

## CHAPTER IV

### THE MODERN CITY

THE city is like a human being in its growth. In the beginning its functions are simple; as it passes into adolescence it acquires new needs; when it reaches maturity its life is as diversified as that of the highly developed man.

We can see this evolution going on before our eyes. As the cross-roads, the mining-camp, or the railroad-station emerges into a settlement, it detaches itself from the county and becomes a village. Its functions are still but little different from what they were before. The roads are unpaved; there are no sewers or sidewalks, no police, fire, or health departments. The streets are not lighted or cleaned. The individual lives much as he did before. The only difference is that he now has neighbors. He is in a position to co-operate. A graded school is one of the first things established. A few street lights are installed, which are put out in the early evening. Sidewalks appear; increasing traffic leads to paving with some cheap material. As the town grows, one or more constables are employed, more as a precaution than a need. Voluntary fire departments with rude apparatus are organized. But for the most

part life remains much as it was in the country district from which the village has insensibly developed.

### **The Town.**

When the village becomes a town its activities increase in number and importance. The close living of people has given birth to certain perils as well as needs which can only be satisfied by the community. Wells are in danger of pollution. Possibly an epidemic of disease breaks out. A conflagration takes place which destroys a portion of the town. A movement is started for a public water supply. Possibly the State board of health compels its installation. A private company is granted the franchise or the community itself builds the plant and provides itself with water from wells or near-by streams.

With the growth of the town provision is made for the public health. Sanitation is bad, and bonds are issued for the building of sewers and the installation of a sewage-reduction plant. The lighting of homes and streets from a common plant becomes profitable, and a franchise is granted to a gas or electric lighting company; or, as is more common, the city itself installs the electric-lighting plant and grants a franchise to a private company for the supply of gas. The streets are better lighted. The volunteer fire department becomes inadequate and provision is made for a permanent paid department. Police and health officers are provided for. The community is no longer rural; it is urban.

In 1910 there were 1,173 communities in the United

States with a population of from 2,500 to 5,000 inhabitants. They contained an aggregate population of 4,105,656 people.

### **The City.**

When the community increases to 5,000 population a new form of government is required. The town becomes a city, and a charter is adopted which provides for several departments in place of the amoeba-like organization of the village. A mayor is elected and department directors are provided for. A city solicitor and city engineer are appointed. The street department builds, cleans, and waters the streets. The health department inspects plumbing; it insists upon the installation of closets; it prevents the pollution of streams. The city is scattered over a wider area and new means of transportation are demanded. A private company is granted the right to lay tracks in the streets and operate cars under a franchise. Business and domestic needs lead to the installation of a telephone plant.

The community has now reached man's estate. It has evolved from rural into urban conditions by imperceptible additions to its activities. And each new activity has made life easier, safer, and more comfortable for almost everybody. The health of the community is improved. Sickness and the death-rate are diminished. Through a common plant the city delivers an unlimited supply of water to the home at a cost of but a few cents a day. Opportunities for education have developed from the single school into elementary and high schools with

opportunities for advanced study not possible in the country district. Life and property are protected by the police, fire, and health departments. Building codes have been enacted, regulating the construction of houses and factories as still further protection against fire.

### **The Change in Life.**

Life, too, has changed. The factory has appeared; work has become specialized. No one produces for himself alone; he produces for the community, possibly for the whole world. Women and children leave the home and are employed in the mills. A new industrial relationship appears and with it differences in wealth and station. Recreation is no longer confined to the home or the church. It is provided by the theatre, the motion-picture show, the saloon, and the streets. There are labor-unions and clubs. Human life has been widened in a great variety of ways; it is richer, more diversified, more complete. And each step in the evolution from the country to the city involves increasing co-operation, both voluntary and compulsory; it involves further division of labor and specialization of work.

Wealth is now unequally distributed. The mansion has appeared along with the tenement. The community has enriched a few with grants to water, gas, electric-lighting, street-railway, and telephone companies, which have increased in value through the growth of the city. Land values have increased until a single building lot is now more valuable than all the land underlying the town a few years before.

Property that could be bought for a hundred dollars an acre is now sold at the same price for a single front foot. Speculators have laid out suburban territory in building lots to sell at speculative prices. Cottages are torn down to make place for tenements in which the rent of a single apartment equals that of a whole house of but a few years before.

Poverty appears. Men must now pay for transportation, for water, and for light, and they must pay a single corporation, for there is no competition in these services. Rent, too, has increased until it is one of the heaviest items in the family budget, a burden which must be met before any other activity is possible.

These are some of the gains and losses of the city. They are social rather than individual. A few are enriched by the growth of the city, while the many are made poorer by it. For the value of land and the value of franchises, from which many of the permanent fortunes of our large cities come, spring from the growth of the community rather than from the efforts of the individuals who own them. The gains have been largely due to the activities assumed by the community, to the many new services undertaken, while the burdens and losses are traceable to the socially created wealth, to the land and franchise values which have been left in private hands.

#### **The Metropolitan City.**

When the community reaches larger proportions it changes again. The number of municipal activities is greatly increased. Co-operation is extended

still further. The individual no longer knows his neighbors. He is increasingly dependent on the community for protection, for services, for enjoyment. His health and his life are endangered in countless ways. Immigration has added a large foreign-born population. A vagrant and criminal class has come in, recruited by the vicissitudes of employment and periodically increased by changes in industry and hard times. The control of vice and crime is one of the most insistent of problems, requiring heavy expenditure for police, for courts, and for penal institutions. There is danger from impure food, which passes through many hands and no longer bears the guarantee of the near-by shop. It must be inspected; weights and measures must be overseen. The factory has grown into a loft building, badly built and with inadequate fire-escapes, which may sacrifice the lives of hundreds of people. The tenements, too, are a menace. They are not owned by the occupants but by speculators. There is inadequate light, often no light in the rooms at all. One and two rooms frequently house an entire family, as well as boarders taken in to eke out the rent. Houses must be inspected; the size of rooms and the amount of air space must be regulated. Tenements must be kept clean and sanitary, with provision for water, baths, and other means of cleanliness made difficult to the individual by the growth of the city.

New means of transit must be provided by elevated and subway systems. New health problems arise. The garbage must be cared for; the streets must be better paved, lighted, and policed. A thou-

sand services must be performed by the community each day just to make life possible.

### **Tenancy.**

The great majority of urban dwellers are tenants. As the city increases in size the percentage of tenancy increases, until in the larger cities the homeowner almost disappears. The census of 1900 shows that 87.9 per cent. of the people of New York live in hired homes. In Manhattan and the Bronx the proportion rises to 94.1, while in Brooklyn it is 82 per cent. Four fifths of the families in Boston, Fall River, Jersey City, and Memphis live in rented homes, while in Detroit, which stands at the head of the list, only 39.1 of the people own their homes. In one assembly district of Manhattan only fourteen out of 13,662 families own their homes free of mortgage and only forty-two own homes at all. The modern city is a city of tenants; to an increasing extent it is a city without homes, for tenancy and the tenement preclude the idea of home as we are accustomed to understand its meaning.

Home ownership is impossible in the larger cities because of the prohibitive price of city land. It is out of the question to any but a very few. Nor is it advisable for the worker to own his home. For modern industry has destroyed permanence in employment. Even the skilled worker is compelled to change his place of residence from time to time to adjust himself to his work. To him home ownership is a danger and a disadvantage. It makes him dependent upon local employment; it impairs his freedom to organize, to move, to resist wage reductions.

**Leisure.**

The city, too, has changed the leisure life of the people. The open fields are far away, while the church is no longer a vital social force and the home is too often a crowded tenement in which there is no place for rest or recreation.

The leisure life of young and old is largely in the hands of commerce; and commerce has no concern for its effect upon the community. The free hours of the family are spent in the saloon, "the workingman's club," in the theatres or motion-picture shows, in the dance-hall and the street. The city has destroyed the recreational opportunities of the smaller town.

**Changed Economic Relationships.**

The urban dweller has also lost his economic independence. He has become an employee. He no longer owns his tools. The relation of master and man has come, and a class division has arisen between the employer on the one hand and great groups of organized and unorganized workers on the other. Occasionally men rise from their class and achieve independence, but the class remains, as does the conflict.

Women have become an important factor in urban industry. A census report in 1909 shows that 19.5 per cent. of the industrial wage-earners are women, and the proportion is steadily increasing. Out of 42,000 women in Fall River, Mass., 18,000 were employed in gainful pursuits, of whom 15,000 were in industries. About one third of the females over ten years of age in Philadelphia were employed



in some form of wage-earning, while one eighth were engaged in industries.<sup>1</sup>

The employment of women still further changes home life; it affects marriages, the education and rearing of children, the character of the home. It is a disturbing element in wages. A recent report of the United States Government on "Women in Industries in the United States" says:

"The story of women's work in gainful employments is a story of constant changing or shifting of work and work shop, accompanied by long hours, low wages, unsanitary conditions of work, and the want on the part of women of training, skill and a vital interest in the work. . . . The most surprising fact brought out in this study is the long period of time through which large numbers of women have worked under conditions which involved not only great hardships to themselves, but shocking waste to the community."

### **The New Citizenship.**

The American city differs from other cities in the world in that its population is largely foreign-born or of immediate foreign extraction. From the census of 1910 it appears

"that the proportion of the total population represented by white persons of either foreign birth or foreign parentage is very large in most of the 19 cities named; in each of 15 cities the percentage of these two elements, taken together, represented more than half the total population, and in 11 of them it is more than two-thirds. The 11 cities, with the percentage of their population represented by these two

<sup>1</sup> *American City Government*, by Charles A. Beard, p. 11.

elements, are: New York, 78.6; Milwaukee, 78.6; Chicago, 77.5; Cleveland, 74.8; Boston, 74.2; Detroit, 74; Buffalo, 71.3; Newark, 69.9; Jersey City, 69.7; San Francisco, 68.3; Minneapolis, 67.2. . . .

“There were in New York (1900) 785,053 persons of German descent, a number nearly equal to the population of Hamburg, and larger than the native element in New York (737,477). New York has twice as many Irish (710,510) as Dublin; two and a half times as many Jews as Warsaw; half as many Italians as Naples, 50,000 to 150,000 first and second generations from Scotland, Hungary, Poland, Austria and England. Chicago has nearly as many Germans as Dresden, one third as many Irish as Belfast, half as many Swedes as Stockholm. The variety of races too is astonishing. New York excels Babel. A newspaper writer finds in that city 36 languages spoken, 49 newspapers published in foreign languages, and one school at Mulberry Bend with children of 29 nationalities. Several of the smaller groups live in colonies, like the Syrians, Greeks and Chinese. But the colonies of the larger groups are reservoirs, perpetually filling and flowing.”<sup>1</sup>

### **The Growth of the City.**

The modern city differs from those of ancient and mediæval times not only in its industrial relationships but in the size and rapidity of its growth. In the days of Athens's greatest splendor the population which its walls enclosed was about 200,000, of whom not more than 20,000 were free. Rome never had more than a million and a quarter of people, while scores of cities to-day have a greater population than did London, Paris, and Berlin in the closing days of the eighteenth century.

<sup>1</sup> *American City Government*, by Charles A. Beard, pp. 24, 26.

All over the world the city is absorbing an increasing percentage of the people. The growth in the United States since the Civil War, and in Germany since the war with France, has been continuous. The cities of England have grown most rapidly during the same period, although urban development in that country has been uninterrupted since the close of the eighteenth century.

In 1910 the urban population of continental United States amounted to 42,623,383 people. This was 46.3 per cent. of the total. Ten years earlier the urban population was but 40.5 per cent.; in 1890 it was 36.1 per cent., and in 1880 29.5 per cent. In the New England division more than four fifths of the people lived under urban conditions in 1910, while in the Middle Atlantic division the urban population constituted more than seven tenths of the total. In New York nearly four fifths of the people live in towns and cities. The lowest proportion of urban population is found in the South, where 25.4 per cent. are urban in the South Atlantic States, 18.7 per cent. in the East South Central division, and 22.3 per cent. in the West South Central division.

During the ten years from 1900 to 1910 the population of the entire United States increased by 21 per cent., while the urban population increased 34.8 per cent. Looking at it in another way, of the total increase in the population of continental United States during the last decade seven tenths was in urban territory and only three tenths in rural territory.

### Concentration of Population.

An examination of the census of 1910 shows fifty cities in the United States having a population of 100,000 or more and containing in all 20,352,138 souls, or 22.5 per cent. of the total population of the country. Nearly one tenth of the total resides in the three cities of New York, Chicago, and Philadelphia. The rate of growth of these three cities during the previous decade was 32.2 per cent.; of the five cities of from 500,000 to 1,000,000 it was 20.4 per cent.; of cities of from 250,000 to 500,000, 34.7 per cent., and of cities of from 100,000 to 250,000, 41.5 per cent. Towns of from 2,500 to 5,000 people increased at the rate of 36.8 per cent. during the period.

According to the census the urban population of the United States in 1900 and 1910 was distributed as follows:

CLASS OF PLACES	NUMBER OF PLACES IN 1910	AGGREGATE POPULATION IN—		INCREASE, 1900-1910	
		1910	1900	NUMBER	PER CENT.
Continental U. S. . . . .	.....	91,972,266	75,994,575	15,977,691	21.0
Territory urban in 1910	2,405	42,623,383	31,609,645	11,013,738	34.8
Places of—					
1,000,000 or more . . .	3	8,501,174	6,429,474	2,071,700	32.2
500,000 to 1,000,000	5	3,010,667	2,501,226	509,441	20.4
250,000 to 500,000 . .	11	3,949,839	2,932,040	1,017,799	34.7
100,000 to 250,000 . .	31	4,840,458	3,421,849	1,418,609	41.5
50,000 to 100,000 . . .	59	4,178,915	2,948,511	1,230,404	41.7
25,000 to 50,000 . . . .	120	4,062,763	3,028,007	1,034,756	34.2
10,000 to 25,000 . . . .	374	5,609,208	4,153,442	1,455,766	35.0
5,000 to 10,000 . . . . .	629	4,364,703	3,194,278	1,170,425	36.6
2,500 to 5,000 . . . . .	1,173	4,105,656	3,000,818	1,104,838	36.8
Remainder of country . . . . .	.....	49,348,883	44,384,930	4,963,953	11.2

**New York.**

A suggestion of the size, confusion of tongues, increase in population, and cost of administration of a great city is indicated by the following description of New York:

“A feature of the recent New York budget exhibit was the likeness of Father Knickerbocker, life size, gazing in wonderment upon some statistics relative to the city of which he is the personification. ‘New York, the second largest city in the world; population, 5,000,000’—a city with more Jews than there ever were in Palestine; more Germans than in any city in Germany except Hamburg and Berlin; more Bohemians than there are in Prague; and more Italians than there are in Rome. ‘One million five hundred thousand increase in ten years; equivalent to the combined populations of Boston, Kansas City, and San Francisco.’ More people respond to the authority of the mayor of New York than did to the first President of the United States; and the employees of the city constitute an army larger than marched with Sherman to the sea. ‘Area, 327 square miles; 5,000 miles of highway; 2,000 miles of sewers; 341 miles of water front.’ A birth every four minutes; a death every seven minutes; a marriage every eleven minutes. Annual school bill, \$30,000,000; \$8,250,000 for fire protection; \$10,000,000 for charities. Cost of a single election, over \$1,050,000. Bonded debt, over \$800,000,000. Total budget for 1912, \$174,000,000.”<sup>1</sup>

**The European City.**

The German city has grown as rapidly, possibly more rapidly, than has our own. There are thirty-

<sup>1</sup> *National Municipal Review*, vol. I, p. 378, Ford H. MacGregor.

three cities in Germany with a combined population of over 12,000,000 people. This is 20 per cent. of the whole. The total urban population in Germany equals 49 per cent. of the whole. The German city remained nearly stationary up to the middle of the century. There was comparatively little growth from 1850 to 1870. In 1871 only 25 per cent. of the people lived in towns of more than 5,000 people, at which time there were but nine cities of over 100,000 population. Now there are forty-seven. According to the German census of 1910, there are seven cities in Germany with more than half a million population. They are Berlin, Hamburg, Munich, Leipzig, Dresden, Cologne, and Breslau. There are four other cities of more than 300,000 people, and twelve cities with more than 200,000 and less than 300,000, and twenty-four others of from 100,000 to 200,000.

In Germany, as in America and England, the city is a by-product of steam, electricity, and transportation. Those countries which lead the world in industry, commerce, and civilization are the countries in which population is predominantly urban. And in none of these countries is there any suggestion that the urbanizing movement will be checked. On the contrary, from decade to decade the cities draw to themselves an increasing percentage of the population.

#### **The Twentieth-Century City.**

The twentieth-century city bears but slight resemblance to the city of the past. It is no longer a place of refuge, of protection from attack. It has

lost the cohesion of the family and the clan. No single religion unites the citizens; no legalized caste divides the free from the slave, the master from the apprentice. It is no longer sovereign as it was in Italy and Germany. It has become an integral part of the state. Its life, too, is no longer local, it has become international. Every corner of the world contributes to its population, as does every race and creed. The steamship and the railroad have made the city a clearing-house; they have brought New York and Peking into closer commercial relations than were the neighboring communities of England two centuries ago. The power of the hand operative has been multiplied into many horse-power by steam and electricity, while the division of labor has increased the productive capacity of the individual a thousandfold. The industrial city is a new force in the world.

### **Summary.**

The nineteenth-century city is almost exclusively an industrial product. It is not united by religious or class ties. It is cosmopolitan in its population and, with certain limitations, is administered on a democratic basis.

The most rapid urban development is in England, America, and Germany, where industrial progress has been most rapid. And in these countries the city is the dominating force in the life of the nation. It is in these countries, too, that urban co-operation has advanced most rapidly, as a response to the needs which the city creates. This co-operation has been both voluntary and compulsory, and the com-

fort and convenience of the city is in direct ratio to the extent of this co-operation. The greatest cities of the world are those in which co-operation has been carried to its furthest extreme, as in Germany and England.

This co-operation has been necessary because of the dangers and vicissitudes of urban life. Poverty has appeared along with the factory. Health is endangered by disease and bad sanitation. There is little opportunity for recreation. Education can no longer be left to the home. It is necessary to provide many services from a common plant which in rural communities each individual supplies for himself. Crime and vice appear, which must be regulated and controlled. Individual property rights are increasingly subordinate to the public weal. The urban worker has lost his independence and has become an employee, while the home is broken up by the entrance of women and children into industry.

The American city, too, is cosmopolitan; it draws its population from all over the world. This presents new problems, new difficulties. Finally, the modern city is organized on a democratic rather than a caste basis. It is governed by elective officials, responsible to the public through the ballot.