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Frederick Law Olmsted, "Public Parks and the Enlargement of Towns", <i>Journal of Social Science</i> 3, American Science Association (Cambridge, Ma., Riverside Press, 1870), in S.B. Sutton (ed.), <i>Civilizing American Cities : A Selection of Frederick Law Olmsted's Writings on City Landscapes</i> , Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press, 1971, pp. 56-8.	Code Sujet	
	Sujet Jury	
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5 There can be no doubt then, that, in all our modern civilization, as in that of the
 ancients, there is a strong drift townward. But some seem to regard the class of
 symptoms I have referred to as those of a sort of moral epidemic, the crisis and
 reaction of which they constantly expect to see. They even detect a growing
 10 disgust with the town and signs of a back-set towards rural simplicity. To avoid
 prolonging the discussion of the question thus suggested I will refer but briefly to
 the intimate connection which is evident between the growth of towns and the
 dying out of slavery and feudal customs, of priestcraft and government by divine
 right, the multiplication of books, newspapers, schools, and other means of
 15 popular education and the adoption of improved methods of communication,
 transportation, and of various labor-saving inventions. No nation has yet begun
 to give up schools or newspapers, railroads or telegraphs, to restore feudal rights
 or advance rates of postage. King-craft and priestcraft are nowhere gaining any
 solid ground. On the contrary, considered as elements of human progress, the
 more apparent forces under which men have thus far been led to gather together
 in towns are yet growing; never more rapidly than at this moment. It would
 seem more rational to prepare for a continued rising of the townward flood than
 to count upon its subsidence. Examining our own country more particularly, it is
 20 to be considered that we have been giving away our public lands under a square
 form of division, as if for the purpose of preventing the closer agricultural
 settlement which long and narrow farms would have favored, and that we have
 used our mineral deposits as premiums for the encouragement of wandering and
 of forms of enterprise, individual, desultory and sequestered in character, in
 distinction from those which are organized, systematized and public. This policy
 25 has had its day ; the choicest lands have been taken up ; the most prominent
 and easiest worked metallic veins have been seized, the richest placers are
 abandoned to Chinamen, and the only reaction that we can reasonably anticipate
 is one from, not toward, dispersion.
 The same policy, indeed, has had the effect of giving us, for a time, great
 30 command of ready money and easy credit, and we have thus been induced to
 spend an immense sum – say two thousand millions - in providing ourselves with
 the fixtures and machinery of our railroad system. This system, while
 encouraging the greatest dispersion of our food-producers, has tended most of
 all to render them, as we have seen, independent of all the old neighborhood
 35 agencies of demand and supply, manufacture and exchange, and to educate
 them and their children in familiarity with and dependence on the conveniences
 and habits of towns-people.
 To touch upon another line of argument, we all recognize that the tastes and
 40 dispositions of women are more and more potent in shaping the course of
 civilized progress, and we may see that women are even more susceptible to this
 townward drift than men. Oftentimes the husband and father gives up his
 country occupations, taking others less attractive to him in town, out of

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45 consideration for his wife and daughters. Not long since I conveyed to a very
sensible and provident man what I thought to be an offer of great preferment. I
was surprised that he hesitated to accept it, until the question was referred to his
wife, a bright, tidy, American-born woman, who promptly said: "If I were offered
a deed of the best farm that I ever saw, on condition of going back to the
country to live, I would not take it. I would rather face starvation in town." She
50 had been brought up and lived the greater part of her life in one of the most
convenient and agreeable farming countries in the United States.