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EDITORIAL

ROCKEFELLER, PRINCE OF ROMANCE.

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ROCKEFELLER, in a recent copy of the *World's Work*, thought he was writing autobiography; but it was richest romance that welled from his pen when he wrote: "A corporation may be moral or immoral, just as a man may be moral or the reverse."

Had Rockefeller been writing medicine, he would have put it: "A cholera germ may be moral or immoral, just as a man may be moral or the reverse."

Or, had he been writing zoology, he would have said: "A man-eating tiger may be moral or immoral, just as a man may be moral or the reverse."

The morality or immorality of a cholera bacterium does not depend upon its keeping its hair brushed or its teeth cleaned, or conforming to other rules and regulations of bacterial etiquette. The essential nature of a cholera bacterium is to infect human beings with a deadly disease; and that nature is, so far as human society is concerned, highly immoral. The only "moral" cholera germ is a dead one.

Likewise, the morality or immorality of a man-eating tiger depends not at all upon his observing certain jungle laws and customs of his fellows. The essential nature of a man-eating tiger is to carry off villagers and devour them; and as far as the human race is concerned, that nature is also decidedly immoral. Like the cholera germ, the only "moral" man-eater would be a dead one.

And similarly with the corporation. Its morality or immorality depends not upon obeying certain inter-state commerce laws, anti-rebate laws, anti-adulteration laws, or other capitalist restrictions upon its "inventive industry" which a government of its fellow-capitalists has imposed upon it. It may obey every one of these things, and still it would be most emphatically immoral. The immorality of a corporation consists in its being a device for sucking up from the workingmen employed by it four-fifths of the wealth these workers produce, thereby leaving

them destitute and starving in the midst of plenty. This is the essential nature of a corporation—without this robbery of profits or dividends it could not exist. And to the human race this nature is immoral, and immoral only. As with the cholera microbe and the man-eater, the only “moral” corporation would be a dead corporation

But there is a way to kill the corporation in its essence, in its private, robbery-breeding ownership, without depriving mankind of the benefits of co-operative labor which the corporation has built up. The way is for the workers to take possession of it, and operate it for their own benefit, instead of for the Rockefellers. That way is lighted by the sun of Socialism. Those who, like Rockefeller, affect to see “moral” corporations so long as private ownership of the tools of production lasts, are Princes of Romance.

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