

CITY MISSIONS IN NEW YORK.

The following paper was read by Mr. J. C. Martin, B.A., at a public meeting of the Students' Missionary Society.

It is only within the last half of a century that the work of City Missions, strictly so-called, has grown into an independent part of American Evangelism. This phase of Christian endeavor may be traced back, for origin, to Bible and Tract Societies, whose labors were confined mainly to distribution of religious literature and visitation from house to house. In the course of time these agencies perceived that the work required to be done could not be overtaken, if attempted along the old lines. The old methods had become too slow. When formerly existing modes of life and trade were being revolutionized by the use of new appliances, when a European population was pouring in an unbroken stream on the New England shores, when cities were springing up and growing with unparalleled speed, wide-awake Christians saw the need for adopting new methods of Evangelistic work in order to reach the masses. This demand for concentrating effort and independent missions became the more urgent, when due consideration was given to *the all important part which large towns have played and are yet destined to play, in human history*. Towns and cities are the centres of influence as well as of population. They affect almost the whole world, either for good or evil. They rule, not only in the commercial realm, but also in the social, the political, the moral, and the religious spheres. This fact was too long overlooked by the Protestant Churches of America. They lost in this respect by not adhering more closely to the example of the Apostles, who confined themselves mainly to the great centres of population, and the example of the Saviour Himself who "went through all the cities and villages preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people." One other important and prevailing cause which led to the establishing of missions in the New England cities was the *social question*. The famous Interior Mission of Germany, started by Wischern, was, to a large extent, an outcome of the social problem. It was originated to counteract the influence of the revolutionary spirit that, from 1830, kept nearly the whole of Europe in a state of turmoil and tumult, until in 1848 it burst forth into various forms of atrocities, not only in the cities of France, but also in London, Vienna, Berlin and Rome. This revolutionary spirit has continued its existence and its growth until it is now one of the strongest and most troublesome agencies with which Christianity has to combat. It has shown itself, not only in the Old World, but on this continent as well, to be a power essentially destructive and atheistic, standing in bitter antagonism to the established institutions of both Church and State, and throwing contempt on the independence of individuals as well as on the