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EDITORIAL

MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING.

By DANIEL DE LEON

WASHINGTON society is much unsettled about the amours of the Duke of the Abruzzi and Miss Katherine Elkins, the multi-millionaire heiress of the mine and railroad magnate Stephen B. Elkins, Senator from West Virginia. The perplexity arises from the circumstance that the Duke is a member of the royal House of Italy; as such, he is a possible successor to the throne; finally, and by reason thereof, his marriage is subject to the approval of the head of the House, the King himself. Rumors have it that the King objects; Rumors have it that the King might not object, or does not object; Rumors explain that the King, as the guardian of the interests of Italy, is bent upon hitching the Duke to some scion of royalty whose alliance may help to prop up the Italian throne; Rumors also hint at the fact that millions may, could, would or should make amends for actual royalty. Raised upon this mass of conflicting Rumors is a still taller mass of Conjecture. Will the Duke marry anyhow, even if the head of his royal House should object? And, suppose the Duke be willing, would the heiress be also willing to purchase a hollow title? Thus perplexed by Rumor and Conjecture Washington society is in a turmoil. "Will it be?" "Will it not be?" "What will it be?"

All of which is much ado about nothing.

Royalty has a special institution named "morganatic marriage." According to this institution a member of royalty may have more than one wife—one, the breeder of descendants to the throne, another, or others, the conjugal solacer or solacers of the polygamous royal husband—these wives are "morganatic." The institution of "morganatic marriage" is, when closely looked upon, only a variation of what capitalist society winks at and recognizes. With capitalism marriage is but a means to secure lineal heirs to property. Where affection is thus debauched the natural consequence is "sacredness of the family" in public, with its shadow of prostitution

in the dark. Royalty systematizes the practice. Hence the morganatic marriage is a recognized affair. The Duke of the Abruzzi may, accordingly, satisfy the head of his royal House by marrying a born Princess, and at the same time satisfy himself by marrying Miss Elkins morganatically.

“But,” Rumor and Conjecture would join in asking, “would Miss Elkins submit to that sort of thing?” The answer is: “Why not?” If the lady does, she would be no pace-setter in the matter. She would but be following precedent—a precedent set by another distinguished American heiress, the daughter of another American “Pillar of the Sanctity of the Family.” Miss Elkins would but follow the brilliant lead of the Rostonese, Miss Elsie Hensler, who was recognized as the morganatic wife of Prince Ferdinand of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha, when he was King of Portugal, and who, as Countess of Edla, outshone the regular wife of His Most Faithful Majesty the King of Portugal, Donna Maria de Gloria, and was treated with “right royal distinction.”

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