

the older States are actually *decreasing* in population and thrift and wealth, and the school-house and church, once their glory and strength, are dying out !

We need not stop to point out the meaning and outcome of this startling fact. The enterprise, the sinews, the hope of the rural population, are fleeing to the city. What the city gains the country loses ! What might prove the glory and salvation of country life may prove the shame and evil of city life ! From 1790 to 1880 our *entire* population increased but 13 times, while the *city* population increased 86 times ! In 1800 we had but 6 cities, with a population above 8,000 ; in 1880 we had 286 ! The census of 1890 will make this showing still more significant. Such phenomenal growth and preponderance of city population constitutes one of the most serious portents of modern times. We are not prepared to forecast its final effect on our national life, political, social, or religious. But its influence, whatever be its character, will be tremendous, if not irresistible.

2. Another fact of momentous importance. The condition of our large and rapidly expanding cities has *unquestionably changed decidedly for the worse during the present generation*. The growth has not been a healthy growth, whether viewed politically, morally, or religiously ; whether estimated in its influence on country life, on business integrity, on political and commercial morals, on the spiritual life of the church and the welfare of the government, or in its bearings on class relations, on social economics, and on the uplifting and purification of society in general. There has been a marked and alarming deterioration. There is no denying this fact—the evidence is too overwhelming. We are confronted to-day with gigantic and rapidly augmenting evils, economic, social, political and moral, caused mainly by the massing of such multitudes in a few great centers, which attract the worst elements of society, as well as the better—centers where all restraints are thrown off, and vice and crime and lawlessness run riot, and corruption and all manner of wickedness take on huge proportions, and endanger the peace and welfare of the people at large, and ultimately the permanence of our free institutions.

The depravities of our great cities increase in the ratio of their growth in population. Of one thing we may be sure, the cities, owing to advantages of centralization and organization and countless wealth, will ultimately triumph over the rural regions. It has been so always in the history of the world. And history repeats itself to-day along this line, and will repeat itself with greater emphasis in the future. It is evident, then, that the decisive battles between Christianity and infidelity and agnosticism ; between true liberty and licentiousness ; between law and order and virtue, and the hostile alien forces which are waxing so strong and defiant among us, are to be fought out in a dozen centers of our widespread republic.