

"Perils—The City" from *Our Country* (1890)¹

Josiah Strong

The city is the nerve center of our civilization. It is also the storm center. The fact, therefore, that it is growing much more rapidly than the whole population is full of significance. In 1790 one-thirtieth of the population of the United States lived in cities of 8,000 inhabitants and over; in 1800, one twenty-fifth; in 1810, and also in 1820, one-twentieth; in 1830, one-sixteenth; in 1840, one-twelfth; in 1850, one-eighth; in 1860, one-sixth; in 1870, a little over one-fifth; and in 1880, 22.5 per cent, or nearly one-fourth.² From 1790 to 1880 the whole population increased twelve-fold, the urban population eighty-six fold. From 1830 to 1880 the whole population increased a little less than four fold, the urban population thirteen fold. From 1870 to 1880 the whole population increased thirty per cent, the urban population forty per cent.³ During the half century preceding 1880, population in the city increased more than four times as rapidly as that of the village and country. In 1800 there were only six cities in the United States which had a population of 8,000 or more. In 1880 there were 286, and in 1890, 437.⁴

The city has become a serious menace to our civilization, because in it, excepting Mormonism, each of the dangers we have discussed is enhanced, and all are focalized. It has a peculiar attraction for the immigrant. Our fifty principal cities in 1880 contained 39.3 per cent of our entire German population, and 45.8 per cent of the Irish. Our ten larger cities at that time contained only nine per cent of the entire population, but 23 per cent of the foreign. While a little less than one-third of the population of the United States was foreign by birth or parentage, sixty-two per cent of the population of Cincinnati was foreign, eighty-three per cent of Cleveland, sixty-three per cent of Boston,⁵ eighty per cent of New York, and ninety-one per cent of Chicago.⁶ A

¹ Josiah Strong, "Perils—The City," Ch. 11 from *Our Country*, edited by Jurgen Herbst (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 1963), 171-186.

² *Compendium of the Tenth Census, 1880*, part I (Washington, D.C., 1883), pp. xxx and 8. The Eleventh Census has not yet given us the urban population in 1890.

³ William M. Springer, in "City Growth and Party Politics," *Forum*, 10 (December 1890), 473-474, estimates from reports and semi-official data that the increase of rural population from 1880 to 1890 was only eight per cent while that of the urban population was more than 57 per cent.

⁴ The first official count. The final official count will doubtless make some change in this number.

⁵ The *Census of Massachusetts, 1885* (Boston, 1887), showed 67 per cent.

⁶ "Foreign by birth or parentage" includes those, only one of whose parents was foreign. Their number is comparatively small and even less important than they might seem, because in a large proportion of instances the native parent was of foreign parentage.

The Tenth Census gives the number of persons, foreign-born, in each of the fifty principal cities, but does not give the native-born population of foreign parentage. We have, however, tolerable satisfactory data for computing it. The parentage of the populations of twenty-eight states, seven territories and the District of Columbia was tallied according to a highly complicated form in order to secure the desired ratios. On this basis the Census Office made an elaborate estimate of those who were foreign by birth or parentage in the whole country and placed the number at 14,955,943. The whole number of the foreign-born was ascertained to be 6,679,943. The former number contains the latter 2.238 times; that is, the foreign-born population multiplied by 2.238 gives the population foreign by birth or parentage. It should be observed, however, that this ratio varies in different states, due doubtless to the preponderance of different races in different sections of the country. For instance, in Massachusetts those of foreign parentage were in 1880 almost exactly twice as many as those of foreign birth. Accordingly for any city in that state we multiply the number of foreign-born by two, which gives the total of the foreign-born and the native-born of foreign parentage, provided the ratio between the two is the same in the cities as in the whole state, which

census of Massachusetts, taken in 1885, showed that in 65 towns and cities of the state 65.1 per cent of the population was foreign by birth or parentage.

Because our cities are so largely foreign, Romanism finds in them its chief strength.

For the same reason the saloon, together with the intemperance and the liquor power which it represents, is multiplied in the city. East of the Mississippi there was, in 1880, one saloon to every 438 of the population; in Boston, one to every 329; in Cleveland, one to every 192; in Chicago, one to every 179; in New York, one to every 171; in Cincinnati, one to every 124. Of course the demoralizing and pauperizing power of the saloons and their debauching influence in politics increase with their numerical strength.

It is the city where wealth is massed; and here are the tangible evidences of it piled many stories high. Here the sway of Mammon is widest, and his worship the most constant and eager. Here are luxuries gathered—everything that dazzles the eye, or tempts the appetite; here is the most extravagant expenditure. Here, also, is the *congestion* of wealth the severest. Dives and Lazarus are brought face to face; here, in sharp contrast, are the *ennui* of surfeit and the desperation of starvation. The rich are richer, and the poor are poorer, in the city than elsewhere; and, as a rule, the greater the city, the greater are the riches of the rich and the poverty of the poor. Not only does the proportion of the poor increase with the growth of the city, but their condition becomes more wretched. The poor of a city of 8,000 inhabitants are well off compared with many in New York; and there are hardly such depths of woe, such utter and heart-wringing wretchedness in New York as in London. Read in *The Bitter Cry of Outcast London*, a prophecy of what will some day be seen in American cities, provided existing tendencies continue: "Few who will read these pages have any conception of what these pestilential human rookeries are, where tens of thousands are crowded together amidst horrors which call to mind what we have heard of the middle passage of the slave-ship. To get into them you have to penetrate courts reeking with poisonous and malodorous gases, arising from accumulations of sewage and refuse scattered in all directions, and often flowing beneath your feet; courts, many of them which the sun never penetrates, which are never visited by a breath of fresh air. You have to ascend rotten staircases, grope your way along dark and filthy passages swarming with vermin. Then, if you are not driven back by the intolerable stench, you may gain admittance to the dens in which these thousands of beings herd together. Eight feet square! That is about the average size of very many of these rooms. Walls and ceiling are black with the accretions of filth which have gathered upon them through long years of neglect. It is exuding through cracks in the boards; it is everywhere...."

must be assumed as long as there is no evidence to the contrary. In Wisconsin, the Census showed that those of foreign parentage were 2.34 times the number of the foreign-born, while in Missouri the ratio was 2.63 to one. Accordingly, in order to estimate the number of those foreign by birth or parentage in a given city in any one of the thirty-five states and territories in which the above tally was made, we multiply the number of the foreign born in that city by the number which the census showed to be the ratio between those of foreign parentage and those of foreign birth in the state in which the city is located. If the city is in a state in which the tally was not made, as for instance, Pennsylvania, Ohio or Illinois, the best we can do is to multiply by the number which is average for the whole country, viz., 2,238.

We hear it objected that one does not see in our cities any such proportion of foreigners as is indicated by the above figures. It should be remembered that of the population foreign by birth or parentage, five-ninths were born in the United States; and at least one quarter of the foreign-born came to this country in childhood, so that six-ninths or two-thirds of this population though it remains largely foreign in ideas, becomes thoroughly Americanized in speech and appearance.

Accordingly if twenty-one per cent of the population of Boston appear foreign, we must not be surprised to learn that sixty-three per cent are foreign by birth or parentage.

Every room in these rotten and reeking tenements houses a family, often two. In one cellar, a sanitary inspector reports finding a father, mother, three children, and four pigs.... Here are seven people living in one underground kitchen, and a little dead child lying in the same room. Elsewhere is a poor widow, her three children, and a child who had been dead thirteen days.⁷ Her husband, who was a cabman, had shortly before committed suicide.... In another apartment, nine brothers and sisters, from twenty-nine years of age downward, live, eat, and sleep together. Here is a mother who turns her children into the street in the early evening, because she lets her room for immoral purposes until long after midnight, when the poor little wretches creep back again, if they have not found some miserable shelter elsewhere. Where there are beds, they are simply heaps of dirty rags, shavings, or straw; but for the most part these miserable beings find rest only upon the filthy boards.... There are men and women who lie and die, day by day, in their wretched single room, sharing all the family trouble, enduring the hunger and the cold, and waiting, without hope, without a single ray of comfort, until God curtains their staring eyes with the merciful film of death." Says the writer: "So far from making the most of our facts for the purpose of appealing to emotion, we have been compelled to tone down everything, and wholly to omit what most needs to be known, or the ears and eyes of our readers would have been insufferably outraged. Indeed, no respectable printer would print, and certainly no decent family would admit, even the driest statement of the horrors and infamies discovered in one brief visitation from house to house."⁸ Such are the conditions under which many tens of thousands live in London. So much space is given to this picture, only because London is a future New York, or Brooklyn, or Chicago. It gives a very dim impression of what may exist in a great city side by side with enormous wealth. Is it strange that such conditions arouse a blind and bitter hatred of our social system?

Socialism centers in the city, and the materials of its growth are multiplied with the growth of the city. Here is heaped the social dynamite; here roughs, gamblers, thieves, robbers, lawless and desperate men of all sorts, congregate; men who are ready on any pretext to raise riots for the purpose of destruction and plunder; here gather foreigners and wage-workers who are especially susceptible to socialist arguments; here skepticism and irreligion abound; here inequality is the greatest and most obvious, and the contrast between opulence and penury the most striking; here is suffering the sorest. As the greatest wickedness in the world is to be found not among the cannibals of some far-off coast, but in Christian lands where the light of truth is diffused and rejected, so the utmost depth of wretchedness exists not among savages who have few wants, but in great cities, where, in the presence of plenty and of every luxury men starve. Let a man become the owner of a home, and he is much less susceptible to socialistic propagandism. But real estate is so high in the city that it is almost impossible for a wage-worker to become a householder. In 1888 the Health Department of New York made a census which revealed the fact that there were then in the city 32,390 tenement houses,⁹ occupied by 237,972 families, and 1,093,701 souls. Investigation in 1890 showed that the tenement houses had increased in two years about 5,000. If there were an average of 33.76 to each house, as in 1888, the tenement house population in 1890 was nearly 1,260,000. The law in New York requires a juror to be owner of real or personal property valued at not less than two hundred and fifty dollars; and this, the Commissioner says,

⁷ The investigations here reported were made in the *summer*.

⁸ Anon., *The Bitter Cry of Outcast London* (Boston, 1883), pp. 2-4, 10.

⁹ In New York under the law of 1887, a tenement house is one occupied by three or more families, living separately. The above census did not include the better class of apartment houses.

relieves seventy thousand of the registered voters of New York City from jury duty. Let us remember that those seventy thousand voters represent a population of two hundred and eighty thousand, or fifty-six thousand families, not one of which has property to the value of two hundred and fifty dollars. "During the past three years, 220,976 persons in New York have asked for outside aid in one form or another."¹⁰ Said a New York Supreme judge, a few years ago: "There is a large class—I was about to say a majority—of the population of New York and Brooklyn, who just live, and to whom the rearing of two or more children means inevitably a boy for the penitentiary, and a girl for the brothel."¹¹ "When an English judge tells us, as Mr. justice Wills did the other day, that there were any number of parents who would kill their children for a few pounds' insurance money, we can form some idea of the horrors of the existence into which many of the children of this highly favored land are ushered at their birth."¹² Under such conditions smolder the volcanic fires of a deep discontent.

We have seen how the dangerous elements of our civilization are each multiplied and all concentrated in the city. Do we find there the conservative forces of society equally numerous and strong? Here are the tainted spots in the body-politic; where is the salt? In 1890 there was in the United States one Protestant church organization to every 438 of the population. Including all Protestant churches, together with missions, there was in Boston one church to every 1778 of the population, and in St. Louis, one to 2662; not including missions, there was in Cincinnati one Protestant church to every 2195; in Buffalo, one to 2650; in Chicago, one to 3601. The average city church is larger than the average country church, but allowing for this fact we may say that the city, where the forces of evil are massed, and where the need of Christian influence is peculiarly great, is from one-half to one-quarter as well supplied with churches as the nation at large. And church accommodations in the city are growing more inadequate every year. Including all Protestant churches, Chicago had in 1836 one church to every 1042 of the population; in 1851, one to every 1577; in 1860, one to 1820; in 1870, one to 2433; in 1880, one to 3062; and in 1890, one to 3601. Brooklyn had in 1840 one Evangelical church to 1575 souls; in 1850, one to 1760; in 1860, one to 2035; in 1870, one to 2085; in 1880, one to 2673; in 1890, one to 2997. In New York City there was in 1840 one Evangelical church to every 2071 of the population; in 1850, one to 2442; in 1860, one to 2777; in 1870, one to 2480; in 1880, one to 3048; in 1890, according to the government census, one to 3544, and according to the police census, one to 4006. That is, if we accept the latter enumeration, New York had in round numbers, one Evangelical church in 1840 to 2000 people; in 1880, one to 3000; and in 1890, one to 4000. These three cities seem to be exceptional only in degree. So far as I have made investigations, there is a general tendency, with variations, in the growth of urban population to outrun church provision. It is true that church buildings are larger now than they used to be, but after recognizing this fact, it is evident that church provision is becoming more and more inadequate to the needs of the city.

In Chicago, "There is a certain district of which a careful examination has been made; and in that district, out of a population of 50,000, there are 20,000 under twenty years of age, and there are Sunday-school accommodations for less than 2,000; that is, over 18,000 of the children and youth are compelled to go without the gospel of Jesus Christ, because the Christian churches

¹⁰ Mrs. Josephine Shaw Lowell, "The Bitter Cry of the Poor in New York," *Christian Union*, 31 (March 26, 1885), 6.

¹¹ Henry George, *Social Problems* (New York, 1886), p. 98.

¹² William Booth, *In Darkest England* (New York and London, 1890), p. 65.

are asleep. Mr. Gates says: 'What wonder that the police arrested last year 7,200 boys and girls for various petty crimes? The devil cares for them. There are 261 saloons and dago shops, three theaters and other vile places, and the Christian church offers Sunday-school accommodation to only 2,000!'"¹³ The writer has found similar destitution in the large cities of Ohio. And the statistics given above indicate that in the large cities generally, it is common to find extensive districts nearly or quite destitute of the gospel. In the Fourth and Seventh wards of New York City there are 70,000 people, and seven Protestant churches and chapels, or one place of worship to every 10,000 of the population. In the Tenth ward there is a population of 47,000 and two churches and chapels.¹⁴ South of Fourteenth Street there was in 1880 a population of 541,726, for whom there were 109 Protestant churches and missions, or about one to every 5000 souls. In 1890, according to the police census, there was in the same quarter a population of 596,878, an increase of 50,000 people, while of churches and missions there was an increase of one. Indeed, the Christian force is not so large now as it was ten or even twenty years ago, because churches have moved out and been replaced by missions. It was stated by Dr. Schauffler in 1888 that during the preceding twenty years nearly 200,000 people had moved in below Fourteenth Street, and seventeen Protestant churches had moved out. One Jewish synagogue and two Roman Catholic churches had been added.¹⁵ So that counting churches of every kind, there were fourteen less than there were twenty years before, notwithstanding the great increase of population.

If moral and religious influences are peculiarly weak at the point where our social explosives are gathered, what of city government? Are its strength and purity so exceptional as to insure the effective control of these dangerous elements? In the light of notorious facts, the question sounds satirical. It is commonly acknowledged that the government of large cities in the United States is a failure. "In all the great American cities there is to-day as clearly defined a ruling class as in the most aristocratic countries in the world. Its members carry wards in their pockets, make up the slates for nominating conventions, distribute offices as they bargain together, and—though they toil not, neither do they spin—wear the best of raiment and spend money lavishly. They are men of power, whose favor the ambitious must court, and whose vengeance he must avoid. Who are these men? The wise, the good, the learned—men who have earned the confidence of their fellow-citizens by the purity of their lives, the splendor of their talents, their probity in public trusts, their deep study of the problems of government? No; they are gamblers, saloon-keepers, pugilists, or worse, who have made a trade of controlling votes and of buying and selling offices and official acts."¹⁶ It has come to this, that holding a municipal office in a large city almost impeaches a man's character. Known integrity and competency hopelessly

¹³ Dr. H. A. Schauffler's address at Saratoga, June 1884. [In *Home Missionary*, 57 (October 1884), 233. Henry Albert Schauffler (1837-1905), Congregational clergyman, served as missionary in Constantinople, Prague, and Brünn, and, in 1884, became the Congregational Home Missionary Society's superintendent for work among Polish and Bohemian immigrants in the United States.]

¹⁴ A. F. Schauffler in Chickering Hall Conference, 1888. [Adolphus Frederick Schauffler (1843-1919), brother of Henry Albert, was a Congregational minister in New York City, and served as superintendent and president of the New York City Mission and Tract Society.]

¹⁵ A. F. Schauffler, Chickering Hall Conference.

¹⁶ Henry George, *Progress and Poverty* (New York, 1879), p. 480. The twenty-eight leaders of Tammany, which organization governs New York City, are thus classified by *The Evening Post*: Twenty-eight professional politicians; one convicted murderer; one tried for murder and acquitted; one indicted for felonious assault; one indicted for bribery; four professional gamblers; five gambling house or "dive" keepers; four liquor-dealers; five former liquor-dealers; three sons of liquor-dealers; three former pugilists; four former "toughs;" six members of the Tweed gang; and seventeen office holders.

incapacitate a man for any office in the gift of a city rabble. In a certain western city, the administration of the mayor had convinced good citizens that he gave constant aid and comfort to gamblers, thieves, saloon-keepers and all the worst elements of society. He became a candidate for a second term. The prominent men and press of both parties and the ministry of all denominations united in a Citizens' League to defeat him; but he was triumphantly returned to office by the "lewd fellows of the baser sort." And again, after a desperate struggle on the part of the better elements to defeat him, he was re-elected to a third term of office.

Popular government in the city is degenerating into government by a "boss." During his visit to this country, Herbert Spencer said: "You retain the forms of freedom; but so far as I can gather, there has been a considerable loss of the substance. It is true that those who rule you do not do it by means of retainers armed with swords; but they do it through regiments of men armed with voting papers, who obey the word of command as loyally as did the dependents of the old feudal nobles, and who thus enable their leaders to override the general will, and make the community submit to their exactions as effectually as their prototypes of old. Manifestly those who framed your Constitution never dreamed that twenty thousand citizens would go to the polls led by a 'boss.'"

As a rule, our largest cities are the worst governed. It is natural, therefore, to infer that, as our cities grow larger and more dangerous, the government will become more corrupt, and control will pass more completely into the hands of those who themselves most need to be controlled. If we would appreciate the significance of these facts and tendencies, we must bear in mind that the disproportionate growth of the city is undoubtedly to continue, and the number of great cities to be largely increased. The extraordinary growth of urban population during this century has not been at all peculiar to the United States. It is a characteristic of nineteenth century civilization. And this growth of the city is taking place not only in England and Germany, where the increase of population is rapid, but also in France, where population is practically stationary, and even in Ireland where it is declining. This strong tendency toward the city is the result chiefly of agricultural machinery, of manufactures and railway communication, and their influence will, of course, continue. If the growth of the city in the United States has been so rapid during this century, while many millions of acres were being settled, what may be expected when the settlement of the West has been completed? The rise in the value of land, when once the agricultural lands have all been occupied and population has become dense, will stimulate yet more the growth of the city; for the man of small means will be unable to command a farm, and the town will become his only alternative. When the public lands are all taken, immigration, though it will be considerably restricted thereby, will continue, and will crowd the cities more and more. This country will undoubtedly have a population of several hundred millions, for the simple reason that it is capable of sustaining that number. And it looks as if the larger proportion of it would be urban. There can be no indefinite increase of our agricultural population. Its growth must needs be slow after the farms are all taken, and it is necessarily limited; but the cities may go on doubling and doubling again. Even if the growth of population should be very greatly and unexpectedly retarded, there are many now living who will see 150,000,000 inhabitants in the United States, and more than a quarter of that number living in cities of 8,000 and upward. And the city of the future will be more crowded than that of to-day, because the elevator makes it possible to build, as it were, one city above another. Thus is our civilization multiplying and focalizing the elements of anarchy and destruction. Nearly forty years ago De Tocqueville wrote: "I look upon the size of certain American cities, and especially upon the nature of their

population, as a real danger which threatens the security of the democratic republics of the New World." That danger grows more real and imminent every year.

And this peril, like the others which have been discussed, peculiarly threatens the West. The time will doubtless come when a majority of the great cities of the country will be west of the Mississippi. This will result naturally from the greater eventual population of the West; but, in addition to this fact, what has been pointed out must not be forgotten, that agriculture will occupy a much smaller place *relatively* in the industries of the West than in those of the East, because a much smaller proportion of the land is arable. The vast region of the Rocky Mountains will be inhabited chiefly by a mining and manufacturing population, and such populations live in cities.

1. In gathering up the results of the foregoing discussion of these several perils, it should be remarked that to preserve republican institutions requires a higher average intelligence and virtue among large populations than among small. The government of 5,000,000 people was a simple thing compared with the government of 50,000,000; and the government of 50,000,000 is a simple thing compared with that of 500,000,000. There are many men who can conduct a small business successfully, who are utterly incapable of managing large interests. In the latter there are multiplied relations whose harmony must be preserved. A mistake is farther reaching. It has, as it were, a longer leverage. This is equally true of the business of government. The man of only average ability and intelligence discharges creditably the duties of mayor in his little town; but he would fail utterly at the head of the state or the nation. If the people are to govern, they must grow more intelligent as the population and the complications of government increase. And a higher morality is even more essential. As civilization increases, as society becomes more complex, as labor-saving machinery is multiplied and the division of labor becomes more minute, the individual becomes more fractional and dependent. Every savage possesses all the knowledge of his tribe. Throw him upon his own resources, and he is self-sufficient. A civilized man in like circumstances would perish. The savage is independent. Civilize him, and he becomes dependent; the more civilized, the more dependent. And, as men become more dependent on each other, they should be able to rely more implicitly on each other. More complicated and multiplied relations require a more delicate conscience and a stronger sense of justice. And any failure in character or conduct under such conditions is farther reaching and more disastrous in its results.

Is our progress in morals and intelligence at all comparable to the growth of population? The nation's illiteracy has not been discussed, because it is not one of the perils which peculiarly threaten the West; but any one who would calculate our political horoscope must allow it great influence in connection with the baleful stars which are in the ascendant. But the danger which arises from the corruption of popular morals is much greater. The republics of Greece and Rome, and, if I mistake not, all the republics that have ever lived and died, were more intelligent at the end than at the beginning; but growing intelligence could not compensate decaying morals. What, then, is our moral progress? Are popular morals as sound as they were twenty years ago? There is, perhaps, no better index of general morality than Sabbath observance; and everybody knows there has been a great increase of Sabbath desecration in twenty years. We have seen that we are now using as a beverage 29 per cent more of alcohol per caput than we were fifty years ago. Says Dr. S. W. Dike: "It is safe to say that divorce has been doubled, in proportion to marriages or population, in most of the Northern States within thirty years. Present figures indicate a still greater increase."¹⁷ And President Woolsey, speaking of the United States, said in 1883: "On the whole, there can be little, if any, question that the ratio of divorces to marriages or to population

¹⁷ Samuel W. Dike, "Some Aspects of the Divorce Question," *Princeton Review* (March 1884), p. 170.

exceeds that of any country in the Christian world."¹⁸ While the population increased thirty per cent from 1870 to 1880, the number of criminals in the United States increased 82.33 per cent. It looks very much as if existing tendencies were in the direction of the decline of vice. Excepting Mormonism, all the perils which have been discussed seem to be increasing more rapidly than the population. Are popular morals likely to improve under their increasing influence?

2. The fundamental idea of popular government is the distribution of power. It has been the struggle of liberty for ages to wrest power from the hands of one or the few, and lodge it in the hands of the many. We have seen, in the foregoing discussion, that centralized power is rapidly growing. The "boss" makes his bargain, and sells his ten thousand or fifty thousand voters as if they were so many cattle. Centralized wealth is centralized power; and the capitalist and corporation find many ways to control votes. The liquor power controls thousands of votes in every considerable city. The president of the Mormon Church casts, say, sixty thousand votes. The Jesuits, it is said, are all under the command of one man in Washington. The Roman Catholic vote is more or less perfectly controlled by the priests. That means that the Pope can dictate some hundreds of thousands of votes in the United States. Is there anything un-republican in all this? And we must remember that, if present tendencies continue, these figures will be greatly multiplied in the future. And not only is this immense power lodged in the hand of one man, which in itself is perilous, but it is wielded without the slightest reference to any policy or principle of government, solely in the interests of a church or a business, or for personal ends.

The result of a national election may depend on a single state; the vote of that state may depend on a single city; the vote of that city may depend on a "boss," or a capitalist, or a corporation; or the election may be decided, and the policy of the government may be reversed, by the socialist, or liquor, or Roman Catholic or immigrant vote.

It matters not by what name we call the man who wields this centralized power—whether king, czar, pope, president, capitalist, or boss. Just so far as it is absolute and irresponsible, it is dangerous.

3. These several dangerous elements are singularly netted together, and serve to strengthen each other. It is not necessary to prove that any one of them is likely to destroy our national life, in order to show that it is imperiled. A man may die of wounds no one of which is fatal. No sober-minded man can look fairly at the facts, and doubt that together these perils constitute an array which will seriously endanger our free institutions, if the tendencies which have been pointed out continue; and especially is this true in view of the fact that these perils peculiarly confront the West, where our defense is weakest.

These dangerous elements are now working, and will continue to work, incalculable harm and loss—moral, intellectual, social, pecuniary. But the supreme peril, which will certainly come unless there is found for existing tendencies some effectual check, and must probably be faced by many now living, will arise, when, the conditions having been fully prepared, some great industrial or other crisis precipitates an open struggle between the destructive and the conservative elements of society. As civilization advances, and society becomes more highly organized, commercial transactions will be more complex and immense. As a result, all business relations and industries will be more sensitive. Commercial distress in any great business center will the more surely create wide-spread disaster. Under such conditions, industrial paralysis is likely to occur from time to time, more general and more prostrating than any heretofore known. When such a commercial crisis has closed factories by the ten thousand, and wage-workers have been thrown out of

¹⁸ Theodore D. Woolsey, "Divorce," *North American Review*, 136 (April 1893), 314.

employment by the million; when the public lands, which hitherto at such times have afforded relief, are all exhausted; when our urban population has been multiplied several fold, and our Cincinnati's have become Chicagos, our Chicagos New Yorks, and our New Yorks Londons; when class antipathies are deepened; when socialistic organizations, armed and drilled, are in every city, and the ignorant and vicious power of crowded populations has fully found itself; when the corruption of city governments is grown apace; when crops fail, or some gigantic "corner" doubles the price of bread; with starvation in the home; with idle workmen gathered, sullen and desperate, in the saloons; with unprotected wealth at hand; with the tremendous forces of chemistry within easy reach; then, with *the opportunity, the means, the fit agents, the motive, the temptation to destroy, all brought into evil conjunction*, THEN will come the real test of our institutions, then will appear whether we are capable of self-government.