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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	
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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 toward. 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.