

THE IMPORTANCE AND RAPID GROWTH OF CITIES.

Dr. Strong calls cities the "nerve centre and also the storm centre of our civilization." All along the course of history we see that cities have been the battle-ground of civilization and religion. Memphis and Thebes on the Nile represent the power of the Pharaohs. Nineveh and Babylon on the Tigris and Euphrates were synonymous with Assyrian and Babylonish greatness. Jerusalem is the essence of Solomon's great riches and dominion. Tyre and Sidon represent the commerce of Phœnicia, Athens the art and philosophy of Greece, and imperial Rome the law and learning of the vast empire of the Cæsars. Not only is this true, but if we read history closely we will see that those nations rose and fell as their cities rose and fell. Idolatry and rebellion in Jerusalem meant the exile of the whole nation in Babylon. Corruption and licentiousness in the city on the Tiber meant the overthrow and dismemberment of the great Roman empire,

But the mutations of years have not changed the characteristic of civilization, for the city is to-day, even more than in ancient times, the centre of influence. It has massed within it the greatest accumulations of wealth, and consequently the great corporations and manufacturing interests that cannot be carried on without large capital. With increasing wealth comes greater educational facilities, and the establishment of those branches of art that produce the luxuries wealth demands. The press has an ever widening sphere of readers, and through it the pulpit and platform greatly increase the number of their auditors. Law in its enactment and administration tends toward the city also. These and many other factors give to the great centres of population a powerful and far-reaching influence for good or for evil. Some of these factors we shall notice as we proceed.

The growth of cities in modern times is simply phenomenal. A species of social gravitation is drawing men in ever increasing numbers to the cities. London, for example, during the first 1800 years of its existence, *i. e.*, 200 years ago, had a population of only 670,000. Fifty years ago it was not larger than New York is now. But it would be necessary to combine New York, Brooklyn, Philadelphia, Chicago, Boston, St. Louis, Baltimore, Cincinnati and San Francisco to have the population of the London of 1890. Its present population is larger than that of our whole Dominion, and it is