

ROADTOWN

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Roadtown by Edgar Chambless

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DEDICATION

This book is dedicated to J. Pierpont Morgan, a *straight* player of a *crooked* game, who, it is said, played his usual role in the Wall Street manipulations of the Central Railroad of Georgia securities, which adroitly and legally absorbed the small savings and happiness of many unsophisticated investors — an action which, in my case at least, proved to be a blessing in disguise, for it made me *suffer* first and then made me *think*. Hence the gratitude and consequent dedication to Mr. Morgan for starting the train of thought, which finally resulted in the invention of Roadtown, a plan for side-stepping the *crooked* game as now played so that henceforth whosoever will may become a *straight* player of a *straight* game.

FOREWORD

Nineveh, Babylon, Rome, London, New York,—all cities from the twilight of the past to the high noon of the present have been constructed on one plan, which is no plan at all. Like Topsy, they jest grewed, with no further aims in view than to huddle together for the sake of companionship and self-protection against enemies. A map of the haphazard streets straying crookedly through them looked like cracks in an earthenware dish. The siege-walls which until recently surrounded them emphasized the prisoner-like existence of their inhabitants. Noise, dirt, disease, suffocation and confusion, crime—these spirits of evil took up their abode in the midst of them, never to be dislodged, and students of political economy, hygiene, decency and morality wasted eloquence and logic in showing how bad it all was, and in suggesting pica-yune and transient remedies. The true

Moses, with the effectual remedy, which will lead us out of our long Egyptian bondage, arrives only to-day, and if we will but follow the teachings of the gospel contained in the ensuing pages, we may be free, healthy, wealthy and happy forevermore.

This Moses of ours, temporarily incarnated as Mr. Chambless, arrives at the psychological moment when we are all ready for him. The Jeremiahs of rotten conditions and the Cassandras of impending woe had prepared us for the necessity of change, and the Edisons, Teslas and Lodges of electrical and other inventions had supplied the means for it. The great riddle was ripe for the guessing: and Mr. Chambless has guessed it.

Transportation, distribution, and the middle-man,—what a waste of time, energy, economy and common sense are involved in our present handling of these elements? The domestic servant problem,—how sorry and slipshod a solution of it are the hotel and boarding house of to-day? The elimination of the open country from our children's training and from our own opportunities for peace and san-

ity,—what a paltry and impotent substitute for it is the hybrid suburb? Personal independence, social harmony, full value for work done, adequate leisure after toil,—does not this sound like the Millennium? Read Mr. Chambless, O ye captives of Civilization, and burst your shackles!

He takes a map and a ruler and draws you a straight line from the Atlantic coast to the Alleghanics, thence on to the Mississippi, so across the prairies to the Rockies, and down to the very sands of the Pacific. What does this line stand for? It stands for the site of the New City; and there may be as many more of them as you can make straight lines from any given point to any other, in any direction along and athwart the continent. A single line of houses, superimposed upon three lines of railway, one on top of the other, underground, two stories of living and working rooms above-ground, a continuous promenade along the roofs, and gardens and country front and back all the way. Concrete “poured” houses (Edison’s patent); smokeless, noiseless, unintermittent, arrow-swift

trains, local and express, bearing you at all times, in no time, to your precise destination and back; telephones, telegraphs, teleposts, parcel-carriers, freight service, compact, punctual, prompt, accurate, enabling you to live along the line from part to part and from end to end, and be served with the best at the cheapest at all times, while sitting in your easy chair; house-work done mechanically, and your private trade or profession followed in your own workrooms at minimum expense of time and effort and at greatest profit; rent reduced, taxes minimized, slums exterminated, pure food, fresh air and exercise ad libitum; politics purified, cut-throat competition supplanted by rational coöperation,—in short, the means for erecting mankind to its full stature and rendering everybody free, useful, happy and wise can be secured by Mr. Chambless's Roadtown, and the moment to begin is Now! Read his book and get together. Have we not waited long enough? He has spent half a lifetime perfecting his plans; they are as practical as they are attractive, and his