CONTENTS

Introduction. The Importance of Taste: Intellectual Roots 1

Chapter 1. Paintings in Public Life:  
The Rise of the American Art-Union 16

Chapter 2. The Limits of Cultural Stewardship:  
The Fall of the American Art-Union 64

Chapter 3. Art and Industry: Debates of the 1850s 95

Chapter 4. The Art of Decoration and the Transformation of Stewardship: The Making of the Metropolitan Museum of Art 128

Chapter 5. Metropolitan Museum on Trial:  
Antiquities, Expertise and the Problem of Race 161

Chapter 6. The Battle for Sundays at the Museum 208

Epilogue. Edith Wharton’s Museum 236

Notes 239

Index 277

Acknowledgments 285