

**THE STRAIGHT ROAD: A  
NOVEL FOUNDED ON THE  
PLAY OF THE SAME TITLE**

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The Straight Road: A Novel Founded on the Play of the Same Title by Clyde Fitch

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**CLYDE FITCH**

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# THE STRAIGHT ROAD

*A NOVEL*

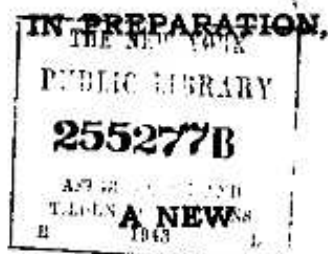
FOUNDED ON THE PLAY OF THE SAME TITLE.

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BALTIMORE, MD.



**AMERICAN PLAY,**

**WITH**

**MINNIE VICTORSON**

**AND A**

**POWERFUL COMPANY.**

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102 FEB 1899

**SYNOPSIS OF THE PLAY  
UPON WHICH  
THIS NOVEL IS FOUNDED.**

**ACT I.**

The "Settlement House" near Houston Street (New York).

**ACT II.**

At Miss Thompson's (on the Hudson).

**ACT III.**

At Molly's (Avenue A).

**ACT IV.**

At Molly's (Avenue A).

*CHARACTERS.*

MARY O'HARA,	A WOMAN,
MISS THOMPSON,	GOSSIP,
MISS LANNER,	BILL HUBBELL,
MRS. FINNERTY,	DOUGLASS AINES,
MISS FINNERTY,	A POLICEMAN,
LIZZY LEE,	SERVANT AT MISS THOMPSON'S.



# THE STRAIGHT ROAD

## CHAPTER I

### THE SETTLEMENT HOUSE

Among the most densely populated settlements of the submerged tenths in the great city of New York is that section which extends for many blocks, both east and west of that old historic thoroughfare, the Bowery, along its entire length.

Situated near the Bowery in Houston street, a settlement house, established by the humanitarian impulses of the beautiful and wealthy Ruth Thompson, stood a serene and cozy structure, doing the sentinel work of sweet charity amidst the vice and squalor of its surroundings.

Ruth Thompson was an orphan and immensely wealthy in her own right. Satiated with the frivolities

of fashionable life and being possessed of an overpowering religious zeal and a desire to elevate and better the condition of her fellow-creatures of the under world, she had renounced all the worldly pleasures afforded by the possession of a large fortune and had taken up her residence in this Houston street settlement house, from which she ministered to the wants of her people, as she termed them.

Associated with Miss Thompson in the active work of the settlement were her intimate friend, Miss Lanner, and Douglass Aines, a young man who was employed by Miss Thompson in a clerical capacity and to perform that part of the work which certain emergencies required of men only.

Miss Lanner was a sincere and faithful friend of Miss Thompson and was ever watchful and solicitous of her interests; but Aines, who had ingratiated himself into the favor of Miss Thompson and was regarded as her accepted suitor, was not above the suspicion of sordid motives in his attentions to the lady, whose fortune would be a far greater attraction to a man of Aines' character than the love of a good, pure and noble woman.

It was nine o'clock in the evening and the street noises in the vicinity of the settlement house were still creating the pandemonium which usually signalizes these congested districts from early morning until far into the night.

Miss Lanner and Aines had just entered the settlement house sitting-room, a large apartment, with dull, gray-green walls, hung with numerous large photo-

J. P. V. M.

graphs of fine paintings, and finished in good but simple taste with solid "Mission" furniture.

Miss Lanner seated herself by a large center table upon which stood a green-shaded electric reading lamp, and was proceeding to cut the leaves of a magazine, when Aines threw himself lazily into a chair on the opposite side of the table and began leisurely to roll himself a cigarette.

"You don't mind if I smoke, do you, Miss Lanner?"

"Ruth does, Mr Aines, which is much more important," answered Miss Lanner, with decided emphasis, at the same time casting a glance of ill-concealed contempt at the young man.

"But Ruth is not here, now, Miss Lanner, and the smoke will all blow out of the window before she comes in."

"It is not the smoke that Ruth objects to, Mr. Aines. She wants to impress the people with the idea that there is a room in the settlement house where smoking is not indulged in. Suppose some of the settlement attendants should come in now and find that you are disregarding Ruth's wishes, how do you suppose they would interpret that?"

"Oh, nonsense!" ejaculated Aines, as he rose to pick up the extinguished match from the floor, where he had thrown it in endeavoring to reach the fireplace. "Oh, nonsense," he continued, "what's the odds? No one will come in, and Ruth won't know it, if they do. I suppose we are through with the rabble for tonight."

"Why do you call our people 'rabble' in my pres-