

# OUR TIMES

1900-1925

BY MARK SULLIVAN

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1936

## ART FINDS A PATRON

The Function of Diffusing Goods Creates a New Market for the Talent of Persuasiveness. A Changed Objective for the Quality of Allurement in Words. A Change That Took Place in the Economic Bases of Newspapers and Periodicals. "Grub Street" Disappears. Increased Access to Art by the Average Man. Increased Production of Art and Increased Diffusion of it, but Without Conspicuously High Achievement, or the Emergence of Unusual Intellects. Some Poets of the Day. One Art, Architecture, Which, Because of an Unusual Condition, Made Indisputable Progress, Attaining Much Greater Distinction than Ever Before.

HAND in hand with mass production went mass distribution. The result enriched the average man, enormously. The processes by which diffusion was accomplished wrought deep-reaching changes in American institutions, points of view, ways of life.

"Scientific management" in production became "scientific salesmanship"<sup>1</sup> in distribution. "Overcoming sales resistance" was professional patter for the process, "sign on the dotted line" the objective of it. This, too, became a school and a cult, its practice a highly developed art, its experts and acolytes a lavishly paid profession. Any one who possessed in his personality the gift of persuasiveness found the richest market for his talent in the business of influencing men to buy goods. Eloquence, imagination, power of exhortation, magnetism of personality, all those endowments which give to the possessor of them ability to move other men, the talents which in previous ages would have been exercised primarily in the world of ideas and of the spirit, converting masses of men to accept new creeds or abandon old

<sup>1</sup> Defined by the *Detroit Free Press* as "selling a dress suit to a man who went into the store to buy a celluloid collar." That quip adequately implies the spirit of "scientific salesmanship," but to describe the art in terms of a single transaction is to under-suggest its scope. "Scientific salesmanship" was a thing of organization, with armies of salesmen drilled as carefully as soldiers, campaigns based on elaborate surveys, built up along lines of sales psychology, synchronized with advertising.

# OUR TIMES<sup>2</sup>

Study the Cards— We Have a Standard

The advertisers in the New York City Surface Cars possess the full confidence of the world's greatest buying public. It's a big thing—this having a person's or a public's confidence. It spells success. Ask them about it.

We have the exclusive control and sale of all advertising space in the Surface Cars of New York City (Boroughs of Manhattan, Bronx and Richmond) and in the Fifth Avenue Auto Busses. No patent medicines or objectionable advertisements. Ask for rates and information.

New York City Car Advertising Company  
225 Fifth Avenue New York City

A double-page advertisement in a magazine in 1909.

ones, persuading them to support one political party or oppose another — these talents were now dedicated to enticing men to buy more automobiles, more bath-tubs, more phonographs, more hats, more shoes, more soap. Talent for exhortation which in former eras taught man to prepare for the next world now taught him to use more goods in this.

Salesmanship evolved a technique more refined than pulpit or platform oratory; advertising became more subtle in method, more concrete in results than any form of proselyting argument. The art which Milton<sup>2</sup> put into selecting words which should make man think about God was excelled by the care with which American writers

<sup>2</sup>“Few sonnets ever written — and we assume that the sonnet is one of the most finished forms of literary art — have been prepared with the thought and anxiety (we grant the poet divine afflatus!) that go into the creation of an effective and compelling advertisement. . . . We do mean to say, therefore, that the written word in the form of advertising such as made possible swift universal acceptance of the automobile exercised an influence upon society far beyond that of anything but the masterpieces of the greatest masters of thought. There is not a writer of fiction or prose in the world to-day who can command even the passing attention of three million readers; but there are many writers of advertisements whose work must not only compel the attention of millions of readers every week, but must in addition *impel these readers to open their pocketbooks and spend, in the aggregate, billions of dollars!*” From a pamphlet, “The Written Word,” in which a large advertising agency, N. W. Ayer & Son of Philadelphia, devoted itself to advertising the art of advertising.

# 3 OUR TIMES

of advertisements assembled words designed to persuade man to consume more chewing-gum. The man, or advertising agency, who wrote an effective selling slogan, such as "It Floats," received far greater compensation than Milton for "Paradise Lost." And just as the poets and prophets of earlier ages considered that the main concern of man was to think about eternity, so did the Miltons of mass production and advertising come to look upon man as existing for the primary purpose of consuming more goods.



The BELMONT & the CHESTER are the new **ARROW COLLARS** with the notch that makes them sit perfectly. 15¢. 2 for 25¢.

The CHESTERFIELD is the new **Cluett SHIRT** with the bosom that cannot bulge. \$2.00

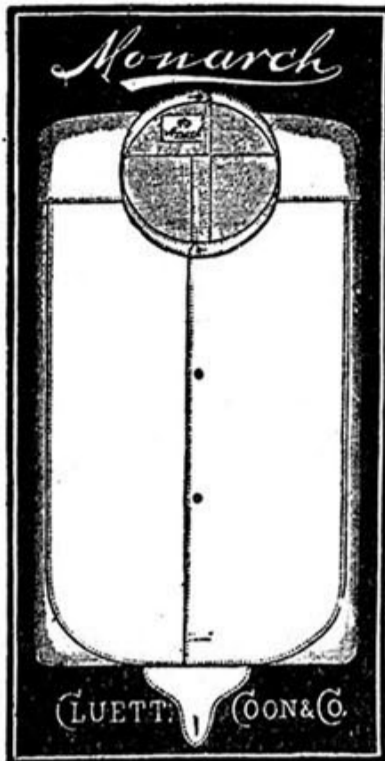
A double-page magazine advertisement of the Cluett, Peabody Company, 1910.

Advertising which preceding the 1890's had consisted of little more than formal announcements, designed mainly to supply the seeker for goods with the name and address of the merchant who had them to sell, was now directed toward inspiring in readers the wish to buy. Advertising became mass stimulation to buy. To provide forums in which it could function, newspapers expanded; periodicals increased in size, multiplied in circulation.

In bringing about this change, the principal agency was the automobile.<sup>3</sup> Here was a new commodity, with an

<sup>3</sup> The automobile, with its accessories, was the principal agency in the increase in size and circulation of periodicals. The department store, coming into existence a little earlier, shared with the automobile responsibility for increase in the size of newspapers.

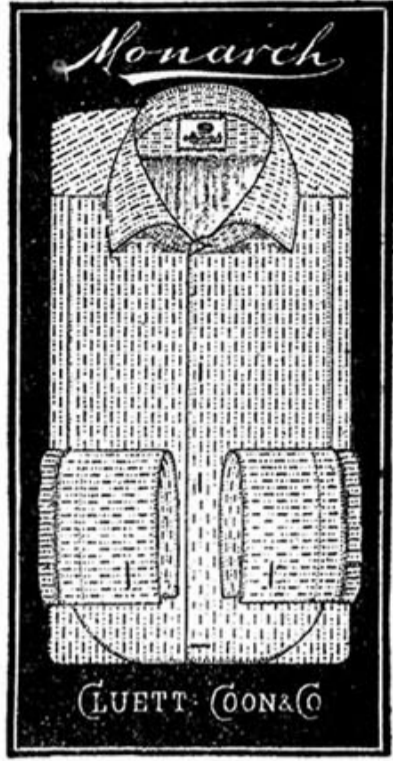
4  
**OUR TIMES**



**THERE'S A REASON WHY**  
*Monarch* Brand **Shirts**

Are most desirable.  
**LET'S FIGURE IT OUT:**  
1. Order your shirts **MADE** and, after waiting, in most cases you get what you pay for; good stock, good fit—all at a *good round price*.  
2. Buy the *Monarch* Brand Shirt, you get exactly the **STYLE** you want; you get it in just the **COST GOODS** you feel you want; you get it **Ready-to-put-on**.  
You get in

*Monarch* Brand **Shirts**  
Garments that are  
**GUARANTEED**  
*In Fit, Finish, and Fashion.*  
Isn't there a difference in your favor?  
**SEE YOUR OUTFITTER.**



WE'LL SEND YOU OUR COMPLETE CATALOGUE IF YOU'LL GIVE US YOUR ADDRESS.  
A little cool yet, but, ladies, *Monarch* BRAND WAISTS will be nice when summer comes.  
OUR SOUVENIR CATALOGUE WILL TELL YOU ALL ABOUT THEM.  
**CLUETT, COON & CO., Makers, Factories, TROY, N. Y.**

**Scientific  
Suspenders**



A much needed  
**Reform.**  
Perfect Comfort to the Wearer.  
Popular for full dress wear because they cannot crease the shirt bosom and the straps are never seen.

No dragging on the shoulders.  
The trousers keep their shape because they are never pulled up from the shoe and there is no strain on the bands. No sewed joints to come apart.  
The scientific principle of the pulley acting on the cord insures perfect freedom of movement in any position.  
To wear them is to like them.  
On sale by all first-class dealers or sent by mail on receipt of price, 50c., 75c., \$1.00, \$1.50 and \$2.00, post-paid. State height and weight.  
**SCIENTIFIC SUSPENDER CO. (Lim.), BUFFALO, N. Y.**

**W. L. DOUGLAS**  
**\$3 SHOE** IS THE BEST.  
FIT FOR A KING.



\$5. CORDOVAN, FRENCH & ENAMELLED CALF,  
\$4.35 FINE CALF & KANGAROO  
\$3.50 POLICE, 3 SOLES.  
\$2.50 \$2. WORKINGMENS, EXTRA FINE!  
\$2. \$1.75 BOYS' SCHOOL SHOES  
LADIES  
\$3. \$2.50 \$2. \$1.75  
BEST DONGOLA.

SEND FOR CATALOGUE  
**W. L. DOUGLAS,**  
BROCKTON, MASS.  
Over One Million People wear the  
**W. L. Douglas \$3 & \$4 Shoes**  
All our shoes are equally satisfactory  
They give the best value for the money.  
They equal custom shoes in style and fit.  
Their wearing qualities are unsurpassed.  
The prices are uniform, --- stamped on sole.  
From \$1 to \$3 saved over other makes.  
If your dealer cannot supply you we can.



**D. L. DOWD'S HEALTH EXERCISER.**  
For Gentlemen, Ladies, Youths; athletes or in valid, Complete gymnasium; takes 6 inches of floor room; new, scientific, durable, cheap. Indorsed by 100,000 physicians, lawyers, clergymen, editors, and others now using it. Illustrated circular, 40 engravings, free. Address D. L. DOWD, Scientific, Physical, and Vocal Culture, 9 East 14th Street, New York, or C. F. JORDAN, Chicago Agent, 269 Dearborn Street.

**NEW** READINGS, RECITATIONS, CATALOGUES FREE!!! **PLAYS**  
DE WITT, ROSE ST., N. Y.

A page of magazine advertisements of the early 90's. A later development of the Cluett advertisement is shown on the opposite page.

enormous potential market, sold at a price much greater than any other commodity that ever before had had a popular sale. The larger price of the automobile permitted a larger appropriation for advertising than any other advertised goods had ever afforded; an automobile selling for a thousand dollars could readily allocate as much as a hundred dollars for advertising. And here was an immense void, a market wholly unoccupied, which in the quarter century to come would absorb thirty-five million cars. Manufacturers, sensing the opportunity, could realize that the prizes of the new industry would go,

# OUR TIMES

A Perfect Liquid Dentifrice  
DELICIOUSLY FLAVORED.

Absolutely Free  
FROM ALL  
Injurious Substances

SAMPLE VIAL  
FREE

25¢  
SOLD BY ALL  
DRUGGISTS



## RUBIFOAM

FOR THE TEETH

E.W.Hoyt & Co.  
LOWELL, MASS.

The care of children's teeth should be a  
Mother's first thought. No more anxiety  
if they use deliciously flavored RUBIFOAM.  
It is a great favorite with the LITTLE FOLKS.

## SOAP SENSE

The Complexion Maker  
The Complexion Keeper

Real, honest, pure, unadulterated soap,  
with the refining, whitening, beautifying juice of  
the cucumber, delicately perfumed.

### Wrisley's Cucumber Soap

10 CENTS A CAKE

HALF THE PRICE OF OTHER GOOD SOAP. If you can't get it in your  
town send six 2-cent stamps for a full-sized cake by mail.

ALLEN B. WRISLEY, CHICAGO

Manufacturer of HIGH-GRADE TOILET SOAPS AND FLORENTINE PERFUMES



The Finishing Touch  
of beauty—just a kiss of Tetlow's

## Gossamer Powder

to lend a velvety softness and a delicate  
beauty to the skin. Perfectly  
pure, entirely harmless, ab-  
solutely invisible. Popular  
for 20 years. Be sure and  
get HENRY TETLOW'S.  
Price, 25 cents by mail, or  
at Druggists. Sample Free.



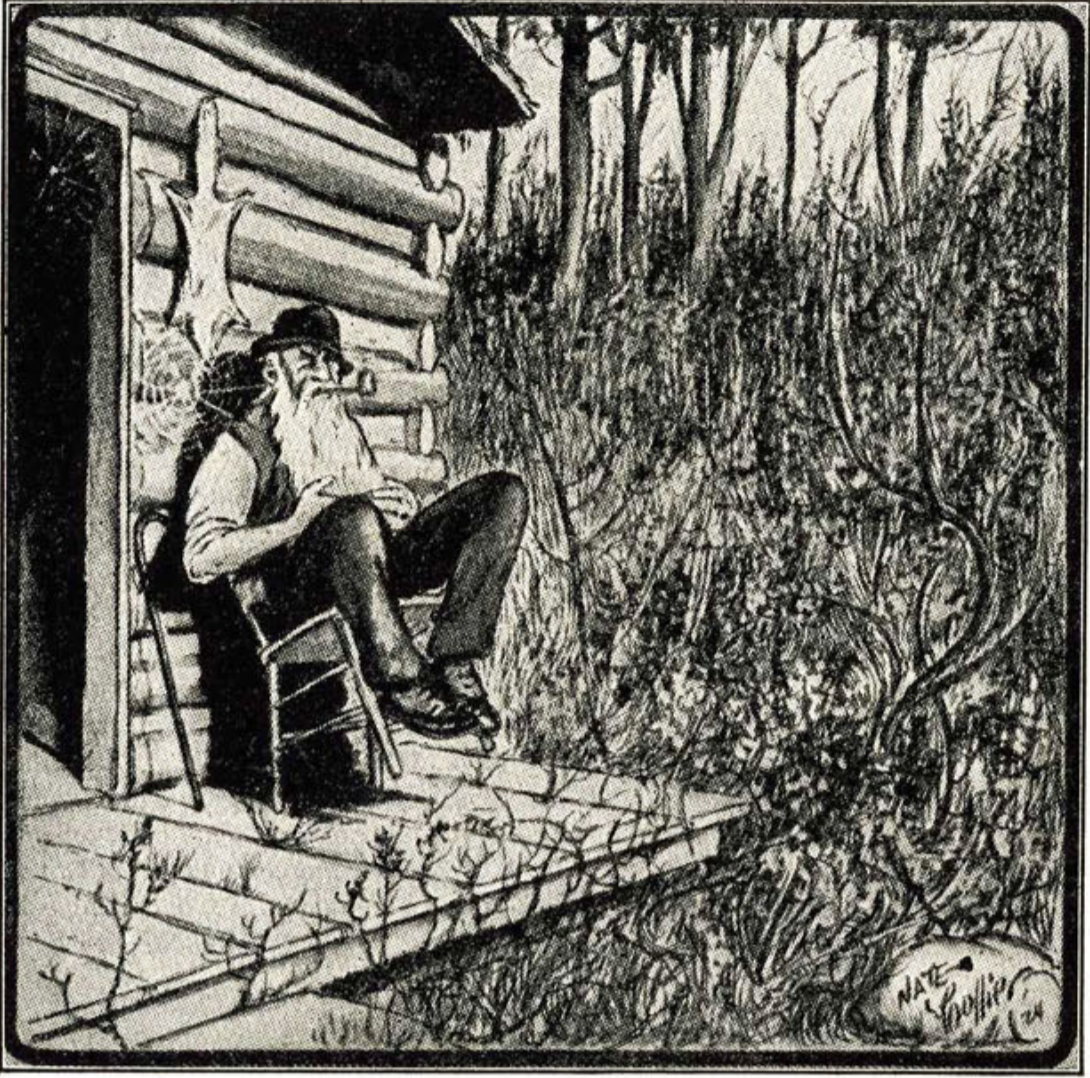
Henry Tetlow, Cor. 10th & Cherry Sts., Phila.

A page of advertisements from the 1890's.

other things being equal, mainly to those who through advertising first impressed their brands upon the public consciousness. This suddenly expanded demand for advertising space created an immensely broadened opportunity for periodicals and newspapers, and for the authors and artists who supplied reading matter or adornment to them.

A consequence was an arrangement in which, directly or indirectly and in one degree or another, materialism became the patron, art and ideas the protégés, in a function of which the objective was the sale of goods. Newspapers and periodicals became, as to the principal economic

# OUR TIMES



From the "Saturday Evening Post." Nate Collier's cartoon.

A joke which pictured the indispensability of advertising to mass distribution during 1900. The man who made the best mousetrap, but didn't advertise, waits for the world to make a beaten path to his door.

base of them, agencies for stimulating the consumption of commodities. Newspapers and periodicals which up to about 1890 had depended for most of their income or entertainment they contained, now received the major portion of their revenue from advertisers. The advertising, which in newspapers of the 1890's was a rather grudgingly tolerated<sup>4</sup> fringe of simple announcements along the edges of reading matter, or in periodicals was confined to a very few pages in the back, was now expanded and elaborated until it occupied the major portion of the space; while reading matter receded relative-

<sup>4</sup> A time when the greatest of metropolitan newspapers could prosper on revenue received from readers alone, was described by Edward P. Mitchell (of the *New York Sun*) in "Memoirs of an Editor":

"During the period [1872-1881] the dividends of *The Sun* ranged almost continually upward from twenty-eight per cent to fifty, with an annual average of thirty-six per cent. The returns for advertising were almost a negligible item then in the earnings of the concern; so much so, indeed, that for years Dana cherished the idea of rejecting advertisements altogether and depending upon income from circulation alone. To newspaper publishers of to-day [1924] this early dream of his must seem fantastic, but it was nevertheless seriously entertained and frequently discussed. The vision dissolved only when the . . . sudden development of department-store advertising conspired to shape the Brobdingnagian format. But the fact remains that with a comparatively slim advertising patronage *The Sun* in a dozen years yielded dividends amounting to fourfold its entire invested capital."

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# 7 OUR TIMES

"I wish I had a cake of

## HAND SAPOLIO



BY A METHOD OF ITS OWN Hand Sapolio cleans the pores, aids the natural changes of the skin, and imparts new vigor and life. Other soaps chemically dissolve the dirt — Hand Sapolio removes it. It is smooth, soothing and healing to the most tender skin. *Don't infer. Try it.*

An advertisement of 1909.

confined to a very few pages in the back, was now expanded and elaborated until it occupied the major portion of the space; while reading matter receded relatively to the position, and the economic status, of in part a frame for the advertising, in part an allurements drawing the reader's eyes to it. Many writers of fiction accommodated themselves to the new basis; the writing of "serials," designed primarily for publication in magazines rather than as books, became a recognized technique, in which an observable detail was that the affairs of heroes and heroines came to successive climaxes at points which happily coincided with the end of the installments in periodicals, the spacing thus bringing about a moment

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# 8 OUR TIMES



Copyright, 1909, E. Kuppenheimer & Co.

The tingle in the air tells of Fall overcoat-time.

If you are guided by the Kuppenheimer name, you'll get all that an overcoat should be—with style dated far enough ahead to make sure that you will lead.

You'll find our garments at the better clothiers

**The House of Kuppenheimer**  
CHICAGO                      NEW YORK                      BOSTON

A magazine advertisement in 1909: note the lady's peach-basket hat and the upholstered shoulders of the men.

of high suspense just preceding the words "To be continued." A novel which omitted thus to adapt itself to serial publication suffered detriment in the literary market, because publication in book form only, where the reader alone paid the bill, was rarely as remunerative as in magazines, where much of the compensation came indirectly in the form of a joint contribution from the advertisers.


The manufacturers of automobiles, ready-made clothing, lotions, soaps, breakfast-foods, and other advertised commodities, became, so to speak, associated patrons of art and letters. A writer who in eighteenth century England would have dedicated his book to a noble lord for bearing the expense of publication — and who thereby

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# 9 OUR TIMES

put himself under obligation to conform to his patron's political and other views.—could, in the America of 1914, have appropriately dedicated his book to a joint association composed of General Motors, Hart, Schaffner & Marx, the American Tobacco Company, and the manufacturers of Listerine, Ivory Soap, and Heinz's Baked Beans. The relation did not entail the servility that went with the old form of patronage, and was in respects felicitous. The new type of patron asked nothing of the author except that he please the reader — attention from the reader's eyes was all that the advertiser desired. The over-suspicious sometimes found in the arrangement an implied limitation on the writer's freedom of ex-



Copyright 1909 by Hart Schaffner & Marx

**B**BETTER be sure your thin summer clothes are of all-wool fabrics if you want them to hold shape and style.

Our mark is the sign; a small thing to look for, a big thing to find. Send for Spring Style Book, six cents.

Hart Schaffner & Marx Good Clothes Makers  
Chicago Boston New York

Another men's clothing ad of 1909. Though the names of the artists are not given, these advertisements were usually done by capable illustrators of the day.

[OldMagazineArticles.com](http://OldMagazineArticles.com)

10  
OUR TIMES

pression. A Socialist and life-long protestant against what is, Upton Sinclair, wrote a book, "The Brass Check," in which he pictured literature and art as the "prostitutes" of business. This view surprised and amused or angered both parties to the relation. True, a writer who was a cog in a mechanism for the diffusion of goods could not readily say that diffusion of goods was evil; but few authors ever wanted to say it, and little of the public desired it to be said. And even an advocate of Socialism, or an ascetic Ghandi preaching a philosophy of doing without goods, would have encountered no curtailment of his liberty of expression, provided only that he wrote entertainingly.



*I say*  
Genuine Joy  
Genuine Appetite  
Genuine Health and therefore  
Genuine Complexion

All come from eating the GENUINE  
*Kellogg's*  
**TOASTED CORN FLAKES**  
NONE GENUINE WITHOUT THIS SIGNATURE  
*W. K. Kellogg*

*Kellogg's*  
**TOASTED CORN FLAKES**  
NEEDS TOASTING OVER FLAME.  
BATTLE CREEK, MICH.

Copyright 1909 Kellogg Toasted Corn Flake Co.

The Kind With the Flavor—Made of the Best White Corn.

Pictures of pretty girls were in great demand by advertisers throughout this period.

# 11 OUR TIMES

An author who in a dollar-and-a-half book might have reached twenty thousand readers found in the *Saturday Evening Post* or *Collier's* several millions. A reader who would not have bought one book in a year, received, for an annual subscription to the *Saturday Evening Post*, half a dozen novels and as many as two hundred short stories and a similar number of articles. Periodical literature flourished as print had never flourished before. Those that had the largest circulation included in their contents and carried to millions of readers the best writing of the time.

To author and artist the arrangement was extremely remunerative. Writers and painters prospered almost like stock-brokers. "Grub Street" as an indigent accompaniment of literary life became a quaint antiquarian phrase. A writer of short stories or serials, who in the early 1890's would have received \$100 from a magazine as his share of what readers paid for the total contents, received in 1914 ten times that sum as, in the main, his share of what advertisers<sup>6</sup> were happy to pay for having a distinguished and competent author write excellent reading-matter alongside which they could print their announcements. Many artists received exalted compensation direct from manufacturers for painting handsome young Adonises who in the advertisements wore Cluett collars, or B.V.D. underwear; or alluring young ladies whose beauty, poise, and charm, so the advertisements said, arose from divers cosmetics, corsets, dentifrices, and medicaments. Other artists, including many of the best — Frederick Remington, Maxfield Parrish, Jessie Willcox Smith, Charles Dana Gibson — found a generously remunerative market for their work, not available to artists of previous generations, in the magazine covers or frontispieces of the better class of popular periodicals, and in illustrating magazine fiction. Pictorial and literary art, including the best that was produced, experienced a wide diffusion, riding the same waves of dis-

<sup>6</sup> With the coming of the radio and the development of it as a vehicle for advertising, the subsidizing of writers (as well as singers and actors) went farther. The performer was paid directly, or often through an advertising agency.

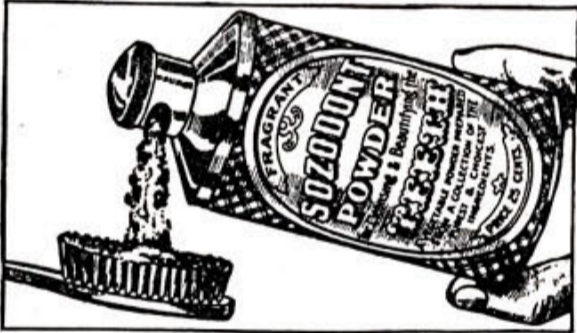
# OUR TIMES

tribution with mass diffusion of goods — hitch-hikers, so to speak, upon the progress of the automobile, joy-riders upon the one institution that dominated the period, mass production of goods.



"Well, then, why don't you try it, too?"

## SOZODONT TOOTH POWDER



The mirror reflects a flattering tale to all who are sensible enough to beautify their mouths with SOZODONT.

The liquid penetrates the little crevices of the teeth, cleansing and purifying them. The Powder is a beautiful polisher of the enamel and gold work in the mouth.

**WILL NOT SCRATCH OR TARNISH.**

No Waste No Spilling No Acid No Grit Antiseptic Saponaceous



Old and new (1899 and 1925) in tooth-paste advertisements.