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EDITORIAL

SATRAPS OF ENGLAND.

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THE conviction of Earl Russell for bigamy by the House of Lords on the 18th is a matter of more significance and moment than the trivial nature of all that has of late been connected with the Earl would at first lead one to believe. It is nothing short of a fresh affront to that sovereignty of the United States and its laws, that our ruling class so much affect to dote on, venerate and uphold as sacrosanct. Owing to the silent acquiescence of our combined Republican-Democratic politicians in office, and the official presence, at the trial, of the American Ambassador to England, more than acquiescence, official sanction is implied.

Earl Russell was married in England to one Mabel Scott, in 1890. Almost immediately the two quarreled, the quarrels resulting in a series of scandalous court trials, instituted by both, but all of which failed of their purpose. Much as the two sought to separate, English law stood in the way. Earl Russell then moved to America; obtained here a domicile; secured, under American law, an absolute divorce from his wife; and then, again under the full sanction of American law, married one Mollie Cook, in Reno, Nev. Upon his return to England he was arrested on the charge of bigamy, and was convicted on the 18th. The first marriage in England was held valid; the American laws under which the Earl was allowed to re-marry were, accordingly, abrogated by the British law. And the point was rubbed in. If a moral sense against bigamy animated the Lords who sat in judgment in the case, however theoretical the bigamy, there might be some extenuation of their conduct; but in that case the judges would have manifested their indignation by the severity of the sentence. They did just the reverse. An offence otherwise treated as felony is punished as a misdemeanor, and the culprit is consigned for only three months to commodious quarters where he can live in luxury. Obviously, the Lords did not proceed from the theory that they had a malefactor to punish, but that they merely had to take such action as would assert their position that the "comity of

nations,” the courtesy that one sovereign nation owes another, is not due by England to the United States; American laws need not be respected in England; a status acquired here is not recognized there.

In this sense the Earl Russell trial is of a piece with British conduct towards America from the beginning of the Boer war down to the present day. American goods have been taken on the high seas; American ports are bases of supply for British ships,—and all the while the capitalist class, that to-day rules this country, meekly submits to have the country treated as a dependency of England.

The capitalist class of America, represented by its Republican and Democratic officials, is a traitor class. The “Law,” which it enforces by means of injunctions and bayonets, is there only to be enforced upon the American toiler; they are the satraps of England, cringing before their distant master and playing the bully upon their near subjects,—the American wage slave.

Transcribed and edited by Robert Bills for the official Web site of the Socialist Labor Party of America.

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