science, its role in the public arena, the criticism of laissez-faire economists, and the hierarchy of sciences in his grand system of social philosophy. By late 1897, Ward had decided to publish the essays in a book format.

The Macmillan Company published the book, *Outlines of Sociology*, in 1898, collecting the many essays Ward had worked on for the *AJS*. He dedicated the work to Small because, he wrote, he was “the first to draw attention to the educational value of my social philosophy; the staunch defender of my method in sociology.” The bulk of the essays concerned Ward’s familiar interests and themes from his work on systematic hierarchical science, his interest in the mind, and the ethical positions of his social reform. The most original and important chapters of the book dealt with Ward’s idea of sociological method—a subject he had spent little time on in his earlier publications but one of interest to academic social scientists, the audience he hoped to reach with this work.

The methods of sociological study increasingly concerned academic social scientists in the late 1890s as practitioners began to seek ways to define the legitimacy of their expertise in social change, social policy, and even progress itself. What made social science “scientific” when compared to the physical sciences? How did objectivist interest in scientific data translate into reform, especially since Ward defined sociology as a science of politics and public policy? Ward’s answers to these questions not only summarized his work over the last fifteen years, they also set him an agenda for his final publications. His answers also led him into serious philosophical conflicts with the ways academic social scientists defined their purposes and their methods. Ward remained the most paramount synthetic thinker in American social science—resisting the disciplinary specialization that began to dominate American university life in the 1890s.

In the chapter entitled “The Data of Sociology,” Ward argued that sociology demanded special consideration of every field of scientific inquiry and was thus better suited to graduate study and application than to the undergraduate curriculum. “The special social sciences are numerous,” he argued, “and . . . there is room for differences of opinion as to what constitutes such sciences, but the following [are the] principal ones about which there is little dispute: ethnography; ethnology; technology; archaeology; demography; history; economics; jurisprudence; politics; ethics. . . . No one of these, nor all of them together, can be said to form sociology, but sociology is the synthesis of them all.”⁴⁶ As the synthetic science, sociology demanded a highly learned student, one already well schooled in all the fields and methods of scientific practice. It was the synthetic nature of

sociology that made it scientific, and although it was to serve the purposes of reform it did so only at the hands of well-schooled and well-trained specialists.

The last four essays in the book examined Ward's old interests in the origin of social forces, the ability of the individual to effect change (what he called "individual telesis"), and the social organization best suited to the development of social progress (what he called "collective telesis" and sociocracy). In these brief examinations of his original ideas, Ward added a more complete consideration of the formal purpose of sociology; in many ways he tried to answer his previous critics and become much more precise in outlining his program and ideas on social change. He identified two camps among late-nineteenth-century sociologists: a "pure" camp allied with the ideas of Spencer; and, an "applied" or "dynamic" camp, closer to the work Ward promoted in 1883. Pure sociologists and social scientists, he argued, suggest that the science of sociology was merely a branch of education and learning that examined social relationships empirically with no view to the ways in which society might be changed. "In a word, it regards sociology as a pure science, and deprecates all attempts to apply its principles. At least it implicitly denies the ability of sociologists, either as teachers or writers, to point out its applications either to students or readers, and would leave this wholly to practical men, whether in the business world or in politics."⁴⁷

In contrast, the dynamic or applied school fully accepts the ideals of pure sociology simply as an early passive phase of social investigation, moving the science toward an active realm, a purposive science of social activism: "The dynamic school . . . clearly perceiving the chaotic condition of both the industrial and the political world, and recognizing that most of the evils of society result from a lack of scientific knowledge on the part of so called practical men, claims the right and feels the obligation to accompany the statement of facts and the definition of laws and principles with an indication of their significance and their necessary bearing upon social affairs and movements."⁴⁸ Ward acknowledged that his books and essays fell squarely within the second of the two camps he outlined. His final chapter in this book, "Collective Telesis," another term for sociocracy, again reaffirmed his ideals of social change and "disabuse[d] in advance the minds of any who may think that I have abandoned the position originally taken, however little sanguine I may have been and still am of rapid progress toward such an ideal."⁴⁹

In restating the main arguments of his two major books, Ward concluded that the pure and applied schools were stages in the development of a scientific intellect capable of sustaining and organizing social science—a scientific intellect, it was important to note, that had not yet been fully formed. In one of his clearest passages on the purpose of soci-

ology Ward argued that the science should have as its most fundamental goal "the betterment of society." Building on the educational scheme he had long advocated, and on his understanding of the function of mind and the psychic forces of society, he argued that "the study of sociology is calculated to enlighten the individual purposes of men and harmonize them with the good of society. It will tend to unify action, to combine the innumerable streams of individual effort and pour their contents into one great river of social welfare. Individual telesis thus verges into collective telesis." In a managerial society every individual had a duty and a responsibility to understand the forces of social change. Only the successful merging of every citizen's will could establish the new society: "In a democracy every citizen is a legislator and government simply becomes the exponent of the social will and purpose. . . . The purpose of sociology is to enlighten communities and put an end to useless and expensive dissensions."⁵⁰ The harmony between individual wants and needs, and the demands of collective progress, lay within the realm of sociological work.

The differences between pure and applied sociology became the focus of Ward's last two books. And this problem pointed to a major methodological debate that would occupy the social sciences throughout much of the twentieth century. Ward concluded this brief volume of essays with a reexamination of his sociocratic ideal of national social reform but his next books would take up the challenge of pure versus applied sociology more directly. If sociology was the study of social laws, and the purpose of applied sociology was to offer possible solutions from the understanding of those laws, how did these solutions actually get put into practice? It was through the organizational structure of the government. Government provided organizational structure to society—a hierarchy of systems that sought solutions to social problems: "Government is the art that results from the science of society through the legislative application of sociological principles."⁵¹ Moreover, he continued, it required sociologists and social scientists to take an active role and participate in social change: "The sociologist and the statesman should cooperate in discovering the laws of society and the methods of utilizing them so as to let the social forces flow freely and strongly, untrammelled by penal statutes, mandatory laws, irritating prohibitions, and annoying obstacles."⁵²

Still, Ward offered little in the way of specific goals or ideas. Instead, he suggested that although society had not yet reached the stage where social consciousness shaped the course of national reform it was well on its way. Only a proper understanding of the sociologist's role can continue this progressive movement and provide the discipline of sociology with purpose. Here, as in his other publications, he came down squarely in favor of an activist government working in tandem with the trained social scientist analyzing social facts. In a telling passage from *Outlines*,

Ward clearly differentiated his collectivist vision of sociocracy from the many competing theories of social reform in the nation: "Individualism has created artificial inequalities. . . . Socialism seeks to create artificial equalities. . . . Sociocracy recognizes natural inequalities and aims to abolish artificial inequalities. . . . Individualism confers benefits on those only who have the ability to obtain them, by superior power, cunning, intelligence, or the accident of position. . . . Socialism would confer the same benefits on all alike, and aims to secure the equality of fruition. . . . Sociocracy would confer benefits in strict proportion to merit, but insists upon *equality of opportunity* as the only means of determining the degree of merit."⁵³

The marriage of Ward's producerist ideals of labor and work and his collectivist vision of sociocracy offered one possible way to solve the problems of late-nineteenth-century and early-twentieth-century industrial democracy. Like a number of social scientists, and many social reformers as well, Ward saw sociology as a theoretical basis for national action. His social theory tried to find a middle ground between socialist collectivism and laissez-faire individualism built, he hoped, on a foundation of sociological knowledge about the functioning of the economy, the political state, business, and all social forces. The question he did not answer, however, was how to achieve a sociocratic nation.

Reviewers paid little attention to the book—mostly because it went over ground thoroughly covered in Ward's other publications. The few who did consider the book regarded it as much more straightforward than some of Ward's other publications, but also much more devoted to what *The Nation* called "an elaborate philosophy . . . involving the improvement of man's lot on earth." For traditional genteel liberals like the editors of *The Nation*, Ward's sociology was "less a scientific system than a practical aim, in which he is entirely at one with every one who is interested in social problems. His book can hardly be taken as more than a series of essays on human society—many of them no doubt interesting, but not in any true sense systematic."⁵⁴

It was an insightful criticism. Ward's advocacy of reform still left him open to the argument that his position was neither an objective approach to social science nor a real contribution to a philosophic system of social science. If the sociologist participated actively with the statesmen how could one argue that the discipline was anything more than the handmaiden of politics itself? It was a question Ward was to try to answer in the years to come. His goal was to differentiate sociology from politics and reform, and to define more clearly the pure and applied camps of sociological study. But the ways in which Ward did this caused more problems than they solved. He seemed to abandon reformist politics for what he believed might be objective neutrality in the social sciences, and this was never quite a successful answer to critics such as Patten, Dewey, and other later social theorists.

Despite the questions raised by the book, many of Ward's friends congratulated him on the volume's publication, hoping it might reach many members of the American reform community. Ely wrote him a letter of thanks and recalled their mutual debts to one another: "It is a stimulating work which will be helpful in many different directions. I read with interest your dedication to Professor Small. I think he well merits the compliment you pay him. . . . I used to take special pains in Baltimore to call the attention of my students to your 'Dynamic Sociology,' and unless I am very much mistaken it was through me that Professor Small became acquainted with your work. You may also remember what I said about it in very early days in my 'Introduction to Political Economy.' So you see I claim some credit for making your merits known! Although we disagree upon more than one point I have always found your work personally helpful and have valued it very highly."⁵⁵

The same year that he published *Outlines*, Ward also finished his last major project as a full-time employee of the Geological Survey. He had grown very tired of the Survey's work and very lonely in Washington. Most of the old friends he had known had left the government, and Ward had developed few friendships among the younger members of the Survey. This final project occupied Ward's summers since the early 1890s when he began visiting the Black Hills and the upper Midwest in order to study the fossil flora of the region. Ward's massive study, "The Cretaceous Formation of the Black Hills as Indicated by Fossil Plants," appeared in the Survey's nineteenth annual report in 1898. It was a massive, four-hundred-page survey of the region containing detailed botanical observation, as well as a catalog of the many plants of the Black Hills region. It was also an impressive scientific achievement, one of the proudest moments in Ward's scientific career. He received many letters of praise from members of the geological community about the massive work. As he did with all of his publications, Ward mailed this to his long list of acquaintances and friends. "In a few cases," he later recalled, "I inadvertently sent copies to sociologists. . . . Their letters were amusing. This memoir simply 'made their eyes stick out.' Supposing that I was devoting my whole life to sociology (and many expressed their surprise that I could do so much work!) they were simply amazed to see that my real vocation was geology and that sociology was only my avocation."⁵⁶

Giddings was one of those amazed social scientists. When Ward sent him even more geological reports at the turn of the century, Giddings commented on the impressive range of his intellectual interests. It was a testament both to Ward's self-advertising as well as to the differences between his polymath intellect, developed in an age before professional training and academic specialization, and the younger social scientists who befriended him in the 1880s and 1890s. "You are the most indefatigable

worker I know," Giddings wrote, "and the range of your interests is pretty nearly as broad as science . . . [your works] have given me a vivid idea of your geological activity to supplement the knowledge I had of your untiring work in sociology and philosophy."⁵⁷

Ward spent the summer and part of the fall of 1898 in Morgantown, West Virginia, teaching at the state university and considering exactly what to do with the rest of his life since government scientific work no longer interested him. Books, as they always had, provided solace and time for reflection. Back in his home on Rhode Island Avenue by late fall 1898, he spent much of his time reading with Rose, her sister Sarah Comstock, and her niece Sarah Simons, a talented social scientist in her own right. Rose continued her practice of collecting reviews of all of Ward's essays and books, patiently pasting them into the notebooks that the two kept in their home. She also remained one of his main botanizing companions for nature walks around the District of Columbia.⁵⁸

John Wesley Powell was on his mind as well in the late 1890s. In late 1898, he read Powell's recent book, *Truth and Error; or, The Science of Intellection*, and agreed to write a lengthy review of his mentor's most recent work for the journal *Science*. Since his retirement and exodus from the rough and tumble of Washington political life, Powell had spent most of his time working with the ethnographers at the Bureau of Ethnology or at his retirement home in Maine. He spent his time reading, writing, and thinking about the meaning and purpose of science and government. *Truth and Error* was his magnum opus on science—a philosophical statement he had postponed writing while he worked in Washington's scientific bureaucracy.

Truth and Error is an incredibly difficult book to read, and it garnered few readers when it was published. A dense, philosophical meditation on the capability of objective scientific truth for progressive social achievement, a paean to rational thinking about science, Powell's tome remains mystifying to most readers to this day. He dedicated the book to Ward, his "philosopher and friend," in honor of their longtime friendship and in order to return the favor of Ward's dedication in *Dynamic Sociology*. In *Truth and Error*, Powell created his own terms to explain his five-tiered notion of scientific knowledge and study: "The whole book," Ward wrote in his review, "is, therefore, like a foreign language, and the readers' first task is to learn the language."⁵⁹

Powell's philosophic language dealt with what he called the properties of all matter in the universe: unity, extension, speed, persistence, and consciousness. His goal was to correct the errors made by all previous philosophers in examining and measuring these properties. It is difficult to follow exactly what Powell intends by his classification, and his examination of the philosophical attempts to explain the events of the natural

world marked a major turn toward the mystical in his thinking, much different from his earlier efforts in writing about science, government, and ethnology. Ward had great difficulty in writing his review and remained at pains to both explain Powell's argument—which he was never quite able to do—and return some measure of praise for his old mentor. While Ward worked on the review, he wrote Ross that he was “trying to review a book by Major Powell which he has dedicated to me, but I find it a tough job.”⁶⁰

Powell's use of language frustrated Ward, an odd criticism given his own penchant for neologisms, but Ward was often more insightful on other people's work than he was on his own. “[Powell] never seems to use a word that has a popular acceptance,” Ward complained, “if he can find a synonym, however rare, or coin a new term.”⁶¹ Ward ultimately decided that while Powell's book might offer something to the modern philosopher of science it was ultimately an intellectual failure: “It seems a pity that a book which is obviously the product of such prolonged and profound philosophical meditation by a mind so well stored with scientific knowledge and direct experience with the real world should be [so] handicapped.”⁶²

The harsh review was a difficult experience for him, but he was assured by Powell that there was no ill will between them. Powell's reply to his critics—as abstruse and confusing as his book—suggested that Ward misunderstood the problem of “truth and error” in philosophy and his five-tiered notion of matter. But Powell hardly offered any more clarity on the issues raised by the philosophy of science. His confusing terminology and language, and his frankly bizarre examination of the relations between particles, suggests that Ward was the more clearheaded thinker of the two when it came to social philosophy, and that he had resisted a mystical turn of mind that characterized Powell's later years.

Ward still found in Powell his only true intellectual companion and confidant. His departure from the scientific community in Washington was still a difficult blow for Ward. In 1902, less than three years after Ward reviewed *Truth and Error*, Powell died at his home in Maine. Although he was widely praised for his work in geology and ethnology many were to forget Powell's more subtle contribution in mentoring careers such as Ward's own; careers made in the scientific bureaucracy Powell so efficiently controlled, understood, and organized. Despite the fact that they drifted apart in the last years of Powell's life, Ward's reflections on their friendship offer one of the few glimpses of the deep personal and intellectual connection the two men shared: “He was the type of true nobleman, and easily distinguished between a difference in our views and any personal difference . . . of all the men I have ever met he seemed to me the most truly great in . . . personal character.” Despite the difference in their

power within the Washington bureaucracy, "he never made me feel that in the slightest. . . . If there ever was a man whom I could say I loved," he concluded, "that man was Major Powell."⁶³

By the late 1890s and early 1900s, Ward decided that he wanted to devote his full time to social philosophy. His dictionary work provided enough income for him and Rose to live comfortably, and the switch to a per-diem salary at the Survey offered much more time to consider social philosophy. He spent many of his days in the late 1890s and 1900s working only half-time in his office at the National Museum. He was free to spend the rest of his day doing dictionary work, which he could combine with reading in social philosophy and social theory. David Hutcheson, a librarian at the Library of Congress and a friend of the Wards, kept him well supplied with books and articles about social theory.

Yet, it was not entirely clear that a teaching career was a possibility for him. He was much older than many social scientists, lacked training in a professional graduate program, and noticed with a little apprehension that academics were coming under increasing scrutiny for their political and social views. When he heard of Ross's troubles at Leland Stanford College (now Stanford University) regarding his political support of free silver and populism, which was to eventually cause Ross to leave the California institution, and when he reflected on the earlier ousting of E. Benjamin Andrews of Brown University for similar political views, he wrote Ross that "the more I think of it the more I appreciate my own humble position . . . one that never questions my words or actions so long as I do my official duty. They may talk all they please about the freedom of the universities, but there is no freedom, and everybody I know is playing a role to conciliate controlling interests."⁶⁴ Despite any of these fears, or his fear of starting an entirely new career, by the early 1900s he sought actively a position in university teaching rather than remain in Washington.

Ward also wanted to consider how to approach the completion of his system of social philosophy; and it was in the company of his relatives at home who read with him, and especially in correspondence with Ross (who visited Washington whenever his schedule allowed) that Ward slowly came to work out his final project. As he read more widely in recent social philosophy, three books helped spark his renewed interest in defining sociology as a science and explaining sociology's intellectual purpose; and these were also to become important in convincing him to finish his systematic study of social science: Benjamin Kidd's *Social Evolution*, T. H. Huxley's *Evolution and Ethics*, and Thorstein Veblen's *The Theory of the Leisure Class*.

Benjamin Kidd's *Social Evolution* (1894) prompted Ward to begin rethinking his ideas about evolutionary theory. Kidd was an English writer and government clerk, self-trained and self-educated in social theory. His

book quickly became one of the most popular and readable accounts of Darwinian and Spencerian social theory and the implications of their ideas for modern society. Kidd attracted Ward with his faith in opportunity and social welfare and his support for government programs to improve the conditions of labor and the poor. But Kidd's book also argued that religion and religious thought allowed society to cling to the idea of progress and subsume individual interests to a collective good—one of Ward's key interests in the function of social progress. Religion, Kidd argued, offered a natural force for the mass of mankind and provided key explanations for the operation of social forces outside of their control. Kidd felt that although competition between nation-states and within nations themselves determined social life in the modern world, the rise of religious faith and altruism in human history checked the competitive forces of self-interest.

Although Ward believed that Kidd misunderstood the operation of the social forces, and he never believed that competition defined social life, he did see in Kidd's interest in religion another social force that controlled and affected human social development. Religion helped establish family relations through marriage, Ward argued in his essay "The Essential Nature of Religion," published in 1898, and also helped to organize social relationships. The early devotion to religion among human societies, he continued, checked the operation of egoistic (subjective) feelings that served as one of the main forces of the psychic factors of progress.⁶⁵ This was a return of sorts for Ward, a man who had been raised in a world of evangelical piety. Despite his frequent diatribes against religion and religious faith he still believed that it had an important effect in social evolution.

Ward felt that his insight into religion and religious faith, gained in part from his reading of Kidd, was one of his moments of true inspiration. Religion was "a substitute in the rational world for instinct in the subrational world."⁶⁶ In short, it was a chapter in the history of the mind, in the history of human evolution, that he had ignored in *Dynamic Sociology* and *Psychic Factors*. Religion was essentially a protective agent for mankind, an early attempt at a reasoned explanation for the phenomena of the universe, although still a rather primitive one. Since passion and feeling were such essential social forces, as he had argued for years, "religion came forward as a more powerful curb to the excesses into which this new egoistic agent would have otherwise plunged its unguided possessors, and for which instinct would have proved wholly inadequate."⁶⁷ But Kidd's insight into the role religion played was mistaken; religion was a conservative and backward-looking force for society, offering no incentive for progress or growth and opposing change of all kinds, including the need to solve the pressing problems of labor. These were the province of science

and reason. Progress, he wrote, consisted in throwing off the necessary conservatism of religion in favor of reason.⁶⁸

Ward's admission that religion played a role in the early history of man and mind was an important one, since he had so long opposed religious explanations for nearly all things. Albion Small badgered Ward for years for his stance on religion and theology generally, and even tried to assuage some of his students' concerns that Ward's work threatened their faith. Science still remained Ward's gospel, although he no longer suggested that it would entirely "swallow up religion, assume its functions, and stand wholly in its stead."⁶⁹ Some of Ward's harsher statements on religion and religious faith can be seen as a youth striking out against received authority. Religion did play an important role in society, checking avarice, ambition, and demands for self-satisfaction alone. But he was still ultimately a rationalist, believing that the trained scientific mind could do much more than faith.

T. H. Huxley's collection of essays, although published in 1892, initially failed to interest Ward. When he finally came to read the volume in the late 1890s, however, he was struck by the ideas of the famous English scientist and was even more surprised by what he saw as a remarkable similarity between Huxley's ideas and his own. Although the two men had never met, Huxley was one of the many English scientists Ward had long admired. Throughout the 1880s and 1890s he sent his publications to Huxley—including his essay "The Psychologic Basis of Social Economics." After he read Huxley's volume, Ward concluded that "what struck me . . . [was] their thorough agreement with my own published conclusions, sounding, as they do, almost like my own voice, using exactly the same arguments and to a large extent the same illustrations, so that many passages from both placed in parallel columns would present a striking resemblance."⁷⁰

In "The Gospel of Action," an essay written in early 1899 as a response to *Evolution and Ethics*, Ward continued his long argument with economists over the nature of their studies and the differences between the systematizing he did and the minutiae he felt they studied. He also became increasingly embittered by the lack of attention in the social science community to his own work and publications. To a certain extent, Huxley's fame bothered Ward as much as any similarity in their ideas.

In reflecting on Huxley's work Ward continued to attack the "nature worship" fallacy among social thinkers and the misuses of evolutionary theory by modern laissez-faire economists. He fully supported Huxley's criticism of Spencerian evolution and determinism and the mistaken application of Spencer's ideas to a wider social realm. But he was troubled by Huxley's view of ethics as a way to comprehend the modern dilemmas of social scientific study. For Ward, ethics as a branch of philosophical

study was far too close to the old moral philosophy he had learned as a young man. "It is not the doctrine of inactivity, of the folding of the arms . . . of laissez-faire, that naturally and legitimately flows from a full comprehension of the law of evolution, but a gospel of action, a recognition of the law of causation and of man as a great and potent cause in the world. The true crown of a system of scientific philosophy is not an ethics which seeks to restrain and circumscribe activity, but a Sociology which aims at the liberation of action through the directive agency of intelligence."⁷¹ Ward's vision of political change—his whole notion of a socio-craic state—was built on his activist social science; a science of society that when properly understood provided the essential answers to solve social problems. Huxley, on the other hand, was much less convinced about the possibilities for reform despite his criticism of Spencer's ethics and political ideals.

Ward also used Huxley's ideas to criticize the movement toward the specialized discourse of professional economics; in part, this was a reaction to Patten's earlier criticism of Ward's systematizing and his economic ideals, as well as Patten's suggestion that the fields of sociology, political economy, and economics were distinct sciences in their own right. Economists, Ward argued, conflated nature and culture far too often and wrongly applied concepts of nature to social evolution. "The total failure of all economists to note this fundamental distinction is the sufficient cause of the glaring discrepancies between economic theory and historical fact, and it is this which has not only brought political economy into disrepute, requiring its very name to be changed to *economics*, but has caused the rise of an entirely new school of economists, whose teachings are to a large extent diametrically opposed to those of a half century ago."⁷² Ward's "gospel of action" owed more to his producerist faith in labor, work, and a moral economy than it did to a thorough reading of Huxley's naturalism and view of evolutionary ethics. But what this essay most importantly provided was a sense that many social scientists misunderstood Ward's ideas and did not see what sociology in his hands could offer.

Ross introduced Ward to the third key book in his intellectual rethinking of social philosophy. In the summer of 1899, Ross invited Ward to teach at Leland Stanford College. The lectures were again a complete success, another indication of his popularity among students of social science. Ross wrote him that "your lectures left behind a trail of thought and discussion which shows itself in many ways. . . . Your egalitarian teaching as to the power of men to appropriate the fund of knowledge struck a responsive chord."⁷³ During Ward's stay at Stanford, Ross also gave him a recently published study of modern economics and class in the United States: Thorstein Veblen's *The Theory of the Leisure Class*.

Ward read the book with deep interest—finding much to like in the fellow midwesterner’s view of power, privilege, and consumption by the rich and wealthy of the modern industrial world. Contemplating a review of the book, Ward stopped in Chicago on his way back to Washington in the fall of 1899. He tried to see Veblen while he was there but missed him. He spoke to Albion Small about the young economist and about possibly publishing a review in the *AJS*. In November 1899, after Ward had returned to Washington, Veblen wrote him to “express my profound regret at having missed meeting you when you were in Chicago the other day. . . . Mr. Small tells me that you are kind enough to have undertaken to review the ‘Theory of the Leisure Class,’” Veblen continued. “I need not say that I appreciate the honor of such an attention at your hands, and that I am looking forward with the liveliest anticipation for your discussion. As a matter of course, you will find evidence in the book of my indebtedness to you.”⁷⁴

Thorstein Veblen shared a similar middle border background to that of Ward, Powell, Ross, Patten, and Ely. Veblen was born on a farm in Wisconsin in 1857, the sixth child of Thomas Anderson Veblen and Kari Bunde Veblen, Norwegian immigrants to America’s prairie frontier. Veblen’s father was a hard-driving farmer, devoted to cultivation of the land and to limited contact with the Yankees who dominated the upper Midwest’s social and political structure. His parents moved to farm land near Northfield, Minnesota, shortly after the end of the Civil War, and remained closely tied to the Norwegian immigrant communities that dotted the upper Midwest and the Plains since the middle of the nineteenth century.⁷⁵ It was land in which immigrants like the Veblens and others were to find, in the words of another chronicler of midwestern life, Mari Sandoz, “a community of . . . countrymen and other homeseekers, refugees from oppression and poverty, intermingled in peace and contentment.”⁷⁶

Thorstein Veblen’s youth was spent in the cultural isolation of a Norwegian immigrant agrarian community, but this “odd and iconoclastic” child was far too brilliant to remain in the farming community for long. Beginning in the early 1870s, Veblen attended Carleton Academy and Carleton College, studying political economy, moral philosophy, science, and theology. After his graduation in 1880, he spent a short time teaching in a Lutheran school in Madison, Wisconsin, before setting off east following his older brother, a mathematician, to Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore. Veblen hoped to establish an academic career in philosophy. While he was in Baltimore he attended classes and lectures from such luminaries as Herbert Baxter Adams, Richard Ely, and Charles Sanders Peirce, but he never obtained a degree. He likely read Ward’s work while he was there since it was frequently assigned in classes at Johns Hopkins.

Unhappy and isolated at Johns Hopkins, and unable to obtain a scholarship, Veblen left Baltimore for Yale in order to study philosophy under

the well-known moralist Noah Porter. Veblen was at Yale when the school was rocked by a controversy over the use of Herbert Spencer's book, *The Study of Sociology*. William Sumner, one of Veblen's teachers, argued with Porter for two years over the use of the book, firmly advocating for its use in classes on social theory. Porter opposed the book, as he did most recent social theory, eventually winning the argument with Sumner. But he looked old-fashioned and even foolish following the popularity of Spencer's work and his tour of the United States in 1882, and he finally allowed use of the book in the mid-1880s. Veblen absorbed the arguments of Spencerian evolutionism in Sumner's classes, as well as the interest in Scottish commonsense philosophy and Kantian ethics in his other classes with Porter and philosopher James McCosh. He graduated from Yale with a Ph.D. in philosophy in 1884, but despite his brilliance and strong letters of recommendation from his mentors at Yale, Veblen was unable to obtain a position at any American university.

It took Veblen seven years to obtain an academic position. It might even have been the economic difficulties of his life in this period that led him further and further away from philosophy toward economics and sociology. In 1891, he obtained a scholarship to work for a year under economist J. Laurence Laughlin at Cornell University, and the next year he followed Laughlin to the newly opened University of Chicago. Veblen's career in economics took shape at Chicago, although he remained a difficult and irascible colleague for the rest of his life. But his work in economics revolutionized the field. He burst on the scene in 1898 with an essay entitled "Why is Economics Not an Evolutionary Science," which blasted conventional laissez-faire economists, their lack of a true understanding of Darwinian science, and their use of taxonomic categories to define the fluid reality of economic behavior.

It was Veblen's first book, *The Theory of the Leisure Class*, however, that attracted enormous attention, severely criticizing conventional economic theory. Veblen's cultural theory of economic reality, and the relativity of scientific thought he gained from his intimate knowledge of Darwinian science, offered a new version of economics, adding to the chorus of voices—including Ely, Patten, and others—who transformed the field in the late nineteenth century.

Veblen's book mirrored many of Ward's own ethical interests and criticisms of traditional economics. It is both a cultural history of the development of a leisure class, their "place and value . . . as an economic factor in modern life," and an economic study of waste and production in modern industrial life. Veblen traced stages of cultural evolution in the life of savage, barbarian, and industrial nations—stages that were closely linked to the evolutionary view of society Ward and other Washington intellectuals had been analyzing since the 1880s. Ward had probably read some

of Veblen's earlier essays that appeared in the *AJS* since he served as a consulting editor of the journal. Veblen's book expanded on this earlier work on the instinct of workmanship, the structure of ownership, and his criticism of the views of the "barbarian status of women," all subjects close to Ward's heart.⁷⁷

Veblen's work quickly entered into the general American cultural lexicon with phrases such as "conspicuous leisure" and the most famous, "conspicuous consumption." These ethical and economic concerns were closely allied to Ward's own political and social interests, and Veblen's savage and satirical criticism of the unproductive consumption of products by the leisure class warmed Ward's heart. "As seen from the economic point of view," Veblen argued, "leisure, considered as an employment, is closely allied in kind with the life of exploit; and the achievements which characterize a life of leisure, and which remain its decorous criteria, have much in common with the trophies of exploit." Moreover, Veblen remarked, "the characteristic feature of leisure-class life is a conspicuous exemption from all useful employment." Given Ward's long-term interests in the productive, useful employment of labor it is no wonder that he found in Veblen a valuable supporter.⁷⁸

Veblen traced the elements of leisure-class life through an examination of modern cultural standards of taste, manners, and morals. He examined the expressions of dress as examples of the conspicuous consumption and expression necessary to maintain association with the leisure class and demonstrate its authority and power. Nonproductive behavior was the hallmark of the leisure class, he argued, and the ostentatious shows of wealth and power in late-nineteenth-century America, what he called the holdovers of a barbarian stage of social evolution, provided valuable evidence for the truth of Veblen's cultural observations, mocking the rise of a wealthy class dedicated to little more than the ostentatious display of their own consumption. Veblen, like Ward, had no doubt that it was to the producers of society that the ultimate social victory would belong. The leisure class was not going to survive very long since its puffery and dependence on manners meant little to the bulk of mankind.

Ward had at first declined to review Veblen's book. He told Small he was "too much a Jacobin" to give the book its proper due, and asked whether Ross might review it instead. Ross wanted Ward to do the review, however, and was pleased when his uncle finally decided to undertake it: "I am looking forward to your review of Veblen's book," Ross wrote his beloved uncle, "How it fluttered the dovescotes in the East! All the reviews I have seen of it so far are shocked and angry. Clearly their household gods have been assailed by this iconoclast."⁷⁹ It is no surprise that Ward's review of the book was laudatory, and one of the first major positive reviews of the book to appear in academic journals. He was invigorated by the book, and when

he came to write his last two publications in the 1900s many of Veblen's words and ideas were to make their way into his system of social philosophy: "The trouble with this book," Ward argued, "is that it contains too much truth. It also suggests a great deal of truth that it does not contain, and this is quite as bad as to tell the truth outright."⁸⁰

Ward always felt his review of Veblen's book was his best essay. He saw the book as a clearheaded examination of contemporary America as it entered the twentieth century, an exposé of the values keeping the nation in the thrall of *laissez-faire* and individualist ideals: "In fact, the book is a mirror in which we can all see ourselves. It is more. It is a telescope through which we see our ancestors, and when, all at one view, we see all the generations of our pedigree down to and including ourselves . . . the image takes on a rather ugly aspect."⁸¹ At the same time that he praised Veblen's criticism of the values of the leisure class, however, Ward also missed some of Veblen's ironic intent when he wanted him to explain in more historical detail the evolution and emergence of the leisure class, and the ways in which it has succeeded in acquiring power. Veblen's satire seemed to miss Ward, in part at least, and Ward's seriousness of purpose belied the iconoclastic work of the Chicago economist.

Nevertheless, Ward's review thrilled Veblen. "I beg to express my very lively appreciation of the honor you have done me in your extended and appreciative review of the 'Leisure Class'," Veblen wrote after it appeared. "Your unqualified approval has given me more pleasure than anything that has occurred in connection with the book, and I can only hope that it will not end with giving me an intolerable conceit."⁸² Veblen, despite the intellectual kinship he shared with Ward, was not altogether convinced that Ward fully understood his work. Still, he appreciated Ward's review as the "Patriarch of Sociology," and responded to critics of the laudatory review with qualified praise for the older Ward. Veblen responded to one critic of Ward's review that "it is not kind of you, and scarcely reverent, to use irony and other allied figures of speech concerning the English of the Patriarch of Sociology, in a case where laudable sentiment gets the better of his diction. What you say is true—as it should be—and what you imply is truer still—as is not surprising—when you speak of the magnanimity and positiveness with which Mr. Ward understands the 'Leisure Class.' I assure you his review has been a great help to me in that respect. It has brought me a sobering realization of the very grave importance which my writing, and what I now understand to have been my thinking and my insight, have for the spread of knowledge among men. I am unable to share your view that the allegation of 'too much truth' is to be taken as an accusation. I find myself unable to resent it."⁸³

In addition to the reading and the rethinking that he had begun on his system of social philosophy, Ward decided that he wanted to spend more

time traveling both in America and abroad. In November 1899, the Geological Survey asked Ward to conduct a study of the petrified forests of Arizona in an effort to help Congress determine the feasibility of creating a national park to protect the valuable natural preserve. It was the only time that he formally worked on a project with the national parks system despite the fact that he had spent so much time with Powell and others in the Washington scientific community who played important roles in the development of the American conservation movement. Most of Ward's reports in the Geological Survey were technical contributions to the scientific work of the American government and paid little heed to the policy implications of research since that work was generally reserved for his writing in social theory and philosophy. But this report offered the opportunity for Ward to work with actual policymaking and provide some influence in the making of national attitudes toward the conservation of the natural world.

It had been a long-term goal of conservationists and preservationists to save the fossil forests of Arizona, and it was difficult to protect the area without federal intervention. As early as the 1850s, travelers and surveyors frequently remarked on the wonder and beauty of Arizona's petrified forests, and scientists debated their origins and formation. It is one of the most remarkable paleontology parks in North America, protecting thousand of fossil plants as well as a stunning array of artifacts testifying to the interchange of cultures early in the history of settlement in North America. Ward's assistant, F. H. Knowlton, had done extensive research on the Arizona forests in the late 1880s, participating in the scientific debates about the origin of the petrified logs. When Ward arrived in Arizona, he quickly surveyed the forest, trying to determine its geological composition and its origin in time, and also asked local conservationists what they wanted from government intervention to protect the region. He finished his report after he returned to Washington in December 1899. In the report, Ward argued that the forests deserved national protection and preservation: "These petrified forests may be properly classed among the natural wonders of America, and every reasonable effort should be made not only to preserve them from destructive influences but also to make their existence and true character known to the people."⁸⁴ Ward hoped that the area could be set aside for scientific study and research before it was forever damaged by public use and exploitation.

The Arizona forests were finally set aside as part of the national park system in 1906 when President Theodore Roosevelt, acting on Ward's report and recommendations, established the Petrified Forest National Monument. Ward's Arizona study was not his only formal participation in policymaking in all the years he was in Washington. He had been involved in the debates over irrigation that racked the Survey in front of

Congress, and his work on the Black Hills later led to the establishment of another fossil park in the United States (the Fossil Cycad National Monument, created in 1922, was eventually removed from the National Park Service because of horrible mismanagement). These uses of scientific research and examination were exactly the kind of work that government science and policy should be doing. But in general, and very much unlike Powell and other Washington scientists, Ward still shied away from the political and policy aspects of scientific work. In part, this explains his constant reluctance to be specific in the context of his reform vision, and it also reflects Ward's growing determination that neutrality was the proper stance for government scientific study.

Ward was an aging scientist by the time conservation and preservation became part of the national government's activities in the late 1890s and early 1900s. He generally stood apart from these efforts in the Roosevelt administration. Led by younger scientists at the Survey and in the Forest Service, men such as Gifford Pinchot, C. D. Walcott (Powell's replacement as director of the Survey), Frederick Haynes Newell, and W J McGee, the direction of government scientific work changed in the late 1890s and 1900s. Instead of shying away from the political and policy aspects of government as Ward had, these progressive reformers sought specific solutions to social problems in politics, law, and policy, not in systems of thought. Forged at first at the state level in places such as Wisconsin, the social and scientific legislation orchestrated by these progressives eventually spelled out a program of government initiatives in American life that went far afield of Ward's interest in an idealist sociocracy. Nonetheless, Ward was still pleased by the role that he played in the creation of the Arizona natural preserve and his pioneering role in establishing a rationale for government involvement in the natural world.

By the end of the 1890s, Ward decided that it was social science and social reform that deserved all of his attention. He had found a new career and a new audience in teaching social theory. In a letter to Ross, he recounted his successes, reflecting on the major events of his life. "At 32 I knew nothing, had done nothing," he complained. "My first article appeared in October, 1876, when I was 35 years old. *Dynamic Sociology* did not appear till 1883 when I was 42 years old! All for want of opportunity. I have been hampered since by the same obstacle—lack of time and what they call *leisure*, lack of books, lack of right surroundings." And yet, he concluded, all was not lost in his life. He had succeeded despite the obstacles in his path to success: "Let it [all] pass. I have done something notwithstanding."⁸⁵

By the dawn of the twentieth century Ward stood between two worlds. One was his work as a government scientist, working in the national interest to solve the problems facing the nation. Ward's specific contributions

here may seem minor but they were part of a larger and growing fabric of efforts to establish government bureaus as agents of progress and change based on the work of information gathering and scientific analysis done by groups of scientists such as those at the Survey. But this constituency was beginning to collapse under the weight of congressional ire and the official retirement of its most important leader, John Wesley Powell. The other was the world of academic and international social science where Ward could spend time working on his social philosophy and expanding the work that he had begun with the publication of his first book in 1883. But Ward was never completely at ease in this world. Older than most of his colleagues, trained in an era without access to thorough education, Ward felt that he had lost his moorings and was without a real intellectual home. He spent the last years of his life trying to recapture the spirit he experienced when he first came to work in the Survey with Powell, the spirit that had moved him into social science in the first place.

Gulliver among the Lilliputians, 1900–1913

Lester Ward left for Europe in the summer of 1900 to attend the meeting of the Institut International de Sociologie (IIS) in Paris and visit with the friends he had acquired in his years of writing and working in science. In addition, William Torrey Harris, the U.S. commissioner of education and a longtime member of Washington's scientific societies, asked him to attend the educational and sociological activities at the Paris Exposition of 1900. Harris hoped that Ward's account of the exposition could be included in his annual report and add substance to his comparative studies of American and European educational systems. For Ward, it was also an opportunity to test his ideas for new books on his system of social philosophy.

The Paris Exposition was the fifth and last in a series of Parisian fairs celebrating world progress and technological achievement in the nineteenth century. It was "a fin de siècle event par excellence," an affair designed to bring together all the world at the dawn of a new, and hopefully better, age. Throughout the century France had held fairs to assess the world's progress in all facets of modern social life. The fair of 1900 was to be the biggest yet, the greatest display for the world entering the new century; a "world of iron," as historian Daniel Rodgers has called it, assessing the economy, progress, and growth of all the world's nations throughout the nineteenth century. Ward spent most of his time at the intellectual conferences organized to assess the social and political achievements of the world rather than at the fair's main exhibits and displays. It was an auspicious time for him. He was able to deliver lectures and papers on what he felt were new ideas for another book on social philosophy.

When he returned to the United States in the fall, Ward immediately began preparing the report for Harris, "Sociology at the Paris Exposition of 1900." The lengthy essay examined the intellectual events of the exposition and the meeting of the IIS. He celebrated the science of sociology as the most important element of modern social policy for the twentieth century. Modern social policy and social institutions were central concerns of many of the men and women who attended the Parisian fair. As Daniel Rodgers has demonstrated, the entire world of trans-Atlantic social reform was on display in Paris. Ward watched all of the lectures, committee meetings, and conferences on all aspects of social, political, and economic policy. All political persuasions were represented at the fair; socialists, communists, social welfare liberals, women's suffragists, conservatives of all stripes, all mingled at the events in Paris. Trade unionists debated with anarchists about the importance of government policy and organizational activity. Conservatives critiqued the idealism of social welfare liberalism, mocking the attempt to remake the world. Paris in 1900 "assembled a world of competing solutions," as Rodgers has argued, but for Ward it was enormously productive for his thinking. He felt he could encompass all of this world of reform and all of this thinking about social structures in a final set of books offering a theory of social development, progress, and national government. A properly formulated system of social philosophy could explain the forces that shaped the "social question" at the beginning of a new century.¹

Ward began his essay by tracing the development of political liberty in the nineteenth century. The modern political state had not achieved millennial perfection as many eighteenth- and early-nineteenth-century reformers had hoped: "It was supposed that political liberty would, if fully secured, remove the greater part of the evils under which society was laboring and usher in an ideal state of human existence. This dream has not been realized, and the more farsighted of all nations have become satisfied that no conceivable degree of political perfection can accomplish the result." But at the dawn of the twentieth century, Ward continued, sociology, and the studies of social scientists generally, offered new ways to unburden society from the "social problem."

It had long been taught, and is still largely believed, that social evils are incurable, but this doctrine has latterly been called in question, and there is no doubt that the growing skepticism on this point has greatly stimulated the study of social science. The time has now arrived when an old school economist who holds to the irremediable character of social evils is looked upon much as would be a physician who should reiterate the view . . . that plagues and pestilences are wholly beyond the reach of human art to arrest, remove, or prevent. Those who perceive these deeper truths of society, whatever they may call themselves, are sociologists, and their number and importance are increasing very rapidly.²

Ward particularly praised the work of the International Association for the Advancement of Science, Arts, and Education, an umbrella organization of English, American, Russian, French, and German scientists and scholars who organized public lectures and tours at the exposition. Their purpose was to bring home the meaning of the exposition to the visitors, "not merely to concentrate at the French metropolis the products of human invention, industry, and achievement in all parts of the world, but also to attract there and bring into contact and cooperation the men, the talents, and the ideas of all nations."³ Ward himself participated in this project, giving his own public lecture, "The Dependence of Social Science Upon Physical Science," drawn from various sections of *Dynamic Sociology*, *Psychic Factors of Civilization*, and his essays and lectures from the 1880s and 1890s. He also reprinted the reports of the Congress for Instruction in the Social Sciences tracing the progress of social science in all phases of education. The reports considered primary, secondary, and higher education in the United States and Europe and were written by some of the world's leading social thinkers, including Sidney Webb (on commercial education in Britain), Paul Barth (on sociological instruction in Germany), Charles Gide (on advanced social science instruction in France), Georges Renard (on social instruction in Switzerland), Émile Durkheim (on the role of the university in the social education), and many others.

Ward also examined that summer's meeting of the IIS. Although the activities of the IIS were not formally connected to the exposition, Ward wanted to include an examination of the only organization "of a high scientific character devoted to what may properly be called original research in sociology, wholly disconnected from any propagandist or pedagogic objects."⁴ Instead of summarizing all of the papers presented at the meeting, Ward simply reprinted his contribution to the conference, "Social Mechanics." "I think I can say without undue egotism that the considerations put forth in this paper . . . are those that lie at the foundation of the science of sociology and constitute the justification of the claim to the existence of such a science. I had the necessity for some such a presentation so forcibly thrust upon me by the character of sociological literature in general that I felt impelled to formulate once [and] for all the basic principles of the science and to make the effort to attend the only international congress of sociologists in the world and endeavor to impress these principles upon the minds of the members of that great representative body of sociological thinkers."⁵

Ward delivered the paper in French, again spending hours practicing his language skills before his lecture in order to impress the audience. The paper recounted the details of his interpretation of the social forces from *Dynamic Sociology* and *Psychic Factors*, introducing those who had not read

his works to the ideas he had been discussing since 1883. Ward defended the "true scientific character" of social science against the criticism that it was a moralistic science with no truly exact methodology. The concern for defining sociology's legitimacy as a science framed most studies by American and European social thinkers, and Ward decided that he must speak to these concerns in order to offer a comprehensive philosophical system. "I will . . . say that if I regarded social phenomena as wholly lacking in the quality of exactness, and all sociological truth as necessarily conditioned and only probable, I should have no interest in sociology, and should devote no time or energy to it." Always the taxonomist and classifier, Ward proclaimed a positivist law for understanding the scientific character of social science: "*In the complex sciences the quality of exactness is only perceptible in their higher generalizations.*"⁶

The objectivity of social science emerged from the creation of philosophic systems designed to analyze all social theories and social data; it was Ward's very form of social philosophy that demanded attention from the world's social thinkers. The deepest problem facing social science was what Ward called the "fallacy of the near," the inability to understand the social forces shaping history and the future because of the chaos and confusion of the immediate present. Social scientists needed to escape from current events and current problems in order to see the patterns and laws of social development and human life. He found the most potent examples of this kind of scientific method in both geology and the work of ethnologists, led so ably by his friend Powell and the Bureau of American Ethnology during the late nineteenth century. The observation of geological formations showed the symmetry of nature, where the untrained eye may see no patterns in rock formations at all. The observation of foreign cultures by early anthropologists indicated the methods all social scientists might pursue, and the comparative study of "ethnographic parallels" between societies in different stages of development proves the existence of uniform laws of social progress.

Ward divided sociology into two main branches of study: social statics (what he also called "pure sociology") and social dynamics (also called "applied sociology"). It is the "broader truth," he said in the lecture, "that organization is the basis of and in fact constitutes order in the social world, and all the different social structures and human institutions are themselves organized into a whole. . . . Social structures are reservoirs of power applied to social ends." It was not competition between individuals in society that allowed for progressive change but rather the development of ever more complex social structures in human society: "Darwin has taught us that throughout the organic world there is a 'struggle for existence.' Society is also a theater of struggle, but a broader view of the subject in both fields and in all other fields justifies us in modifying Darwin's

severe formula, and in looking at the order in the inorganic, the organic, and the social worlds as the product rather of a *struggle for structure*.”⁷

The subject of social dynamics is progress, the evolution of society, and the laws and principles organizing social development. Ward went over old ground arguing that he had tried to move the science of society in this direction as early as 1883 but that it was a premature effort. Humans, he argued, are animals uniquely able to transform and alter their environment, capable of consciously transforming the world around them to their advantage. This is the great subject of social dynamics: identifying the ways in which humans transform the world around them and achieve satisfaction of their desires from purposive action. But social progress depends on order, he warned, on understanding the forces that shape the social structures in which humans live and work.

Order was the subject of social statics. Social scientists needed to examine the forces shaping both order and progress; they needed to show how humans live within social structures and how they can transform and change social structures over time. The two branches of the science are equally dependent on each other, but most social science has been done only on social statics and not dynamics. Ward’s social philosophy was an effort to work out the laws and operations of the “dynamic” field of sociological study.

The lecture was a complete success. “I felt inspired and had a perfect confidence and a clear sense of the situation,” he recalled in his diary. “I began right and proceeded to lay my ideas before them in a clear and dignified way that at once received attention. I could feel that I had the audience with me. The hall was fairly well filled. It went off splendidly and I put the emphasis always just where it belonged. The *statique sociale* took about thirty-five minutes, and I proposed to stop. To my great surprise the audience shouted non! non! and even [Jacques] Novicow insisted that I should go on. So, on I went to the end and held them perfectly all through. The applause was hearty, and there was some discussion which had to be continued in the afternoon session.”⁸ The audience must have been impressed, indeed, because the members of the IIS elected Ward president of the organization for the next meeting in 1903. It was one of the greatest honors of his intellectual life, a proud moment to be recognized as a major intellectual on two continents.

Ward returned from Europe ready to tackle the capstone to his vision of social philosophy. On 1 January 1901, shortly after he finished his report to Harris, Ward invited his closest friends to his Rhode Island Avenue home to listen to his ideas, and to see how they envisioned the completion of his system of social philosophy. Ward was just beginning a new book, and he wanted the input of those he had worked with for so long. Among the invitees was John Wesley Powell, William Torrey Harris, Carroll Wright (the

commissioner of labor), and, of course, the family he read with so often, his wife, Rose, his sister-in-law Sarah Comstock, and Rose's niece Sarah Simons. Edward Ross, who was unable to attend the gathering because of teaching commitments, wrote his uncle that "although I could not be at the christening no one has a better right than I to grip your hand and offer most heart-felt congratulations on beginning the new book. . . . There isn't a man in this country in any social science who isn't interested in what you are doing and doesn't take pride in the '*monumentum aere perennius*' you are gradually building. So here's to the health of the youngster."⁹ Ward decided with the help of his friends that two volumes were necessary to complete his system of social philosophy, and he hoped to be able to get them into print quickly.

With his work on these two volumes, Ward finally realized those great ambitions he expressed before he started his first manuscript in 1869. Years of reading, writing, and scientific investigation culminated in the publication of his last two volumes of sociology: *Pure Sociology* (1903) and *Applied Sociology* (1906). Together they were nearly equal in length to his first book, designed to summarize his years of thinking on social philosophy. During the early 1900s, Ward was one of the most well-respected social theorists in the nation and commanded respect from a wide audience of academic scientists and social scientists. Just after the publication of *Pure Sociology*, his friend Albion Small commented, "you were not only ahead of us in point of time, but we all know that you are head, shoulders, and hips above us in many respects scientifically. You are Gulliver among the Lilliputians . . . there is no more incontestably ordained high-priest of science among the sociologists than you are."¹⁰

Ward worked on the first volume throughout 1901 and 1902 trying to develop his scientific system of applied and pure sociology. He decided that the first book was to focus on pure sociology and examine the theoretical foundations of the field. While writing the manuscript, Ward penned a lengthy section on the history of social science, which he decided not to include in the final version of the manuscript he sent to the Macmillan Company in the late fall of 1902. Instead, he sent this section, "Contemporary Sociology," to Small for publication in the *AJS*. The articles, which appeared in the winter and spring of 1902, sought to enumerate the "principle systems of sociology" in the field at the turn of the century. It was a unique article, far different from anything Ward had previously published. "Contemporary Sociology," excerpted in the larger volume published the following year, outlined the major developments in social philosophy since the appearance of *Dynamic Sociology* nearly twenty years earlier.

Ward made no attempt at lengthy criticism of the different conceptions of the field. Instead, he saw each of them as progressive steps in the evo-

lution of the science, each an aspect of a larger system of philosophy. Although this essay displayed Ward's prodigious reading in social philosophy, it also revealed his dependence on older notions of scientific practice. Rather than place each of these in conflict with another, examining the epistemological and methodological positions of each, Ward tried to combine all aspects of these views into his philosophic system. This kind of systematic science, however, did not sit well with most academic social scientists at the turn of the century. Ward remained the paramount synthetic thinker in social philosophy incorporating all of these various arguments into a more general system of social philosophy.

The first system of sociology, "Sociology as Philanthropy," was the only one that Ward felt did not adequately capture the truly scientific aspect of sociology. And yet, he argued, in a rebuke to the genteel reformers in the ASSA that "it is probably safe to say that this conception of sociology is the prevailing one with the public today. The word now frequently occurs in the newspapers, but always in this sense. More than nine-tenths of the papers that are read before the American Social Science Association proceed from that idea of social science."¹¹ This older view of the moral efforts of sociology, Ward argued, was not science but reform; it was the work done in tenement houses, social settlements, as well as work with the poor: "Social work," he concluded, "[is] often of a high order, and for the most part very useful, but it is not sociology."¹² Sociology was about system building, he insisted, not simply social reform. In order to define the scientific purpose of sociology it needed to be divorced from reform. This omission in his system, done mainly to help prove the scientific character of social science, was to prove difficult to maintain if not entirely contradictory. For younger social scientists and progressive reformers, it remained unclear why Ward seemed to abandon the reforming impulse of his earlier social science in favor of neutrality.

Ward examined the other major theories quickly, showing how each was part of the development of the science but did not adequately capture all of the purposes and meaning of sociology as a system of social thought. Sociology as biology, he wrote, was mostly a false application of Spencerian pessimism to social evolution; sociology as political economy, on the other hand, applied social facts to a limited set of economic problems apart from the whole of social phenomena. In fact, professional economics had little to say to the sociologist interested in the operation of social reform. Ward's ethical interests were evident in his definition of the field: "Now, respecting those non-productive, parasitic, and even injurious employments, economics has nothing to say, except to consider whether they are successful . . . capital has become concentrated in relatively few hands, while the artisan class has not acquired the intelligence to participate in such a movement. Thus enormous relative inequalities

have grown up in modern society. At the same time these very causes have accelerated rather than retarded the rise of the proletariat, and improved the absolute, rather than the relative, material condition of the working classes. . . . Society, though not in a dangerous condition, is in a sort of ferment, and there has been made possible a social problem, or rather a crowd of social problems."¹³

Only sociology, Ward believed, offered the opportunity to study and analyze these problems. It is a "new science which seeks a true and fundamental acquaintance with, rather than an immediate solution of, social questions. . . . It does not hold them in haughty disdain, nor does it pretend to possess any panacea for social evils, but it is open to inquiry, takes a true scientific interest in social events and phenomena for their own sake, and either inhibits its concern for the practical results, or has faith that these will be best subserved by first laying in a store of knowledge."¹⁴ But this aspect of Ward's thought remained troublesome, and it was to prove a significant problem in the reviews of his next book. He refused to specify any approach to the "crowd of social problems" facing the industrial republic; his only recommendation, it seemed, was study and reflection.

In addition to sociology's relationship to economics, Ward analyzed the relationship between other social sciences and the reform aspects of sociology. Sociology as the synthetic science was more than merely another word for those studies that fall under the rubric of social science, such as political science, history, anthropology, and philosophy. "Sociology is not exactly a structure built of these materials. It is rather a generalization from them all. It abstracts from each all that is common and forms a sort of head, to which they constitute, as it were, the body and limbs. In short, sociology is an integration or synthesis of the whole body of social sciences."¹⁵ Although the collection of social facts was important to any scientific study or endeavor it was the systematic relations, the creation of an order of analysis, that really made an objective science from the disparate facts collected by investigators.

Ward concluded the series with a review of recent major books in sociology, especially Edward Ross's recent book, *Social Control* (1901), which the younger social scientist dedicated to Ward, as well as the work of Giddings, Small, and others. The essay did not stir much controversy although it was an adequate introduction to the major social theories of the day. Ludwig Gumplowicz, the Polish sociologist working in Austria, wrote Ward in June 1902 that "it was a good idea to display all the varieties of sociology in order to give the reader an adequate idea of the chaos which typifies the many different directions and schools (!!!)—if these men can be designated as sociologists, each of whom forms his own 'school.' You have characterized very well these fantasies in which each

man is possessed of a fixed idea."¹⁶ But it was not clear that Ward's lengthy summary of social theory amounted to a more complete understanding of sociological method. It remained to be seen whether or not his book could provide a clear direction for social science.

Armed with this review of recent social theory Ward was ready to complete his manuscript, now entitled *Pure Sociology: A Treatise on the Origin and Spontaneous Development of Society*, and create a philosophic system that encompassed all contemporary social theories. He sent the book to the Macmillan Company in late fall 1902, and anxiously awaited the reception. The book, he wrote in his introduction, was "aiming at a System of Sociology" that complemented the two previous volumes he had written and was now to be concluded with a final volume on the other great field of social philosophy, applied sociology. He dedicated the book, "To the twentieth century, on the first day of which it was begun." Despite his protest to the contrary, much of the book actually covers old ground, and his interest in systematic theory alone made this one of his most difficult books to grasp. His old reforming zeal is absent from this bare and neutral examination of social science systems. The reviews of the book were not kind, and the controversy over one review nearly destroyed Ward's friendship with Albion Small completely.¹⁷

Ward divided his big book—over five hundred pages long—into three sections covering the theoretical organization of pure sociology: taxis, or the study of sociological order; genesis, or the origins of social phenomena; and teleosis, the study of the intelligent control of social progress. Sociologists studied human achievement, Ward wrote, examining "not what men are, but what they do. It is not the structure, but the function. Sociologists are nearly all working in the department of social anatomy, when they should turn their attention to social physiology."¹⁸ The organic metaphor of social anatomy was important since it was a common one among turn-of-the-century social thinkers and was often used in defense of a Darwinian social order of competition, control, and dominance.

Ward declared that the marks of human achievement and success lie in work, artifice, and human dominion over nature. It was ground he had already covered in *Dynamic Sociology* and *Psychic Factors of Civilization*, but here he made it central to the theoretical underpinning of social philosophy generally: "Achievement does not consist in wealth. Wealth is fleeting and ephemeral. Achievement is permanent and eternal. And now mark the paradox. Wealth, the transient, is material; achievement, the enduring, is immaterial. The products of [human] achievement are not material things at all. . . . In a word they are *inventions*. Achievement consists of invention. . . . It is anything and everything that rises above mere imitation and repetition. Every such increment to civilization is a permanent gain, because it is imitated, repeated, perpetuated, and never lost."¹⁹

Achievement as a category of analysis was human labor and artifice, the conscious creations of human society including law, government, industry, and politics. The keynote to Ward's definition of achievement is knowledge, his longtime interest, and it is from this premise that sociologists must construct their ordered picture of the scientific study of society.

Sociology as a science meant imposing order on the chaos of human development. The measures of human achievement provided the sociologist with the keys to outline uniform laws of development. "In doing this," Ward concluded, "it will be found that we have passed from chaos to cosmos. Human history presents a chaos. The only science that can convert the milky way of history into a definite social universe is sociology, and this can only be done by the use of an appropriate method, by using the data furnished by all the special social sciences, including the great scientific trunks of psychology, biology, and cosmology, and generalizing and coordinating the facts and groups of facts until unity is attained."²⁰ A grand vision of order prompted the study of society, and all the arguments of social philosophers were steps in his vision of the ordered study of social phenomena.

If "taxis" was the general order that sociologists imposed on their data, "genesis" was the origins of the data sociologists examined: the origins of society, of human achievements, and of progress. These "genetic" phenomena were creations unaffected by the efforts of man; they were inherent to the process of evolution whether in human society or in nature. These could be biological in origin, such as the development of the mind and reason, which Ward had covered in *Psychic Factors* and examined again in this volume, but his most important insights in this large section of the book dealt with his theory of social evolution. Social evolution was "sympodial" and "synthetic," moving in fits and starts with no particular direction. This sympodial development was haphazard and without a specific end; rather than linear progress, human society moved in various cycles of growth, death, and rebirth.

Ward gained his historicism primarily from his study of natural history; the forces of evolution gripped social progress just as they controlled natural life. But what made social evolution different from the forces shaping nature was the mind and the "dynamic agent" of feeling and reason, ground that he had previously covered and again examined here with an eye toward making these subjects part of the broad field of theoretical sociology. The specific ways in which mind, reason, and feeling provided man dominion over nature were left for the subject of applied sociology. Here Ward viewed them as the guides for the science of social mechanics, social statics, and social dynamics, the subjects of his address before the IIS and in the report he gave to Harris in 1900.

Social mechanics dealt with the science and laws of the mind, which were the key forces that shaped society. It is like the study of physics,

Ward wrote, and in fact “social physics” was the term that Auguste Comte had originally given to the study of society. The dynamic agent of feeling was the subject of social mechanics but this agent was aggressive, ruthless, powerful, and without direction. “Social energy surges through society in all directions, but, like a flood or a storm, it is ruthless. The innate interests of men work at cross purposes, often to no purpose. They conflict, collide, and dash against one another, but in such an unorganized, haphazard, and chaotic way that they do not produce equilibrium but mutual ruin. . . . If there was no way of curbing or harnessing the social energy there would be nothing but destruction—no construction.”²¹

Thus the sociologist needed to look at the forces of *restraint* and *order*—social statics—which checked the wayward tendencies of the motive forces of feeling. This was the problem with the older forms of liberal thinking. There was no room for the organizing elements of the state—those parts of society including government, social organizations, and the like that Powell had highlighted more than two decades earlier. Moreover, it was the sociologist who studies these organizations and their functions in modern social evolution. Many intellectuals in the trans-Atlantic community that Ward knew well were familiar with this idea. French social thinkers such as Émile Durkheim and those in the IIS believed that their Third Republic needed the guiding hand of social scientific work. German social thinkers felt the same way about the construction of broad social welfare programs. And Ward was already popular with Russian liberal intellectuals trying to build a civic society different from the autocratic czarist past to shape Russian life in the twentieth century. Ward was speaking to a shared concern and a shared effort.

Social statics, the second branch of Ward’s “genesis,” was the study of the organizational structures, the human institutions, controlling the forces of social energy. The struggle of society, he stated, repeating the arguments he had made in 1900, was a “struggle for structure. . . . Without structure, organization, order, no efficient work can be performed. Organization as it develops to higher and higher grades simply increases the working efficiency of society.”²² Human institutions are the achievements of man seeking order and control—these are the working storehouses for the social energy of progress, growth, and development in society.

If mechanics and statics are the central branches of theoretical sociology, examining the forces that shape society and the forces that control social energy, social dynamics considers the connections between the two; the connections between the energy of progress and the need for order. Social dynamics studies the “moving equilibrium” that keeps society evolving and progressing rather than remaining in place in the struggle for structure. Order and progress, Ward concluded, were mutually dependent on one another in modern social life.

In his section on "social dynamics," Ward integrated the arguments of sociologist Ludwig Gumplowicz and others on race struggle as a central aspect of sociological study. The struggle of different peoples motivated social development according to this idea; the development of caste order, inequality, and law were elements of the subjugation of one race by another. Ultimately the result of these struggles was the development of the idea of one people, one nation, and one state. These "cross fertilizations" of different peoples was the basic stuff of human history, Ward argued, and was to eventually lead—far in the future of human evolution—to the development of a new race.

Ward purged much of this argument of its heavily racist assumptions about the superiority of one race over another. At the heart of much of the racial language and analysis in turn-of-the-century social discourse was a notion of basic racial inferiority. Racial views permeated the political culture of the United States and much of the trans-Atlantic community but Ward shared none of this belief in the biology of racial inferiority. For him, the problem was lack of opportunity, lack of knowledge, and lack of access to power. There had been so many struggles of so many different races over time, he wrote, that there was no such thing as a pure human race. When he met Gumplowicz in the summer of 1903, just after the publication of the book, Ward disabused him of his racism. Likening the struggle of races to geological changes in the earth's history, Ward showed Gumplowicz how assumptions about the achievements of races did not reveal superiority of one race over another but merely the lack of opportunity given some peoples—a basic subjugation based on different political and social power but not on innate ability. Ward's thoroughgoing egalitarianism and his ability to incorporate into his general system of social science such a wide variety of interpretations of social change impressed Gumplowicz. "I was beaten," he wrote in an article about Ward, "I stood there like a pupil who had just been thoroughly whipped by his teacher."²³ Not everyone in twentieth-century America agreed, however. Many social scientists in the early twentieth century and into the 1950s, including Ward's nephew Edward Ross who advocated immigration restriction in the 1920s, continued to hold tenaciously to notions of basic racial inferiority. But Ward's old Radical Republican beliefs held firm when it came to race and racial opportunity. He had, as he said a few years before, transferred his hatred of oppression under slavery to oppression of laboring classes and poor generally.

Ward's arguments about race and opportunity also attracted the attention of others interested in the problem of racial inequality in America, especially those interested in the ideas of Booker T. Washington and his basic faith in the connection between opportunity and education. Near the end of his life, for example, Ward received a letter from an African-American

school principal about his arguments regarding race and intelligence: “Your arguments . . . respecting the capacity of races is my philosophic hope—as a black man, or rather, a man, black. The unreasonable arrogance which your argument completely *demolishes* is, in my humble opinion, the bug-bear of Negro aspiration. The fact that improvement, in normal cases, must follow well-directed conscious effort is pregnant with inspiration for every thoughtful proletariat. . . . I feel that I am indebted to you for the hopeful doctrine that you have given the world, not for my race as such, but for all struggling humanity endeavoring to rise thru meritorious effort.” In the mid-1940s, E. Franklin Frazier, the famous African American sociologist and one of the most important twentieth-century social thinkers, wrote in his analysis of race and American sociology that Ward was one of the few early theorists to leave arguments about the intelligence of various races out of his theories of society and social development.²⁴

The final aspect of genetic social philosophy in Ward’s pure sociology was the classification of social forces. Always interested in the hierarchy and order of social phenomena, Ward arranged the energy of social mechanics, social statics, and social dynamics into a general taxonomic scheme of social forces: ontogenetic forces (basic human needs seeking pleasure and avoiding pain); phylogenetic forces (group preservation, sexual, reproductive, and family functions of social development); and sociogenetic forces (the moral, aesthetic, and intellectual forces of the mind). The entire classification was still theoretical—each of these classifications represented natural developments in the evolution of the social order without the interference of man. Ward was at his most metaphysical in this section of the book, again revealing his frequent penchant for neologisms. He tried to create a vocabulary for pure sociology—a basic terminology for the genetic or natural aspects of social evolution. Few of his terms ever entered into the general vocabulary of social scientists, however, and few sociologists ever used Ward’s terminology for the classification of the social forces. By 1911 sociologists spoke often of the “social forces error” when they examined Ward’s classification. Only one term gained any currency after the volume was published: “gyneacocracy.” Ward’s frank discussion of human sexuality and love as major aspects of the dynamic agent of human feeling, and his gynaecocentric theory of natural evolution, the primacy of the female sex in nature, made up the major portion of his discussion of the phylogenetic social forces.

The argument built on Ward’s 1888 article “Our Better Halves,” where he had first outlined some of his ideas. In *Pure Sociology* he provided a vocabulary and a lengthy discussion of the social origins of sex differences to embolden the ideas he had laid out fifteen years earlier. The theory is basic in its interpretation of sex: the female is primary in nature and the male a lower evolutionary offshoot: “[It] is the view that the female sex is

primary and the male secondary in the organic scheme, that originally and normally all things center, as it were, about the female, and that the male, though not necessary in carrying out the scheme, was developed under the operation of the principle of advantage to secure organic progress through the crossing of strains."²⁵ But in human society from a combination of sexual selection, male physical power, and evolutionary social change, the situation has been reversed; the female is no longer primary in human sexual selection and has become subject to male will.

Ward's argument is as much ethnographic as it is sociological. He based his idea on observations made by nineteenth-century anthropologists analyzing ancient societies and the origins of man. The fact that he included sexuality and the problem of gender in social analysis put Ward far ahead of most of his male colleagues. Much of early sociology ignored gender entirely. Ward made it one of the key categories for the motive forces of social change.

Ward did hold out the hope that women could be released from their bondage to men. It was an argument that made him immensely popular with women's reform groups and especially among suffrage advocates:

Throughout all human history woman has been powerfully discriminated against and held down by custom, law, literature, and public opinion. All opportunity has been denied her to make any trial of her powers in any direction. In savagery she was underfed, overworked, unduly exposed, and mercilessly abused, so that in so far as these influences could be confined to one sex, they tended to stunt her physical and mental powers. During later ages her social ostracism has been so universal and complete that, whatever powers she may have had, it was impossible for her to make any use of them, and they have naturally atrophied and shriveled. Only during the last two centuries and in the most advanced nations, under the growing power of the sociogenetic energies of society, has some slight relief from her long thralldom been grudgingly and reluctantly vouchsafed. What a continued and increasing tendency in this direction will accomplish it is difficult to presage, but all signs are at present hopeful.²⁶

Ward complained that his theory and ideas had been ignored since he first proposed them in 1888. Despite the support and friendship of Charlotte Perkins (Stetson) Gilman (she had married Houghton Gilman in 1900), Ward did not acknowledge the contribution of her ideas in popularizing his work. Gilman, in fact, angrily wrote Ward that she was "a little grieved in reading your statement that no one had taken up your theory—for I had stoutly defended it in my book *Women and Economics*. But perhaps you didn't consider that book of sufficient importance to mention. Or perhaps you haven't read it."²⁷ Ward did read Gilman despite the fact that he never explicitly acknowledged her work in his pub-

lications. In a telling comment about the impact he hoped that his work had on Gilman and on others he wrote her in 1907: "I read your book. I could hear my own voice all the time. But, of course, it was not an echo. It is pitched much higher than I can strike and differs also in *timbre*. I have always told Dr. Ross that all I could do was to block out the statue from the slab in rough strokes, and he must finish it up. Now you come along and touch it up with a fine-pointed chisel."²⁸

Finally, Ward's section on genesis included an examination of the "sociogenetic forces" that shaped the "socializing and civilizing impulses of mankind." These were impulses fixed within human nature, forces inherent in nature that competed with the selfish desires of the individual: the socializing impulse of morality (religion, custom, and tradition), aesthetics (imagination and creation), and intellect (the natural desire to learn, acquire knowledge, and ascertain truth).

Ward's conception of the theoretical structure of "genesis" occupied the major portion of his book and represented his most extensive foray into establishing a theoretical basis for the social science. If the book had ended here—with a recapitulation of his theoretical conception of the science—it might have made more of an impact on his readers. But Ward continued the volume with a section on "telesis": the artificial control man had over nature and natural evolution. It was this inclusion that often confused the reviewers.

Much of this section went over the evolutionary development of the mind, which he had covered in his earlier book, *Psychic Factors of Civilization*. Ward considered the directive control of mind and reason in social evolution, human dominion over nature, and the "socialization of achievement." Much of the chapter examined the role a "social intellect" could play in directing, controlling, and utilizing the social energy of evolution. Ward ended the book by returning to his old standby: his faith in the power and influence of education.

He highlighted the recent creation of state university systems in the United States as a most important step in the establishment of a wide, democratic, and truly public system of educational institutions that competed against the older, privately endowed institutions—places such as the University of Wisconsin where many of Ward's economist friends worked, including eventually Ross, and which was led by Charles Van Hise, who spent most of the 1870s and 1880s working for Powell in the Geological Survey. Ward intended this section of the book as a bridge to a final volume on applied sociology in his system of social philosophy. "The action of society in inaugurating and carrying on a great educational system, however defective we may consider that system to be, is undoubtedly the most promising form thus far taken by collective achievement. It means much even now, but for the future it means nothing less than the

complete social appropriation of individual achievement which has civilized the world. It is the crowning act in the long list of acts that we have . . . constituting the socialization of achievement."²⁹

Pure Sociology was Ward's most thoroughly theoretical book and also received the most extensive criticism, even from those who had so forcefully supported and admired his conclusions in *Dynamic Sociology*. Ross lavished praise on his beloved uncle when he received a copy of the book. "As for 'Pure Sociology,' it is simply great," he wrote. "There is no question in my mind that this is your greatest book. In eloquence, in simplicity of style, in massiveness of treatment, in scope of thought you have gone ahead of your former record in *Psychic Factors*." Ross was especially appreciative of Ward's synthetic mind, his ability to incorporate "the systems of one idea that are now competing in the field."³⁰

Simon Patten also congratulated Ward on the publication of the book: "I have just finished reading your new book," he wrote to Ward, "and want to congratulate you on its form, content and freshness. It strikes me as by all odds the best of your books and contains the best statement of sociological development I know of. I was best pleased with your doctrine of sympodial development."³¹ But in addition to this praise, Patten also criticized Ward's understanding of the forces shaping social progress, especially his understanding of "feeling" as a dynamic agent. His dated psychology, Patten felt, fundamentally misunderstood the nature of feeling in human psychology, a part of the human mind shaped by social experience and socialization rather than the simplistic outcome of a particular "faculty" of the mind. Although social progress was in fact sympodial—that is to say, not linear—Patten wrote in another letter, Ward's continued reliance on feeling and the mind did not adequately explain the dynamic agents of progress.

Other reviewers also challenged Ward's ideas and were far less supportive of his work than either Patten or Ross. A young psychologist at Vassar College, H. Heath Bawden, reviewed Ward's book in the pages of the *AJS*, and his review was a satirically critical one. "From the psychological point of view," Bawden began, "this book is more instructive in what it attempts but fails to do than in what it actually accomplishes." It was a valiant effort to define the broad theoretical basis of sociology but "it is the character of the psychological conceptions which he employs" that ultimately doomed the book to obscurity.³² Ward's language and peculiar understanding of social theory lent a vagueness and haziness to the book, and his seeming inconsistencies in this work as compared to the others make the book far less effective than it might otherwise have been. Bawden could only see contradiction and confusion in Ward's terminology—gone was the effort to define the social order that he had at least tried to do in his first two books.

Ward still relied on the quaint terms and ideas of faculty psychology in his understanding of the mind, a conception that could not admit of the fluidity of consciousness that psychologists from William James to John Dewey had been discussing for years. "Finally, we come to what is in some respects the most important psychological conception in the book, because of its relations to sociology—that of the place of the psychical individual in social achievement. The fundamental law is that in organic evolution the environment transforms the organism, whereas in the socialization of achievement man transforms the environment. The medium of this transformation is the mind. . . . The really social nature of individual consciousness and the important function of the individual in the reconstruction of (social) experience are vaguely assumed throughout the book. . . . An inadequate psychology," Bawden concluded, "precludes any satisfactory statement of the principle."³³

In addition to the Bawden review, Albion Small included four "notes" of his own on Ward's book, which essentially constituted another lengthy review. Small's notes contained lengthy criticism of Ward's book along with extensive praise. Despite the fact that he went over the book thoroughly and often pointed out Ward's inconsistencies, Small praised Ward as the most prominent social thinker of the day, and a leader of the field of sociology. "I envy the sociologist who can read *Pure Sociology* and not feel oppressed by the limitations of his knowledge," Small wrote in his third note. "The book draws on many sources that are sealed to most of us. While we may be incompetent to discuss frequent details, we may wonder at the author's tremendous power of generalization and organization. He has been in a class by himself for twenty years, and in spite of all qualifications, this latest volume justifies the belief that his final rank will be among the first-rate thinkers of our period."³⁴

The praise was a genuine reflection of Small's long friendship and respect for the elder statesman of social theory. But many of his critical comments went right to the heart of Ward's conception of sociology as a science. The mistakes in the book's method were important, Small argued, and did not further elucidate the problem of understanding social phenomena and progress. What did it mean that pure sociology only considered the unconscious operation of social forces and sought explanations external to human functions? Although he awaited Ward's deeper explanations in a second volume on applied sociology, Small simply could not understand Ward's conception of the theoretical basis of social science. It was "a good joke," he wrote, that Ward confused what was really the process of socialization for sociology as a science: "Socialization is both conscious and unconscious," Small argued, "[whereas] sociology is thought about socialization, and is necessarily conscious." Moreover, Small continued, "as he claims that sociology falls into the two parts, pure

and applied, the latter of which is telic rather than explicative, explanation of conscious social actions would in that case be left in a limbo which sociology does not penetrate."³⁵

Small's other notes went into even more detail about each section of Ward's book pointing out that Ward's protest that he was studying pure social phenomena did not make sense. His ideas offered no understanding of the relativity of social scientific explanations; his generalizations, although they were indeed part of a grand system of ideas, offer "an excess of attention to the concepts, and defect of attention to situations." Ward, Small wrote, works on the "organization of abstractions" rather than the real social problems that sociologists study and face in their inquiries. "The more I read Ward, the more I am inclined to classify him as a philosopher with sociological leanings, instead of a sociologist with philosophical attachments. This is, of course, in no sense a charge against the content of his system. It is an attempt to place that system with reference to the center of interest in sociology."³⁶ This attempt to elucidate and outline some kind of objective and neutral science mystified Small. It seemed to repudiate a quarter century of Ward's work not only in social theory but in the very organizations of government that he held needed to take up the challenges of American social reform.

Small had in effect accused Ward of abandoning interest in the reform aspects of sociology in favor of the abstraction of a system. But Small worked in the laboratory of social scientific field studies in Chicago influenced by such reform projects as Jane Addams's Hull House, John Dewey's laboratory school, and other outgrowths of social scientific study. The practice of sociology was far different in these contexts from the theoretical world Ward understood. For Ward, sociology was built on systematic thought about society; it was not about the process through which reformers might shape society.

Ward was furious about both the Bawden review (calling him a "degenerate") and Small's lengthy notes in the *AJS*. Livid at the treatment, he nearly broke off his friendship with Small over the reviews and felt for the rest of his life that he had been slighted by the "Chicago crowd" in American social science. He wrote Edward Ross that "No one could have been as loathe to give Small up as I. I do not think his instincts have changed, but he no longer owns himself. I do not of course suppose that Rockefeller or Yerkes descend to petty censorship, but such things are always put into the hands of some clique of small men adopted to manage them. . . . I no longer doubt that *Pure Sociology* has thus been put on to the '*Index Prohibitus*,' and can almost fix the date at which it was done. Bawden was hired to put it down and Small was instructed to follow suit."³⁷ J. Odenwald Unger, a friend of Ward's who had been translating his works into German for publication in Europe, wrote Ward that she was quite upset by the hos-

tile reception of the book. Ward sent Unger's lengthy letter to Small, who returned it with even more criticism. "I sent [the letter] to Dr. Small with whom I have been having quite a correspondence about the reviews. He has returned it with some rather uncomplimentary remarks. . . . He only wants adverse criticism. A change has come over the spirit of his dreams, and I can only account for it on the hypothesis that he is under instructions from the capitalistic censorship that controls the [University of Chicago]." Ward was convinced that neither Bawden or Small understood the book at all, although he never really elaborated on just how their criticisms were so misplaced. But, he concluded, "such things do not perturb me at all. The bulk of the reviews are fairly appreciative and the world at large understands me."³⁸

Small was hurt by Ward's charges and hastily wrote him a letter explaining that he had not actually chosen Bawden as reviewer of the volume, and that Ward's nasty letter to him was entirely unwarranted. Ward had called Small a "mule," "intellectually color-blind," and "incapable of clear thinking." Small was stunned, since he had spent a good part of his career supporting all of Ward's work, and he still acknowledged the important influence his books held over him. Ward, he declared, did not understand the function of criticism in the academic world of social science: "I had supposed that you were really anxious to be taken as a text and examined under all different magnifying glasses that could be brought to bear. The charge of wanting to 'down' the book is so far-fetched that I can hardly believe the evidence of my senses to the effect that you have entertained such a notion. We should make ourselves ridiculous if we carried out the program of a mutual admiration society."³⁹

Although deeply wounded by his fights with Small over the reviews of *Pure Sociology*, Ward was hopeful that he could leave this behind as he left for Europe in the summer of 1903. The chance to escape Washington again and enjoy the fellowship of IIS, especially since he served as that year's president, was thrilling. As president, he delivered an address there based on notes he had begun to assemble for the second volume of his system. Although the trip to Europe made him quite ill, it was still a thrilling experience. He wrote Ross in July that the meeting was a grand success: "The whole affair has been one continued ovation, and if I had not been spoiled in the making I certainly should be now. I can only reconcile myself to such attentions by the fact that they are not bestowed upon *me* at all, as president of the IIS, etc., but upon *my ideas*—ideas that have excited in long years of obscurity and seclusion without hope or thought of their ever attracting any attention from the big world. That is where the satisfaction comes in."⁴⁰ Despite the fact that Rose could not join him due in part to her health that summer, Ward still had many friends in Europe to share in the experience.

The hostile relations between Ward and Small were to last the rest of their lives. Throughout 1903 and 1904 Small and Ward tussled on almost every issue, including the program and papers to be delivered at the St. Louis Louisiana Purchase Exposition in 1904. Just as at the Chicago World's Fair and the Paris Exposition, the planners of the fair in St. Louis—including Ward's friend and colleague W J McGee—included an important intellectual conference as part of the exhibits in the city. Small was the chair of the committee on social science, and he had invited Ward to deliver a paper at the meeting alongside a number of the world's prominent social thinkers. He wanted Ward to write a paper on the history of sociology, akin to the essays he had done in the *AJS*, and deliver it alongside Franklin Giddings's paper on sociological methodology. Ward did not want to do the paper on the history of sociology, preferring instead to write on method, but Giddings had already begun the preparation of his essay. By his own admission Ward ignored most of Small's letters on the Congress, until he finally told Simon Newcomb, who was also on the program committee, that he would not deliver an address at St. Louis.

Ward claimed in a letter to Ross that Small never really wanted him to participate in the conference. When Small told him that Giddings already began a paper on methodology, Ward responded that "it is evident now that [Small] would not have let me do it anyhow, and that he was only prevaricating all the time. He is running the Congress on the same principle as the [AJS]. I am not considered sound on fundamental concepts. I could do no harm with the drudgery work of bibliography, and was to be tucked away in a safe place, but in such a manner that foreign sociologists would not be surprised at my being ignored. They can now be told that I was invited but declined."⁴¹ Ross tried to soothe Ward's wounded pride, eventually convincing him to attend the St. Louis World's Fair. When Ferdinand Tönnies was unable to deliver a paper on social structure, Small invited Ward to deliver his own paper on the subject instead. Ward still thought it was Ross who arranged the paper and not Small, but in any case he attended the meeting in the fall of 1904. The paper, entitled the "Evolution of Social Structures," repeated what Ward had written about the social evolution of racial conflict and social assimilation in *Pure Sociology*.⁴²

Between the publication of *Pure Sociology* in 1903 and the publication of the next volume *Applied Sociology: A Treatise on the Conscious Improvement of Society by Society* in 1906, Ward at last formally resigned his position with the Geological Survey and decided it was time to leave Washington permanently. In May 1903 he had received a letter from James Quayle Dealey, a young professor of social science at Brown University, and a longtime admirer of Ward's work. But he had difficulty using the books

with students, wondering if it was possible to abridge Ward's work in a shorter textbook format.⁴³ Ward did not want to do the work himself but agreed to let Dealey prepare the textbook, and he convinced the Macmillan Company to publish the joint venture between them. *A Text-Book of Sociology*, edited and with an introduction by Dealey, appeared in 1905, consisting entirely of reprinted portions of Ward's essays in *Outlines*, chapters from *Pure Sociology*, and the sections on education from *Dynamic Sociology*. The book made little splash, however, since it reprinted rather than condensed Ward's work. Still, Ward was pleased to offer students a more attractive and accessible reprint of his work, and it made him think about the possibility of reprinting larger collections of all of his essays.⁴⁴

Although he had always intended to write a second volume Ward waited until the summer of 1904 to actually begin it. At the same time, he returned to Spencer's volumes, reconsidering the Englishman's social system as he prepared *Applied Sociology*. In a review of Spencer's sociological system written in 1904, Ward criticized the English philosopher's antilabor and antigovernment rhetoric. "The existing 'social unrest' of which we are hearing so much is due in the main to the imperfect state of social integration at which the world has arrived, and its sole remedy must be through more and more complete integration. The present social movement is wholly in this direction. . . . The movement toward collectivism . . . is really a true social evolution, proceeding on natural principles, and aiming at the same end as all other forms of social progress—the good of mankind."⁴⁵ Ward's second volume was to follow this movement toward collectivism based on the theoretical underpinning of *Pure Sociology*.

He began writing his last book shortly before his sixty-third birthday on July 14, 1904: "At three I broke ground on my book, *Applied Sociology*, and wrote two pages," he wrote in his diary. "I am writing on the same paper as *Pure Sociology*. It is just three years ago today that I wrote the first page of that. It is not wholly a coincidence, but I was ready to begin today."⁴⁶ He wrote all summer and fall, finally finishing a draft in February 1905. He originally wanted the Macmillan Company to publish the book, but they had not yet recovered their costs in publishing his two previous books, *Pure Sociology* and *A Text-Book of Sociology*. They asked Ward to cover the losses before publishing another volume. He refused. He was too well known, he argued, to have to do a task he had only done for his first book in 1883.

Infuriated by Macmillan's suggestion that he should cover the costs of publication, Ward decided to return to Ginn and Company, the firm that had published *Psychic Factors*, still in print ten years after its original publication. They agreed to go ahead with the volume, even offering to print a second edition of *Pure Sociology* at the same time. Plates for his book began

to arrive in September 1905, and, as he always did, Ward made extensive changes in his choice of words, language, and the style of his prose.

Late 1905 and early 1906 should have been an ideal time for Ward to come out with the final volume of his system of social thought. By then, sociologists again debated the creation of a professional society of their own. And it was to Ward that many social theorists turned for advice and counsel. The process started in the summer of 1905 when George Veditz, a social scientist at Columbian University, wrote a circular asking a number of prominent social scientists whether or not there should be a professional organization for sociology, just as there was for economics, history, and political science. Veditz, an admirer of Ward's work for years, asked the old master what he thought. Ward agreed that the creation of a organization of sociologists was necessary, arguing that American social scientists could emulate the IIS in Paris.

About three hundred sociologists gathered at the annual meeting of the American Economic Association on 27 December 1905. They argued for hours about the feasibility of an independent organization or whether it should merely be an adjunct to another professional association already in existence. Ward argued forcefully in favor of an independent association, especially since it was impossible to decide how sociologists could join only one other professional organization. It was not clear whether sociology was closest to economics, history, or political science. The assembled social scientists formally passed Ward's recommendation for the American Sociological Association (ASA) and quickly formed a committee to write a charter and elect officers.

The following day Ward received the news that he had been asked to serve as the first president of the association. Ward had thought that Giddings would get the vote, but Ward's friends, Ross, Small, and Giddings as well, engineered the honor for the grand theorist of social science in recognition of the role that he had played in all of their lives. Giddings later remarked that "nothing he had ever done gave him so keen a sense of justice and fitness as he enjoyed in moving that Dr. Ward be made the first president of the American Sociological Society. Many years ago, when even among educated people the name of sociology was not merely discredited, but almost entirely unknown, Dr. Ward was already actively engaged in giving the word meaning and insisting on the great role played by reason in the evolution of human society. All sociologists are under a heavy debt of gratitude to him, and their indebtedness to Ward is at least as great as to August Comte and Herbert Spencer."⁴⁷

Applied Sociology was published shortly after the first meeting of the sociological community to organize a professional society. It should have been an opportunity to define the profession, particularly since a number of social scientists anxiously awaited its publication after the critical fail-

ure of *Pure Sociology*. *Applied Sociology* was written to answer the critics of the earlier volume and to complete his system of social philosophy. In many ways, the book returned to the roots of his work emphasizing social change and reform over theory, restating many of his old themes: education, progress, and the individual's role in social change. In an unpublished preface to the book, Ward argued that "most of my work since *Dynamic Sociology* appeared has been devoted to supplying the foundations for that book. Its chief defect consisted in assuming too much. In the first place it assumed that so simple a proposition as that the desires and wants of men constitute the social forces needed no elaborate demonstration. But the decade that followed its appearance abundantly proved that this was not the case, and *Pure Sociology* [was] written as an answer to all the manifold objections arising from the general failure to understand that proposition."⁴⁸

Still, the book was even more repetitive than *Pure Sociology* and relied heavily on his previous work to defend his ideas, as well as on the work of an obscure French social scientist to support his faith in education as the foundation of social growth. "This work, and its predecessor, *Pure Sociology*," he wrote in the published preface, "constitute together a system of sociology. And these, with *Dynamic Sociology*, *The Psychic Factors of Civilization*, and *Outlines of Sociology*, make up a more comprehensive system of social philosophy." But in many ways what Ward offered his readers was another brief for the power of education, and it was not clear whether they actually saw this as any kind of advance over all his other work. For those who shared his ethical and social concerns, *Applied Sociology* was a concise restatement of principles and a return to the interests that had originally attracted so many people to his work. But for others, Ward's work now seemed tired or quaint. He no longer seemed to set a tone for debates in social science, or even engage the younger theorists of the discipline.⁴⁹

Applied Sociology was a much more compact book than *Pure Sociology*—a little over three hundred pages long. Like its predecessor this book also has a tripartite division covering the major subfields of applied sociology: movement (or change), achievement, and improvement. Applied sociology served the needs and interests of human society for the "profit of mankind." If the subject of pure sociology was the achievements of the social forces independent of the operations of man, then the subject of applied sociology was the aim of the science itself, and its use for the improvement and progress of the social order. The key to this progress was Ward's old interest in education. Provide education and knowledge to the world, he said, and you have the means to secure future improvement and progress. But Ward experienced the same intellectual difficulty he had with *Pure Sociology*. Despite his ethical and political interests he maintained that sociology was a

neutral science, a science somehow independent of politics. It made his faith in progress, education, and sociocracy seem odd, if not entirely contradictory; moreover, as Small had pointed out in his review of *Pure Sociology*, it still remained unclear what differentiated the two fields of sociology. "Applied sociology is not government or politics, nor civic or social reform," Ward wrote in his introduction. "It does not itself apply sociological principles; it seeks only to show how they may be applied. It is a science, not an art. The most that it claims to do is to lay down certain general principles as guides to social and political action. But in this it must be exceedingly cautious. The principles can consist only of the highest generalizations. They can have only the most general bearing on current events and the popular or burning questions of the hour. The sociologist who undertakes to discuss these, especially to take sides on them, abandons his science and becomes a politician."⁵⁰

Much of the first part of Ward's book on "movement" again went over the ground he had covered in the volume on pure sociology, particularly his argument that the subject of sociology was human achievement. Applied sociology examined the conscious efforts of man to improve human society. Ward kept closely to his old themes, adding a new term to his vocabulary about the power of education. The most important movement in recent history, he argued, was the growth of intellectual egalitarianism. The power of the mass of mankind to acquire the knowledge of science and shed the errors of theological thinking, which had so long sought to explain social life, was equal across all the classes and races of mankind. It was the proletariat's coming to intellectual consciousness that should serve as the subject of study for the applied sociologist.

The second part of Ward's book, "achievement," examined how the sociologist could explain the capability of the mass of mankind for the expansion of knowledge. He relied heavily in this section on the work of an obscure French social scientist whom he had met through his participation in the IIS, Alfred Odin. In a statistical work on the origins of French men of letters and the factors that led to their achievements and their genius, Odin found that the effects of their social environment proved much more important than their genetic backgrounds, family, or class position. Education, environment, and opportunity offered the best chance to use the genius—what Ward called the "latent intellect"—inherent in all classes of society. Ward hoped that his lengthy summary and examination of Odin's research into the French social order might serve as a guide for American social scientists and offer a model for a similar study of the factors affecting knowledge and achievement in American communities.

Ward recognized that a modern industrial democracy, unlike the antebellum world of his youth, no longer offered the ability to be truly self-made. Self-made men, Ward now realized, were the products of a dif-

ferent age or economic and social organization before the Civil War, impossible in the twentieth century without the proper opportunity and education to fulfill their ambitions. In many ways he again universalized his own experience and his own desires for education and advancement; he did not want to be an example for advantages of adversity. The equalization of opportunity and education remained his main formula for social reform and the continued progress of the American social order. "There is no use in talking about the equalization of wealth," he concluded. "Much of the discussion about 'equal rights' is utterly hollow. All the ado made over the system of contract is surcharged with fallacy. There can be no equality and no justice, not to speak of equity, so long as society is composed of members, equally endowed by nature, a few of whom only possess the social heritage of truth and ideas resulting from the laborious investigations and profound meditations of all past ages, while the great mass are shut out from all the light that human achievement has shed upon the world. The equalization of opportunity means the equalization of intelligence, and not until that is attained is there any use or any hope in schemes for the equalization of the material resources of society."⁵¹ Throughout the book Ward relied heavily on the insights and the ideas that he had expressed over twenty years earlier.

The final part of applied sociology examined progress or improvement itself, the ends and purposes of the science. He still considered it futile to offer methods or specific plans for his ideas about education, reform, and the importance of the equalization of intelligence and opportunity. "Those who have read *Dynamic Sociology*, unless they expect me to repudiate that work entirely and reject the method that I there outlined, know already what method I recommend. I hope I am somewhat wiser now than I was when I wrote that book, and I know that I have been compelled to abandon some of the positions there taken, but the general philosophy that it contains is still my own, and nothing has occurred to weaken my conviction that the method of that work . . . is not only sane and sound but also practicable whenever society seeks to adopt it."⁵² He avoided any attempt to define his ideas more clearly than he had in *Dynamic Sociology*, offering only the most general discussion of education and the diffusion of knowledge based on his Comtean scheme for the organization of nature. The social heritage, and what he called the "administration of the social estate," that needed to be passed on from generation to generation required all the people of the nation to have equal access to scientific discovery and understanding.

The two principles that he felt were the most important for the applied sociologist to pursue were attractive labor and attractive legislation, both of which he had also covered in *Dynamic Sociology*. Attractive labor returned him to his roots in the productive faith in the laboring classes and

his distrust of parasitic market finance. He highlighted Thorstein Veblen's contribution to his understanding of the origins and function of the leisure class, although with none of Veblen's biting satire. He even noted the contribution of utopian socialist ideals to his faith in attractive labor. But he still offered no schemes or cases to demonstrate exactly how attractive labor could bring about necessary reforms in the social order, despite the progressive movement throughout the country to outlaw child labor, improving working and living conditions in America's cities, and provide trade unions with more power in the face of corporate organization. At least explicitly, Ward made no mention of the community studies, the social reform movements, and the emergence of municipal action against social problems as evidence or examples of his vision of applied social science. He felt that this was an obvious connection, but his failure to highlight these activities still made Ward's arguments seem odd to younger social scientists and social theorists.

The second principle, attractive legislation, again emphasized the need for intelligent use of social data gathered by scientists on the problems faced by an industrial democracy. But the nation needed an intelligent citizenry to operate the laws required to control the social forces and control the progress of society. Moreover, Ward demonstrated a distrust in the ability of legislative bodies to pass the proper legislation needed for the kind of society he hoped for: "It must not be supposed that such legislation can be conducted to any considerable extent in the open sessions of legislative bodies. These will doubtless need to be maintained, and every new law should finally be adopted by a vote of such bodies, but more and more of this will become a merely formal way of putting the final sanction of society on decisions that have been carefully worked out in what may be called the sociological laboratory. Legislation will consist in a series of exhaustive experiments on the part of true scientific sociologists and sociological inventors working on the problems of social physics from the practical point of view."⁵³ It was administrative government, the kind of work Powell tried to do with the Geological Survey, that best served the needs of the industrializing republic.

The volume ended rather abruptly—seemingly unfinished—with no further discussion of or conclusion about the purposes of sociology or the duties of applied science. And he made no attempt to conclude the book with a reconsideration of both applied and pure sociology. It was an odd omission, and one that reviewers noted. The reviews of *Applied Sociology* were far more positive than the reviews of *Pure Sociology*, in part because so many of the sociologists shared Ward's ethical interests even if they did not quite follow what they regarded as his archaic methods. Since *Applied Sociology* dealt so thoroughly with Ward's faith in the power of education and the power of man for improvement, it was natural that at least some

of the reviews were positive. Ross glowingly reviewed the book and naturally supported the conclusions and argument of his uncle. "This great book is a noble crown to the author's philosophy. No writer has presented so powerfully the claims of education as a conscious social policy. No one has so vindicated the worth of the teacher's work. Best of all, however, is the spectacle of an eminent thinker seeking in all humility to show that the fewness of men of eminence is due to adverse circumstances rather than to the rarity of natural talent, and insisting that not a great gulf but only a gentle declivity separates the men of achievement from common work-a-day people."⁵⁴ Even the review commissioned by Small for the *AJS* was highly complimentary. "It is an epoch-making book. . . . One is fairly carried away by the author's meliorism."⁵⁵

The most positive reviews and appreciation of the book came from American socialists. For the rest of his life, in fact, Ward received a number of letters praising his work in the socialist cause, although he never accepted the political label or felt he did anything specific in regard to the Socialist Party. Still, he constantly noted in his files the growth of the Socialist Party and their success in local elections. Philip Minassin, a trade union organizer and socialist from Philadelphia, frequently wrote Ward, praising his work and comparing his collectivism to the work of Karl Marx: "Philadelphia Socialists think of Lester F. Ward as much as they do for their Karl Marx and read his books more." Ward sent Minassin more publications, and also sent him a photograph to keep with him. George Kirkpatrick, another socialist friend, reviewed *Applied Sociology* for *The Worker* and praised Ward's commitment to egalitarianism and national planning. Ward's precise attitude toward the socialist praise is not clear, although he did reject the request of Henry T. Jones, a Milwaukee socialist, to join in the socialist cause and write books on socialist politics. Ward responded that he had no interest in partisan rhetoric, and that he abhorred revolution.

But not all of the reviewers were quite so convinced that Ward's work was revolutionary. Edward Thorndike, educator and psychologist, was particularly critical of Ward, especially since he did not share Ward's ethical and social concerns. Ward's "intellectual communism," Thorndike explained in one of his two reviews of the book, was a simplistic answer to the complex problems of modern social life. Moreover, he argued, it is not the poor and the underclass who need education and support for a life of knowledge but the very people who possess an education. American intellectual life needed more support for researchers and those who contribute to the life of the mind than it needed the further equalization of intelligence and knowledge. Thorndike never agreed with Ward's faith that a favorable environment led to the kind of social order he envisioned, or that even if the distribution of knowledge were improved, it contributed to the general improvement of society.

In a particularly pointed comment on the social life Ward and his friends led in Washington, Thorndike proposed that Ward should have spent the last twenty years teaching the servants of the Cosmos Club the principles of modern scientific thought. If he had, Thorndike wrote, he would not celebrate the distribution of knowledge with such enthusiasm. Thorndike concluded that the profit from Ward's book came from "the realization of problems rather than from the acceptance of the particular solutions which he offers." And yet even Thorndike conceded that Ward treated education more ably and with more comprehensiveness than all social thinkers since Spencer, and admitted that "those who, like the writer, are puzzled to fit the facts to its doctrines and those who heartily accept it will equally enjoy it and equally admire it as a further example of the author's great gifts as a thinker and as a writer."⁵⁶ A reviewer for *The Nation* also criticized the repetitiveness of Ward's book, suggesting that perhaps in 1883 Ward's collectivism and his solution to social problems had seemed quite revolutionary. Now, however, that no longer seemed true.⁵⁷

With the publication of *Applied Sociology*, Ward had finally completed the capstone to his system of social science. Having resigned from the Geological Survey at the end of 1905, there was little left in the city for him, and most of the friends he now had were members of the academic social science community. The old Washington intellectual community was gone for the most part, populated now by younger bureaucrats and scientists who were part of the activist Roosevelt administration. The most important innovations in the relationship between science and government no longer came from the Geological Survey as they had under John Wesley Powell. The years of congressional attacks on the Survey undercut the organization, and as Ward himself knew, it was no longer as ably led or staffed as it was in the early years. Power had shifted away from the Survey by the early twentieth century. In the hands of men such as W J McGee, a Powell protégé, and Gifford Pinchot, government science took the lead in a major conservation movement for national parks, forest protection, and the creation of a national commons of public lands. Despite the fact that his social philosophy had in some ways offered a rationale for activist government and even inspired many of the social scientists and reformers involved in national reform, Ward did little to formally contribute to these activities.

Instead, he wanted a permanent teaching post, and one of his first thoughts was to ask James Dealey if he could be of any assistance. Ward had written him about possibly teaching at Brown at the end of 1905, just before the publication of *Applied Sociology*. Dealey responded positively writing Ward he "was delighted at your suggestion that you . . . might conclude to settle near Providence and Boston. Professor Wilson and I

both agree that in such case you must come to some kind of organic connection with Brown University. Some arrangement can surely be made satisfactory. . . . Your sociological system is so well under way at Brown that it would be most natural that you be connected in some way with our sociological department."⁵⁸ After a month of negotiation, and just after his election as president of the ASA, Ward was granted a teaching position by Brown University's president, William Faunce.

Ward's arrival at Brown was important for the institution, still a small regional college seeking more prominence in the nation's intellectual life. And for Ward it filled a long-term goal of security and, he hoped, the opportunity to promote his ideas even more widely. In teaching he had found a calling and a way to spread the very educational ideals he had upheld for so long. With the final completion of an entire system of social thought, Ward wanted an opportunity to teach students and possibly create a following among younger intellectuals and reformers.

He and Rose were to move to Providence in the fall of 1906. That year, they also received the good news of the birth of Edward Ross's son in spring 1906 whom Ross named for his beloved uncle. Ward was thrilled to leave Washington and, at the age of sixty-five, set off on an entirely new career. "The fact is that Brown is wide awake," he wrote to Ross about the new job. "She has watched the signs of the times and does not want to lag behind. She concluded to strike high and be at the top. I was the choice, wise or otherwise, I go there with flying colors and everything is being done to make me feel welcome. The spirit is beautiful and I am highly pleased."⁵⁹

Ward's arrival at Brown University was to be the climax of his intellectual career, the highlight of a long journey studying and writing about social and scientific subjects. He wrote Ross that he enjoyed the work at Brown, and hoped he could continue it for a long time. Summarizing the last ten years of his life and his desire to achieve a national reputation as a major American social theorist, he told Ross that "[My] call to Brown was not quite so much of a surprise. . . . I suppose I might have been 'called' somewhere long ago if it had not been generally supposed that I was a fixture here [in Washington] and that there would be no use in asking me to go elsewhere. But I had long contemplated a change. I have long felt that I *ought* not to give so much time to natural science. It was a sense of *usefulness*, and I know that my sociological work is more useful than my botanical and geological work." He hoped, he wrote in another letter, to escape the present in his sociological studies, and to impart this to his students: "One of the greatest struggles of my life has been to make philosophy triumph over the present." But this was theoretically easier than it was practically possible in his everyday life.⁶⁰

Before leaving Washington for Providence, Rose (now seemingly in better health) and Lester Ward traveled to England and Europe in the summer

of 1906. It was a much-needed vacation for both of them, and another chance for Ward to attend the next meeting of the IIS held in London in August 1906. He delivered two papers there, later published by Small in the *AJS*, dealing with issues he raised in his most recent books. His first lecture, "The Sociology of Political Parties," examined politics as aspects of his vision of struggle in society and as an example of his principle of social synergy. In the aftermath of the American Civil War, he informed his audience, politics became a struggle between capital and labor, a battle replacing the antebellum conflict between freedom and slavery. But too often this conflict was viewed only in terms of the partisan struggle between Democrats ("the less intelligent class" of American politics) and Republicans (a "party of progress" but now controlled by large industrialists in American society). Instead, Ward argued that it was the state not the nation's political parties that required the attention of sociologists and social reformers; partisanship should have no role in the making of social investigations. "The state still represents the collective action of society, and in a much more comprehensive sense than it did under a monarchical government. . . . Under the strict economic regime that was originally demanded and ultimately achieved, which forbids that state to interfere in any way with the so-called individual freedom of the citizen—the *laissez-faire* theory—it was found that individuals could and did inaugurate a system which restricted the personal liberty of man more completely and more oppressively than the state had ever done." Collectivism, the enlargement of the state's powers, Ward concluded, was the only way out of the nation's "modern slavery" to *laissez-faire* individualism.⁶¹

Ward never intended to deliver his other address at the London meeting. But he felt it was necessary for him to respond to the comments of Jacques Novicow, a Russian social scientist and pacifist who spent his career teaching and working in France. Novicow criticized Ward and other social thinkers for their reliance on Darwin for theories of society—what Novicow called "social Darwinism." It was one of the only times that Ward formally participated in the debate about social Darwinism. Ward felt that it was essential to correct Novicow's mistaken notions about his work. "With this vague notion in their minds," he said in response to Novicow's paper, "certain [social theorists] have invented the phrase 'social Darwinism,' and have set it up as a sort of 'man of straw,' in order to show their agility in knocking it down." In fact, Ward said, all these theorists needed to look at Darwin much more closely if they were going to make this charge. This aspect of Ward's thinking on Darwin actually prefigured modern historical arguments about social Darwinism and the debates about who relied on Darwinian notions for social theory. Darwin was not only a minor figure in his understanding of government development and social science, but, he continued, there is only one proper

way to view Darwinian science. Only Ward's vision of natural science properly understood Darwin, and the other evolutionary theorists such as Lamarck and Haeckel; the scientific insights into competitive natural selection in evolution had no place in the American social system.⁶²

According to Ward, all social theorists who apply the social Darwinian label try to rid social theory of all forms of struggle. First, Darwin is most often confused with Malthusian economics, especially in the work of laissez-faire economists. "It is therefore wholly inappropriate to characterize as social Darwinism the *laissez-faire* doctrine of political economists, even when it is attempted to support that doctrine by appeals to the laws of organic development. That the *laissez-faire* doctrine is false and not sustained by biological principles I freely admit and have abundantly shown, but the fallacy involved is to be found in an entirely different department of scientific investigation." In particular, Novicow had highlighted Ward's view of race struggle as aspects of Darwinian metaphors in his work. But Ward argued that struggle is the very essence of ancient human history, the central subject of pure sociology and an unconscious "genetic" force in human evolutionary history. The real question for social scientists was what they gained from the study of unconscious forces of struggle, and whether they saw struggle as the destiny of human society.⁶³ Modern civilization had witnessed a radical break between nature and culture, and the modern social scientist needed to examine how the mind and reason had the capability to erase the forms of social struggle that characterized older human communities.

After their return from London in the late summer of 1906, Lester and Rose Ward quickly gathered their possessions and made their way to Providence for the start of classes at Brown. During his time at the college, Ward continued to participate in the activities of the IIS at their annual meetings, traveling and studying in England and Europe during the summers of 1907, 1909, 1910, and 1911. He was a valuable representative for Brown, an intellectual far more prominent nationally than many other members of the faculty. The papers in Providence, as well as the *Brown Alumni Monthly*, celebrated Ward's campus arrival in the fall of 1906, both providing a portrait and biographical sketch to highlight his hiring at the school.

Ward's position at Brown became even more important for the college when he was reelected as president of the ASA at the annual meeting held in Providence in December 1906. Ward delivered his first presidential address at that meeting, "The Establishment of Sociology," where he continued to press the issue of synthesis for the new science and the need to set its purposes on a solid scientific foundation. Other sciences had experienced intellectual revolutions in their interpretations for the events of the natural world, he explained, the theory of gravity, for example, in

the explanation for the physical characteristics of the universe radically changed the scientific interpretations of movement, mass, and time. But, he argued, "This is not the case with modern theories in sociology. The organicist theory is not false, nor is that of imitation, nor that of the struggle of races, nor that of social control, nor yet that of the 'consciousness of kind.' . . . These hypotheses, and almost all others in sociology are true, or contain a considerable part of the grand sociological truth which is the final synthesis of them all."⁶⁴

As students of a young social science, scarcely more than a half century old, sociologists needed to see the value in the many competing explanations for social progress. It was no surprise that Ward viewed himself as the grand synthesizer necessary for the establishment of a truly scientific science of society. Society was not a "great bewildering maze," or a "vast meaningless chaos," but was instead the product of "uniform laws and forces, a product of social causation, and stands out in clear relief against the background of history." Returning to his Comtean roots, Ward reminded his audience of sociology's paramount role in the grand scheme of scientific organization. What sociology needed to do was enter its applied stage based on a synthesis of the competing explanations of progress.⁶⁵

In addition to his presidential address, Ward also made extensive comments on social Darwinism, building on the remarks he made at the IIS during the previous summer. In this case, Ward discussed the growing interest in eugenics among American scientists, especially those who viewed the Darwinian struggle of natural selection as something essential for human society. He was deeply critical of the elitist arguments favoring the controlled breeding of humans in order to select out only the best possible characteristics for a future improvement of the human race. Ward always remained completely egalitarian in his social philosophy:

The swarming and spawning millions of the lower ranks [of men] will continue in the future as in the past to swamp all the fruits of intelligence and compel society to assimilate this mass of crude material as best it can. This is commonly looked upon as [a] deplorable consequence. . . . Is it possible to take any other view? I think it is . . . so far as the native capacity, the potential quality, the "promise and potency," of a higher life are concerned, those swarming, spawning millions, the bottom layer of society, the proletariat, the working classes, the "hewers of wood and drawers of water," nay, even the denizens of the slums,—that all these are by nature the peers of the boasted "aristocracy of brains," that now dominates society and looks down upon them, and the equals in all but privilege of the most enlightened teachers of eugenics.⁶⁶

The following year, in December 1907, Ward delivered his second presidential address for the ASA, "Social Classes in the Light of Modern Soci-

ological Theory." The address examined his long-term interest in the nature of social class in the United States. Most social theorists, he argued in the address, viewed social classes as the natural products of human inferiority. Ward, on the other hand, viewed class as the product of a defective social system, one that did not allow all citizens access to knowledge and power. Class was due to "conditions of existence," not the natural inequalities of all men. Ward acknowledged that there were differences in intelligence and capability among the citizens of the nation, but these were not reflected in the class structure of industrial democracy.

What Ward really wanted was a true republican meritocracy, where all citizens were given an equal chance to succeed in the race of life without constantly struggling against adversity. This is what he believed when he entered the Civil War almost half a century earlier; this was the essence of the producerist promise of American democratic society. "It follows that the great end of all social arrangements should be to discourage artificial inequalities and to encourage natural ones. It would be a great gain if the former could be abolished altogether, and could this be done . . . natural inequalities would have no tendency to re-establish them. We should have no social classes. All would stand on equal footing and be enabled to put forth all their energies."⁶⁷ In both of his presidential addresses, Ward stayed true to his antebellum habits of thinking: an interest in the republican framework of society, a dedication to a meritocratic system of education and class, and a powerful devotion to egalitarian social principles. All of these were dependent on Ward's faith in learning as the pathway to success and social reform, despite the fact that, to many social theorists, it no longer seemed entirely adequate, or even necessary. The social reformism of a younger generation was beyond Ward's reach at this point in his career.

Despite the genuine successes of Ward's life after his arrival at Brown and his reelection to the presidency of the ASA, there were significant personal problems weighing heavily on his mind. Although he was to continue to write and teach sociology for another six years, he was increasingly alone. The argument that he had with Small was only the beginning of a deep intellectual isolation that had embittered him by the end of his life. Although he often felt ignored and slighted by the American intellectual community during his career, after finally moving to an academic position he hoped this would change. But he seemed to be even more on the margins of the social science community despite the fact that he served as ASA's president. Ward's science no longer seemed to fit the realities of the reform interests of American social scientists. His systematizing did not have much to offer those attuned to policy, legislation, and the networks of social communication required to radically alter American social and political life.

The move to Providence also proved far more difficult than he first imagined. By the summer of 1908, Rose was quite ill, eventually requiring her to return to Washington to be cared for by her sister, Sarah Comstock. That fall Ward wrote his friend Gumpłowicz about the recent events: "A train of adverse circumstances has prevented me from writing to you or any one else during the summer. In April Mrs. Ward was suddenly stricken down with a dangerous malady. She was in Washington, and I was compelled to drop all my work and fly to her bedside. It was a full month before she was able to rise, and not until June could she be moved to a cooler climate. . . . [She] continues to gain strength, but still requires . . . constant care."⁶⁸ Exactly what Rose suffered from is now unclear, but by 1909 and 1910 she had a series of near-paralyzing strokes that left her completely unable to care for herself. Ward visited Rose whenever he could, especially during breaks in the semesters at Brown. He also returned to Washington during the summers but his extensive teaching and lecturing schedule—both here and abroad—meant he spent much of his time alone. He did have a few friends in Providence including Dealey; Professor George Wilson, also of the social and political science department; the university librarian, Harvey Koopman; and also a young woman named Emily Palmer Cape, who was to become his close assistant and confidante in the last years of his life. But Ward was increasingly isolated from the major currents of the world of academic social science.

Ward spent most of the years from 1907 to 1912 assembling the many essays, addresses, and short papers he had written since his first published article in the late 1870s. He hoped that this could be published in book form; he called it *Glimpses of the Cosmos*. He intended the volume as a "mental autobiography," a guide to his lifetime of work and ideas, and how he came to write, organize, and think about social science. The project encompassed both the organization of his published papers, as well as the organization of his many private letters and personal diaries. The project took nearly all of his spare time at Brown. Arranging papers, writing introductions for each of his essays, and preparing an index to his letters occupied his days, which he spent either in the library or in a campus room he lived in after Rose left Providence.

In addition, he devoted an enormous amount of time to teaching students at Brown. He was a popular teacher, recalled one of his colleagues, and students regarded a class with Ward as an important part of a Brown education. His lectures were fairly conventional for a turn-of-the-century classroom, read from note cards based on his years of writing books and essays. Students marveled at Ward's impressive intellectual range, and he even amazed his colleagues with his most famous of classroom materials: a six-foot-high chart called "The Survey of All Knowledge." Ward's chart summarized in a Comtean scheme all of his years of research in the field

of physical and social science, with sociology standing at the top of the list. But the chart also reflected a kind of quaintness about Ward's social thinking—his interest in systems, in organization of scientific knowledge, and his lifelong concern for taxonomy. None of these aspects of social theory really survived much longer in other classrooms around the country, where empirical social surveys became the norm of social scientific study.⁶⁹

Samuel Mitchell, a fellow professor at Brown, recalled sharing an office with what he called a "searching, fearless, and masterful" thinker. Ward worked in Maxcy Hall, the home of the social and political science department, sharing an office with his friend James Dealey, and Mitchell. As a teacher Ward was a challenging intellect; in every class "he had in mind one angle of truth, and sought to define it sharply and exhaustively in [the] hour. He appealed solely to reason, with no attempt to engage the emotions of his students. I do not mean to imply that his lecture was not interesting, but that to me it was abstract. I fancy, for average students, Ward was somewhat above their heads in the class room or seminar, for he dwelt in the main out on the circumference of social science." In the early 1900s, Mitchell recalled, "Many able scholars and teachers were in the Brown group . . . but in the group, by common consent, Lester F. Ward was pre-eminent."⁷⁰

Sara Algeo, a women's suffrage advocate in Providence, was also one of Ward's students while he taught at Brown University. "Lester Frank Ward," she later recalled, "opened up vistas of [rare] delight. No one can measure the joy of studying in maturity. No callow youth can appreciate the feeling of enthralled ecstasy of sitting for hours pouring over such a book, as Ward's 'Applied Psychology' [*sic*] or his 'Dynamic Sociology,' from pure love of the doing with no nightmare of future tortures in the way of examinations or 'plucks.' . . . Studying with Prof. Ward was like sitting at the feet of Aristotle, or Plato. . . . He was the wisest man I have ever known."⁷¹ Charles Carroll, another student of Ward's, said that he "impressed the student as a final authority; he seemed to know everything, from the beginning until the final destruction of the world. Logic flowed in his words like the gentle current of a country brook in mid-summer. There was no turbulence, no strain, never a hiatus. Thought fitted into thought, each succeeding step resting upon the previous in perfect filiation, building always upward and onward."⁷² Ward was so beloved at Brown that the undergraduates dedicated their annual publication, *The Liber*, to him for 1912.

In the summer of 1909, Ward traveled abroad again and attended the opening ceremonies for the Central Labour College at Oxford, a school for young working-class students recently created by English labor activists. Ward delivered what was to become one of his most beloved speeches.

One of the attendants described Ward's style, speech, and the reception he received by the young labor activists who attended his talk. "A cultured voice with a slight American accent, a restrained eloquence, a mass of facts, quotations, authorities, a dignity of scientific conviction, thus was the form of the vital message handed down to the spell bound youths who are preparing for their life work in the helping of labor to free itself from the toils of capitalism."⁷³

His speech demanded the equalization of intelligence in the nation—intellectual egalitarianism he called it—and opposed a eugenicist interpretation of "breeding for brains." "I very well know . . . that you are all democrats. Of course you know that I am a democrat; you would naturally infer it from the fact that, if I do not represent, I hail from the greatest democracy on this globe. But I want to say more; that my democracy is not merely nominal, not merely political; it is a democracy which is ingrained in every fiber of my nature."⁷⁴ The challenge for the world in the twentieth century, he argued, was not only the battle between progress and poverty but more particularly the battle to provide equal knowledge and education to all social classes. "What do we hear all over the world? Nothing but the subterranean roar of that great mass of mankind, infinitely larger numerically than all the other classes put together; that class is rumbling and seething and working, and coming to consciousness; and when they do come to consciousness they will take the reins of power in their hands, and then will have been abolished the last of all the social classes."⁷⁵

It was powerful language. But heard in the context of Ward's longtime interest in the problems of the producing classes it is not all that surprising. In another speech, delivered at New York City's Thomas Paine Society in January 1912, Ward celebrated the Revolutionary battle for liberty, but indicated that recent social struggles were of a different character. "The struggle of to-day is in the direction of a contest for the attainment of social and economic equality and it is the effort on the part of the fourth estate, which used to be called the proletariat—the working classes, the mass of mankind, to secure social emancipation."⁷⁶

Besides teaching and lecturing, Ward spent the majority of his time after 1910 working on his "mental autobiography." He still spent the summers traveling all over the country to lecture, especially at places where his friends worked, such as the University of Wisconsin (Ross and Ely) and the University of Chicago (Small). Even as the field of sociology moved in different directions, these social scientists still regarded Ward as one of the most important social theorists of his day, a father figure to their discipline. He hoped his collection of essays might provide all of those interested in his work with access to it; many of his essays had been published in small journals with no circulation beyond a small audience.

The book also was to serve as a guide to how he created his many books, essays, and lectures—essentially a history of the products of his mind. It was also clear, however, that he could not complete the task alone. Since Rose was no longer able to assist him in collecting his materials and arranging them, a task she had been performing since the 1870s, he needed some assistance with the project. Ward's unique relationship with the woman who became his assistant, Emily Palmer Cape, provided him with important companionship and intellectual friendship during his time in Providence.

A children's novelist, born in 1865 and married to a wealthy New York businessman, Emily Cape was an odd confidante for Ward in his later years. But she was deeply interested in social theory and was a well-educated intellectual in her own right. She was the first woman to attend classes at Columbia University and was credited with being instrumental in the decision to establish Barnard College as Columbia's sister institution. After hearing of Ward's work from Thaddeus Wakeman, she wrote Ward in 1905 asking to see some of his essays and books.⁷⁷ By 1908, the two had become good friends, and Ward frequently stayed at the Capes' home in New York when he visited the area. She wrote Ward in October 1908 to tell him of her appreciation for his work: "Your books, 'A Textbook of Sociology,' and 'The Psychic Factors of Civilization,' have given me such deep pleasure that I can restrain no longer in sending you a few lines to tell you the splendid good they are doing. You probably receive such an abundance of letters of admiration from all sources, that I hesitated a very long time before thus troubling you; but every thing you say is so like a very part of myself, and the expression so clearly and beautifully put that long years of study for me seem crystallized into a wonderful clearness."⁷⁸

Cape's admiration for Ward came at an important point in his life. Lonely without Rose living in Providence, Ward enjoyed the attention Cape lavished on him—nearly twenty-five years younger than Ward, she offered him companionship at a time he desperately desired it. She was effusive in her praise of his ideas, and as he worked on the publication of his essays it buoyed his spirits. In 1908, Cape wrote that "the ideas you put forth in your books have as it were belonged to me, and though I have many friends, and know several prominent minds, the 'essence', the sincere feeling along the possibilities of *truly* higher development, of comprehending the *actual* beauty of Life—Oh! *so few* seem to grasp. . . . To have found a mind expressing so clearly, so exquisitely truths which touch the very most splendid of sciences today—Sociology—made me long to give my . . . word of gratefulness."⁷⁹

By 1910, this unusual friendship deepened, and Cape sought Ward's opinions and comments on a wide range of social issues. Exactly how far

this relationship went is a mystery to this day, though there are some hints of a very intimate connection in some of Ward's surviving papers. Cape sent him clippings from the New York newspapers about science, social science, and the reform efforts in the nation, and also sent pictures of the places she traveled. On one photograph, clipped from a book about California, she wrote of the beauty of nature and her wish to "stand so silently by you in such a [place], and let you steal a beautiful kiss." That summer she came to Wisconsin to hear Ward speak and teach his summer classes. Ross had invited Ward to teach in the summer session, and Cape made every effort to be there.

While she was in Wisconsin, Cape asked Ward if she could help him with his work of assembling his papers. She had been reading all of the essays Ward sent her, and encouraged him to continue his project to arrange his lifetime of intellectual output into a multivolume collection. "I was wondering why I could not go on with the 'Work' I am so much interested in?" Cape asked Ward. "If it were possible for you to let me have some to go ahead with I should be delighted."⁸⁰ Ward allowed Cape to assist him with the project of collecting his essays. He wrote her in 1910, explaining why the project was so important to him: "The name 'Glimpses of the Cosmos' occurred to me years ago, and I have an old slip with the name on it, but no date. I do not think I wrote the name for a year or two after I decided upon it, for it was in my mind for so long. Many things in my biography are of that kind, long unwritten, I suppose I may be a genius in a sense; so much subconscious work. I explain it as the result of *stocked* (perhaps *overstocked*) mind. I have acquired so much *knowledge* by eternally digging at things, that it is a kind of ferment in my brain, and is constantly cropping out in one shape or another."⁸¹

By 1911, Ward and Cape were well on their way with the arrangement of the volumes of his publications. He scoured his lengthy diaries for biographical explanations of how he developed his ideas, spending hours writing introductions to each of his many essays, and writing lengthy historical guides to each of his longer books. He intended the work to encompass twelve volumes, including all of his papers on social science and reform, as well as the reports and essays written for the Geological Survey. Cape often came to Providence to help him with the work, and the two frequently went on walks in the city to examine the flora of the region. Botany, even if it was no longer his daily occupation, still interested him, and the *Providence Bulletin* once commented that Ward "was frequently seen on the streets of the city, though most of those who noted him in his afternoon walks were unaware that he was one of the most distinguished scholars of his day and generation."⁸² Cape's devotion to Ward and her lavish praise endeared her to him, and she became his chief defender immediately after his death, publishing the first biography of him.

She even encouraged his hope of writing another book on philosophy generally, entitled "Monism; The True Quietism," linking social thought, religion, and science in another grand scheme of thought. But neither his multivolume collection of papers nor another book were to be completed in his lifetime.

Ward had achieved much in his life by 1912. A number of Progressive reformers regarded him as their intellectual precursor—the man who set the stage for the assault on city machines, urban corruption and inefficiency, and the political changes affecting the nation by the 1910s. Frederick Howe, one of the leaders of the American municipal reform movement and a leading Progressive thinker, wrote the older Ward in 1912 "to tell you how great a debt I owe to you for the things you have written. . . . I am but one of thousands who have had their mental mists cleared by your writings." Howe was lavish in his praise for the elder statesman of American social science:

When I express my own intellectual obligations I feel that I am expressing the obligations of a nation for the new interpretations you have given to life, to society, to the place of men and women, to the whole social awakening which has been finding expression during the past ten or fifteen years. . . . You took the heritage which I received from the old school of thought and gave it a new organizing central thought that has been as it were a core about which other things all arranged themselves. And I think you have done that for all of us, whether we are able to trace the parenthood of our thoughts or not. Certainly the whole social philosophy of the present day is the formative expression of what you have said to be true.⁸³

Unfortunately, Ward began to suffer from serious health problems by 1911–12. Although he never openly complained to his colleagues, his health was declining significantly. The wounds he suffered to his legs in the Civil War now began to cause him almost constant severe pain; he also had problems with his lungs, suffering from constant bouts with the flu and pneumonia. His diary records his almost daily struggle with his health, and his inability to keep pace with the work he wanted to complete. Nonetheless, he still pushed himself to work as often as possible. He frequently walked the city for hours on his nature walks, traveling the hilly streets of Providence every day despite the agonizing pain in his legs. He was immensely stubborn in his ways and the exhaustion from this activity bothered him more and more over the course of the next year.

By the winter of 1912–13 his health problems became even more severe. Unable to breath, and suffering "lung complications" as he called them, he was increasingly weak and unable to devote as much time to writing and reading as he would have liked. In February, deeply concerned about his health, he wrote Cape that he hoped "all my literary effects should go

to you for any use you might want to make of them." By March 1913, he was still working very hard but becoming increasingly weak. On 4 March 1913, he recorded in his diary that as he worked on the preparation of the first volume of *Glimpses of the Cosmos* he felt unable to complete the task. Still, he kept working on his courses, on his books, and on an important lecture he was to give in New York City on the connections between sociology and eugenics. On 7 March, although he complained about his loneliness, he still had enough work to occupy him, and besides, he confessed, it was his fortieth wedding anniversary, a day of celebration for him. Rose was also feeling better, he was told by his sister-in-law Sarah (Sate) Comstock, and that made him a little happier.⁸⁴

On 8 March, he left for New York to meet Emily Cape and to lecture at the Federation for Child Study. "We went to the Grand Union [hotel], got a nice room . . . and we went out and had a big dinner, then a talk in the room."⁸⁵ The lecture, "Eugenics, Euthenics, and Eudemics," examined the popularity of genetic planning among a number of social thinkers and quoted the remarks he made about social Darwinism a few years earlier. Although a program of "positive eugenics" may seem to be a good idea, Ward told his audience of municipal reformers, it was simply impossible in practice. "The present eugenic movement is one of distrust of nature, or lack of faith in great principles, of feverish haste to improve the world, of egotism in the assumption of a wisdom superior to that of nature."⁸⁶ Instead, he wanted a program of what he called "euthenics," which Ward essentially defined as the nurturing care of society, and "eudemics," a program that improved the welfare of the masses of society by improving the surrounding environment. It was essentially a return to his old refrain: educate and provide access to information, and reform will come to the nation. No consciously followed program of eugenic "breeding" could possibly do better.

The lecture went over well with the Progressive audience, and Ward was pleased with his reception there. But despite the general good cheer of his visit to New York he was deeply depressed and upset about his health when he returned to Providence. It prevented him from extensive reading and corrections to the page proofs of *Glimpses*. On 25 March, he finished his students' midterm assignments but decided that he had enough of his classes for that semester. His weakness and pain became unbearable at this point.

He told Dealey and his students that he would no longer give lectures that semester and was leaving immediately to return to Washington. On 26 March, he left Providence by boat for New York City, and then by train to Washington. He saw Emily Cape briefly in New York before the train left, and slept most of the way to Washington. "[I] arrived at last in an exhausted condition," he recorded in his diary that evening. "[I] explained

[my trip] as soon as I got my breath. Found Rose looking splendidly. Sate got me a good dinner. Dr. Cuthbert [Rose's physician] came in the evening and I told him the whole story. He is coming tomorrow to examine me thoroughly." Ward felt compelled to continue working, and he did finally finish all the page proofs for the first three volumes of *Glimpses*.⁸⁷

But just two days after he arrived in Washington he had what he called "the sickest day of my life," an inability to breathe, severe and intense pain all over his body, and no strength. He was fearful but also fascinated by what was happening to him; ever the scientific observer, Ward recorded how his body was responding to age and pain. "[I] had a dreadful night," he wrote. "Sat up two hours in bed and 2 and 1/2 . . . in the big chair in the front room. . . . [The doctors] seem to think my heart affected."⁸⁸ He never recovered, and on 1 April he stopped writing entries in his diary—a practice he had kept since 1860. Over the next two weeks his health worsened. On 17 April 1913, with Rose by his bedside, Lester Frank Ward died of heart failure in his Rhode Island Avenue home, just three months shy of his seventy-second birthday.

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Conclusion

Glimpses of the Cosmos

News of Lester Ward's death saddened the world's intellectual community. In academic journals, magazines, and personal letters to Rose Ward, they expressed their deep regret over his passing. Edward Ross, Sarah Comstock, and Rose's niece Sarah Simons administered his will and were determined to provide Ward a proper intellectual legacy. Rose was too ill to carry on this work, eventually succumbing to her own health problems a little over a year after her husband's death. Ward's relatives scoured his papers and unfortunately they destroyed many of his diaries, apparently fearing the intimacy of his reflections; it was, Emily Palmer Cape recorded, a "dastardly deed."¹ Both Sarah Comstock and Sarah Simons took care of Ward's final publication, guiding *Glimpses of the Cosmos* into print. Although Ward never lived to see the publication of his multivolume collection, he had finished the preparation of the introductory material for each essay. The family decided not to reprint all of Ward's work in its entirety, cutting down the collection from the original twelve volumes to six. The first volume of *Glimpses of the Cosmos* appeared in late 1913. The other five appeared between 1914 and 1918, all completed under the direction of Sarah Comstock and Sarah Simons.

Ward's final posthumous publication offered American intellectuals and reformers a guide to his wide interests in and thinking about science and society. It is an impressive collection of essays, ranging over all fields of physical and social science. When Albion Small reviewed the first three volumes in 1914 he expressed his "awe for [Ward's] terrific mental drive." The collection ultimately disappointed Small, however, because it seemed to lack a context to understand Ward as a thinker: "In sociology and biography

[Ward] seemed to feel that there was a self-sufficient structure [to] his thinking, and that any reference to the surroundings in which the structure took shape was irrelevant, or at least superfluous."² Much like the taxonomic and organizational structure of his science, Ward's final volumes were a massive catalog of his life with little reference to the forces that shaped his thinking.

The volumes also reveal some of the negative aspects of Ward's personality that plagued the last years of his life. He lashed out in the introduction to his essays against his enemies in American social science, and against the ignorance of his work he identified among social theorists. When American social thinkers paid heed to the work of Henri Bergson, for example, Ward claimed he could find nothing in Bergson's volumes that he himself had not said earlier. Ward's obsessive interest in the development of each of his ideas offers a wealth of information for his biographer but also revealed a certain immodesty of his later years in celebrating his achievements. Nothing was too inconsequential to mention to his readers: the size and type of the paper he worked on, the hours and days he spent on each essay, the praise he received from colleagues for his ideas.

In the summer of 1913, the American Sociological Association held a memorial meeting in honor of their first president, publishing the comments of the participants in an issue of Small's *American Journal of Sociology*. Most of the commentators were Ward's longtime friends including Edward Ross, James Quayle Dealey, Franklin Giddings, and Small himself. Each of them felt sociologists owed a deep debt to Ward's work in social theory, at least as inspiration for the study of society and for forcefully arguing that social change could be understood. Ward's passionate critique of laissez-faire economics was one of the earliest criticisms of the "do-nothingism" of Gilded Age political culture, an important part of the growing chorus of voices advocating for reform of national institutions in the late nineteenth century. All American social scientists needed to make Ward's work their starting point for understanding social progress. Ross celebrated his beloved uncle as "the foremost . . . social philosopher" of the late nineteenth century. "Ward lived to see his philosophy triumph in the minds of leaders of thought and opinion," Ross concluded. "Today there is nothing left of the Spencerian theory of the state which thirty years ago dominated the political thought of intellectuals."³

Small's lengthy comments, however, offered the most cogent assessment of Ward's life and work. Unlike Ross, who always defended his uncle's social theory, Small felt no personal or familial obligation to Ward, clashing with him on several occasions in the last ten years of his life. Small left no doubt that Ward's work was important in American social philosophy, but he also provided a judicious assessment of Ward's faults as a social theorist. For Small, Ward's early work, especially *Dynamic So-*

ciology, was inspirational, far different from anything else he or his contemporaries had ever read. Reading Ward opened their eyes to new ways of thinking:

I cannot precisely date my discovery of *Dynamic Sociology*, but its meaning for me was crucial, and I was aware at once that it had leveled barriers to an advanced stage in my mental growth. . . . The sight of the title *Dynamic Sociology* instantly acted as a reagent to crystallize elements that had been incoherent in my mind, and to separate the product from foreign substances. The moment I began to turn the leaves of the book, I was aware of feeling as the alchemists might have felt two or three centuries earlier if they had stumbled upon the "philosopher's stone." . . . I have often said, and it remains my estimate, that, everything considered, I would rather have written *Dynamic Sociology* than any other book that has ever appeared in America.⁴

Although *Dynamic Sociology* was a revolutionary book for those who read it in the 1880s and 1890s, Small admitted that "at the same time the book never seemed to me a solution, but rather a wonderfully expressive symbolic guide to the path in which solutions might be found."⁵ Ward had never advanced much beyond that first book. His career as a thinker could never offer any more philosophically or scientifically than the ideas he expressed in 1883. "I must confess that I have never been able to learn from Dr. Ward's later works anything of first-rate importance which I did not find in *Dynamic Sociology*. . . . I think he would have endorsed my opinion that the later books were justified pedagogically, but that they exhibited a scientific anti-climax."⁶

For the rest of his career, Small was to continue to offer this combination of quiet praise and stern criticism of Ward's work in social science. When he reviewed fifty years of American sociological theory in 1916, Small struggled to place Ward's thought in the history of the discipline. Ward was "a voice crying in the wilderness" when he first published his system of social thought in 1883.⁷ But he also was a remarkably provincial intellectual, detached from many late-nineteenth-century developments in social theory and social philosophy. His psychology was especially dated, Small argued. Ward clung to outmoded models of social thinking, remaining committed to the systematic thought of Comtean positivism and Spencerian evolution even as social scientists moved toward other modes of analysis.

Small also recognized the deep commitment Ward had to a "pure science" ideal of research. He was above all a "museum investigator," Small wrote. "His daily work was to sift botanical evidence, to draw up reports on the evidence, to label and pigeonhole specimens, with a high degree of probability that both reports and specimens would rest forever after in undisturbed oblivion."⁸ Small argued that Ward's greatest contribution

lay in his impressive workmanship and his wide-ranging interests in all forms of science. But Ward's personal faults often overcame his science and social theory. He was stubbornly committed to his ideas alone: "His work was . . . always more insulated from that of men engaged on the same problems than was good for the author and his products. . . . He grew more and more unable to abide anyone who showed signs of thinking that he might not have said the final word on the subject of sociology."⁹ Small knew Ward's personality all too well. Ward never found the kind of camaraderie he had with Powell with any of the other social theorists that he knew.

Ward remained the great "initiator" for sociological studies in the United States, Small concluded, but he was always out of place among university-trained social scientists. Ward was a product of a different intellectual world. He had no intellectual models to follow in his early life, no clear way to pursue a life of the mind when he had to struggle for money, a job, and an education. Science was to him a gospel, a replacement for religious evangelism in some ways; it was not a method of analysis but a firm set of clear, progressive, and observable facts guiding all aspects of social life. As Small recognized, Ward's autodidacticism produced in him a peculiar habit of mind; the same qualities that allowed him to succeed despite the difficult obstacles he faced in his early life also hindered his influence among American intellectuals: stubbornness, his unyielding defense of his ideas, his unwillingness to accept any criticism, and his desperate desire for praise late in his life. Firmly convinced that he could understand the forces shaping society and offer the ability to control them, Ward could not admit that there were any faults in his system, could not even entertain the notion that there might be a range of possible solutions to social problems not spoken of in his work.

In contrast, Small argued, the younger academic social scientists trained in the 1880s and 1890s maintained a "depressing consciousness that the relations which they wanted to understand were a labyrinth to which they had not found a very satisfactory guide. They were perforce investigators. They had to work in a fashion which was a rough sort of induction." Sociology, Small declared, now needed to examine the "human facts" of social life; social scientists needed to use ethnographic techniques, data collection, and fieldwork to assess the forces shaping modern American life. "We have given up the notion that it is feasible to arrive at a survey of human experience so complete and precise that it may be reduced to a miniature, as we make reduced models of our physical world, or of our solar system."¹⁰ Systematizing was not appropriate to this endeavor. Theory in Ward's hands depended too heavily on preconceived notions of social progress. Small was even more critical of Ward in his textbook of sociology, *The Origins of Sociology* (1924). He chastised Ward's

mistaken notion that sociology owed more to Auguste Comte than anyone else, claiming instead that it was the German academic inheritance that most influenced the development of social science in the United States, which most historians would now agree with.¹¹ There was a sea change in the forces shaping American intellectual life in the late nineteenth century, and Ward simply could not keep pace with the changing structure of social theory.

Ward's mixture of reform advocacy in *Dynamic Sociology* and his attempt to build a dual system of sociology in his final two publications often caused divergent reactions to his work from the 1920s to the 1940s. But in Small's assessment of Ward's legacy, he put his finger on the key contribution Ward had made in 1883. He had indeed provided a "symbolic guide" for social reformers in the twentieth century, and his work helped set in motion and contribute to a decades-long process of restructuring American liberalism (a process that continued into the mid-twentieth century). There were few social theorists in the 1870s and 1880s advocating for the democratic aspects of social planning; many had entirely rejected the antebellum faith that reform could possibly remake the world. Ward maintained this ethical commitment, remade it for an industrial republic, and many early-twentieth-century progressives found in him a father figure for reform and social science.

As social scientists debated the meaning of social scientific data and the proper role of social science in the public sphere, they put Ward's ideas to variant uses. On the one hand, Ward's books and articles could be safely ignored by some members of the sociological community as an anachronistic and old-fashioned form of social theory. Sociological study had taken a dramatically different turn by the 1920s. His polymath synthesizing was no longer appropriate to a social theory attuned to empirical community studies and detailed portraits of the social conditions of modern American cities and towns. In such works as William I. Thomas's series of volumes on Polish peasant life in Europe and America, Robert Park's voluminous studies examining the city as a sociological laboratory for studying American community life, or in the culminating achievement of pre-World War II sociological study, Robert and Helen Lynd's *Middletown*, the study of sociology focused on just the sort of problems Small indicated Ward ignored: the "human facts" of social life in a modern industrial democracy. The study of sociology became a discipline far removed from the intellectual world Ward understood. Abstract theorizing, especially in the building of systems of social thought, did not fit the needs of research or theories of social change.

Longtime supporters of laissez-faire and classical economics were even more dismissive of Ward's life and work—and in their interpretations of Ward there is scarcely any praise for the work he did in establishing social

theory after the Civil War. Albert G. Keller, a student of William Graham Sumner and his successor as chair of sociology at Yale University, remembered Ward as a “simpler, kindlier, more unworldly, more childishly and inoffensively egotistical soul than . . . is seldom to be encountered. No one could begrudge him the delight of his latter days in the recognition that came to him. But the truth is that, scientifically speaking, he had better stuck to his paleobotany.”¹² Keller, a devoted follower of Sumner, had little love for Ward’s theories or his ethical interests. Ward struck him, especially in his later volumes *Pure Sociology* and *Applied Sociology*, as “a wishful thinker” and a “special pleader” for his personal causes; he was a “self-centered” and “naïvely vain” man who was always bothered by his lack of recognition. “I do not see scientific dispassion in either of these attempted demonstrations; I see merely a defense of a pre-accepted thesis set forth with a show of much random learning. . . . He remained to the end a juvenile-minded sentimentalist and wishful thinker. What lends him a certain interest as a person, especially when combined with his paternal amiability, totally destroys confidence in him as a scientist.”¹³

On the other hand there was a small revival of Ward’s work by sociologists who challenged the empirical objectivist model of social science research. At George Washington University, George Veditz, a sociologist who helped found the American Sociological Association, organized the Lester Frank Ward Sociological Society, a short-lived organization of students dedicated to social science. In histories of sociology written in the 1920s and 1940s, most especially by sociologists critical of the objectivist trend such as Harry Elmer Barnes and Charles Ellwood, Ward was celebrated as the founding father of the discipline, the first social theorist to offer a defense of social planning led by the expertise of social scientists. Barnes, in fact, dedicated his *History and Prospects of the Social Sciences* to “Lester Frank Ward, who first clearly envisaged the importance of the social sciences in determining the destiny of man and society.” Clement Wood, another popularizer for social theory in the 1930s, celebrated Ward as ranking among the giants of nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century thought such as Karl Marx, Charles Darwin, and Sigmund Freud. Bernhard J. Stern, a radical sociologist and editor of the Marxist journal *Social Forces*, devoted much of his research in the 1930s to collecting Ward’s correspondence and publishing it for the entire sociological community. When Samuel Chugerman’s biography of Ward appeared in 1938, his reputation as the founding father of reform-minded sociology was just reaching its peak. By the late 1940s and 1950s, intellectual historians also rediscovered Ward, giving him a prominent place among American social thinkers of the late nineteenth century.¹⁴ As World War II loomed, sociologist Melvin Vincent celebrated Ward in the centenary year of his birth. Modern sociologists, he declared, must learn from the optimism and faith Ward had in social planning.¹⁵

How then should we remember Ward? What influence did he have on twentieth-century social theory? Intellectual influence is a notoriously difficult problem for the historian of ideas to measure. In most cases it is not even evident what criteria should be used to measure the influence of a single intellectual. I have tried to see Ward's role in shaping political thought in the late nineteenth century as part of a broader effort of the Washington intellectual community and the social sciences at large to re-think American liberalism. There is, I think, tremendous value in examining the connections between biography, ideas, and society in intellectual life, particularly as historians reexamine the study of the late nineteenth century. I have taken as my guide in this study of Ward's life and thought C. Wright Mills's injunctions on understanding history and biography in his examination of sociology:

Know that many personal troubles cannot be solved merely as troubles, but must be understood in terms of public issues—and in terms of the problems of history making. Know that the human meaning of public issues must be revealed by relating them to personal troubles—and to the problems of the individual life. Know that the problems of social science, when adequately formulated, must include both troubles and issues, both biography and history, and the range of their intricate relations. Within that range the life of the individual and the making of societies occur; and within that range the sociological imagination has its chance to make a difference in the quality of human life in our time.¹⁶

To a certain extent Ward's reputation as the precursor to modern administrative government is deserved—especially when one considers how early his system of social thought appeared and the impact that his work had on a few key young social scientists such as Ross, Ely, and Small. Many of the works celebrating him in the 1930s and 1940s looked to Ward to justify the development of a managerial state and the expansion of government services during the New Deal. These advances in social planning and government initiative in the economy have pushed many recent historians to study American liberalism in new and different ways than the liberal tradition was previously understood. One can find easy support in Ward's work for this recent historiographical trend—in *Dynamic Sociology* and the essays he wrote in the 1880s, Ward offered a counterpoint to negative ideas about social reform and government expansion. His democratic optimism that there could be social change, that one could still hold on to the promises of reform as he understood them from antebellum political culture, deserves attention as elements of political culture after the Civil War. As recently as the 1990s, a few writers have placed emphasis on Ward in popular books and essays as the key early voice for welfare-style government before the New Deal.¹⁷

Ward did provide his own sense of how he viewed his contribution to liberal reform thought in the late nineteenth century. Although he could not overcome the characteristic immodesty of his later work, complaining about the "complete lack of acquaintance . . . with me and my works" among social scientists, Ward recognized that his ideas were in many ways products of long-term changes in American intellectual life. "[A]s my ideas are slowly making their way in the world, and getting in the air . . . and as the world becomes ripe for them, they are seized upon by brighter minds who imagine they have an original thought. Much of it, however, is due to the *Zeitgeist* itself, which is at last overtaking me."¹⁸

One need look no further than the work of few key twentieth-century political intellectuals such as Herbert Croly, Walter Lippmann, and most importantly John Dewey to see the legacy of Ward's attempt to criticize a rapacious market capitalism, reexamine the traditional liberal focus on the individual, and quiet fears about the tyranny of government. Ward's scientific politics and belief that the nation needed central planning in support of progress found expression in works such as Croly's, *The Promise of American Life* (1909). Croly, whose father David Croly was a positivist following in Auguste Comte's Religion of Humanity, famously expressed the "new nationalism" of early-twentieth-century social reform by arguing that America needed to seek planning with Hamiltonian means to achieve Jeffersonian ends. At least in spirit Ward hoped for much the same thing almost thirty years earlier and had been working in a government organization dedicated to just such an ideal. Walter Lippmann's famous expression of the Progressive reform creed in *Drift and Mastery* (1914) also showed a debt to Ward's ideas expressed in the years immediately following the Civil War and Reconstruction. Democracy was itself, in Lippmann's formulation, the politics and understanding of science; scientific thinking, he argues, structures all social understanding and "it is self-government," as he wrote in his famous essay. This was how the nation could escape from its ceaseless drift in growth and progress. Dewey, the most sophisticated of all the twentieth-century political thinkers on the relationship between democracy and individualism, pondered for his entire intellectual life the same problems that Ward tried to solve in the 1870s and onward. In books such as *Individualism Old and New* (1930) and *Liberalism and Social Action* (1935), Dewey reconstructed liberalism, discarding the emphasis on competitive capitalism as the fountainhead of the protection for liberty.¹⁹

But Ward was also correct in saying that he was now being overtaken. Political thinkers such as Croly, Lippmann, Dewey, and others in the early to mid-twentieth century were not advocating for a positivist science. They knew that the kind of certainty Ward discovered in scientific method was illusive if not entirely impossible. They also understood much more

about the socialization of human personality and they had a much more sophisticated understanding of human psychology. The faculty psychology of Ward had no place in a modern industrial world and did not fit the reality of human experience in the twentieth century.

Still, Ward's critics have given him far too little importance in late-nineteenth-century social thought. It is true that Ward's scientific work was dated by the twentieth century in his devotion to systems and the collection of massive amounts of data. But his botanical work in this regard created a foundation for later bibliographic and scientific work in the mid- to late twentieth century. Botanist Henry Andrews, a longtime professor at Washington University in St. Louis and a major expert in paleobotany in the post-World War II era, recalled coming across Ward's work in gathering the *Compendium of Fossil Plant Names* when he was at Geological Survey in the early 1950s. He was amazed at the amount of work Ward had put into this project, nearly 160,000 names by the time he died. This collection became the foundation for books on plant nomenclature in the 1950s and 1960s, works still used by scientists and updated every decade by the Geological Survey.²⁰

In addition, few of Ward's supporters or his critics have ever considered the impact that working in Washington had on Ward's notions about science and society. Ward was removed from many of the forces shaping the developments of academic social science in the late nineteenth century, and to judge him (as some critics have) by the standards of modern academic research seems odd. He was most importantly part of a provincial intellectual community that remained aloof from the specialization of the American university, and yet tied to it through cooperative scientific work. It was possible to see a joint venture in Gilded Age political and social reform between government scientists and social scientists and those who worked in the academy. Theirs was supposed to be a joint effort at remaking the nation in the aftermath of war. Although it was a community that eventually failed to achieve its broad-based goals, it surely represented an important part of the intellectual landscape of the country from the 1860s to the early 1900s.

Although the history of the Washington intellectual community in the late nineteenth century is remembered more for the work of John Wesley Powell, there was a much broader community of fellow-travelers involved in their efforts. As a key member of Powell's community of scientists Ward did have an important impact in laying the groundwork for an ideal of administrative planning guided by a central authority of scientific associations in the nation's capital. And, much more so than Powell, Ward provided a grand intellectual framework for government scientific work. Although the locus of power in government science gradually shifted away from the Geological Survey in the early twentieth century, remnants

of the interest in administrative science did survive in Progressive era Washington. Ward's ideas about capabilities and importance of government science are a more powerful legacy than any specific contributions he might have made to Progressive politics.

The most enduring survival of Ward's concept of scientific administration lies in the Progressive era conservation movement. In the Inland Waterways Commission, led by Powell protégé W J McGee, in Frederick Newell's Reclamation Service, originally part of the Geological Survey but later its own bureau within the Department of the Interior, and in the Forestry Bureau, led by the able Gifford Pinchot, Washington scientists remained important parts of the policymaking functions of government in the early twentieth century. They still had to fight the same political forces that plagued Washington scientists during Powell's tenure at the Geological Survey, especially Western senators fiercely protecting their states from any government intervention for waterways, irrigation, or government control of land policy. This kind of scientific politics and administration owed enormous debts to Ward's work. McGee, Newell, and Pinchot were administrative scientists committed to the policy structures needed to regulate America's use of its natural resources. But they each built their careers in government science based on their predecessor's work in forming the structure of the Washington scientific community.²¹

Ward's broader contribution to twentieth-century American liberalism, especially what historians are now calling the reconstruction of American liberalism, is far more important than many historians have previously realized. Ward's contributions to liberal political theory went beyond serving as just as a critic of *laissez-faire* political economy. There are strong parallels between Ward's faith in education and the centrality of education in John Dewey's devotion to small-group participatory democracy. Ward's optimistic faith that education was to serve as the mainspring of a new meritocratic social order is admirable, but it was still left to others to define precisely how this could be carried out into a new kind of social order and politics. Ward's devotion to education in his system certainly deserves attention although his inability to indicate any specific ideas about the public school system is admittedly frustrating.²²

Of course we can and should be critical of the tendencies within the vision of national planning Ward expressed that ignored local concerns and issues, and that ignored the hard questions of how those who disagreed on solutions could solve problems in democratic politics. Not all questions, as Ward's critics such as Dewey pointed out, would be solved by Ward's ideas of education and planning; the conflict may become clearer but the result and solution would be just as far off. There was also an antidemocratic tone in much rhetoric about the needs for planning and regulation in American society (though Ward himself avoided this much of

the time). The Geological Survey ran headlong into this problem with the effort to map and control water access in the American West, and the ignorance of local needs, local concerns, and local constituencies continued to plague those administrative scientists who followed the early workers such as Ward and Powell. There was a naïveté in Ward's presumption that education, properly done, could lead to social progress and social reform. The perfectionism that lay within his ideas expressed a somewhat simplistic faith in the ability to reshape the individual.

But there is also good reason to try to understand Ward's belief in the benefits of planning and national direction. Not all democratic or popular tendencies were good for society, Ward well knew. Slavery, for example, was an issue that needed to be solved by the power of government. In his own lifetime he had witnessed the need for rational decision making to solve national problems. And, for him, as for later progressives such as Lippmann and Dewey, science could provide the answers necessary to solve national dilemmas. Most especially for Ward this was the problem of labor and capital, the problem of not providing any kind of social leadership as the nation ran headlong into the age of corporate capitalism and industrial expansion.

Ward should best be remembered for his admirable defense of egalitarian social ethics and a commitment to concerns about working-class success. He harbored few prejudices about the ability of class, sex, or race to determine success in American life. Considering the path of some social scientists (including his nephew Edward Ross) toward racial and ethnic restrictions based on theories of racial intelligence, the IQ movement, and immigration legislation in the 1920s, Ward should be heralded for holding firmly to his egalitarian faith, a faith born in the reform of antebellum America and tested during the Civil War and Reconstruction. Although Ward's science can certainly be criticized, and his devotion to outmoded theories of scientific research put him out of touch with many late-nineteenth-century changes in social theory, his faith in basic equality was an important hallmark of all his work. Ward's social thought demonstrates the persistence of antebellum habits of thinking into the late nineteenth century: the force of republican and producerist categories of labor, moral economy, and class carried across the Civil War, powerfully informing the discussions of the social problems of the late-nineteenth-century republic. Ward's overwhelming commitment to and faith in progress represents a sharp departure from traditional portraits of Gilded Age complacency and simplicity of thought.

Ward's life also provides an important entry into the world of the Washington intellectual community and the world of Gilded Age social theory generally. As historians turn their attention more and more to the social history of intellectuals and intellectual communities it is important to consider

the ties between the academy and the unique provincial intellectual worlds of nineteenth-century America. Washington was one of the leading scientific communities in the late nineteenth century, one that differed markedly from intellectual communities in New York, Boston, or Chicago, but nonetheless contributed to the development of a political theory better suited to the post-Civil War industrial republic.

Ward's thinking about politics and society is most instructive for studying the shifts from antebellum reform and politics to the postwar world of industry, organization, and bureaucracy. At the heart of Ward's political theory lay a commitment to social change that had its roots in antebellum perfectionism. This carried over the course of the Civil War and Reconstruction and it was never entirely discarded by Ward in his books and essays. The mixture of republican ideas about virtue and knowledgeable citizenry and liberal ideas for the economic freedom to succeed and move up the social ladder combined in Ward's political theory. Although Ward's administrative faith in sociocracy and the realities of democratic participation sometimes mixed uneasily, he nonetheless bequeathed a powerful sense that there was a genuine possibility for social change at a time after the Civil War when many had discarded that hope.

In the final volume of his unfinished trilogy examining the history of American thought, Vernon Parrington offered his own assessment of late-nineteenth-century American liberalism and the contributions of thinkers such as Ward. Parrington chastised the younger critics of American democracy in the 1920s, warning them not to ignore the long history of liberal thought in the United States and not to forget those who came before them in defining the nature of American society. Parrington believed that those social critics, such as the Young Americans like Randolph Bourne and Van Wyck Brooks, who, rejecting intellectual precursors as out of touch with the modernist needs of the industrial republic, missed important parts of their own intellectual heritage. "The younger liberals who love to tweak the nose of democracy are too much enamored of what they find in their own mirrors. They are indisputably clever, they are spouting geysers of smart and cynical talk, they have far outrun their fathers in the free handling of ancient tribal totems—but they are afflicted with the short perspective of youth that finds a vanishing-point at the end of its nose." Parrington highlighted the contributions of liberal thinkers of the past who have been ignored by the young liberals criticizing their intellectual mentors, and he placed Ward high upon the list.

Middle-aged liberals—let it be said by way of defense—at least know their history. They were brought up in a great age of liberalism—an age worthy to stand beside the golden forties of the last century—and they went to school with excellent teachers. Darwin, Spencer, Mill, Karl Marx, Haeckel, Taine,

William James, Henry George, were masters of which no school in any age need feel ashamed; nor were such tutors and undermasters as Ruskin, William Morris, Matthew Arnold, Lester Ward, Walt Whitman, Henry Adams, to be dismissed as incompetent. . . . It was the end of an age perhaps, the rich afterglow of the Enlightenment, but the going down of the sun was marked by sunset skies that gave promise of other and greater dawns."²³

Another social critic also echoed similar sentiments in assessing the history of late-nineteenth-century America. In the early 1930s, Lewis Mumford (although himself one of the Young American critics of the 1920s) warned that historians and social thinkers have too often ignored aspects of the "Brown Decades," those years when America seemed to be floundering after the Civil War. He also included Ward as one of those forgotten contributors to a new American politics: "Beneath the crass surface [of the Gilded Age], a new life was stirring in departments of American thought and culture that had hitherto been barren, or entirely colonial and derivative. . . . Granted that the brightest successes of the Brown Decades seem . . . to be only muddy failures," Mumford argued, "it is much more important to realize that many works which were then pushed aside as inept, ludicrous, or eccentric were in actuality genuine successes, emergent elements in a growing American tradition."²⁴

Both Mumford's and Parrington's reflections on late-nineteenth-century America are instructive in the study of American life and thought in the last years of the nineteenth century. Social scientists are notoriously whiggish in their histories, often overlooking the ideas and forces that shaped their disciplines in favor of capturing a past that better fits the present world of social scientific thinking and practice. As a number of recent commentators have noted, sociologists and other social scientists have developed a canon of thought (most generally Marx, Weber, and Durkheim) that has dropped many of the early workers and thinkers out of the discipline's history. Those in the canon are not necessarily to be ignored but there is a far wider world of intellectuals who established the basis for examining the forces shaping society and social development.²⁵ Ward's work is generally ignored today, not part of contemporary debate about the social sciences in this country. And yet he was a key member of the early history of American social science, even with his faults and his inability to adjust to the rapidly changing intellectual environment of the early twentieth century. This is not all that surprising—many if not most intellectuals eventually suffer a similar fate, becoming rigid and fixed in their ideas. Ward's attempt to find a social theory that recaptured a simple and basic faith in civic equality and responded to the needs of a rapidly industrializing society in the aftermath of the Civil War remains an important achievement of Gilded Age social theory. Ward's work was one

of destruction—trying to tear apart a Spencerian social system he felt greatly hindered the critical development of American national reform.

In the volumes Lester Ward spent the last years of his life working on, he summarized what he felt was his deepest contribution to the science of society. “I was an apostle of human progress,” he concluded, “and I believed that this could be greatly accelerated by society itself.”²⁶

Notes

INTRODUCTION

1. Brown University's Faculty Committee quoted in James Quayle Dealey, "Lester Frank Ward," 63.

2. Charles Beard, "Lester F. Ward." This essay was a review of Samuel Chugerman, *Lester Frank Ward*, the second biography of Ward. Charles and Mary Beard also devoted space to Ward in *The American Spirit*, 405–12.

3. In addition to Chugerman's hagiographic celebration of Ward there are two other works: Emily Palmer Cape, *Lester Frank Ward*, and Clifford Scott, *Lester Frank Ward*. Cape was, in essence, Ward's official biographer; he wrote her that she should write his life's story after he died. The book is an intimate reflection on the man but Cape never really engages the broader context of Ward's social and political thought. Clifford Scott's study is by far the best of the three, and it is an important examination of Ward's life and thought.

Three other very important works spend some time on Ward. Robert Bannister's *Sociology and Scientism*, 13–31, examines the development of an objectivity standard for sociology in the United States, which he sees as early as Ward's own work. Dorothy Ross, in *The Origins of American Social Science*, 85–97, pays much attention to Ward's contributions to early social science. For a study that pays attention to Ward's life and work in Washington, D.C., but also takes a broader American positivist tradition as its focus, see J. Gillis Harp, *Positivist Republic*.

4. Charles A. Ellwood, *A History of Social Philosophy*, 530.

5. John C. Burnham, *Lester Frank Ward in American Thought*, 22. See also John C. Burnham, "Lester Frank Ward as Natural Scientist," 259–65.

6. Ralph Gabriel, *The Course of American Democratic Thought*, 220.

7. Richard Hofstadter, *Social Darwinism in American Thought*; Henry Steele Commager, *Lester Frank Ward and the Welfare State*. Commager also devoted an entire

chapter to Ward in his *The American Mind*. See also Ernst Becker's review of the history of sociology, *The Structure of Evil*, 68–99. For a general review of the literature of "social Darwinism," see Robert Bannister, *Social Darwinism*, and Donald Bellomy, "'Social Darwinism' Revisited."

8. Eric Goldman, *Rendezvous with Destiny*; Sidney Fine, *Laissez-Faire and the General Welfare State*.

9. Daniel Rodgers, "In Search of Progressivism," 123.

10. Daniel Rodgers, *Atlantic Crossings*; James Kloppenberg, *Uncertain Victory*.

11. Louis Menand, *The Metaphysical Club*, x. An earlier and important work in political thought is George Frederickson, *The Inner Civil War*. Frederickson, however, had a much more specific subject in mind than does Menand.

12. Lester Frank Ward, "Education and Progress," in *Glimpses of the Cosmos*, 6:337–40. Ward called this six-volume collection of his smaller works his "mental autobiography." This essay was originally delivered as a speech before the Central Labour College at Oxford in 1909. I borrow the phrase "disciplinary professionalism" from Thomas Bender's *Intellect and Public Life*.

13. On "corporate liberalism," see R. Jeffrey Lustig, *Corporate Liberalism*. See also, on the history of the Progressive generation, Morton White, *Social Thought in America*; and Robert Wiebe, *The Search for Order*. Robert Westbrook's *John Dewey and American Democracy* is an excellent history of both Dewey's thought and the intellectual life of the Progressive generation in general. It represents a model for intellectual biography. For a reconsideration of this historiography see Dorothy Ross, "The Liberal Tradition Revisited and the Republican Tradition Addressed," in *New Directions in American Intellectual History*, ed. John Higham and Paul Conkin, 116–31.

14. See Michael Lacey, "The World of the Bureaus: Government and the Positivist Project in the Late Nineteenth Century," in *The State and Social Investigation in Britain and the United States*, ed. Michael Lacey and Mary O. Furner, 127–70. See also Michael Lacey, "The Mysteries of Earth-Making Dissolve"; and James Kirkpatrick Flack, *Desideratum in Washington*, the only general narrative history of the Washington intellectuals. On the broader contours of the new liberalism see Mary O. Furner, "The Republican Tradition and the New Liberalism: Social Investigation, State Building, and Social Learning in the Gilded Age," in *The State and Social Investigation in Britain and the United States*, ed. Lacey and Furner, 171–241; and Furner, "Social Scientists and the State: Constructing the Knowledge Base for Public Policy, 1885–1920," in *Intellectuals and Public Life*, ed. Leon Fink, et. al., 145–81. Another very recent work examining the new liberalism in the United States is Nancy Cohen, *The Reconstruction of American Liberalism, 1865–1914*, although unlike Furner's work she does not examine Ward or the role of the Washington scientists and intellectuals in remaking liberalism in the late nineteenth century.

15. Ward used these terms in "The Scientific Basis of Positive Political Economy," in *Glimpses of the Cosmos*, 3:32–35. The article originally appeared in *The International Review* (April 1882).

16. Lacey, "World of the Bureaus," 149.

17. On the genteel reformers see John Tomsich, *A Genteel Endeavor*; and John G. Sproat, *The Best Men*. See also the reconsideration of these liberal reformers in Cohen, *The Reconstruction of American Liberalism*.

18. The literature on republicanism is extensive. See especially Bernard Bailyn, *The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution*; Gordon Wood, *The Creation of the American Republic, 1776–1787*; Robert E. Shalope, “Republicanism and Early American Historiography”; and Gordon Wood, *The Radicalism of the American Revolution*. For a review and criticism of republicanism as a concept see Daniel Rodgers, “Republicanism: The Career of A Concept.”

19. See especially James Kloppenberg, “Premature Requiem: Republicanism in American History,” in *The Virtues of Liberalism*, 59–70. See also William Novak, *The People’s Welfare*, which forces historians of ideas and politics to rethink American political thought and how social regulation and government activity shaped antebellum law and economy.

20. On working-class organization and republicanism see especially Nick Salvatore, *Eugene V. Debs*; and Sean Wilentz, *Chants Democratic*. Most important in my understanding of producerism, the working class, and republicanism has been Victoria C. Hattam, *Labor Visions and State Power*. See also the perceptive discussion of the discourse of class from the late eighteenth to the late nineteenth century in Martin Burke, *The Conundrum of Class*.

21. Lacey, “World of the Bureaus,” 168–70. See also Westbrook, *John Dewey and American Democracy*; and Furner, “The Republican Tradition and the New Liberalism,” in *The State and Social Investigation in Britain and the United States*, ed. Lacey and Furner, 171–241. See as well Cohen, *The Reconstruction of American Liberalism*.

22. In this way I am utilizing David Hollinger’s understanding of a broad discourse among social science intellectuals in the United States. As he writes: “Discourse is a social as well as an intellectual activity; it entails interaction between minds, and it revolves around something possessed in common. Participants in any given discourse are bound to share certain values, beliefs, perceptions, and concepts . . . but the most concrete and functional elements shared, surely, are *questions*.” David Hollinger, “Historians and the Discourse of Intellectuals,” *In the American Province*, 132.

23. Quoted from Cape, *Lester Frank Ward*, 127–28.

CHAPTER 1

1. Lester Frank Ward (hereafter cited as LFW), “The Autobiography of Lester Frank Ward,” Box 81, Folder 1 (Reel 24; hereafter “Autobiography”), 2, The Lester Frank Ward Papers, Brown University, John Hay Library, Providence, Rhode Island (hereafter Ward Papers). Ward wrote much of this manuscript after the appearance of his first book in 1883. The Ward Papers have been microfilm-ed and in the citations I have provided the box and folder number as well as the corresponding reel location. Specific frame references have been left out but they can be obtained from the “Microfilm Contents List” available at the John Hay Library or on the index reel of the microfilm set.

2. Quoted by Emily Palmer Cape, *Lester Frank Ward*, 21.

3. LFW, “Personal Remarks,” in *Glimpses of the Cosmos*, 1:lxvi.

4. George K. Ward, *Andrew Warde and His Descendants, 1597–1910*.

5. The quote about Ward's mother is from LFW, "Autobiography," 2, Ward Papers. One letter from Silence Ward is located in the Ward Papers. Her birth date is unknown. The description of his father can be found in both the manuscript biography as well as LFW, "Personal Remarks," in *Glimpses of the Cosmos*, 1:lxviii-lxxiv. Lorenzo Ward recalled in a letter written to LFW that he had a "close call" with their mother pushing him toward the ministry. Lorenzo Ward to LFW, January 1884, Ward Papers (Reel 4).

6. On social and religious changes in Rochester and Western New York see Paul Johnson, *A Shopkeeper's Millennium*; and Whitney R. Cross, *The Burned-Over District*.

7. Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, 452. For a portrait of American society in the middle of the century see George Frederickson, *The Inner Civil War*; Ernest Tuveson, *Redeemer Nation*; John Higham, *From Boundlessness to Consolidation*; Robert Wiebe, *The Opening of American Society*; Nathan Hatch, *The Democratization of American Christianity*; Gordon Wood, *The Radicalism of the American Revolution*; and Lewis Perry, *Boats Against the Current*.

8. On the prophets of success and the masterless citizens of antebellum America see Wilfred McClay, *The Masterless*, 120-33, where he examines Ward's relationship to the discourse about the self. See also Irvin G. Wyllie, *The Self-Made Man in America*; and John Cawelti, *Apostles of the Self-Made Man*. On Tocqueville's examination of self-interest see *Democracy in America*, 525-28; on the revolution in choices see Wiebe, *Opening of American Society*, 143-67. For a general examination of politics and economy in Jacksonian America see Harry Watson, *Liberty and Power*; Charles Sellers, *Market Revolution*; and Walter Licht, *Industrializing America*.

9. On the Powells and the county in general see Donald Worster, *A River Running West*.

10. LFW, "Autobiography," 3-4, Ward Papers.

11. C. S. Percival and Elizabeth Percival, *History of Buchanan County, Iowa, With Illustrations and Biographical Sketches*, 83.

12. Nathan Howe Parker, *Iowa As It Is in 1856*, 61.

13. LFW, "Autobiography," 8, Ward Papers.

14. Iowa Board of the Census, *The Census Returns of the Different Counties of the State of Iowa for 1856*.

15. On the remaking of liberalism in the nineteenth century and its connections to concepts of settlement, freedom, and social evolution see among many others Eric Foner, *The Story of American Freedom*; J. Gillis Harp, *Positivist Republic*; Michael Lacey, "The World of the Bureaus: Government and the Positivist Project in the Late Nineteenth Century," in *The State and Social Investigation in Britain and the United States*, ed. Michael Lacey and Mary O. Furner, 127-70; and Mary O. Furner, "The Republican Tradition and the New Liberalism: Social Investigation, State Building, and Social Learning in the Gilded Age," in *The State and Social Investigation in Britain and the United States*, ed. Lacey and Furner, 171-241. Nancy Cohen has recently assessed the reconstruction of American liberalism in the late nineteenth century in *The Reconstruction of American Liberalism, 1865-1914*.

16. Percival and Percival, *History of Buchanan County, Iowa*, 210-13.

17. Quoted from Raymond J. Heckel, "The History of Buchanan County, Iowa, Prior to 1880," 50.

18. LFW, *Applied Sociology*, 105–6.
19. Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, 460. Richard Ely's quote comes from his autobiography, *Ground Under Our Feet*, 145–46. Lewis Atherton's *Main Street on the Middle Border* is still a masterful portrait of the world of the Middle West.
20. LFW, *Applied Sociology*, 276.
21. Hamlin Garland, *Main-Traveled Roads*, preface.
22. On family life on the Midwestern prairie see John Mack Faragher, *Sugar Creek*, 199–215. Faragher is especially relevant here in his discussion of the tensions between tradition and change in the rural regions of antebellum America. See also Allan G. Bogue, *From Prairie to Cornbelt*, on the general nature of farming in the mid-nineteenth century.
23. On male self-expression in Victorian America see E. Anthony Rotundo, *American Manhood*.
24. LFW, "Autobiography," 12, Ward Papers.
25. The stories are contained in Box 75, Folder 1 (Reel 22), Ward Papers. None of the stories has a title. "The Spaniard's Revenge" is reprinted in *Glimpses of the Cosmos* (1:1–15) and has been filed in Box 74, Folder 7 (Reel 21), Ward Papers.
26. LFW, "Autobiography," 12, Ward Papers.
27. LFW, "The Sociology of Political Parties," 445. See also Harp, *Positivist Republic*, 109–54, for coverage of Ward's life and thought. Harp argues that Ward was a "Comtean Whig" influenced in his mature social theory by the Comtean constructions of science and his past association with the Whig Party.
28. William Novak, *The People's Welfare*. On American Whiggery and the later Republican Party generally see Eric Foner, *Free Soil, Free Labor, Free Men*; and Daniel Walker Howe, *The Political Culture of the American Whigs*. See also, on the important links between concerns for self-improvement and Whig political culture, Daniel Walker Howe, *Making the American Self*, 107–85.
29. LFW, "Autobiography," 16–18, Ward Papers; on Ward's lack of interest in voting see "The Notebooks of Lester Frank Ward," Lester Frank Ward Papers, Special Collections, Gelman Library, George Washington University, Washington, D.C. These notebooks survived the burning of some of his material by Ward's family after his death.
30. For biographical information about Cyrenus Ward, see *The National Encyclopedia of American Biography*, s.v. "Ward, Cyrenus Osborne." See also Edward Rafferty, "Ward, Cyrenus Osborne," in Mari Jo Buhle, et al., *Encyclopedia of the American Left*. There is also biographical material available in The Frank Edwin Ward Papers, Rare Books and Manuscripts Division, New York Public Library, New York City, New York. Frank Edwin Ward was Cyrenus Ward's son and he kept materials related to his father's and uncle's early life.
31. On the trip east to get to Pennsylvania see LFW, "Autobiography," 13–15, Ward Papers.
32. LFW, *Young Ward's Diary*, 2. The diary was originally written in French as an exercise in self-help and cultivated education but citations will come from Stern's translation. The original is preserved in Box 56a, Folder 1 (Reel 15), Ward Papers.
33. LFW, *Young Ward's Diary*, 61 (28 May 1861).
34. LFW, *Young Ward's Diary*, 8 (2 September 1860).
35. Ward to Emily Palmer Cape, quoted in Cape, *Lester Frank Ward*, 25.

36. LFW, "Dynamic Sociology," in *Glimpses of the Cosmos* 3:147–48.
37. LFW, "Aspiration," Box 57, Folder 2 (Reel 16), Ward Papers; a portion of the essay was also reprinted in Stern's version of Ward's diary, *Young Ward's Diary*, 64. On the general influence of common schools in the United States, see Carl F. Kaestle, *Pillars of the Republic*. On the many forms of education and self-improvement in American culture in the antebellum years, see Joseph Kett, *The Pursuit of Knowledge Under Difficulties*.
38. LFW, "Self-Made Men," Box 57, Folder 41 (Reel 16), Ward Papers. On Lincoln and self-made democracy, see Robert Wiebe, "Lincoln's Fraternal Democracy," in John L. Thomas, ed., *Abraham Lincoln and the American Political Tradition*, 11–30. For a different portrait of Lincoln and the self-made democracy, stressing the hypocrisy and transparency of the ideal, see Richard Hofstadter, "Abraham Lincoln and the Self-Made Myth," in *The American Political Tradition and the Men Who Made It*, 118–74.
39. On the self-made man as cultural hero in Jacksonian America, see Wyllie, *The Self-Made Man in America*; and Cawelti, *Apostles of the Self-Made Man*. See also Joyce Appleby, "New Culture Heroes in the Early National Period," in *The Culture of the Market*, ed. Thomas Haskell and Richard Teichgraber, 163–88; and Richard Latner, "Preserving 'The Natural Equality of Rank and Influence': Liberalism, Republicanism, and Equality of Condition in Jacksonian Politics," in *The Culture of the Market*, ed. Haskell and Teichgraber, 189–230. Haskell has also written extensively on the connections between market capitalism and the rise of a new humanitarian sensibility in the nineteenth century; see Thomas Haskell, "Capitalism and the Origins of Humanitarian Sensibility."
40. For a contrasting discussion of the worldview and social experience of women in the middle of the nineteenth century, see Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, "The Female World of Love and Ritual," in *Disorderly Conduct*, 53–76. On the tensions between autonomous self-expression and the social order, see Wilfred McClay, *The Masterless*.
41. LFW, "[Now this is becoming . . .]," Box 57, Folder 31 (Reel 16), Ward Papers.
42. LFW, *Young Ward's Diary*, 25 (8 December 1861).
43. D. H. Meyer, *The Instructed Conscience*, viii; see also Howe, *Political Culture of American Whigs*, for the broader role of moral philosophy in American politics at mid-century; see also Howe's more recent work on the construction of character and faculty psychology in antebellum America, *Making the American Self*.
44. On the "quite erosion" of religious faith among American Victorians, see Anne C. Rose, *Victorian America and the Civil War*; and Paul A. Carter, *The Spiritual Crisis of the Gilded Age*.
45. LFW, *Young Ward's Diary*, 50 (13 April 1861). The emphasis is in Stern's translation. Ward had underscored this portion of the diary later in life.
46. LFW, "The Day of Miracles is Over," Box 57, Folder 10 (Reel 16), Ward Papers.
47. LFW, "Conservatism," Box 57, Folder 8 (Reel 16), Ward Papers. Ward managed to publish this essay in the *Bradford Argus*. See LFW, *Young Ward's Diary*, 111 (6 July 1862).
48. LFW, "[The human race is . . .]," Box 57, Folder 19 (Reel 16), Ward Papers.

49. LFW, "The Influence of Education upon our Nation," Box 57, Folder 21 (Reel 16), Ward Papers. Stern published a portion of this essay in LFW, *Young Ward's Diary*, 68–69.

50. On sexuality and love in nineteenth-century America, see especially John D'Emilio and Estelle Freedman, *Intimate Matters*; Estelle Freedman, *Hands and Hearts*; and, especially useful on the romance between men and women, see Karen Lystra, *Searching the Heart*. Both Freedmen and D'Emilio use Ward's personal diary to great advantage, but they do not tie his emotional experience to any larger issues of social theory generally.

51. Peter Gay, *The Education of the Senses*, 131–32.

52. LFW, *Young Ward's Diary*, 12 (7 October 1860).

53. LFW, *Young Ward's Diary*, 10 (22 September 1860).

54. LFW, *Young Ward's Diary*, 22 (23 November 1860).

55. LFW, *Young Ward's Diary*, 38 (24 February 1861).

56. LFW, *Young Ward's Diary*, 35 (9 February 1861).

57. LFW, *Young Ward's Diary*, 44 (18 March 1861).

58. LFW, *Young Ward's Diary*, 69 (14 July 1861).

59. LFW, *Young Ward's Diary*, 45 (18 March 1861); the comment about first reading the book is on page 41 (3 March 1861). On Frederick Hollick's guides, see D'Emilio and Freedman, *Intimate Matters*, 59, 60, 62.

60. LFW, *Young Ward's Diary*, 52 (23 April 1861).

61. LFW, *Young Ward's Diary*, 69 (16 July 1861).

62. LFW, "Autobiography," 22, Ward Papers. None of Ward's biographers cover Ward's relationship to Elizabeth Vought or much of his diary at all. Historians of sexuality such as John D'Emilio and Estelle Freedman, on the other hand, have used Ward's diary often but not to examine his character or experience in the years before the Civil War.

63. See Lystra, *Searching the Heart*, 28–56.

CHAPTER 2

1. LFW, *Young Ward's Diary*, 53 (24 April 1861).

2. LFW, "[Are we insensible to the ties which bind us? . . .]," no date, Box 57, Folder 5 (Reel 16), Ward Papers. On the "codfish aristocracy" and the inevitability of war see "[I'm for the Union . . .]," Box 57, Folder 20 (Reel 16), Ward Papers.

3. LFW, "Character of Our Enemies," Box 57, Folder 6 (Reel 16), Ward Papers.

4. LFW, "Slavery," Box 57, Folder 43 (Reel 16), Ward Papers.

5. LFW, "[The Political World . . .]," Box 57, Folder 36 (Reel 16), Ward Papers. See also his essay, "The Progress of Human Liberty," Box 57, Folder 38 (Reel 16), Ward Papers.

6. Erastus Ward to Cyrenus Ward, n.d. (probably August 1862), Helen Mears Papers, Swarthmore College Peace Collection, DG 210.

7. LFW, *Young Ward's Diary*, 102 (25 March 1862).

8. LFW, *Young Ward's Diary*, 112 (22 July 1862).

9. LFW, *Young Ward's Diary*, 114 (18 August 1862), on leaving for the war; for his marriage to Lizzie see page 114 (14 August 1862); it was in the previous entry,

however, that Ward first wrote that he “must go to bed with my wife,” page 113 (13 August 1862).

10. Historians have recently concerned themselves with more than just an examination of battles and strategy of the war and have focused on the experience of war itself. See, for example, Reid Mitchell, *Civil War Soldiers and The Vacant Chair*; Gerald F. Linderman, *Embattled Courage*; and James McPherson, *What They Fought For, 1861–1865*. For a general treatment of the issues of war in the middle of the nineteenth century, see James McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom*. For the new history of the Civil War era see the essays in Nina Silber and Catherine Clinton, eds., *Divided Houses*.

11. John Bloodgood, *Personal Reminiscences of the War*, 15.

12. LFW to Erastus Ward, 27 August 1862, Helen Mears Papers, Swarthmore College Peace Collection, DG 210.

13. LFW to Erastus Ward, 27 August 1862, Helen Mears Papers, Swarthmore College Peace Collection, DG 210.

14. LFW to Erastus Ward, 27 September 1862, Helen Mears Papers, Swarthmore College Peace Collection, DG 210.

15. Erastus Ward to Cyrenus Ward, 6 September 1862, Helen Mears Papers, Swarthmore College Peace Collection, DG 210.

16. LFW to W. H. Thompson, 17 October 1862, in *Glimpses of the Cosmos*, 1:21–22. The letter also appeared in the October issue of the *Bradford Argus*. The original letter does not survive.

17. LFW to W. H. Thompson, 17 October 1862, in *Glimpses of the Cosmos*, 1:27–28.

18. For Madill’s quote see David Craft, *History of the One Hundred Forty First Regiment Pennsylvania Volunteers, 1862–1865*, 33. Craft was the chaplain of the regiment and wrote this standard history of the regiment’s activities in correspondence with its other members, including Ward.

19. LFW to Erastus Ward, 21 December 1862, Helen Mears Papers, Swarthmore College Peace Collection, DG 210.

20. LFW to W. H. Thompson, 17 October 1862, in *Glimpses of the Cosmos*, 1:21–28.

21. For Canfield’s discussion of imprisonment see Craft, *History of the One Hundred Forty First*, 99–100.

22. Bloodgood, *Personal Reminiscences of the War*, 100–101.

23. LFW to Erastus Ward, 15 May 1863, Helen Mears Papers, Swarthmore College Peace Collection, DG 210.

24. Erastus Ward to Cyrenus Ward, 16 May 1863, Helen Mears Papers, Swarthmore College Peace Collection, DG 210.

25. LFW, “Letters From the Army,” *Bradford Reporter*, 4 June 1863. The letter is also contained in LFW, *Glimpses of the Cosmos*, 1:29–35. The original letter is preserved in LFW, “Autobiography,” Ward Papers.

26. George Watkins to Surgeon, Fairfax Seminary Hospital, 4 August 1863, Box 4, Folder 2 (Reel 2), Ward Papers.

27. LFW, *Young Ward’s Diary*, 117 (12 August 1863). The Ward Papers also contain Elizabeth Ward’s letters to Ward’s company commander asking for his return home so that she could help take care of his injuries. See Elizabeth Ward to Colonel Henry Madill, 19 July 1863, Box 4, Folder 2 (Reel 2), Ward Papers.

28. LFW, *Young Ward’s Diary*, 118 (21 August 1863).

29. LFW, *Young Ward's Diary*, 123 (18 October 1863).
30. LFW, *Young Ward's Diary*, 125 (6 November 1863).
31. LFW, *Young Ward's Diary*, 126 (6 November 1863).
32. On abortion generally in the nineteenth century, see James C. Mohr, *Abortion in America*; and Janet Farrell Brodie, *Contraception and Abortion in Nineteenth-Century America*.
33. LFW, *Young Ward's Diary*, 140 (13 March 1864).
34. LFW, *Young Ward's Diary*, 152 (4 December 1864).
35. LFW, *Young Ward's Diary*, 143 (12 May 1864).
36. LFW, "Autobiography," 19–20, Ward Papers. The only exception to studies of Ward's war experience is Clifford H. Scott's brief discussion in *Lester Frank Ward*, 18–20. Canfield's letter is preserved in the Ward Papers.
37. On memory, the war, and the cultural experience of understanding the conflict, see David Blight's *Race and Reunion*. See also George Frederickson, *The Inner Civil War*, for coverage of the intellectual response to war and reconstruction.
38. LFW, *Young Ward's Diary*, 167–68. Stern republished this letter in his version of the diary. It originally appeared on the front page of the *Daily National Republican*, 13 April 1865.
39. LFW, *Young Ward's Diary*, 167–68. Ward wrote two essays commemorating Lincoln shortly after he died. See Box 57, Folder 1 (Reel 16), Ward Papers.
40. On Erastus's death see LFW, "Autobiography," 26a–26b, Ward Papers; and LFW, *Young Ward's Diary*, 171.
41. LFW, *Young Ward's Diary*, 173 (28 May 1865). For an account of the Grand Review see Wilfred McClay, *The Masterless*, 9–39.
42. For a version of Lincoln's famous speech, see John G. Nicolay and John Hay, eds., *Abraham Lincoln*.
43. On his hopes for emancipation, see "The World Amazed," Box 76, Folder 20 (Reel 22), Ward Papers.
44. See LFW to Charles Dana, 5 December 1864, Box 4, Folder 3 (Reel 2), Ward Papers; and LFW to Edwin Stanton, 20 January 1865, Box 4, Folder 4 (Reel 2), Ward Papers. Stern reprinted the letter to Stanton, *Young Ward's Diary*, 157–58. The reference to his moral character was in a letter from James McWilliam to LFW, 12 December 1864, Box 4, Folder 4 (Reel 2), Ward Papers, which was used by Ward in his applications.
45. LFW to Abraham Lincoln, 8 February 1865, Box 4, Folder 5 (Reel 2), Ward Papers. Stern reprinted the letter in *Young Ward's Diary*, 160–61. Ward was of course exaggerating his problems since he was not in fact an orphan. His mother did not die until 1877.
46. LFW, *Young Ward's Diary*, 172 (14 May 1865).
47. LFW, *Young Ward's Diary*, 174 (18 June 1865).
48. LFW, *Young Ward's Diary*, 177 (6 August 1865).
49. LFW, "Autobiography," 28, Ward Papers.
50. LFW, "Temperance Question," Box 75, Folder 7 (Reel 22), Ward Papers. The quotes come from the second version of the essay in the collection. Although there is no date on the essay, the fact that Ward mentions the Veterans Reserve Corps would establish a time period of summer 1864 shortly before he was discharged from the Union army.

51. LFW, *Young Ward's Diary*, 180 (24 September 1865).
52. LFW, *Young Ward's Diary*, 200 (6 May 1866).
53. LFW, "Washington City," Box 86, Folder 11 (Reel 22), Ward Papers. There are no other references to the kind of anti-Semitism that Ward expressed in this essay. In his diary, Ward suggests that he is being satirical in the essay but he might have very likely shared the general nineteenth-century American prejudice toward Jewish people.
54. LFW, *Young Ward's Diary*, 201–2 (3 June 1866).
55. LFW, *Young Ward's Diary*, 214–15. The essay is also preserved in the Ward Papers.
56. George Boutwell, *Reminiscences of Sixty Years in Public Affairs*. Boutwell was Secretary of the Treasury from 1869 to 1873, and Ward's boss when he worked there.
57. LFW, *Young Ward's Diary*, 218–19 (1 January 1867).
58. See LFW, "Concordia Lyceum's Critic's Reports," in Box 61, Folder 6 (Reel 16), Ward Papers. There are five reports (for February, March, April, June, and December) for 1866, and all are similar in structure and tone in their criticisms of the lyceum's members. The one quoted is from March and was reprinted in LFW, *Young Ward's Diary*, 197. See also LFW, *Young Ward's Diary*, 188 (31 December 1865).
59. See Thomas Bender, "The City and Professions," in *Intellect and Public Life*, 3–15. On the character of Washington's intellectual life in the early 1870s, see James Kirkpatrick Flack, *Desideratum in Washington*; and Michael Lacey, "The Mysteries of Earth-Making Dissolve."
60. LFW, *Young Ward's Diary*, 277 (1 January 1869).
61. LFW, *Young Ward's Diary*, 236 (4 August 1866).
62. LFW to George Boutwell, 25 April 1870, Box 4, Folder 9 (Reel 2), Ward Papers. Ward officially obtained his promotion in 1871 but he had been acting head since the death of his supervisor. See his promotion papers in Box 4, Folder 9 (Reel 2), Ward Papers. Ward often wrote asking for promotion to different rankings in the Bureau of Statistics. See LFW to George Boutwell, 7 May 1869, Box 4, Folder 7 (Reel 2), Ward Papers.
63. LFW and Elizabeth Ward, "Notes and Comments from reading the Bible in five languages," Box 85, Folder 1 (Reel 25), Ward Papers. On his anti-Catholicism see "Roman Catholic Propagandism," Box 72, Folder 13 (Reel 20), Ward Papers.
64. LFW, "The Church," no date, Box 61, Folder 1 (Reel 16), Ward Papers. The speech is also called "Common Sense vs. Theology." Following the speech is a letter that Ward apparently never mailed in which he responded to his critics.
65. LFW, "Pyrrhonism," Box 71, Folder 9 (Reel 20), Ward Papers. According to a note on the cover page this was written 6 March 1868.
66. LFW, *Young Ward's Diary*, 255 (19 April 1868).
67. LFW to W. G. Marts, 23 May 1870, Box 18, Folder 1 (Reel 6), Ward Papers. See also Peter Gay, *Education of the Senses*, 416–17. According to Gay, Marts was not much affected by this appeal. He eventually married, attended Yale Divinity School, and died in 1914.
68. LFW, *Young Ward's Diary*, 273 (20 December 1868).
69. LFW, *Young Ward's Diary*, 277 (1 January 1869). The Brothers Davenport lived near the Fox farm where young Kate Fox could allegedly make spirits re-

spond to her demands. The young brothers, who lived in Buffalo, were able to make spirits play musical instruments even when tied with heavy ropes.

70. LFW, "The Importance of Intellectual Culture," Box 65, Folder 2 (Reel 18), Ward Papers. There are two versions contained in the papers; a note attached indicates that the essay was written in February 1866 and delivered as a speech on 11 April 1866. On the general disillusionment of postwar American society see Frederickson, *The Inner Civil War*.

71. LFW, *Young Ward's Diary*, 184 (19 November 1865).

72. See LFW, *Young Ward's Diary*, 198 (8 April 1866), for passing of the bill, and LFW, *Young Ward's Diary*, 199 (15 April 1866), for "king" reference.

73. LFW, *Young Ward's Diary*, 286 (14 March 1869).

74. LFW, *Young Ward's Diary*, 250 (23 February 1868).

75. LFW, *Young Ward's Diary*, 256–57 (17 May 1868).

76. LFW, "Is the African Inferior Naturally to the European Race?" Box 65, Folder 22 (Reel 18), Ward Papers. On the general issue of race and Reconstruction politics, see Eric Foner, *Reconstruction*; and George Frederickson, *The Black Image in the White Mind*, for the phrase "romantic racialism."

77. LFW, "Is the African Inferior Naturally?"

78. LFW, "Signs of the Times," Box 73, Folder 4 (Reel 21), Ward Papers. A note attached to the manuscript indicates that it was composed in 1869.

79. LFW, *Young Ward's Diary*, 282 (24 January 1869).

80. For general coverage of all the issues of feminist politics in the 1860s, see Ellen DuBois, *Feminism and Suffrage*, 103–4.

81. Elizabeth Ward to Editor, *The Revolution*, III, no. 23 (10 June 1869): 364. Ward's diary records reading the journal and Lizzie's writing of the letter, *Young Ward's Diary*, 292–93 (23 May 1869).

82. LFW, "Signs of the Times."

83. LFW, "Title to the Soil," Box 75, Folder 9 (Reel 21), Ward Papers.

84. LFW, *Young Ward's Diary*, 317–18.

CHAPTER 3

1. LFW, "Autobiography," 32(g), Ward Papers. Historian John C. Burnham has been the harshest critic of Ward's scientific abilities—offering him little or no place in the history of American scientific and social thought in the late nineteenth century. See Burnham, *Lester Frank Ward in American Thought* and "Lester Frank Ward as Natural Scientist," 259–65. For a different and more judicious view of Ward as a scientist see the intelligent discussion in Robert Bannister, *Sociology and Scientism*, to which I am indebted. On the nature of mid- to late-nineteenth-century scientific inquiry see Paul Jerome Croce, *Science and Religion in the Era of William James*; David Hollinger, "Inquiry and Uplift: Late Nineteenth-Century American Academics and the Moral Efficacy of Scientific Practice," in *The Authority of Experts*, ed. Thomas L. Haskell, 142–56. For a collection of essays that survey the nature of intellectual life and scientific inquiry in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, see Thomas Bender, *Intellect and Public Life*. Louis Menand has brilliantly illuminated the world of late-nineteenth-century social thought in *The Metaphysical Club*.

2. Henry Adams, *Democracy: An American Novel*, 67.
3. For a description of the Washington, D.C., bureaucracy, see Cindy Sondik Aron, *Ladies and Gentleman of the Civil Service*.
4. Ward's remark comes from a note for the book located in the Lester Frank Ward Papers, Box 4, Library of Congress, Manuscripts Division, Washington, D.C. This box also contains a copy of Ward's "Plan of the Great Panacea," which outlined the chapters he hoped to write and the basic contents of them. Ward arranged to have all of his book manuscripts donated to the Library of Congress after his death.
5. LFW, "Notice of *Dynamic Sociology*," *Glimpses of the Cosmos*, 3:204, an essay-history of his attempt to publish his first book. Ward's reference to "my race" was a reference to the human race generally.
6. George Daniels, *Science in American Society*, 222.
7. Ian Hacking, *The Taming of Chance*; see also Croce, *Science and Religion in the Era of William James*.
8. On Darwinism, science, and religion in the nineteenth century, see, among others: Paul Carter, *The Spiritual Crisis of the Gilded Age*; Cynthia Eagle Russett, *Darwin in America*; and Robert Bruce, *The Launching of Modern American Science, 1846–1876*.
9. LFW, "Autobiography," 36–37, Ward Papers.
10. LFW, *Young Ward's Diary*, 247 (26 January 1868).
11. On Agassiz's life, see Edward Lurie, *Louis Agassiz*. On science in general in this era, see Bruce, *The Launching of Modern American Science*. See also Paul Croce's discussion of the impact of Darwinian evolutionary theory on the scientific cosmology of Agassiz and his contemporaries: Croce, *Science and Religion in the Era of William James*, 111–48.
12. LFW, "Nature," 2, Box 88, Folder 3 (Reel 26), Ward Papers.
13. LFW, "Nature," 3, Ward Papers. On Baconian science in the nineteenth century, see Theodore Dwight Bozeman, *Protestants in an Age of Science*. On the probabilistic nature of Darwinian science, see especially Croce, *Science and Religion in the Era of William James*.
14. LFW, "Nature," 22, Ward Papers.
15. LFW, "Man," 31, Box 88, Folder 3 (Reel 26), Ward Papers.
16. LFW, "Man," 47, Ward Papers.
17. LFW, "Mind," 88, Box 88, Folder 3 (Reel 26), Ward Papers.
18. LFW, "Concluding Suggestions," 117, Box 88, Folder 3 (Reel 26), Ward Papers.
19. LFW, "The National Liberal Reform League," Box 69, Folder 1 (Reel 19), Ward Papers; the letter is also excerpted in LFW, *Young Ward's Diary*, 313–15. The names of the other known members of the society are as follows: Jonathan Forrest, W. C. Murdock, H. T. Smith, M. H. Doolittle, J. H. Kingsbery, J. Record, Wm. H. Schively, Maurice Pechin, and George McLane Wood. Nothing is known about them except that some worked as clerks in various departments of the federal government.
20. On free thought, religious organizations, and science in the mid-nineteenth century, see Stow Persons, *Free Religion*; see also Paul F. Boller, *American Thought in Transition*, for coverage of these issues after the Civil War.

21. On Comte and the influence of positivism in the United States in general, see J. Gillis Harp, *Positivist Republic*; it is the first general scholarly discussion of positive science in the United States. Harp's chapter on Ward focuses most prominently on his post-*Dynamic Sociology* career, but his discussion is nonetheless a stimulating interpretation of Ward's science. See also Charles Cashdollar, *The Transformation of Theology, 1830–1890*. On the connections between British and American intellectual life in the mid- to late nineteenth century, see David Hall, "The Victorian Connection," in *Victorian America*, ed. Daniel Walker Howe; and on British positivism in general, see Christopher Kent, *Brains and Numbers*. The most recent biographical study of Comte is Mary Pickering, *Auguste Comte*.

22. LFW, "Literature," Box 66, Folder 7 (Reel 18), Ward Papers. On Chauncey Wright, see Menand, *Metaphysical Club*.

23. Ward never sent the letter to the magazine and he apparently wrote the letter in late December 1868. The quotes are from LFW, *Young Ward's Diary*, 274–75.

24. John Stuart Mill, *Auguste Comte and Positivism*, 6. I rely heavily on the discussion of positivism in Cashdollar, *The Transformation of Theology*, 142–69, for his discussion of Mill.

25. LFW, "The Rising School of Philosophy," *Glimpses of the Cosmos*, 1:110–12. The essay appeared in *The Iconoclast* 1, no. 10 (December 1870). See also "What is the Positive Philosophy," *Glimpses of the Cosmos*, 1:99–101. This essay consisted of lengthy quotations from Mill and appeared in *The Iconoclast* 1, no. 8 (November 1870).

26. LFW, "The Rising School," 112.

27. LFW, "What has been gained No. 2," *Glimpses of the Cosmos*, 1:79. The essay appeared in *The Iconoclast* 1, no. 5 (July 1870).

28. LFW, "Science v. Theology," *Glimpses of the Cosmos*, 1:53. The essay appeared in *The Iconoclast* 1, no. 2 (April 1870).

29. LFW, "The Entering Wedge," *Glimpses of the Cosmos*, 1:66. The essay appeared in *The Iconoclast* 1, no. 3 (May 1870).

30. For Ward's parodies, see, for example, LFW, "Doctrinal Sketches No. 1, Creation," *Glimpses of the Cosmos*, 1:106–9. It appeared in *The Iconoclast* 1, no. 9 (15 November 1870).

31. "Dextra" (Elizabeth Ward), "Letter from a Friend," *The Iconoclast* 2, no. 18 (August 1871); and "Amicus" (Elizabeth Ward), "Hope On, Hope Ever," *The Iconoclast* 1, no. 7 (September 1870). The evidence that Lizzie Ward wrote these comes from handwritten notations by Lester Frank Ward on his personal copies of *The Iconoclast*. Ward recorded that these entries had been contributed by his wife.

32. On the nature of unbelief in the nineteenth century, see James Turner, *Without God/Without Creed*.

33. LFW to George Schumm, 8 December 1883, George Schumm Papers, Labadie Collection, Special Collections Library, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor.

34. LFW, "Autobiography," 30, Ward Papers. Stern also included this line in his version of the diary, *Young Ward's Diary*, 318, but he did not record where he gained the information. Ward makes almost no mention of Lizzie Ward in his published autobiographical remarks in Volume I of *Glimpses of the Cosmos*.

35. LFW to Rosamund Pierce, n.d., Box 18, Folder 1 (Reel 16), Ward Papers. He practiced the letter a number of times and the handwriting in the two copies that

he kept is rushed and rambling. The letter was also reprinted in Ward, *Young Ward's Diary*, 318–20.

36. Little material relating to Rose Ward survives in the various archives of Ward's papers, so determining her views about politics, society, feminism, and so on is nearly impossible. She did help her husband's career and the two did seem to have genuine affection for one another. There are a few letters from Rose Ward in the Edward A. Ross Papers (Rose Ward was Ross's aunt), but they deal entirely with family business. We do know that it was Rose's family that decided to destroy or hide many of the volumes of Lester Ward's diary (only two volumes survive). In any case, it is hard to determine much about the relationship between the two. Nonetheless, it seems clear that the two never had the same devotion to one another that Lester Ward had for Lizzie.

37. On the politics of education in the 1870s, see David Tyack, "Education and Social Unrest, 1873–1878"; and Ward McAfee, *Religion, Race and Reconstruction*, for coverage of national politics and education.

38. LFW, "Education," Box 88, Folder 5 (Reel 26), Ward Papers. According to a pencil note on the manuscript Ward worked on it from 18 June 1871 until 26 September 1873.

39. LFW, "Education," 77, Ward Papers.

40. LFW, "Education," 85, Ward Papers.

41. LFW, "Education," 149, Ward Papers.

42. LFW, "Education," 158–59, Ward Papers.

43. LFW, "Education," 180, Ward Papers.

44. LFW, "Education," 320, Box 88, Folder 6 (Reel 26), Ward Papers.

45. LFW, "Education," 474, Box 89, Folder 1 (Reel 27), Ward Papers.

46. LFW, "Education," 620–21, Ward Papers.

47. LFW, "Meliorism," Box 67, Folder 4 (Reel 18), Ward Papers. Although this was not preserved with the rest of the manuscript it is clear from its structure and writing that it was intended to be part of the manuscript that he was working on.

48. LFW, *Young Ward's Diary*, 255.

49. LFW, "The Local Environment As an Education Resource," Box 65, Folder 8 (Reel 18), Ward Papers.

50. This section is based on Ward's botanical notebooks: "The Botanical Notebook and Journal of Lester Frank Ward," Box 85, Folders 2–5 (Reel 25), and Box 86, Folders 1–4 (Reel 25), Ward Papers. The notebooks begin April 1872 and continue until October 1884, when Ward apparently stopped the practice of keeping the journals. Much of the materials are simply lists of flowers that he gathered and no more. For a discussion of botany as a science in the mid- to late nineteenth century, see Elizabeth Keeney, *The Botanizers*.

51. LFW, "Autobiography," 54, Ward Papers.

52. The very brief records of the Club are located in the Smithsonian Institution's archives: "Potomac-Side Naturalists Club, 1859–1866, 1873," Smithsonian Institution, Archives and Manuscripts Division, Washington, D.C.

53. The information on Powell's life and activities comes from the following sources: William Culp Darrah, *Powell of the Colorado*; Wallace Stegner, *Beyond the Hundredth Meridian*; and the discussion of Powell's activities in William H. Goetzmann, *Exploration and Empire*. The most important source, however, is the

recent outstanding biography of Powell by Donald Worster, *A River Running West*.

54. Grove Karl Gilbert was one of the first scientists that Powell recruited to his survey; Gilbert had previously worked for a competing survey under General Wheeler. Gilbert is quoted from Michael J. Lacey, "Mysteries of Earth-Making Dissolve," 147. See G. K. Gilbert, "John Wesley Powell," 635–46.

55. LFW, "Sketch of John Wesley Powell," *Glimpses of the Cosmos*, 2:427. Powell had agreed to an interview with Ward for editor E. L. Youmans, who published the essay in *The Popular Science Monthly* (January 1882): 390–97.

56. LFW, "Rocky Mountain Flora," *Glimpses of the Cosmos*, 2:2–5. Ward kept the copies of all the letters except this one. The letter was published twice: first in the *New York Semi-Weekly Tribune*, 8 October 1875; and second in the *New York Daily Tribune*, 27 November 1875. For the rejection of the other letters see D. Nicholson to LFW, 30 November 1875, Box 75, Folder 11 (Reel 22), Ward Papers.

57. LFW, "Rocky Mountain Flora," 4.

58. LFW to Editor, *New York Daily Tribune*, 14 August 1875, Box 75, Folder 14 (Reel 22), Ward Papers.

59. LFW to Editor, *New York Daily Tribune*, 21 June 1875, Box 75, Folder 12 (Reel 22), Ward Papers.

60. LFW to Editor, *New York Daily Tribune*, 20 July 1875, Box 75, Folder 13 (Reel 22), Ward Papers.

61. LFW to Editor, *New York Daily Tribune*, 5 September 1875, Box 75, Folder 18 (Reel 22), Ward Papers.

62. LFW to Dr. Daniel Coit Gilman, 23 September 1876, Box 4, Folder 10 (Reel 12), Ward Papers.

63. LFW, "The Local Distribution of Plants and the Theory of Adaptation," *Glimpses of the Cosmos*, 2:47. The article was written in 1875 as Ward prepared for his trip for Utah and appeared in *The Popular Science Monthly* (October 1876): 676–84.

64. I am indebted to the intelligent analysis of Bannister, *Sociology and Scientism*, and his discussion of the philosophical issues that influence Ward's understanding of scientific knowledge and method (see especially pages 13–31); on probability in general, see Croce, *Science and Religion in the Era of William James*.

65. On public moralists in a trans-Atlantic context, see Stefan Collini, *Public Moralists*. On Spencer's life, see J. D. Y. Peel, *Herbert Spencer*. The "Spencer vogue" has received extensive attention in American historiography, but see especially one of the first studies: Richard Hofstadter, *Social Darwinism in American Thought*.

66. LFW, "Cosmic and Organic Evolution," *Glimpses of the Cosmos*, 2:149. The article appeared in *The Popular Science Monthly* (October 1877): 672–82.

67. LFW, "Cosmic and Organic Evolution," 160.

68. LFW, "Haeckel's Genesis of Man; or, the History of the Development of the Human Race," *Glimpses of the Cosmos*, 2:67. Ward reprinted the pamphlet in its entirety here and provided a short introductory note explaining how he came to write the essay. It originally appeared in three separate issues of *The Penn Monthly* in April, May, and June 1877.

69. On Haeckel's life and work, see the discussion in Harp, *Positivist Republic*, 83–87. See also Daniel Gasman, *The Scientific Origins of National Socialism*, which

focuses on the German thinker's monism and its connections to the later development of German national socialism.

70. On Haeckel, evolution, and Darwin, see Peter Bowler, *The Non-Darwinian Revolution*, 82–90.

71. LFW, "Haeckel's Genesis of Man," 71.

72. LFW, "Haeckel's Genesis of Man," 89.

73. Pritchett quoted from Wilcomb E. Washburn, *The Cosmos Club of Washington*, 17.

74. LFW, "The Way to Scientific Lawmaking," *Glimpses of the Cosmos*, 2:169. The article appeared in a local newspaper edited by Edward Peters, a friend of Ward's (see *The National Union*, 3 November 1877). Ward wrote a previous essay on the same subject, which also called for a central collection agency at the seat of the national government: LFW, "The Province of Statistics," *Glimpses of the Cosmos*, 2:164–67. This article also appeared in *The National Union*, 27 October 1877. The term "national seminary of learning" is W J McGee's and is quoted from Michael Lacey's work on the Washington intellectuals, "The Mysteries of Earth-Making Dissolve"; see also James Kirkpatrick Flack, *Desideratum in Washington*.

CHAPTER 4

1. For an extensive discussion of the leadership of the Washington intellectual community and an analysis of their ideals see Michael Lacey, "The World of the Bureaus: Government and the Positivist Project in the Late Nineteenth Century," in *The State and Social Investigation in Britain and the United States*, ed. Michael Lacey and Mary O. Furner, 127–70; and Michael Lacey, "The Mysteries of Earth-Making Dissolve."

2. George Browne Goode, "The Origin of the National Scientific and Educational Institutions of the United States," reprinted in *The Origins of Natural Science in America*, ed. Sally Gregory Kohlstedt, 244–45. The essay was originally delivered as a lecture at the annual meeting of the American Historical Association in 1889.

3. John Wesley Powell, *Mythologic Philosophy*, 3–4.

4. John Wesley Powell, *Outlines of Sociology*, 5–6; see also the discussion of Powell's ideas in Lacey, "The World of the Bureaus."

5. John Wesley Powell, "Annual Address of the President," 121.

6. See LFW, "Incomplete Adaptation as Illustrated by the History of Sex in Plants," *Glimpses of the Cosmos*, 2:315–23, read before the American Association for the Advancement of Science on 27 August 1880. See also *The American Naturalist* (February 1881): 89–95.

7. LFW, "Feeling and Function as Factors in Human Development," *Glimpses of the Cosmos*, 2:270–75, read before the American Association for the Advancement of Science on 31 August 1880. Ward published the essay a few months after the conference in *Science: A Weekly Record of Scientific Progress* (23 October 1880): 210–11.

8. E. L. Youmans to LFW, 31 January 1880, Box 18, Folder 20 (Reel 6), Ward Papers. Henry Holt was a young publishing house in the early 1880s while Apple-

ton was well known in scientific circles and published all of Herbert Spencer's work in this country. For a description of the Appleton and Holt publishing houses see the *Dictionary of Literary Biography*, s.v. "D. Appleton and Company," and s.v. "Henry Holt and Company," vol. 49, Part One.

9. LFW to E. L. Youmans, n.d., Box 18, Folder 15 (Reel 6), Ward Papers.

10. LFW to E. L. Youmans, n.d. but probably late December 1880 or January 1881, Box 18, Folder 5 (Reel 6), Ward Papers. See E. L. Youmans to LFW, 2 December 1880, Box 18, Folder 20 (Reel 6) for Youmans's first note that he had been reading the book and that the publishers would not be willing to go ahead with it.

11. A number of Ward critics, such as historian John Burnham, have noted how Ward's work in science was surpassed later in life and represented an antiquated form of research. But, for all his faults, Ward was a field examiner in paleontology and an amazing collector of facts and information in his chosen field of study. His office correspondence testifies to the extensive relationships he forged and the respect he garnered from scientists in North America and Europe. For collections of Ward's office correspondence see the Francis Laney Papers, University of Idaho, Special Collections, Moscow, Idaho; Laney was a geologist who collected the letters and signatures of well-known scientists. He collected around thirty of Ward's letters from the late nineteenth century. See also the office correspondence in the Lester Frank Ward Papers, Smithsonian Institution, Archives, Washington, D.C., a smaller collection but no less interesting for the extent of questions Ward was asked about his discipline.

12. LFW, "Autobiography," 56, Ward Papers.

13. LFW, "Notice of *Dynamic Sociology*," *Glimpses of the Cosmos*, 3:202.

14. LFW, "The Flora of Washington and Vicinity," *Glimpses of the Cosmos*, 2:419. This was originally given as a speech in front of the Philosophical Society of Washington on 22 January 1881. The bulk of these comments were read from the folios of his book published later that year, *Guide to the Flora of Washington and Vicinity* (Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1881).

15. LFW, "The Flora of Washington and Vicinity," 422.

16. LFW, "Notice of *Dynamic Sociology*," 204.

17. LFW, "Notice of *Dynamic Sociology*," 204; see also William Culp Darrah, *Powell of the Colorado*, 280–81. Darrah talked to members of the Geological Survey who knew Ward and Powell, and they noted that Ward was not well liked at the Survey by some people, in part because of how much time Powell offered him.

18. On the American Social Science Association, see Mary O. Furner, *Advocacy and Objectivity*; and Thomas Haskell, *The Emergence of Professional Social Science*.

19. LFW, "Politico-Social Functions," *Glimpses of the Cosmos*, 2:337–38. The article was originally read to the Anthropological Society of Washington in March 1881 and later appeared in *The Penn Monthly* (May 1881). For an examination of the debate about political economy in the ASSA, see Furner, *Advocacy and Objectivity*, 35–58; see also Haskell, *Emergence of Professional Social Science*, for analysis of another reform-minded interpretation of social science, one that generally remained distinct from the natural scientific influence important to Ward.

20. LFW, "Politico-Social Functions," 338.

21. LFW, "Politico-Social Functions," 353.

22. On Cyrenus Ward, see s.v. "Ward, Cyrenus Osborne," *Dictionary of American Biography*; see also Dorothy Ross, *The Origins of American Social Science*, 89–90; and

Edward Rafferty, "Ward, Cyrenus Osborne." See also the collection of Ward material in the Frank Edwin Ward Papers, Rare Books and Manuscripts Division, New York Public Library, New York City, New York. Cyrenus Ward's publications include *The New Idea* and *A Labor Catechism of Political Economy*. There is also material on Cyrenus Ward's involvement in socialist politics in Timothy Messer-Kruse, *The Yankee International*.

23. See Lorenzo Ward to LFW, 20 January 1884, Box 40, Folder 2 (Reel 12), Ward Papers. C. S. Percival and Elizabeth Percival, *History of Buchanan County, Iowa, With Illustrations and Biographical Sketches*, also contains a brief biographical portrait of Lorenzo Ward. There is little information available about Justin Loomis Ward. Allen Burns, a historian who tried to write a biography of Lester Frank Ward in the early 1950s, was able to interview a surviving granddaughter of the Ward family who told him of the family's political history. Allen Burns's letters to this effect are available in the Bradford County History Society, Towanda, Pennsylvania, and were sent to me courtesy of the county librarian.

24. See the Anthropological Society of Washington, *Transactions of the Anthropological Society of Washington*, 43. Michael Lacey describes this event in detail and quotes Powell's remarks extensively in Lacey, "The Mysteries of Earth-Making Dissolve," 347; see also Lacey, "The World of the Bureaus," for a description of Powell's ideas of government, property, and political economy. For a description of Powell's general ideas on social evolution, much of it influenced by Lewis Morgan, see Curtis Hinsley, *Savages and Scientists*, 125–44.

25. LFW, "Kant's Antinomies in the Light of Modern Science," *Glimpses of the Cosmos*, 3:10.

26. LFW, "Kant's Antinomies In the Light of Modern Science," 16.

27. See LFW, "Society as a Domain of Natural Forces," *Glimpses of the Cosmos*, 2:286. Ward read the paper at the Anthropological Society of Washington 16 May 1882. See also his response to a paper by J. C. Welling, *Glimpses of the Cosmos*, 3:287–88.

28. LFW, "Review of *The Positive Philosophy of August Comte*, by L. Levy Bruhl," *Glimpses of the Cosmos*, 6:167–68. Ward recalled these comments from his diaries in reflecting on how he knew Comte and how he wrote this review. They appear in the prefatory remarks on the paper but not in the text of the review itself.

29. LFW, "The Scientific Basis of Positive Political Economy," *Glimpses of the Cosmos*, 3:35. The article originally appeared in *The International Review* (April 1882).

30. LFW, "Scientific Basis," 47–48.

31. LFW, "Scientific Basis," 48. Ward borrowed the term "conation" from Scottish philosopher Sir William Hamilton. See Robert C. Bannister, *Sociology and Scientism*, 18–19.

32. LFW, "Scientific Basis," 35–36.

33. E. L. Youmans to LFW, 20 February 1882, Box 18, Folder 20 (Reel 6), Ward Papers. Youmans was in contact with Appleton and wrote Ward this letter indicating that they would publish the book if he agreed to pay for the cost. The letter that Powell wrote does not survive but Ward made mention of it in the preface to his book.

34. The manuscript version of Ward's book is held in the Lester Frank Ward Papers, Manuscripts Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C., Boxes 1–4.

These boxes contain all of Ward's handwritten pages and a few notes he took while preparing it for publication. They also contain a lengthy analytical index never published with the book.

35. E. L. Youmans to LFW, 6 November 1882, Box 4, Folder 17 (Reel 2), Ward Papers.

36. *New York Times*, 10 November 1882. See also *New York Times*, 22 August 1882, which discussed Spencer's arrival and itinerary during his visit. For a general description of the events at the dinner see E. L. Youmans, *Herbert Spencer on the Americans and the Americans on Herbert Spencer*, published just after Spencer's visit to the country.

37. William Graham Sumner, "Professor Sumner's Speech," in *Herbert Spencer on the Americans*, 35–40.

38. LFW, "The True Philosopher," in *Herbert Spencer on the Americans*, 77.

39. LFW, "The True Philosopher," 79.

40. LFW, "Notice of *Dynamic Sociology*," 136–37.

41. Letter quoted from Donald Bellomy, "The Molding of an Iconoclast: William Graham Sumner, 1840–1885," 664. The letter was written by Robert Matthews from Rochester, New York, in May 1883. I rely heavily on Bellomy's outstanding dissertation for my understanding of Sumner's thought and his relationship to Spencer and evolutionary theory in general.

42. LFW, *Dynamic Sociology* (hereafter cited as *DS*), 1:2–3.

43. Historians have generally interpreted *Dynamic Sociology* in one of two ways: either as a founding document of professional sociology and linked to the increasing professionalization of the social sciences in the United States; or as an effort to counteract a dominant laissez-faire liberalism with a definition of the welfare state. See Ross, *Origins of American Social Science*; Bannister, *Sociology and Scientism*; Furner, *Advocacy and Objectivity*; and Haskell, *Emergence of Professional Social Science*. An intelligent consideration of debates in the social sciences and the influence of older paradigms in setting the terms of the turn-of-the-century debate is Mark Smith, *Social Science in the Crucible*. Older interpretations of Lester Ward's life that utilize his ideas as a way to critique the ideas of Sumner and other "social Darwinists" include Richard Hofstadter, *Social Darwinism in American Thought*; and Henry Steele Commager, ed., *Lester Frank Ward and the Welfare State*. Commager also devoted an entire chapter to Ward in his *The American Mind*. A reconsideration of this literature, in the context of a debate over the nature of "social Darwinism," can be found in Robert Bannister, *Social Darwinism*; and Donald Bellomy, "'Social Darwinism' Revisited."

44. LFW, "Autobiography," 60, Ward Papers.

45. E. L. Youmans to LFW, 30 January 1883, Box 18, Folder 22 (Reel 6), Ward Papers. See also E. L. Youmans to LFW, 5 May 1883, Box 18, Folder 22 (Reel 6), Ward Papers, where Youmans warned Ward that Appleton had wanted to change some of the book.

46. Ward quoted his diary in LFW, "Notice of *Dynamic Sociology*," 211; the original no longer exists. On the early sales of the book see E. L. Youmans to LFW, 5 June 1883, Box 18, Folder 22 (Reel 6), Ward Papers.

47. LFW, *DS*, 1:preface.

48. LFW, *DS*, 1:16–18.

49. LFW, *DS*, 1:36. Ward's insight into the enlarged functions of government in the nineteenth century has become a topic of increasing interest among historians. See William Novak, *The People's Welfare*. Novak examines the history of state laws and regulatory organizations in the economy of nineteenth-century America concluding that much of the argument about a laissez-faire paradise in the nineteenth century misses the extensive regulation by state governments in the economy.

50. LFW, *DS*, 1:37.

51. LFW, *DS*, 1:86–87. For the influence of Comte and positivism in general in the United States, see L. L. Bernard and Jessie Bernard, *Origins of American Sociology*, 115–76, for the perspective of professional sociologists in the middle of the century. A more recent and comprehensive treatment is in J. Gillis Harp, *The Positivist Republic*.

52. LFW, *DS*, 1:103.

53. LFW, *DS*, 1:103–4.

54. LFW, *DS*, 1:133–34.

55. LFW, *DS*, 1:137–38.

56. LFW, *DS*, 1:26–27.

57. LFW, *DS*, 1:89.

58. LFW, *DS*, 1:154–55.

59. LFW, *DS*, 1:464–66.

60. LFW, *DS*, 1:475

61. LFW, *DS*, 1:578.

62. LFW, *DS*, 1:594–95. Ward's notions of class are discussed in Charles Hunt Page, *Class and American Sociology*, 29–72.

63. LFW, *DS*, 1:705–6.

64. LFW, *DS*, 1:xvii.

65. LFW, *DS*, 2:107.

66. Louis Menand discusses systems and ways of thinking in late-nineteenth-century intellectual circles in *The Metaphysical Club*.

67. LFW, *DS*, 2:108–9.

68. LFW, *DS*, 2:111–12.

69. LFW, *DS*, 2:401.

70. LFW, *DS*, 2:155–56.

71. LFW, *DS*, 2:251.

72. LFW, *DS*, 2:496.

73. LFW, *DS*, 2:537–38.

74. LFW, *DS*, 2:627–29; see also, 561–64. Ward's ideas on education have been discussed in a number of dissertations. See Elsa P. Kimball, *Sociology and Education*; Edward Everett Walker, "The Educational Theories of Lester Frank Ward"; and Charles Francis Donovan, "Education in American Social Thought." See also, although the interest is focused more generally on the Progressives, Lawrence Cremin, *The Transformation of the School*.

75. LFW, *DS*, 2:568–71.

76. LFW, *DS*, 2:588.

77. LFW, *DS*, 2:591.

78. LFW, *DS*, 2:632–33.

79. LFW, "A National University," Box 69, Folder 2 (Reel 19), Ward Papers.

80. The recent literature on Ward's life that falls within the context of Ward's experience in Washington generally includes Lacey, "The World of the Bureaus"; and Mary O. Furner, "The Republican Tradition and the New Liberalism: Social Investigation, State Building, and Social Learning in the Gilded Age," in *The State and Social Investigation in Britain and the United States*, ed. Lacey and Furner, 171–241. See also Lacey's earlier study, "The Mysteries of Earth-Making Dissolve." The other recent reconsideration of Ward's life is Harp, *Positivist Republic*. Harp is mainly interested in the influences of Comtean categories on Ward's social thought and generally concentrates his attention on what he regarded as Ward's "apolitical" science and Comtean sociology.

CHAPTER 5

1. See *The Catholic World* (December 1883): 383–89. Rose kept this practice of collecting the reviews of Lester Ward's publications for the rest of the century. The notebooks into which she pasted all the reviews are preserved in the Ward Papers.

2. Ward quoted the review in *Glimpses of the Cosmos*, 3:239–40. The review originally appeared in *The Capital* (June 1883). He also included a list of all the reviews that he wrote in this volume of *Glimpses of the Cosmos*.

3. Ward eventually received letters from Tylor, Congreve, and Spencer thanking him for the book. They are all preserved in Box 40, Folder 1 (Reel 12), Ward Papers.

4. E. L. Youmans to LFW, 15 October 1883, Box 18, Folder 23 (Reel 6), Ward Papers. Ward quoted the review in "Notice of *Dynamic Sociology*," *Glimpses of the Cosmos*, 3:140. The review originally appeared in *The Popular Science Monthly* (June 1883): 273–76.

5. John Wesley Powell, "Ward's *Dynamic Sociology*," (27 July 1883): 107–8.

6. John Wesley Powell, "The Three Methods of Evolution," 52.

7. See especially the last of the reviews: John Wesley Powell, "Ward's *Dynamic Sociology*," (24 August 1883): 222–26. On Powell's anthropology see Curtis Hinsley, *Savages and Scientists*.

8. Grant Allen, "Lester Ward's *Dynamic Sociology*," 309.

9. Allen, "Lester Ward's *Dynamic Sociology*," 311.

10. Herbert Spencer to LFW, n.d., Box 40, Folder 1 (Reel 12), Ward Papers. Ward also quoted the letter (written in July 1883) in "Notice of *Dynamic Sociology*," 213. The discussions of Ward and Spencer include Elsa P. Kimball, *Sociology and Education*; Richard Hofstadter, *Social Darwinism in American Thought*, 67–84; and Charles Hunt Page, *Class and American Sociology*, 73–112.

11. LFW, DS, 1:218.

12. LFW, "The Jeffersonian Paradox," Box 65, Folder 24 (Reel 18), Ward Papers. Ward never sent or finished this piece.

13. Ward said that the review was complimentary in LFW, "Notice of *Dynamic Sociology*," 215. Donald Bellomy contends that the review was Sumner's in "Molding of an Iconoclast," 670–71. Bellomy discovered that Sumner received the book from the *Times* at the same time that he received another book for review, and, he argues, both reviews sound similar to Sumner's general tone and

argument. It is certainly true that Ward was wrong about the praise the review offered his book.

14. Quoted from Bruce Curtis, *William Graham Sumner*, 16. On Sumner's life see especially Bellomy, "Molding of an Iconoclast"; and the intelligent discussion in Robert C. Bannister, *Sociology and Scientism*, 87–110. Dorothy Ross also devotes space to the differences between Sumner and Ward in *Origins of American Social Science*, 85–97.

15. On Yale during this time period see Louise Stevenson, *Scholarly Means to Evangelical Ends*. On the connections between natural science and religion in the antebellum American college see D. H. Meyer, *The Instructed Conscience*; and Daniel Walker Howe, *Making the American Self*.

16. [William Graham Sumner], "The Science of Sociology." See also Bellomy, "Molding of an Iconoclast," 670–74.

17. [Sumner], "The Science of Sociology."

18. [Sumner], "The Science of Sociology."

19. William Graham Sumner, *What Social Classes Owe Each Other*. There is a copy located in the Ward Papers that contains marginalia in Ward's hand.

20. Sumner, *What Social Classes Owe Each Other*, 23.

21. Sumner, *What Social Classes Owe Each Other*, 119.

22. LFW, "Moral Science," Box 68, Folder 14 (Reel 19), Ward Papers. This was an unfinished and unpublished essay Ward wrote in 1884 a few days after finishing Sumner's book and before he published a review.

23. LFW, "Professor Sumner's Social Classes," *Glimpses of the Cosmos*, 3:301–5. The review originally appeared in *Man* 4, no. 9 (1 March 1884). For a discussion of Sumner's ideas, see Ross, *Origins of American Social Science*; Hofstadter, *Social Darwinism in American Thought*, 51–66; and Page, *Class and American Sociology*, 73–112.

24. LFW, *DS*, 1:596.

25. On Peirce, Dewey, and the ideas of Ward's contemporaries generally, see Louis Menand, *The Metaphysical Club*. See also Robert Westbrook, *John Dewey and American Democracy*.

26. LFW, "The Mind as a Social Factor," *Glimpses of the Cosmos*, 3:362–63. The article appeared in *Mind: A Quarterly Journal of Psychology and Philosophy* (October 1884): 563–73.

27. LFW, "The Mind as a Social Factor," 371.

28. For the developments in social thought generally, and on laissez-faire individualism specifically, the classic study is Sidney Fine, *Laissez-Faire and the General Welfare State*. For a general overview of social thought, politics, and industrialism in the late nineteenth century, see John Garraty, *The New Commonwealth, 1877–1890*, especially his chapter on "Social Thought." But recent historians have begun to reexamine the late-nineteenth-century liberal tradition and the conflicts that Fine defines in the era. On this, see especially Nancy Cohen, *The Reconstruction of American Liberalism*.

29. LFW, "[Psychic Factors of Civilization]," *Glimpses of the Cosmos*, 5:1.

30. James C. Welling to LFW, 10 July 1884, Box 4, Folder 21 (Reel 2), Ward Papers. See also Box 4, Folders 21–22 (Reel 2), Ward Papers, for the prospectus of the Corcoran School of Science. And James C. Welling, *Brief Chronicles of Columbian College, 1821–1873*.

31. Spencer Baird to LFW, 1 May 1885, Box 4, Folder 24 (Reel 2), Ward Papers. Baird wrote to thank Ward for his kind contribution.

32. LFW, "Irrigation of the Upper Missouri and Yellowstone Valleys," *Glimpses of the Cosmos*, 3:359. The essay originally appeared in *Science* (August 29, 1884): 166–68.

33. On irrigation, water, and land in the late nineteenth century, see Donald Worster, *A River Running West*; and Donald Pisani, *Water, Land, and Law in the West*.

34. LFW, "Sketch of Paleobotany," 431–32.

35. Powell's comments in his director's reports on Ward's work were always favorable. See, for example, John Wesley Powell, "Director's Report," 33–34, where Powell referred specifically to Ward's contributions in paleobotany.

36. Letters between Deane and Ward are preserved in the Ward Papers, as well as in the Walter Deane Papers, Archives, Gray Herbarium Library, Harvard University Herbaria, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts. Ward's friendship and correspondence with M. S. Bebb can be traced through the many letters in the Ward Papers that Bebb sent asking for assistance with locating and cataloguing his collection of flowers. The letters between Alfred Russel Wallace and Ward have been published in Bernhard J. Stern, ed., "The Letters of Alfred Russel Wallace to Lester F. Ward." See also Alfred Russel Wallace to LFW, February 1887, Box 5, Folder 1 (Reel 2), Ward Papers, for two letters requesting Ward's company on botanical excursions.

37. Alfred Russel Wallace, *My Life*, 2:117–18. See also Stern, "The Letters of Alfred Russel Wallace to Lester F. Ward."

38. See especially Michael Lacey, "The Mysteries of Earth-Making Dissolve."

39. LFW, "Psychic Factors," *Glimpses of the Cosmos*, 5:1.

40. LFW to James C. Welling, 9 June 1887, Box 18, Folder 16 (Reel 6), Ward Papers.

41. On Knowlton, White, and Ward as botanists, an interpretation much more favorable to Ward than John Burnham's harshly critical dismissal of Ward's work, see Henry Andrews, *The Fossil Hunters*, 208–18. Andrews, a well-known botanist who taught at Washington University among other institutions, regarded Ward as one of the major early promoters of paleobotany, someone sadly ignored by later members of the field.

42. LFW to James Welling, 9 June 1887, Ward Papers.

43. On the general history of American life in the late nineteenth century, see Robert Wiebe, *The Search for Order, 1877–1920*. There is a great deal of literature on the reorientation of American thought in the late nineteenth century: Morton White, *Social Thought in America*; John Higham, "The Reorientation of American Culture in the 1890s," in *The Origins of Modern Consciousness*, ed. John Weiss; and Alan Trachtenberg, *The Incorporation of America*. Ward's life in the 1880s has been most completely covered by Bannister, *Sociology and Scientism*, 13–31; and Clifford H. Scott, *Lester Frank Ward*, but neither of them views Ward from the context of Washington's scientific community. Bannister views this era as a transitional phase in Ward's life from his "first" sociology to his "second" sociology, but he overemphasizes the changes Ward made in his thinking, paying less attention to the consistency in Ward's work over the last two decades of the nineteenth century despite the rapid changes in the social scientific community over those years.

In addition, see Raymond Seidelman and Edward Harpham, *Disenchanted Realists*, 27–40, who discuss Ward's contribution to political science and theory in the 1880s and 1890s. They mistakenly associate his ideas with a Locofoco background experience, based on a similar error by Dorothy Ross, "Socialism and American Liberalism." Ross corrects this impression in *The Origins of American Social Science*, 85–97, and includes extensive coverage of Ward's life, as well as a general examination of the problems facing social scientists in the 1880s and 1890s.

44. On Washington I am especially indebted to Michael Lacey, "The World of the Bureaus: Government and the Positivist Project in the Late Nineteenth Century," in *The State and Social Investigation in Britain and the United States*, ed. Michael Lacey and Mary O. Furner, 127–70. See also Lacey, "The Mysteries of Earth-Making Dissolve"; and James Kirkpatrick Flack, *Desideratum in Washington*. The general political culture of Washington in the late nineteenth century has been well covered in Morton Keller, *Affairs of State*.

45. *Testimony Before the Joint Commission to Consider the Present Organizations of the Signal Service, Geological Survey, Coast and Geodetic Survey, and the Hydrographic Office of the Navy Department, with a View to Secure Greater Efficiency and Economy of Administration of the Public Service in Said Bureaus*, United States Senate Misc. Doc. 82, 49th Congress, 1st Session (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1886). On the Joint Commission, see especially Lacey, "The World of the Bureaus." See also Wallace Stegner's interpretation of the commission's work in his biography of Powell, *Beyond the Hundredth Meridian*, 283–93; William Culp Darrah's biography, *Powell of the Colorado*; the excellent chapter in A. Hunter Dupree, *Science in the Federal Government*, 215–31; Thomas J. Manning, *Government in Science*; and Worster, *River Running West*. For the commission hearings, see *Testimony Before the Joint Commission*.

46. Hugh B. Hammett, *Hilary Abner Herbert*, 98.

47. *Testimony Before the Joint Commission*, 1013.

48. *Testimony Before the Joint Commission*, 1014.

49. *Testimony Before the Joint Commission*, 1082.

50. Quotes are taken from the Committee's final report, *Report of the Joint Commission to Consider the Present Organizations of the Signal Service, Geological Survey, Coast and Geodetic Survey, and the Hydrographic Office of the Navy*, United States Senate Report No. 1285, 49th Congress, 1st Session (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1886), 125.

51. LFW, "Moral and Material Progress Contrasted," *Glimpses of the Cosmos*, 4:8. The essay originally appeared in *Transactions of the Anthropological Society of Washington* (Washington, 1885), 3:121–30.

52. On the theory and ideas of early anthropologists see Hinsley, *Savages and Scientists*.

53. LFW, "Moral and Material Progress Contrasted," 11.

54. LFW, "Moral and Material Progress Contrasted," 13–14.

55. LFW, "Moral and Material Progress Contrasted," 14.

56. LFW to Edward A. Ross, 4 May 1896, in Bernhard J. Stern, ed., "The Ward-Ross Correspondence, 1891–1896," 396. Stern undertook a project in the 1930s to publish some of Ward's correspondence. This collection represents the letters Ross wrote to Ward, which are preserved in the Ward Papers. See also the Edward A.

Ross Papers, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Madison, Wisconsin (microfilm edition).

57. Albion Small to LFW, 25 July 1891, in Bernhard J. Stern, ed., "The Letters of Albion Small to Lester F. Ward," (December 1933): 165. Small's letters are preserved in the Ward Papers in scattered locations throughout the letter boxes. For ease of reference I have cited the letters from Stern's reprinting of them. For these references consult the Manuscript Catalog in the John Hay Library, and the Reel Contents List for specific locations. The strange organization of Ward's papers is more easily followed in these guides. Ward also quoted Small's remark in the preface to the second edition of *Dynamic Sociology*.

CHAPTER 6

1. L. Metcalf to LFW, 25 September 1886, and L. Metcalf to LFW, 8 October 1886, Ward Papers.

2. For information on *The Forum*, Ward, and the general goals of magazine publishing in the 1880s, I am indebted to John Milton Cooper, *Walter Hines Page*, 90–113; the quote comes from page 101. On *The Forum* see also Frank Luther Mott, *A History of American Magazines*, 4:511–23.

3. LFW, "Broadening the Way to Success," *Glimpses of the Cosmos*, 4:37. The essay originally appeared in *The Forum* (December 1886): 340–50. On Galton and the problem of human nature in American thought, see Mark Haller, *Eugenics*; Merle Curti, *Human Nature in American Thought*; and Carl N. Degler, *In Search of Human Nature*.

4. LFW, "Broadening the Way to Success," 39.

5. LFW, "Autobiography," 33, Ward Papers.

6. LFW, "The Enlargement of State Functions," Box 69, Folder 19 (Reel 16), Ward Papers. A note on the essay indicates its dates of preparation. Ward apparently never sought publication of this essay.

7. LFW, "The Enlargement of State Functions," Ward Papers.

8. LFW, "The Use and Abuse of Wealth," *Glimpses of the Cosmos*, 4:50; the article originally appeared in *The Forum* (February 1887): 549–58. On the Knights of Labor and republican ideals in the Gilded Age, see Leon Fink, *Workingman's Democracy*. On the Populists, see Lawrence Goodwyn, *The Populist Moment*.

9. LFW, "The Use and Abuse of Wealth," 53–54.

10. LFW, "The Use and Abuse of Wealth," 53.

11. LFW, "False Notions of Government," *Glimpses of the Cosmos*, 4:68; the article originally appeared in *The Forum* (June 1887): 364–72. Before he published the essay Ward originally envisioned calling it "The Growing Conceptions of Government."

12. LFW, "False Notions of Government," 71.

13. LFW, "What Shall the Public Schools Teach," *Glimpses of the Cosmos*, 4:101, 104. The article originally appeared in *The Forum* (July 1888): 573–83.

14. LFW, "Our Better Halves," *Glimpses of the Cosmos*, 4:138–39; the essay originally appeared in *The Forum* (November 1888): 266–75. The essay was even the subject of an editorial by Christine Ladd Franklin in *The Nation*, 15 November 1888.

15. LFW, "Genius and Women's Intuition," *Glimpses of the Cosmos*, 4:222–29. The article originally appeared in *The Forum* (June 1890): 401–8. Allen's essay appeared as "Women's Place in Nature," *The Forum* (May 1889).
16. LFW, "A New Plea for Women's Education," Box 69, Folder 12 (Reel 19), Ward Papers. It was written in January 1889 and delivered as a lecture 27 February 1889.
17. Mary Dodge to LFW, 1 June 1890, Box 44, Folder 2 (Reel 12), Ward Papers.
18. Ms. E. F. Andrews to LFW, 11 June 1890, Box 6, Folder 6 (Reel 2), Ward Papers. For an analysis of the work of scientists on Darwin and sexuality, see Cynthia Eagle Russett, *Sexual Science*; and Degler, *In Search of Human Nature*, 105–38. On women's political culture more generally, see Katherine Kish Sklar, *Florence Kelley and the Nation's Work*.
19. Professor Carrie Harris to LFW, 6 January 1898, Box 21, Folder 14 (Reel 6), Ward Papers.
20. Professor Ellen Hayes to LFW, 28 June 1895, Box 48, Folder 3 (Reel 13), Ward Papers.
21. LFW, "Genesis of Women's Social Condition," unfinished manuscript fragment, Box 69, Folder 12 (Reel 19), Ward Papers.
22. On Campbell's life, see s.v., "Helen Campbell," *The National Cyclopaedia of American Biography*, Volume IX, 126. See also Nancy Folbre, "The 'Sphere of Women' in Early-Twentieth-Century Economics," in *Gender and American Social Science*, ed. Helene Silverberg, 42.
23. Helen Campbell to LFW, 24 June 1889, Box 43, Folder 12 (Reel 12), Ward Papers.
24. Helen Campbell, *Household Economics*, 14–15.
25. LFW, "True and False Civil Service Reform," *Glimpses of the Cosmos*, 4:111–12; the article originally appeared in *The Historical American* (July 1888). On the Civil Service reformers' genteel ambitions, see John Tomsich, *A Genteel Endeavor*.
26. LFW, "True and False Civil Service Reform," 113.
27. LFW, "The Sociological Position of Protection and Free-Trade," *Glimpses of the Cosmos*, 4:183. The article appeared in *The American Anthropologist* (October 1889): 289–99.
28. For Hoyt's references to Ward, see John Hoyt to LFW, 2 October 1895, Box 21, Folder 17 (Reel 6), Ward Papers; and The National University Committee of One Hundred to LFW, 30 May 1896, Box 22, Folder 5 (Reel 7), Ward Papers, reporting on the progress of the movement. The idea of a national university has a long history in the United States—since the days of the Revolution and throughout the Gilded Age. See David Madsen, *The National University*, the only history of the National University movement.
29. LFW, "The Increase and Diffusion of Knowledge Among Men," Box 65, Folder 4 (Reel 18), Ward Papers. Ward borrowed the title from a phrase in James Smithson's will giving the money for the establishment of the Institution. Ward continued to give versions of this lecture to a wide variety of audiences throughout the 1890s and 1900s.
30. The quote is from LFW, "The Science and Art of Government," *Glimpses of the Cosmos*, 4:324; the essay originally appeared in *The Proceedings of the American*

Association for the Advancement of Science, Washington, 1891 (Salem Press, 1891), 420–21.

31. LFW, "A National University: Its Character and Purpose," *Glimpses of the Cosmos*, 4:324–25, which originally appeared in *The Proceedings of the American Association for the Advancement of Science*, 421–22. Ward also wrote an essay immediately following the Allison Commission hearings, "The National University," *Glimpses of the Cosmos*, 4:20–22, which originally appeared in *Science* (18 December 1885): 539.

32. On the German university and the American interest in German models of higher education, see Jurgen Herbst, *The German Historical School in American Scholarship*. Daniel Rodgers's (*Atlantic Crossings*) recent examination of this German tradition is very important, and very helpful, in tracing out the influences they had on American interest in social reform.

33. Benjamin Rader, *The Academic Mind and Reform*, 13. All biographical information on Ely comes from Rader's study of his life. See also Ely's autobiography, a wonderful source for examining the life of academic social science in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, *Ground Under Our Feet*.

34. Quote from the circular taken from Rader, *The Academic Mind and Reform*, 35. Ely's prospectus was challenged by some economists as too radical for the founding of the organization. See also Joseph Dorfman, *The Economic Mind in American Civilization*, 205–12, for a discussion of the "new school" of economists.

35. Richard Ely to LFW, 21 March 1885, Box 4, Folder 21 (Reel 2), Ward Papers, thanking Ward for sending "Moral and Material Progress Contrasted," and asking him to join American Economic Association; Richard Ely to LFW, 11 December 1886, Box 41, Folder 2 (Reel 12), Ward Papers, again asking Ward to participate in the American Economic Association (Ely had forgotten that Ward already joined); Richard Ely to LFW, 10 November 1887 and Ely to LFW, 22 November 1887, Box 42, Folder 1 (Reel 12), Ward Papers, telling Ward that he relied on Ward's ideas for his publications.

36. LFW, "Some Social and Economic Paradoxes," *Glimpses of the Cosmos*, 4:155; the essay was first given as a lecture to the Anthropological Society of Washington. It originally appeared in *The American Anthropologist* (April 1889): 119–32.

37. On Gunton, see Dorfman, *Economic Mind in American Civilization*, 47, 127–28; on my references to Cyrenus Ward's relationship to the New York labor movement, see his son's papers, Frank Edwin Ward Papers, New York Public Library, Rare Books and Manuscript Division, New York, New York. Scattered in the Ward Papers are a few letters from Gunton praising Ward's work. In addition, see Timothy Messer-Kruse, *The Yankee International*, for analysis of the American tradition of radicalism in the work of Cyrenus Ward and other New York socialist radicals.

38. LFW, "Some Social and Economic Paradoxes," 153–65.

39. LFW, "Some Social and Economic Paradoxes," 153.

40. Quoted from John L. Gillin, "Franklin Henry Giddings," in *American Masters of Social Science*, ed. Howard Odum, 197; other biographical information can be found in Robert C. Bannister, *Sociology and Scientism*, 64–86. On Giddings's work in sociology generally see also Dorothy Ross, *The Origins of American Social Science*, 123, 127–28. In addition, see the study of New York's social science community in

the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, John L. Recchiuti, "The Origins of Progressivism."

41. Franklin Giddings to LFW, 23 June 1887, Box 41, Folder 3 (Reel 12), Ward Papers.

42. Albion Small to LFW, 18 September 1890, in Bernhard J. Stern, ed., "The Letters of Albion Small to Lester F. Ward," (December 1933): 165. On Small's life, see Vernon Dibble, *The Legacy of Albion Small*; and Ross, *Origins of American Social Science*, 122–40.

43. Syllabus quote taken from Stern, "The Letters of Albion Small to Lester F. Ward," (December 1933): 165.

44. Biographical information about Ross is taken from Julius Weinberg, *Edward Alsworth Ross and the Sociology of Progressivism*. Ross changed the spelling of his mother's maiden name (from Ellsworth to Alsworth). See also Ross's own reflections on his life in his well-written and engaging memoir, *Seventy Years of It*.

45. Ross, *Seventy Years of It*, 42.

46. LFW, "The Course of Biologic Evolution," *Glimpses of the Cosmos*, 4:198–219; the quote appears on 198. The address, given on 25 January 1890, originally appeared in *The Proceedings of the Biological Society of Washington* (Washington, 1890), 5:23–55.

47. On Lamarck, the story of the giraffes, and evolutionary biology in the nineteenth century, see Richard Burkhardt, Jr., *The Spirit of System*.

48. LFW, "Neo-Darwinism and Neo-Lamarckianism," *Glimpses of the Cosmos*, 4:291; the essay was published in *The Proceedings of the Biological Society of Washington*, Volume VI (Washington: The Society, 1891), 11–71. For discussions of Weismann, the Neo-Darwinists, and the crisis of the 1890s, see Robert C. Bannister, *Social Darwinism*, 137–63; Bannister, *Sociology and Scientism*, 22–25; and Richard Hofstadter, *Social Darwinism in American Thought*, 76–77. See also Hamilton Cravens, *The Triumph of Evolution*, 15–56; and Degler, *In Search of Human Nature*, 3–31.

49. I am indebted for this example to Haller, *Eugenics*, 60.

50. LFW, "The Transmission of Culture," *Glimpses of the Cosmos*, 4:246–53; the article originally appeared in *The Forum* (May 1891): 312–19. On Lamarck and the influence of his ideas on American scientists and social scientists, see George Stocking, "Lamarckianism in American Social Science, 1890–1915," in *Race, Culture, and Evolution*, 234–69. Ward's argument actually resembles a modern-day philosophical debate about Darwin's ideas; see Daniel Dennett, *Darwin's Dangerous Idea*, where he argues that there are cultural transmitted "memes" similar to biological genes carried from generation to generation. For an analysis and critique of this book, see Stephen Jay Gould and Daniel Dennett, "Darwinian Fundamentalism: An Exchange," *The New York Review of Books* (14 August 1997): 64–65; Stephen Jay Gould, "The Pleasure of Pluralism," *The New York Review of Books* (26 June 1997): 47–52; and Stephen Jay Gould, "Darwinian Fundamentalism," *The New York Review of Books* (12 June 1997): 34–37.

51. See S. P. Langley to LFW, 19 December 1890, Box 44 Folder 3 (Reel 12), Ward Papers; and J. H. Comstock to LFW, 17 November 1891, Box 45, Folder 3 (Reel 12), Ward Papers.

52. On the changing nature of biology in the 1890s, and the modernist turn in university research, see Philip J. Pauly, "Modernist Practice in American Biology," in *Modernist Impulses in the Human Sciences, 1870–1930*, ed. Dorothy Ross, 272–89.

53. On M. M. Kovalevskii and Ward generally, see Alexander Vucinich, *Social Thought in Tsarist Russia*, 153–72.

54. George Kennan to LFW, 18 July 1891, Box 6, Folder 10 (Reel 2), Ward Papers. Ward also quoted the remark in the preface to the second edition of *Dynamic Sociology*. This George Kennan is the great-uncle to the famous twentieth-century diplomat, George F. Kennan.

55. LFW, "The Psychologic Basis of Social Economics," *Glimpses of the Cosmos*, 4:345–66; the quote appears on 355. The essay originally appeared in the *Proceedings of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, Rochester Meeting, 1892* (Salem Press, 1892).

56. Ward made this comment in his introduction to "Collective Telesis," *Glimpses of the Cosmos*, 5:339. Edward Bellamy, *Looking Backward: 2000–1887*. See also John L. Thomas, *Alternative America*.

57. LFW, "Collective Telesis," 337–40.

58. Charlotte Perkins Stetson to LFW, 1 January 1896, Box 48, Folder 6 (Reel 13), Ward Papers.

59. Ward quoted Bellamy's letter in "The Psychologic Basis of Social Economics," 346. See Edward Bellamy to LFW, 29 January 1893, Box 7, Folder 2 (Reel 3), Ward Papers, for the original copy of the letter.

60. LFW, "The Psychologic Basis of the Social Economics," 347. Bellamy's comments originally appeared in *The New Nation* (25 April 1893).

61. Albert Chavannes, *The Future Commonwealth*. See also Albert Chavannes to LFW, 11 July 1895, Box 20, Folder 9 (Reel 6), Ward Papers; and Albert Chavannes to LFW, 10 November 1895, Box 20, Folder 9 (Reel 6), Ward Papers. On Chavannes's life and work, see Jon Roper, "Utopianism, Scientific and Socialistic"; and Francine Cary, "Albert Chavannes and the Future Commonwealth."

62. Ward noted Patten's treatment of his essay in LFW to Edward A. Ross, 27 November 1892, in Bernhard J. Stern, ed., "The Ward-Ross Correspondence, 1891–1896," 375; and LFW to Edward A. Ross, 14 April 1894, "Ward-Ross Correspondence," 385. On Patten generally and his relationship to Ward's ideas I am indebted to Daniel M. Fox, *The Discovery of Abundance*, 157–61.

63. LFW, "The Utilitarian Character of *Dynamic Sociology*," *Glimpses of the Cosmos*, 4:315; the essay originally appeared in *The American Anthropologist* (April 1892): 97–103.

64. LFW to Edward A. Ross, 4 March 1892, "Ward-Ross Correspondence," 368–69. On his progress and earlier title, see LFW to Edward Ross, 18 February 1892, "Ward-Ross Correspondence," 366–67.

65. LFW, "Psychic Factors," *Glimpses of the Cosmos*, 5:20. The publisher, for reasons unknown to Ward, left off the dedication entirely. The original version of the manuscript, with its dedication, is held in the Lester Frank Ward Papers, Boxes 5–6, Library of Congress, Manuscripts Division, Washington, D.C.

66. LFW, "Notebooks: Records of Principal Events, 1890–1897," 20 July 1892, Lester Frank Ward Papers, Special Collections, Gelman Library, George Washington University, Washington, D.C. See Department of Interior to LFW, 12 August 1892, Box 6, Folder 14 (Reel 2), Ward Papers, informing him that his salary was cut.

67. On Powell, see Thomas J. Manning, *Government in Science*; Wallace Stegner, *Beyond the Hundredth Meridian*; and William Culp Darrah, *Powell of the Colorado*.

68. LFW, "Solution to the Great Social Problem," Box 74, Folder 6 (Reel 21), Ward Papers.

69. Edward A. Ross to LFW, 3 November 1893, in "Ward-Ross Correspondence, 1891-1896," 382.

70. LFW, *The Psychic Factors of Civilization*, hereafter cited as *Psy. Fac.*

71. LFW, *Psy. Fac.*, vii-viii. On mid-nineteenth-century moral philosophy and faculty psychology, see D. H. Meyer, *The Instructed Conscience*; and the recent interpretation in Daniel Walker Howe, *Making the American Self*, which reconsiders the tradition of faculty psychology, republicanism, and liberalism in American social thought.

72. William James, *The Principles of Psychology*, preface.

73. Edward Ross to LFW, 22 February 1892, "Ward-Ross Correspondence," 367-68. On James, see George Cotkin, *William James*.

74. LFW, *Psy. Fac.*, 16.

75. LFW, *Psy. Fac.*, 49.

76. LFW, *Psy. Fac.*, 90

77. LFW, *Psy. Fac.*, 92-93.

78. LFW, *Psy. Fac.*, 101.

79. LFW, *Psy. Fac.*, 114.

80. LFW, *Psy. Fac.*, 220-21.

81. LFW, *Psy. Fac.*, 230.

82. LFW, *Psy. Fac.*, 277.

83. LFW, *Psy. Fac.*, 290.

84. LFW, *Psy. Fac.*, 288.

85. LFW, *Psy. Fac.*, 307-8.

86. LFW, *Psy. Fac.*, 304.

87. On Ward's collectivism and the wide range of collectivist projects in American social philosophy, see James Gilbert, *Designing the Industrial State*; Frank Tariello, *The Reconstruction of American Political Ideology, 1865-1917*; and Raymond Seidelman and Edward Harpham, *Disenchanted Realists*.

88. LFW, *Psy. Fac.*, 320.

89. LFW, *Psy. Fac.*, 323-24.

90. LFW, *Psy. Fac.*, 325-26.

91. See the Lester Frank Ward Manuscripts, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C., Box 5, which contains the handwritten version of *Psychic Factors*. I am indebted for the discovery of this reference to J. Gillis Harp, *The Positivist Republic*, 151. But Harp does not quote the reference in full, nor does he examine the context in which Ward made the statement.

92. LFW, "The Distribution of Wealth." Ward wrote the review in the fall of 1893.

93. LFW, *Psy. Fac.*, 330-31.

CHAPTER 7

1. LFW, "Spencer-Smashing At Washington," *Glimpses of the Cosmos*, 4:109-10. They originally appeared in *The Popular Science Monthly* (April 1894): 856-57. Ward said he borrowed the phrase from his friend Edward L. Youmans.

2. Edward Ross to LFW, 8 April 1894, in Bernhard J. Stern, ed., "The Ward-Ross Correspondence, 1891–1896," 384. For the Wallace letter see Bernhard J. Stern, ed., "The Letters of Alfred Russel Wallace to Lester F. Ward," 378–79; and for the original, Alfred Wallace to LFW, 21 November 1893, Box 45, Folder 3 (Reel 12), Ward Papers.

3. LFW to Edward Ross, 14 April 1894, "Ward-Ross Correspondence," 385.

4. Simon Patten, "The Failure of Biologic Sociology," 924–25. See also Daniel M. Fox's discussion in *The Discovery of Abundance*, 157–61.

5. Patten, "Failure of Biologic Sociology," 940.

6. Simon Patten to LFW, 29(?) April 1894, Box 45, Folder 6 (Reel 12), Ward Papers.

7. LFW, "Review of Simon Patten, *The Theory of Social Forces*," 639.

8. Simon Patten to LFW, 23 April 1897, Box 50, Folder 11 (Reel 13), Ward Papers. See also Fox, *Discovery of Abundance*, on Patten's ideas.

9. John Dewey, "Review of *The Psychic Factors of Civilization*"; see also Robert C. Bannister, *Sociology and Scientism*, 20–22. On Dewey's psychology generally and the changing nature of his thought in the 1890s, see Robert Westbrook's intelligent study of Dewey and his generation of social thinkers, *John Dewey and American Democracy*.

10. LFW to James McKeen Cattell, 17 July 1894, quoted from Geraldine Joncich, *The Sane Positivist*, 321–22. Joncich discovered the letter in Cattell's Papers.

11. LFW, "The Political Ethics of Herbert Spencer," *Glimpses of the Cosmos*, 5:55–56; the review originally appeared in *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* (January 1894): 582–619.

12. LFW, "The Ethical Aspects of Social Science," *Glimpses of the Cosmos*, 5:294; the article originally appeared in *The International Journal of Ethics* (July 1896): 441–56. On the general interest in ethics and social responsibility, especially among the Progressive generation, see David B. Danbom, "The World of Hope."

13. LFW, "Plutocracy and Paternalism," *Glimpses of the Cosmos*, 5:231; the article originally appeared in *The Forum* (November 1895): 300–310.

14. LFW, "Plutocracy and Paternalism," 236–37.

15. LFW, "Coxy's Army," *Washington News* (23 April 1894), 3.

16. LFW to Edward A. Ross, 7 August 1896, "Ward-Ross Correspondence," 399.

17. LFW to Andrew Dickson White, 26 July 1896, The Andrew Dickson White Papers, Special Collections, Cornell University Archives, Ithaca, New York. I am indebted to Clifford H. Scott, *Lester Frank Ward*, 142, for the discovery of the letter, but he does not quote it in full.

18. Although both Stetson and Ward had heard of one another, it was Campbell who formally introduced the two reformers. See Helen Campbell to LFW, 15 January 1896, Box 48, Folder 10 (Reel 10), Ward Papers; and Charlotte Perkins Stetson to LFW, 1 January 1896, Box 48, Folder 10 (Reel 13), Ward Papers.

19. I refer to her as Stetson here because that is how she was known until her marriage to George Houghton Gilman in 1900. All biographical information on Stetson comes from Mary Armfield Hill, *Charlotte Perkins Gilman*; and Ann J. Lane, *To Herland and Beyond*.

20. Charlotte Perkins Stetson to LFW, 5 June 1897, Box 9, Folder 19 (Reel 3), Ward Papers.

21. Charlotte Perkins Gilman, *The Living Charlotte Perkins Gilman*, 187.
22. On Stetson's racial and gender analysis in her work see Gail Bederman, *Manliness and Civilization*, 134–50.
23. H. L. Fairchild to LFW, 11 February 1892, Box 20, Folder 22 (Reel 6), Ward Papers; Fairchild to LFW, 15 August 1892, Box 20, Folder 23 (Reel 6), Ward Papers, for Fairchild's note that Ward's resignation would not be accepted; and Fairchild to LFW, 6 October 1892, Box 20, Folder 23 (Reel 6), Ward Papers, for a note mentioning Ward's refusal to join the society in any way after his treatment.
24. Ward's argument with Coues can be followed in their correspondence. See LFW to Editor, *Religio-Philosophical Journal*, 13 March 1893, Box 23, Folder 15 (Reel 7), Ward Papers, where Ward argued that his reputation had been maligned; Elliot Coues to LFW, 20 March 1893, Box 20, Folder 14 (Reel 6), Ward Papers, where Coues warned Ward that he was overreacting; and LFW to Elliot Coues, Box 23, Folder 16 (Reel 7), Ward Papers, where Ward agreed not to make the matter public.
25. See LFW, "The Status of the Mind Problem," *Glimpses of the Cosmos*, 5:90.
26. LFW, *Glimpses of the Cosmos*, 6:218.
27. Albion Small, "Note on Lester Ward's *Dynamic Sociology*," 110–11.
28. LFW to Edward A. Ross, 24 November 1901, in Bernhard J. Stern, ed., "The Ward-Ross Correspondence, II, 1897–1901," part II, 748. Stern published all of the correspondence between Ward and Ross in four articles in the 1930s and 1940s. Ross's letters are preserved in the Ward Papers, John Hay Library, Brown University, but Ward's side of the correspondence was provided to Stern by Ross himself and is not preserved in Ward's or Ross's papers.
29. LFW to Franklin Giddings, 15 November 1896, in Bernhard J. Stern, ed., "Giddings, Ward, and Small," 316. The letter was given to Stern by Giddings himself and is not preserved in any manuscript collection.
30. For Ward's work at the school of sociology see the letters from the school's director, C. D. Hartranft. C. D. Hartranft to LFW, 1 August 1894, and Hartranft to LFW, 15 August 1894, Box 8, Folder 2 (Reel 2), Ward Papers.
31. Herron quoted in Michael Kazin, *The Populist Persuasion*, 32.
32. LFW, "Christian Sociology," *Glimpses of the Cosmos*, 5:194–95; the article originally appeared in *Bibliotheca Sacra* (July 1895): 482. On the American Institute of Christian Sociology, see Benjamin Rader, *The Academic Mind and Reform*, 121, 133–34, for Ely's role in the organization. On George Herron, see especially Robert M. Crunden, *Ministers of Reform*, 40–52.
33. LFW, "Review of Franklin Giddings, *Principles of Sociology*," 703.
34. Reverend L. T. Chamberlain to LFW, 18 March 1895, Box 48, Folder 1 (Reel 13), Ward Papers; Franklin Giddings to LFW, 13 March 1895, Box 48, Folder 1 (Reel 13), Ward Papers.
35. Albion Small to LFW, 25 May 1895, in Bernhard J. Stern, ed., "The Letters of Albion Small to Lester F. Ward," (December 1933): 172.
36. The two most important works on the wide community of intellectuals working on the problems of social reform are James Kloppenberg, *Uncertain Victory*; and more recently Daniel Rodgers, *Atlantic Crossings*. Neither of these works deal with Ward's work in sociology.
37. Linda Clark, *Social Darwinism in France*, 120. On Ward's role in the IIS see René Worms to LFW, 13 July 1896, Box 50, Folder 1 (Reel 13), Ward Papers, asking

Ward whether he would be interested in the French society; and René Worms to LFW, 31 August 1896, Box 50, Folder 2 (Reel 13), Ward Papers, on Ward's election to the IIS.

38. On Patten generally and his relationship to Ward, see Fox, *The Discovery of Abundance*.

39. LFW, "Utilitarian Economics," *American Journal of Sociology* (1897).

40. LFW to Edward Ross, 2 May 1897, "Ward-Ross Correspondence, II," part I, 596.

41. LFW to Edward Ross, 27 August 1897, "Ward-Ross Correspondence, II," part I, 597–98.

42. LFW to Edward Ross, 7 November 1897, "Ward-Ross Correspondence, II," part I, 600.

43. LFW to Edward Ross, 7 November 1897, "Ward-Ross Correspondence, II," part I, 601–2. The cane is preserved in the collection at the John Hay Library, Brown University, Providence, Rhode Island.

44. Edward Ross to LFW, 3 March 1898, "Ward-Ross Correspondence, II," part I, 602.

45. Edward Ross to LFW, 4 September 1897, "Ward-Ross Correspondence, II," part I, 600.

46. LFW, *Outlines of Sociology*, 136.

47. LFW, *Outlines of Sociology*, 193.

48. LFW, *Outlines of Sociology*, 193.

49. LFW, *Outlines of Sociology*, 196–97.

50. LFW, *Outlines of Sociology*, 204–5.

51. LFW, *Outlines of Sociology*, 271.

52. LFW, *Outlines of Sociology*, 274.

53. LFW, *Outlines of Sociology*, 292–93.

54. "Review of Lester Ward, *Outlines of Sociology*," *The Nation* (8 September 1898).

55. Richard Ely to LFW, 25 April 1898, Box 51, Folder 2 (Reel 13), Ward Papers.

56. LFW, "The Cretaceous Formation of the Black Hills as Indicated by the Fossil Plants," *Glimpses of the Cosmos*, 6:70. This is just an autobiographical reflection on the project. The full report appeared within the United States Geological Survey, *Nineteenth Annual Report of the United States Geological Survey, 1897–1898, Part II* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1898), 521–958.

57. Franklin Giddings to LFW, 21 February 1900, Box 51, Folder 8 (Reel 13), Ward Papers.

58. LFW, "The Notebooks of Lester Frank Ward," Lester Frank Ward Papers, Special Collections, Gelman Library, George Washington University, Washington, D.C. This set of four volumes contains brief notations of Ward's daily activities in the 1890s until his death in 1913. He apparently copied these from his extensive diaries, which are no longer in existence. But they do provide an interesting log of Ward's interests and the reading he did in his home with relatives and friends.

59. LFW, "Review of John Wesley Powell, *Truth and Error; or, The Science of Intellection*," 126. For an excellent interpretation of the book, see Donald Worcester, *A River Running West*, 551–57.

60. LFW to Edward Ross, 1 January 1899, "Ward-Ross Correspondence, II," part II, 735.

61. LFW, "Review of John Wesley Powell," 132.
62. LFW, "Review of John Wesley Powell," 136.
63. LFW, "Review of *Truth and Error; or, The Science of Intellection*," *Glimpses of the Cosmos*, 6:53. This is an autobiographical reflection on writing the review and on Powell's life and career.
64. LFW to Edward Ross, 26 October 1900, "Ward-Ross Correspondence, II," part II, 743.
65. For an intelligent analysis of Ward's relationship to Kidd's social ideas and Huxley's work, see Bannister, *Sociology and Scientism*, 23–25. See also the reevaluation of Kidd in Mike Hawkins, *Social Darwinism in European and American Thought, 1860–1945*, 171–74.
66. LFW, "The Essential Nature of Religion," *Glimpses of the Cosmos*, 6:14. The essay originally appeared in *The International Journal of Ethics* (January 1898). An earlier version was given as a lecture entitled "Religion from an Anthropological Point of View" to the Anthropological Society of Washington in 1897.
67. LFW, "The Essential Nature of Religion," 22.
68. LFW, "The Essential Nature of Religion," 29–30.
69. LFW, "The Essential Nature of Religion," 31.
70. LFW, "The Gospel of Action," *Glimpses of the Cosmos*, 6:57. The essay originally appeared in *The Independent* (13 July 1899): 1865–68.
71. LFW, "Gospel of Action," 63.
72. LFW, "Gospel of Action," 62.
73. Edward Ross to LFW, 29 November 1899, "Ward-Ross Correspondence, II," part II, 737.
74. Thorstein Veblen to LFW, 28 November 1899, Box 51, Folder 5 (Reel 13), Ward Papers.
75. For biographical material on Veblen, see Joseph Dorfman, *Thorstein Veblen and His America*.
76. Mari Sandoz's chronicle of her father's life in the Plains is a superb account of the forces that shaped this region in Veblen's youth and into the twentieth century. *Old Jules*, 19.
77. Thorstein Veblen, *The Theory of the Leisure Class*; the quote is from the preface.
78. Veblen, *Theory of the Leisure Class*, 40, 44.
79. Edward Ross to LFW, 21 April 1900, "Ward-Ross Correspondence, II," part II, 737.
80. LFW, "Review of the *Theory of the Leisure Class*, by Thorstein Veblen," 829.
81. LFW, "Review of *Theory of the Leisure Class*," 830.
82. Thorstein Veblen to LFW, 29 April 1900, Box 51, Folder 11 (Reel 13), Ward Papers.
83. Letter from Miss Hardy cited in Dorfman, *Thorstein Veblen*, 195–96.
84. LFW, "The Petrified Forests of Arizona," *Glimpses of the Cosmos*, 6:84. The report originally appeared in *Annual Report of the Board of Regents of the Smithsonian Institution, 1899* (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1901). For a thorough examination of the science and the policy behind Ward's report and the forest generally, see George Lubick, "Soldiers and Scientists in the Petrified Forest."
85. LFW to Edward Ross, 1 January 1899, "Ward-Ross Correspondence, II," part II, 734–35.

CHAPTER 8

1. Daniel Rodgers, *Atlantic Crossings*, 8–32. On the history of the Parisian fair, see Richard Mandell, *Paris 1900*; the quote is from page xiii.
2. LFW, "Sociology at the Paris Exposition of 1900," 1453.
3. LFW, "Sociology at the Paris Exposition," 1454.
4. LFW, "Sociology at the Paris Exposition," 1571.
5. LFW, "Sociology at the Paris Exposition," 1578.
6. LFW, "Sociology at the Paris Exposition," 1579.
7. LFW, "Sociology at the Paris Exposition," 1588.
8. See the autobiographical remarks in LFW, "Sociology at the Paris Exposition," *Glimpses of the Cosmos*, 6:115–16.
9. Edward Ross to LFW, 9 January 1901, in Bernhard J. Stern, ed., "The Ward-Ross Correspondence, II, 1897–1901," part II, 743.
10. Albion Small to LFW, 7 December 1903, in Bernard J. Stern, ed., "The Letters of Albion Small to Lester F. Ward," (March 1937): 313.
11. LFW, "Contemporary Sociology," (January 1902): 477.
12. LFW, "Contemporary Sociology," 478.
13. LFW, "Contemporary Sociology," 498–99.
14. LFW, "Contemporary Sociology," 499–500.
15. LFW, "Contemporary Sociology," (March 1902): 635.
16. Ludwig Gumplowicz to LFW, 24 June 1902, in Aleksandra Gella, trans., *The Ward-Gumplowicz Correspondence*, 7. This collection contains Gumplowicz's letters in the Ward Papers, which were written in French and German, as well as the letters Ward wrote to Gumplowicz, which were discovered by the translator in Krakow in the 1960s.
17. LFW, *Pure Sociology* (hereafter cited as *PS*), preface.
18. LFW, *PS*, 15.
19. LFW, *PS*, 25.
20. LFW, *PS*, 62.
21. LFW, *PS*, 169.
22. LFW, *PS*, 184.
23. Ludwig Gumplowicz, "An Austrian Appreciation of Lester F. Ward," 648–51. Ward and Gumplowicz had a significant correspondence before the Austrian social scientist's suicide in 1909. Gumplowicz's letters, which are preserved in the Ward Papers, have been published in Bernhard J. Stern, ed., "The Letters of Ludwig Gumplowicz to Lester Ward." Gella, *Ward-Gumplowicz Correspondence*, reprints Stern's collection and adds Ward's letters, which are not preserved in the Ward Papers at Brown University.
24. E. Franklin Frazier, "Race and Sociology." The letter is W. H. Burnett to LFW, 14 January 1911, Box 54, Folder 2 (Reel 14), Ward Papers.
25. LFW, *PS*, 296.
26. LFW, *PS*, 377.
27. Charlotte Perkins Gilman to LFW, 30 June 1903, Box 28, Folder 9 (Reel 8), Ward Papers. Despite Gilman's criticism in this letter she would later write Ward that she tried to read his work often and appreciated his ideas: Gilman to LFW, 20 January 1904, Box 52, Folder 6 (Reel 13), Ward Papers.

28. LFW to Charlotte Perkins Gilman, 9 February 1907, cited in Mary Armfield Hill, *Charlotte Perkins Gilman*, 267. The original letter is located in the Charlotte Perkins Gilman Papers, Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe College, Cambridge, Massachusetts.
29. LFW, *PS*, 575.
30. Edward Ross to LFW, 14 March 1903, in Bernhard J. Stern, ed., "The Ward-Ross Correspondence, III, 1902–1903," 707.
31. Simon Patten to LFW, 11 March 1903, Box 52, Folder 3 (Reel 13), Ward Papers. Patten wrote a number of letters on Ward's book, each one increasingly critical of the book. See Patten to LFW, 4 April 1903, Box 52, Folder 4 (Reel 13), Ward Papers, and Patten to LFW, 15 April 1903, Box 52, Folder 4 (Reel 13), Ward Papers.
32. H. Heath Bawden, "Review of Lester Ward's *Pure Sociology*," 408–9.
33. Bawden, "Review of Lester Ward's *Pure Sociology*," 414.
34. Albion Small, "Note on Lester Ward's *Pure Sociology*," (March 1903): 707.
35. Albion Small, "Note on Lester Ward's *Pure Sociology*," (November 1903): 405.
36. Small, "Note on Lester Ward's *Pure Sociology*," (March 1903): 705.
37. LFW to Edward Ross, 11 July 1904, in Bernhard J. Stern, ed., "Ward-Ross Correspondence, III, 1904–1905," 87.
38. LFW to J. Odenwald Unger, 6 December 1903, Box 31, Folder 1 (Reel 9), Ward Papers.
39. Albion Small to LFW, 24 November 1903, "The Letters of Albion Small to Lester F. Ward," (March 1937): 312.
40. LFW to Edward Ross, 16 July 1903, "Ward-Ross Correspondence, III," 713.
41. LFW to Edward Ross, 3 July 1904, "Ward-Ross Correspondence, III," 86.
42. LFW, "Evolution of Social Structures," *Glimpses of the Cosmos*, 6:201–3, which recounts Ward's battle with Small over the papers at St. Louis.
43. James Quayle Dealey to LFW, 21 May 1903, Box 52, Folder 5 (Reel 13), Ward Papers.
44. James Q. Dealey and LFW, *A Text-Book of Sociology*.
45. LFW, "Herbert Spencer's Sociology," *Glimpses of the Cosmos*, 6:177. The article originally appeared in *The Independent* (3 March 1904): 730–34. For another of Ward's late-nineteenth-century essays on Spencer's career, see the earlier essay, "The Political Ethics of Herbert Spencer," *Glimpses of the Cosmos*, 5:55–65; it originally appeared in *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* (January 1894): 582–619.
46. See LFW, "Applied Sociology," *Glimpses of the Cosmos*, 6:225.
47. "The Organization of the American Sociological Society," *American Journal of Sociology* (January 1906): 564–65. This is the official report of the committee organized to elect representatives and write the bylaws of the organization; it contains an extensive history of its creation and organization.
48. LFW, "Applied Sociology," 231. The manuscript version of Ward's book is housed in the Lester Frank Ward Collection, Boxes 9–10, Library of Congress, Manuscripts Division, Washington, D.C. This collection consists entirely of Ward's handwritten version of each of his books. The handwritten preface is housed in this collection.
49. LFW, *Applied Sociology* (hereafter cited as *AS*); the quote is from p. iii. On Ward's decline in popularity also see Dorothy Ross, *The Origins of American Social Science*, 88–94.

50. LFW, AS, 9–10.
51. LFW, AS, 281.
52. LFW, AS, 297.
53. LFW, AS, 339.
54. Edward A. Ross, "Review of Lester Ward, *Applied Sociology*," 358.
55. Howard, "Review of Lester Ward, *Applied Sociology*," 854.
56. Edward Thorndike, "Review of Lester Ward's, *Applied Sociology*," *The Bookman* (November 1906): 294. The other Thorndike review appeared in *Science* (7 September 1906): 299–301.
57. "Review of Lester Ward, *Applied Sociology*," *The Nation* (1906): 562.
58. James Dealey to LFW, 1 December 1904, Box 28, Folder 1 (Reel 8), Ward Papers.
59. LFW to Edward Ross, 18 March 1906, in Bernhard J. Stern, ed., "Ward-Ross Correspondence, IV, 1906–1912," 92.
60. LFW to Edward Ross, in Bernhard J. Stern, ed., "Ward-Ross Correspondence, IV, 1906–1912," 92.
61. LFW, "The Sociology of Political Parties," 439–40.
62. Ward's paper, "Les Lutttes Sociale et des Luts Biologiques," appeared in *Annales de l'institut Internationale de Sociologie*, Tome IX (Paris, 1906), 111–26. It appeared in English as "Social and Biological Struggles," *American Journal of Sociology* (November 1907): 289–99; the quote is from page 290. The characterization of Ward as a "reform Darwinist" first appeared in Eric Goldman, *Rendezvous with Destiny*.
63. LFW, "Social and Biological Struggles," 292.
64. LFW, "The Establishment of Sociology," *Glimpses of the Cosmos*, 6:261. It originally appeared in *The American Journal of Sociology* (March 1907): 581–87.
65. LFW, "The Establishment of Sociology," 263.
66. LFW, "Social Darwinism," 710.
67. LFW, "Social Classes in the Light of Modern Sociological Theory," 617–27.
68. LFW to Ludwig Gumplowicz, 11 October 1908, quoted in Gella, *Ward-Gumplowicz Correspondence*, 58.
69. LFW, "The Survey of All Knowledge." The chart is preserved in Box 75, Folder 5 (Reel 22), of the Ward Papers.
70. Samuel Mitchell, "Some Recollections of Lester F. Ward and James Q. Dealey," 45, 47.
71. Sara Algeo, *The Story of a Sub-Pioneer*, 25.
72. Charles Carroll's remarks are quoted in James Quayle Dealey, "Lester Frank Ward," 63.
73. LFW, "Education and Progress," *Glimpses of the Cosmos*, 6:332. The original appeared in *The Plebs Magazine* (November–December 1909): 218–21, 241–44.
74. LFW, "Education and Progress," 333–34.
75. LFW, "Education and Progress," 340.
76. LFW, "Lecture to the Thomas Paine Society," *Glimpses of the Cosmos*, 6:350.
77. Emily Palmer Cape to LFW, 2 October 1905, Box 53, Folder 2 (Reel 14), Ward Papers.
78. Emily Palmer Cape to LFW, 9 October 1908, Box 54, Folder 6 (Reel 14), Ward Papers.

79. Emily Palmer Cape to LFW, 23 October 1908, Box 54, Folder 6 (Reel 14), Ward Papers.

80. Emily Palmer Cape to LFW, 8 June 1910, Box 56, Folder 1 (Reel 14), Ward Papers.

81. Emily Palmer Cape, *Lester Frank Ward*, 97.

82. "Lester Frank Ward," *The Providence Bulletin*, 19 April 1913.

83. Frederick Howe to LFW, 27 July 1912, Box 56, Folder 3 (Reel 14), Ward Papers.

84. LFW, "The Diary of Lester Frank Ward, 1913," 8 March 1913. I located this diary in the Lester Frank Ward Papers, Special Collections, Gelman Library, George Washington University, Washington, D.C. The diary has gone entirely unused and unpublished since Ward's death, and it is the only volume (other than the first volume located at Brown University) to survive his family's destruction of them. It is not clear how this volume came to George Washington University.

85. LFW, "The Diary of Lester Frank Ward," 26 March 1913.

86. LFW, "Eugenics, Euthenics, Eudemics," *Glimpses of the Cosmos*, 6:390; it originally appeared posthumously in *The American Journal of Sociology* (May 1913): 737-54.

87. LFW, "The Diary of Lester Frank Ward," 27 March 1913.

88. LFW, "The Diary of Lester Frank Ward," 29 March 1913.

CONCLUSION

1. Emily Palmer Cape's notation about Ward's diaries can be found in the Ward Papers at Brown University. Two volumes of the diaries survived destruction: one located at Brown University and one located at George Washington University. Correspondence regarding Ward's will and papers can be found in Correspondence Files, the Edward A. Ross Papers, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Madison, Wisconsin (microfilm edition). Ross consulted with Harry Koopman and Sarah Comstock about Ward's papers.

2. Albion Small, "Review of Lester Frank Ward, *Glimpses of the Cosmos*," 660-61.

3. Edward Ross, "Lester Frank Ward," 65-66.

4. Albion Small, "Lester Frank Ward," 76-77.

5. Small, "Lester Frank Ward," 76.

6. Small, "Lester Frank Ward," 78.

7. Albion Small, "Fifty Years of Sociology in the United States, 1865-1915," 749.

8. Small, "Fifty Years of Sociology," 751.

9. Small, "Fifty Years of Sociology," 751.

10. Small, "Fifty Years of Sociology," 753.

11. Albion Small, *Origins of Sociology*, 315-17.

12. Albert G. Keller, *Net Impressions*, 326.

13. Keller, *Net Impressions*, 327-28.

14. The material on George Veditz and the Lester Frank Ward Sociological Society can be found in Box 2 of the Lester Frank Ward Papers, Special Collections,

Gelman Library, George Washington University, Washington, D.C. See the bibliography for complete references to the literature on Ward and sociology from the 1930s and 1940s (especially Bernhard Stern's work). Here I will highlight Clement Wood, *The Substance of the Sociology of Lester F. Ward*; Charles Ellwood, *A History of Social Philosophy*; and Harry Elmer Barnes, *An Introduction to the History of Sociology*. See also Harry Elmer Barnes, *The History and Prospects of the Social Sciences*. For an analysis of the conflict between objectivist social scientists and reform-oriented social scientists, see Mark Smith, *Social Science in the Crucible*.

15. Melvin J. Vincent, "Lester Ward and Social Planning."

16. C. Wright Mills, *The Sociological Imagination*, 226.

17. See Harold Evans, *The American Century*, 25–27; and Stephen Sneigowski, "Lester Frank Ward: The Philosopher of the Welfare State," 47–55.

18. LFW, "Personal Remarks," *Glimpses of the Cosmos*, 1:lxxxii–lxxxiii.

19. On these issues in the thought of the three men I am heavily dependent on James Kloppenberg's *Uncertain Victory*. See also Robert Westbrook, *John Dewey and American Democracy*. On Croly, and in particular his positivist father, see the perceptive discussion in J. Gillis Harp, *Positivist Republic*.

20. Henry Andrews, *The Fossil Hunters*, 208–17.

21. On these aspects of Washington science in the Progressive era, see especially Robert Dorman's chapter on John Wesley Powell in *A Word for Nature*, 173–218; Donald Pisani, *Water, Land, and Law in the West*, 141–57; 180–94; and Donald Jackson, "Engineering in the Progressive Era," 539–74. The classic account of conservation in Progressive era Washington is Samuel P. Hays, *Conservation and the Gospel of Efficiency*.

22. See especially James Peel, "A Comparative Study of the Educational Theories of Lester F. Ward and John Dewey"; and Laurel N. Tanner and Daniel Tanner, "Environmentalism in American Pedagogy," 537–47.

23. Vernon L. Parrington, *Main Currents in American Thought*, 3:401–2. On the Young Americans see Casey Nelson Blake's *Beloved Community*.

24. Lewis Mumford, *The Brown Decades*, 9, 11; Mumford mentions Ward's work specifically on page 17.

25. See especially the recent review of sociological theory by R. W. Connell, "Why is Classical Theory Classical?"

26. LFW, "Dynamic Sociology," *Glimpses of the Cosmos*, 3:172.

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The following list is not meant to be comprehensive for a study of Ward's life and thought, or to the massive historiography available on late-nineteenth-century American social, intellectual, and political history. Instead, it is meant to be suggestive and provide a guide to those sources that have been most useful in writing this book. Most important, I would point people to Lester Ward's own work and papers—the central source of information for this project. The largest collection of Ward material (more than eleven thousand items) is available at the John Hay Library, Brown University, Providence, Rhode Island, and is now preserved on microfilm. I was able to consult both the microfilm edition and portions of the physical collection as well. Other collections of Ward material, listed below, are smaller but contain valuable materials for a study of his life. Most of Ward's published essays are available in *Glimpses of the Cosmos*, but the last three volumes did not include reprints of every essay. See the notes for specific references to these publications.

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