

## AN UNSUCCESSFUL INVASION.

BY C. G. FURLEY.

The Misses Vandersteen, of Chicago, were going to Europe, not in a vain spirit of sightseeing, such as might befit any commonplace American whose finances permitted him to visit the Old World, but with a distinct intention of invading and conquering English society. Possibly of settling on English soil: but this formed no essential part of their plan.

"I don't know that it's worth while actually to marry any of them," said Mrs. Oppenheim. Mrs. Oppenheim was the guide, philosopher, and friend of the young ladies, having herself passed two most successful seasons in London, and, she declared, roused hopeless love in the breasts of innumerable Englishmen, and intense jealousy in those of English ladies. "Englishmen don't make such kind, obedient husbands as Americans," said this experienced lady; "they are tyrannical and dreadfully stupid; but it always enhances a girl's value with men on this side to have it known that she has refused a few Englishmen. At least, I should not advise you to accept anything less than the heir to an earldom, and then only if he is young and handsome. But the great point is that you'll be presented at Court, which at once gives you a right to the best society here—it's a sort of certificate of merit; and Lady Barbara knows her work, and won't take you to any but the best houses, so I am sure you will have a lovely time. Oh, one last caution! don't get too intimate with any of the people on board ship, unless you are quite sure that they are the sort you will want to keep up with afterwards. I was terribly plagued by a woman who went over with me. I had to be civil to her when we were crossing, and the result was that in London she was always bothering me. As she read in the newspaper that I had been at the Queen's Drawing-room or Reception she persecuted me to present her till I was forced to insult her in self-defense."

Many more advices and warnings did Mrs. Oppenheim give her young friends, till both Valeria and Ermytrude felt that if their career in England was not successful the failure would be due to their own blundering, and who was less likely to blunder than these stately and self-possessed damsels? Very high of heart were they when they stepped on board the Cornardier that was to convey them to the scene of triumph; and when they sat down to partake of the first meal with their fellow-passengers, very careful were they not to risk too intimate an acquaintance with any of them. There was only one, they decided, that looked at all worth cultivating—a fair-haired handsome young Englishman; but he had been conversing with the people near him with so much animation that they felt sure that he could not be of any importance.

"I shouldn't think he was anybody," said Valeria, reflectively, "though he does look so aristocratic; but then you can never guess at an Englishman's position by his being civil all round. They never seem to think it necessary, even the highest of them, to keep their inferiors at a distance."

"That's because the distance is so immeasurable that no one will attempt to traverse it," returned Ermytrude a little bitterly, remembering one or two occasions where her social inferiors had not seemed so conscious that she stood far above them as might be desired. "I wonder what his name is?" she added.

"I heard some one call him Mr. Ellis."

"Ellis! You can't learn much from that. I like a name like Cholmondeley or Grosvenor, that you don't often see outside the *Peerage*; then you know where you are, but Ellis might belong to anyone."

"Let us look up the *Peerage*," suggested the younger sister.

They searched that interesting manual, with a copy of which they had provided themselves, and found that Ellis was the family name of the Earl of Sussex.

"What does it say about him?"

"He is an old man himself, born 1802. His eldest son, Lord Eastbourne, born 1828, married 1853, Lady Louisa Frederica le Marchant, only daughter of the Marquis of Foxland, and has issue: Hugh Roderick Herbert le Marchant Ellis, born 1855."

With one accord the sisters ceased reading, and exclaimed, "Can it be he?"

They made an effort to discover if their fellow-passenger was indeed that scion of the noble house of Sussex. Leaving their stateroom, where the absorbing study of the *Peerage* had been carried on, they went on deck, where they found Mr. Ellis discussing Christian names with some other gentlemen.

"One's godfathers and godmothers occasionally make blunders in names they give one, but society always sets the matter right," he was saying. "I know a man who was christened Launcelot, but whom everyone calls Dolly, for no other reason than it seems to suit him better. I myself am afflicted with a string of names long enough to serve a whole family if economically used, but they are all contracted into Dick."

The Misses Vandersteen heard only the latter part of this speech, and a ray of disappointment shot from the eyes of each. This was not the Honorable Hugh Roderick Herbert le Marchant, but some common-place, uninteresting, middle-class Dick! They walked round the deck, and as they again heard the noxious, because plebeian, Ellis say, in answer to some question, "No, I did not spend much time in the cities. I wanted to make some sketches, and, with the exception of some of the older parts of New York, I found nothing of interest in the northern towns. I spent most of my time on the Hudson till winter came on, and then I went south. Now, New Orleans is a place—"

The Misses Vandersteen listened to no more, but crept away to their cabin to hide their disappointment.

"To think of his being only an artist!" sighed Valeria.

"But some artists are in society," said Ermytrude, who had been more deeply struck by the stranger's good looks than her sister.

"Not while they are so young as he is," replied Miss Vandersteen sententially.

Next day was rather stormy, and many ladies were sick, among them the Misses Vandersteen. Their maid was also ill, and unable to attend to them, and the stewardess had too many invalids to attend to to give as much attention to the Misses Vandersteen as these young ladies required. Indeed, they would have fared badly but for the kindness of a young girl named Alice Barclay, who was going to Europe for the first time with her parents. When they were able to lie on the sofa in the ladies' cabin she was ready to fan them, read to them, get them champagne or iced water, as their capricious fancy dictated; in short to make herself essential to their comfort. While they were ill and weak they accepted her attention gratefully, though with a sense of the injustice of a fate which ordained that an Alice Barclay, a little brown-haired girl of no particular consequence, should be well and enjoying the voyage, while the majestic Valeria and the sinuously elegant Ermytrude Vandersteen lay prone and helpless. As, however, the sisters began to recover, Mrs. Oppenheim's warning recurred to their minds. What if Miss Barclay's kindness were only a trick, whereby, like the old man of the sea, she might climb upon their shoulders,

and thus gain admission to the sacredly select social circles wherein they meant to shine! "One can't be too careful," said the sisters Vandersteen; and they amiably resolved to snub Miss Barclay as soon as they were well enough to dispense with her services.

At last Ermytrude was able to crawl on deck. Alice Barclay, who was sitting on a deck-chair, listening with a deep interest to a lively description of a day's hunting from Dick Ellis' lips, saw her as she came up, and was at her side in an instant.

"I am glad to see you on deck," she exclaimed. "Come and take my chair; it is nicely sheltered from the wind, and Mr. Ellis is telling me about England, and it is so interesting."

"Thanks," said Ermytrude, stiffly; "I don't think Mr. Ellis could give me any information about England that would be of use to me, and I have a chair of my own somewhere." Ellis found her chair, placed it in a comfortable corner, and wrapped her rugs round her, but did not suggest that she should come near Alice. She barely thanked him, and he returned to his companion.

"Can you wonder, Miss Barclay," he said, alluding to a discussion they had had the previous day—"can you wonder at my countrymen having such a false impression of yours; when a woman like that comes to England and calls herself an American lady?"

"I know she is horrid," Alice replied, with something like tears in her eyes; "but you know we aren't all like that."

"Yes, fortunately I do; I know you. Formerly my ideal woman was rather hazy and undefined, but now I know exactly what she is like. She is not very tall; but graceful as a fairy; she has brown hair and eyes; she is always bright and cheerful, and she is kind to everyone, even to those who don't deserve it. She is an American, and her name is—"

"Oh, Mr. Ellis, there is Valeria Vandersteen; do go and get her a chair," interrupted Alice, speaking calmly enough, and looking him in the face with a glance that seemed to defy him to say that she was blushing.

"Thanks," said Dick, "I'm only a barbarous Englishman, and a little insolence from a woman goes a long way with me. I have had quite as much as I want."

"Oh, but I wish you would help her." "That alters the case." And Dick obediently went and arranged everything for Valeria's comfort, thereby deepening the impression in the Vandersteen mind that he wished to attain the honor of their intimacy.

Presently a pause in their conversation enabled Alice and Dick to hear a dialogue between the sisters that was evidently leveled at them.

"The worst of there being no titles with us," said Valeria, "is that Englishmen who would never aspire to good society in their own country think they have a right to mix with the best families in America."

"Yes, but they don't keep it long," answered her sister; "they find their own level pretty soon, and keep to the families of dry-goodsmen and the like."

Alice Barclay started from her seat. "Please take me for a walk up the deck, Mr. Ellis," she said; "I can't endure this." When they were out of hearing she exclaimed vindictively: "I should like to throw them overboard!"

"Don't," cried Dick, laughing. "I don't mind taking any wager you like that before three months are over they will wish they had drowned themselves before they spoke rudely of either you or me."

During the remainder of the voyage the Misses Vandersteen treated Alice with a condescending stiffness which, we are sorry to say, made her regret she had ever spoken to them, but Dick Ellis they carefully ignored, save once. He was in

the saloon, putting up in a portfolio some sketches which he had been showing to Miss Barclay, when Valeria Vandersteen entered. She herself had some talent for painting and no little love for it, and she could not resist the pleasure of looking at these drawings.

"Did you do them, Mr. Ellis? Oh, do let me see them," she cried.

He showed her each one, telling her the subjects, and talking about the spots where they were made, in such an interesting manner that for full half an hour Valeria forgot the solemn duty of keeping him at a distance. But as they came to the last of the sketches she recalled it, and mourned her temporary unbending.

"This is really lovely," she said, taking up a view of the Hudson; "I should like to buy it. What is the price of it, Mr. Ellis?"

Dick stared at her in amazement.

"Excuse me," he said coldly, "my sketches are not for sale."

"But I want this one particularly."

"Then, Miss Vandersteen, will you honor me by accepting it?"

"Certainly not; I couldn't do such a thing. You must sell it me."

"I would much rather give it you."

"But I won't take it. What price do you ask?"

"I have really never thought of it," said Dick.

"Would twenty-five dollars be enough?"

"Since you make a point of buying it—yes."

Valeria produced her purse, paid the money, and carried off the sketch in triumph.

"Now he can't presume on knowing us," she reflected. "If I had accepted the drawing he might have made use of the incident to foist himself on us in London, but now it's merely a matter of business."

It Dick muttered something unorthodox under his breath after Miss Vandersteen had left him it might surely be forgiven. He collected his sketches once more, and went to Alice Barclay. "I have just had a new experience, Miss Barclay," he said; "I have been earning money."

"Indeed! How?" she asked.

"Miss Vandersteen has just bought one of my sketches for twenty-five dollars."

"Oh, Mr. Ellis! And you let her do it?"

"She insisted on it. I asked her to take it as a gift, but she evidently considered the offer presumptuous, so I was obliged to let her have her own way. But I don't like to be insulted, even by a lady; and lest Miss Vandersteen should wish to purchase any further specimens of my work, I want you to do me a favor."

"I?" said Alice in astonishment.

"Yes. Will you accept the whole portfolio as a token of an Englishman's admiration for your country?"

"Oh, I can't, Mr. Ellis. It is too great a gift."

"Perhaps you would prefer to buy them."

"How can you be so unkind? You know I don't mean that."

"Forgive me, I had no right to speak like that; but Miss Valeria's manner irritated me so much. You will forgive me, Alice? And in token of your forgiveness you will accept my work, will you not? I should like to think that it was in your possession."

And what could Alice do but blush and consent.

At last Liverpool was reached, and the Misses Vandersteen took train for London there to place themselves under the care of Lady Barbara Macnab.

Lady Barbara Macnab was a disappointed woman. When, as Lady Barbara Vandeleur, she had first made her entrance into society, she had been much admired, and consequently she had dis-