

THE STRATEGISTS

By James B. Connolly

ILLUSTRATIONS BY W. J. ENRIGHT



ARRIVED in Santacruz in the early evening, and as I stepped out of the carriage with the children the majordomo came rushing out from under the hotel portales and said: "Meesus Trench, is it? Your suite awaits, madam. The Lieutenant Trench from the American warship has ordered, madam."

There was a girl, not too young, sitting over at a small table, and at the name Trench, pronounced in the round voice of the majordomo, she—well, she was sitting by herself, smoking a cigarette, and I did not know why she should smile and look at me—in just that way, I mean. But I can muster some poise of manner myself when I choose—I looked at her. And she looked me over, and smiled again. And I did not like that smile. It was as if—as Ned would say—she had something on me.

She and I were to be enemies—already I saw that. She was making smoke rings, and she never hurried the making of a single one of them as she looked at me; nor did I hurry a particle the ushering of the two children and the maid through the portales. But I did ask, after I had greeted Nan and her mother inside: "Auntie—or you, Nan—who is the oleander blossom smoking the cigarette out under the portales?"

It spoke volumes to me that Nan and her mother, without looking, at once knew whom I meant. She was the Carmen Whiffle of whom nearly every other American woman waiting to be taken home on the next transport had been whispering—and not always whispering—for weeks in Santacruz.

Nan, of course, had a good word for her. Is there a living creature on earth she wouldn't? "I think she is wonderfully good-looking," said Nan.

"No woman with a jaw like that," said Nan's mother, "can be good-looking.

And she sat at the piano there early this evening and raved over the 'Melody in F'; but when she tried to play it, it was with fingers of wood. What she really did play with spirit, Nettie—when she thought there were none of us American women around to hear her—was: 'I Want What I Want When I Want It.'"

Auntie went on to tell then how this creature was a divorcée who had married an oil millionaire, and within six months got her divorce and a half-million alimony out of him. And she was born—not Carmen, but Hannah! "Now, what's the psychology, Nettie," said auntie, "of a woman who changes her name from Hannah to Carmen? If I had a husband within a thousand miles of her, I'd lock him up."

You may understand from the foregoing that Mrs. Wedner—Nan's mother—is a woman of convictions; and so she is. The Lady with the Wallop is what Ned tells me the men folks call her. But I am not without convictions myself.

"I have a husband within a thousand miles of her," I said, "and if you mean that for me, auntie, I won't lock him up—not even if he were the to-be-locked-up kind. When I can't hold my man, auntie, against any specimen of her species, I won't call in the police to help me. And I think I'll give her another look-over before the evening is ended."

"Don't bother your head with her," said auntie. "And sit down and have something to eat." And we did have something to eat, but up-stairs in my suite.

The children and I were eating, and Nan and auntie were giving me all the gossip since I'd seen them last, when the maid came in to say that the trunk with the children's things in it hadn't been sent up with the others. There's no use leaving such things to a maid in those countries—I went down to see about it myself; and there it was as I expected,

lying in the lobby where a lazy porter hadn't yet got around to it.

I told the fat majordomo a thing or two, and the trunk was soon on its upward way; and then—as I was down-stairs—I thought to take a glance about to see if anybody I knew had arrived in the meantime. You must remember that American refugees were arriving from the interior on every train, the revolutionary general Podesta being expected to enter the city almost any day—or hour.

I saw the back of a man's head, and I said to myself: "If that isn't as near Larry Trench's head as anything on earth can be!"—the shapely, overhanging back head and the uncrushable hair that went with it. There was a row of palmettos in tubs, and I walked around to make certain. It was Larry. And he was with a young woman. And the young woman was Carmen Whiffle, and her heavy-lashed agate eyes were gazing into the steady, deep-set, blue-green eyes of Larry. One look was all I needed to know what that lady's intentions were in the present case. "So!" I said to myself—"that's what you meant when you smiled at the name Trench? Perhaps you thought Larry was my husband!"

Now, I hadn't seen a single officer or man of our ships on my way from the station, nor while I had been down-stairs with Nan and auntie earlier. Which was significant in itself, for a fleet of our battleships were anchored in the harbor, my Ned's among them. I looked around now. No, there wasn't one officer of ours in the dining-room, nor in the plaza outside. So what was Larry, a young officer of our marine corps, doing all by himself ashore?

And Larry was my Ned's young brother and my own little Neddo's godfather, and long ago I had decided that Larry should marry my own chum and cousin Nan, the very best girl that ever lived. And—well, if ever a woman looked like the newspaper photographs of the other woman of a dozen celebrated cases, Carmen Whiffle was that woman.

I stood there at the end of that row of palmettos, hesitating; and while I hesitated the orchestra struck up, and I saw the lady lead Larry out for a dance.

I did not have to see Carmen Whiffle

dance to know that she could dance. If they never learn to do anything else on earth, women of her kind do learn to dance. All women who have men on their minds learn to dance. She could dance. If I had never seen her lift a toe off the floor, the lines of her figure were there to prove that she could dance. But she lifted her toe. More than her toe. She danced—I have to give her credit for it—with grace; and after she warmed up to it, not only with grace but with abandon; with so much abandon that all the other women who were trying to dance with abandon ceased their feeble efforts and stood against the wall to watch her.

After that dance Carmen Whiffle never had another chance with me. I almost ran up to my room. Little Anna was already asleep; but Neddo, aged six, was wide-awake. Nan and her mother had gone to their room, which was across the hall on the same floor.

"Neddo, dear, do you know your uncle Larry is down-stairs?" I asked him.

"Oh-h, mummie!" he cried, and came leaping out of his cot bed. "I must see him, mummie!"

"I'm going to let you go down-stairs all by yourself, Neddo, and see him. And then be sure to bring him up here, to have a look at sister. And then be sure to take him to the balcony at the end of the hallway and tell him to draw the lattices and wait there. It's to be a surprise, Neddo, tell him; but not a single word more than that."

I waited two minutes or so, and then followed Neddo. I was in time to see Neddo throw himself at Larry, and wrap his arms around his neck and smother him with kisses. "Uncle Larry! O Uncle Larry! Come and see who's up-stairs! No telling, you know!"

From where I was, on the screened balcony overlooking the lounging-room, I needed no ship's spy-glass to read the suspicion in Carmen Whiffle's eyes when she looked at little Neddo. I do believe she could even suspect that innocent, affectionate child with playing a game. And the tears came into Larry's eyes.

"My godson, my brother's boy," explained Larry. "If you don't mind my running away for a few minutes, Miss Whiffle, I'll hurry back. I'll explain to

Neddo's mother that you are waiting and hurry right back."

"Don't explain anything," said Miss Whiffle, just a bit tartly. "Never mind any explaining, but come back as soon as you can. I shall be waiting here."

Are you at all given to the habit of fancying in human beings the resemblance to different kinds of birds and beasts? Looking down on Carmen Whiffle just then, I could see where, if her well-cushioned features were chiselled away, she would look startlingly like a hawk.

I may be unjust, I know, but I was thinking of more than one thing just then. I was thinking of what I read in Carmen Whiffle's glance and smile at me when I passed under the portales of that hotel that evening. A devoted, slavish wife and mother was what she was thinking I was; and possibly I am. But women of her kind are altogether too quick to think that the devoted wife and mother hasn't any brains.

And more than all the brains in the world is the wisdom that comes of knowing men. Carmen Whiffle may have known several men in her day; but if she did it was to know them incompletely; and to know any number of men incompletely is never truly to know any one, while to know one man well is to know many. And when that one in my case was Larry's own brother, why, I wasn't worrying over a battle with Carmen Whiffle, superbly equipped though she doubtless thought herself.

Ned and his brother Larry were natively pretty much alike; but my Ned was trained early in a rigid profession and early assumed the responsibilities of marriage and a home; and—he told me so more than once—so saved himself more than one drift to leeward. It is no gain for us women to dodge facts in this life. To a man with a conscience, a wife and two children are better than many windward anchors, as Ned would say. Larry was Ned, minus the wife and two children, and plus a little more of youth and the not yet, perhaps, disciplined Trench temperament.

And for every child a woman bears mark her up a decade of years in human wisdom. And twice a decade in hardening resolution. It had already become

marble in me—my resolution to save from the talons of this hawk this brother of my Ned's—a twenty-five-year-old man of war according to stupid bureau files, but in reality a little child playing in the garden of life with never a thought of any bird of prey hovering in the air above him.

I watched Larry go bounding up the wide staircase with Neddo, and then I waited long enough for them to get well out of sight ahead; and for Neddo to lead his uncle up the second flight, to show him baby in her bed asleep; and Larry—I could picture him—time to stoop over and kiss the dear, warm, plump little face.

"And now you must hide—I'll show you, Uncle Larry—till mummie comes," said Neddo, and led him back to the hall and onto the balcony, which looked down on the patio of the hotel. And there Neddo left him, after closing him in behind the lattice, as I had told him.

I then went to get Nan, who had been sentenced to read her mother to sleep with something out of Trollope. Nan's mother carried volumes of Trollope with her as other women carry hot-water bottles. Twenty minutes of dear old Trollope and she was good for her eight hours' sleep, she would say, as she did now; but this time without keeping Nan twenty minutes.

"Nettie, the way you go around commandeering people, you ought to be a general in the army," said auntie, but with perfect good nature. "Go along with her, Nan."

I led Nan to where Neddo was waiting in his crib. "Did you tell Cousin Nan yet, mummie?" asked Neddo in what he thought was a whisper.

"Tell me what, Neddo?" asked Nan.

"Neddo!" I said, and raised a finger. "Sh-h, Neddo!" and Neddo sh-h-d, and I led Nan into the hall. "I'm dying to have a talk with you," I whispered to Nan—"out here, where Neddo won't be kept awake and the maid won't hear us."

And so, just when Larry was thinking of breaking out of his hiding-place, he heard a door in the hall open, and through the slats of the lattice saw two women's shadowy forms tiptoeing down the hall toward his balcony.

Nan went straight to the lattice. "Let's let the air in, Nettie."



Drawn by W. J. Enright.

"Where did you hear of Larry last, Nan?"—Page 78.

"No, no, Nan," I cried, "don't throw open the lattice!"

"Why not?" she asked, her hands on the latch.

"Flying things! Bats and other tropical night birds."

"Ugh-h-h!" cried Nan, and let the lattice alone.

"Let's sit here," I said, setting our chairs almost against the lattice. Larry could not escape then if he wanted to, because it was a twenty-foot drop onto a lot of marble vases or the spiked edges of some cactus plants, and more than twenty feet to a marble walk and into the depths of some kind of a spouting fountain in the patio.

He had to stay, and, being an officer and a gentleman, of course, he was trying not to hear; but the lattice slats were loose-fitting and we were sitting not two feet from them.

"Where did you hear of Larry last, Nan?" I began.

"Oh," said Nan, "I've been getting mamma to take all kinds of trips, Nettie, and every trip with the one idea of seeing Larry somewhere. Wherever I thought any of our warships came, there I'd specially get mamma to go. I can draw a map of this coast-line with all its ports in their proper places with my eyes shut. And the places in the different ports I've peeked into, Nettie!—knowing how curious Larry always was to see everything going on and hoping to run across him in that way. I even got mamma to go to a bull-fight last Sunday."

"A bull-fight, Nan!" I said.

"Why not?" retorted Nan. "In our country we have prize-fights. And which is worse—for men to maul beasts or to maul each other?"

"I know, Nan, but women who have seen them——"

"I know, Nettie—and their writing articles of the horror of it, but always after they've satisfied their curiosity. The curse of our training to-day, Nettie, is hypocrisy."

Which was just like Nan—straight from the shoulder! But we just have to restrain those headstrong ones. "I wouldn't call it hypocrisy altogether, Nan," I said.

"What else is it? And what else was

it when every old hen in our town went cackling from one house to another when the papers published that story about Larry losing so much money at cards one night? And some of these same women not able to afford a second maid and even doing their own fine laundering in secret—some of them playing afternoon bridge, Nettie, for a quarter of a cent a point. It just makes me sick. How do we know how many of them wouldn't gamble away ten thousand dollars in one night if they had it?"

And just then I heard "That's you, Nan!" in Larry's fervent voice, from behind the lattice.

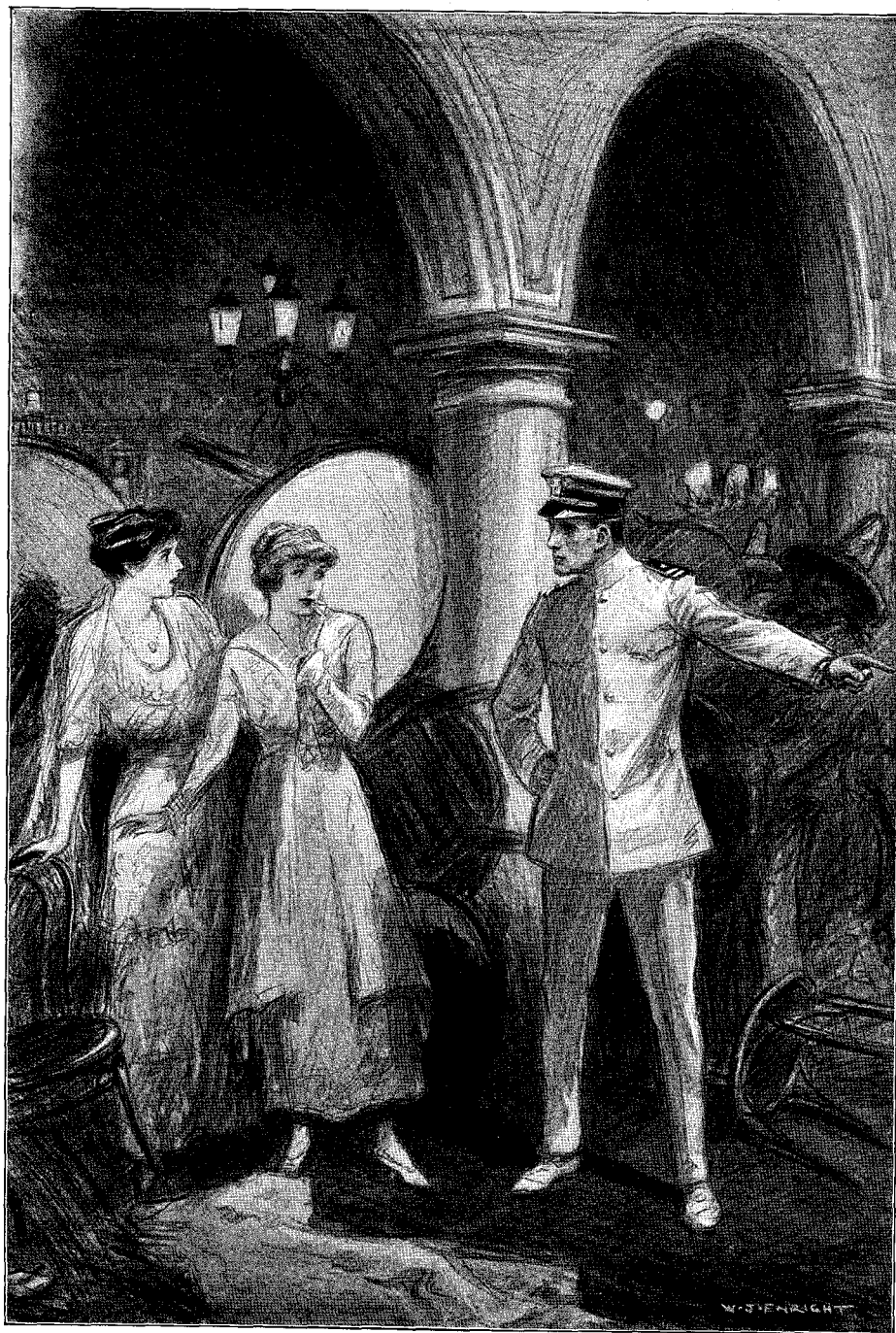
Nan leaped up. I could feel her heart beating when she fell against me. "Did you hear that, Nettie?"

"I did hear something," I said—"a word from one of the cooks or maids down-stairs it must have been. They take the air in the patio of an evening when their work is done. Remember, voices carry far in the tropics—especially when it is damp."

"I never knew that, Nettie," said innocent Nan—"that voices carry farther in the tropics. And I'm sure it is clear and lovely out." And she stood up to look through the lattice.

Now, the best defense to an attack, Ned always told me, is another attack; so "But Larry did drink too much that time, Nan," I said.

"Why, Nettie Trench—from you!" cried Nan, and plumped back into her chair. "When did he drink too much? Just once—when he knew so little of wine that he had no idea how much would upset him. The trouble was that poor Larry never knew how to hide anything he ever did. No hypocrisy in him at any rate. And I'd a good deal rather have a man who did what Larry did, and own to it and be sorry right out, than a man that you never know when he is lying to you or not, or what he is likely to be doing when he is out of sight. And he gave me his promise in a letter that he would never touch another card or drink another glass of wine until I said he might. Mother wouldn't let me answer the letter. And he guessed how it was, and I don't blame him for writing her as he did. Mamma was too harsh. She paid too



Drawn by W. J. Enright.

"All stand clear of the main entrance."—Page 82.

much attention to town gossip, and I told her that. And she said: 'I think, Nan, a little travelling and discipline won't hurt you one bit'; and then Larry went and got his appointment to the marine corps, thinking there might be a war and some fighting for him down in this country."

Now, I always have held that women, even as men of any account, are never so attractive as when they throw aside all affectation and stand forth just as they are—that is, if they're wholesome and good to begin with; and no surer way to hold the right kind of a boy to the line than to let him know that the right girl has never lost faith in him. But Nan was holding forth altogether too bravely—with the boy in the case so handy. A few little reservations—a few—at this particular time, I thought, would do no harm. And so "Sh-h, Nan!" I warned.

"I won't, Nettie Trench. It's so, and you know it. I hate superior people, Nettie. Father always did, too. And you know how he liked Larry. Dear papa! One night, Nettie—I was never so surprised—mamma all at once began to cry—imagine mamma crying! She was crying for papa, who had to die, she said, before she could appreciate the gentleness and warm heart that was in him. And papa always said that no kind of people go farther to the bad than those who really think they're better than others. He used to say that such beasts, for their punishment, ought to be forced to herd by themselves."

I believed in what Nan said myself, but also, thinking of the wily woman waiting below, I decided that a little chastening of the spirit of rebellious girlhood would now be in order. So I said: "But a long record of the human race, Nan, proves that if we do not intend to try to be better than the people we happen to be with, then we ought to take care whom we are with."

"You and your sermons!" exclaimed Nan. "Nettie dear, talk *with* me, not *at* me. Oh, Nettie"—Nan threw herself on my shoulders—"I never had a chance to tell him I'm not mad with him. And I'm afraid he'll do something desperate. And if they get to fighting down here, as everybody says, he will be killed! He's that kind, Nettie—he will be killed!"

"And isn't my Ned likely to be killed at all?" I said, beginning to get frightened too; and then, seeing her so tearful: "But it will be all right, dear—don't you worry."

"But, Nettie, why shouldn't a woman let a man know—or give him a hint? 'What!' says mamma to me, 'would you run after him?' But why should I be afraid to let him know that I do care for him?"

"I don't know why not, Nan. It depends on the man, perhaps."

"Did you ever let Ned know you cared for him before he asked—did you, Nettie?"

She was so wistful I almost forgot Larry behind the lattice; but I caught myself in time. "I hope, Nan Wedner, you don't think I proposed to him?"—that was with such dignity as I could quickly assume.

"But, Nettie"—she switched her head on my shoulder—"do you suppose Ned knew, Nettie?"

"I'm afraid," I sighed—I thought of Larry listening, but I had to tell her the truth—"he would have been dull not to guess it."

"And Ned isn't dull, is he?" said Nan.

"Ned dull! I guess not!" I said.

And while I stood with Nan tearful and discouraged against my shoulder, I could hear the patter of the fountain tinkling up from the patio, and the voices of men and girls, and the music of some kind of a native instrument; and the song was of home and love by a man to a girl. And do you know?—no matter what we think of their politics and so on—those men down in that country do seem to be able to put something terribly sad into their voices when they sing, and somebody somewhere has said that no man who loves but is more often sad than gay. And it made no difference—it may have been some low-built kitchen girl he was singing to, and he one of the hotel porters loafing on his job—not a mite of difference. The melody of it rose up and clutched me. And Nan clinging to me—I could feel it clutching her, too. And I knew that for Larry behind the lattice—it was hard work staying where he was; and as for myself—I hadn't seen my Ned in almost a year, and, thinking of Ned and

his ways, I felt all at once terribly lonesome and like crying with Nan. And then a vision of the arrogant beauty down-stairs came suddenly to my mind. But now without my being so afraid. It would be safe enough now, I thought, to have Larry and Nan meet in her presence.

"Let us go down-stairs now, Nan," I said. "We can look at the dancing. That Miss Whiffle, they say, is a wonderful dancer."

"Yes, but let me look at the children again, Nettie," said Nan. "I love to see them asleep. Isn't it wonderful to you, Nettie, to think of your having children of your own—nobody else's but your own?"

"And Ned's," I said.

"Of course. You wouldn't give them up for anything, would you, Nettie, in all the world? Why, Nettie, I'd go down on my knees and scrub floors, like the old women in the office buildings, every night of my life in thankfulness to have such lovely little babies of my own!"

"Hush, Nan!" I said, thinking of Larry in hiding.

"And Larry, Nettie—wouldn't Larry love to have children of his own!"

Before she could say any more I hurried her away to look at the children, and also to give Larry time to make his escape. And after Nan had cuddled them we headed for the stairs, I wondering just how I could let Larry see us after we got there. And while descending the stairs we heard a rifle-shot, and another, and another, and then dozens of shots.

"Podesta! Podesta!" we heard everybody calling out then, and the waiters dashed from under the portales to the corner of the plaza to see what was doing. And as we hurried down-stairs we heard a voice—Larry's voice.

"This plaza is about the best-lighted place in town," Larry was saying to a group of diners. "The most exposed, but also the safest place—on the defense—in the city. Whatever they decide to do to us here, at least we can see them coming to do it."

The stout majordomo was standing near Larry. "Truly, that is so," he said.

"And these little marble-topped tables," said Larry, "won't be bad little defenses against their rifle fire. We can

set them up on edge between the columns of the portales. Let's get busy with the tables now."

Everybody began to clear the little tables by sweeping whatever was on them to the marble floor. The majordomo cried out: "Careful, if you please, señors!" But no one minded him, and everybody then began to pick up the marble-topped tables, Nan and I among them, and place them between the portales columns.

Larry, if he saw us, paid no attention to us; neither did he pay any attention to Carmen Whiffle when she stood at his elbow. "There's no changing nature, Nan," I said—"the male in war time is a warrior first and a lover afterward."

"Would you want him not to be?" said Nan, who had dropped grabbing tables to stand off and admire Larry; and while she was at that, her mother, in a dressing-gown of a chocolate shade, came down the wide stairs.

"Mamma, there's Larry—look!" cried Nan. "And he won't pay the least attention to us!"

"Why should he?" retorted auntie. "He has his work before him. Let him do it in peace."

By this time the tables were all piled up as Larry had ordered, and half the women in the hotel were clustering around him. You would think they had a special claim on him. But he almost rudely waved them away; among them Carmen Whiffle, who retired, I was pleased to see, in some wonderment.

"Good for you, Larry!" I said; but was myself shocked a moment later when he said, with both hands in the air warning us: "Mesdames—señoras, señoritas, ladies, demoiselles—there probably isn't the least danger, but no harm in standing clear. You, Nettie," he added, when I was going to rush over to him, in my pride to let the others know who he was and I was—"you too, Nettie, same as the rest!"

"Larry Trench, why, what—" I began, and "O Larry!" began Nan—

"And you, Nan—you know I'm not allowed to speak to you," said Larry. "I promised your mother I wouldn't"; but he gave her a glance which sent her trembling up against me, murmuring: "O Nettie, Nettie, I'm so glad!"

"And you, too, Mrs. Wedner," said Larry—"all stand clear of the main entrance. Perhaps you'd all better go up a flight—yes, two flights, up out of the way—everybody!" And he began shooing us all toward the stairs.

"Why, Larry Trench!" I cried—"you'd think you'd been seeing us every day for the last year, instead—"

"Don't be silly," said Nan's mother. "He is right. Ladies, I think we would all do well to follow Lieutenant Trench's instructions." And she always did look the born leader—all we women followed her when she led the way up-stairs.

But we did not go up any two flights. At the head of the grand staircase we stopped, and there waited to see what would happen next.

It soon happened. A man looked through between the tables and chairs of the portales. Larry invited him in. He was one of Podesta's officers, and he came in with a pistol in his belt, but very polite; and Larry just as much so. They talked, and were still talking, when we heard the tramping of men in shoes outside in the plaza, and then—I couldn't believe my eyes—when I took another look there was my own Ned in uniform; and he stepped past the chairs and tables to where Larry and the native officer were; and there was a palavering all around. And I felt pretty proud the way Ned could talk the lingo with so many looking on.

"Ned, Ned!" I called out; and he heard me, but he gave me a sign to be quiet with his hand behind his back. And by and by Ned and Larry and the native officer marched out, and then we rushed to the windows of the rooms opening on the plaza, and we saw General Podesta order his men to march off; and as they did our bluejackets and marines stacked arms in the plaza, and then we knew everything was going to be all right.

And Ned came back into the hotel with Larry to tell us that we need have no further fear—that Podesta's men were to leave the city; and Podesta came back and bowed to us, and said it was so.

And we came running down the stairs, and some of those women there acted as if they would kiss Ned, but I soon let them know who I was, especially Carmen Whiffle, who, after looking in surprise at

us, turned to Larry. But auntie and Nan and Larry were already strolling over to the row of palmettos, at which Carmen Whiffle, tossing her head and swaying her waist like every Carmen of every Carmen opera I ever saw, walked over to where Podesta had sat down at a table by himself.

"Will you tell me," I asked Ned on our way up-stairs, "how Larry ever came to know Carmen Whiffle?"

"If there is a young officer in port who doesn't know Carmen Whiffle, I have not met him. She takes care of that."

"But he didn't have to talk with her by the hour—and dance with her."

"In the service, Nettie," said Ned, "we sometimes have to find out things that have nothing to do with the main engine or the turret guns. And Carmen Whiffle knows General Podesta very well. And Larry, if somewhat young and innocent, is not without brains. Now don't ask any more."

And I did not; but I went on to tell Ned how I had planned the balcony interview. Ned could not keep it to himself—he told auntie.

"Yes," said auntie, when he had finished, "it was very clever. Nettie always is. My door was ajar when I saw Neddo running for down-stairs, and I stopped him to learn what in the world he was doing. And he told me the secret that I wasn't to tell Nan."

She is the most annoying woman. "If you knew so much, why didn't you stop it?" I asked.

"Why should I stop it?" she answered, with the most exasperating calm. "I always wanted Nan and Larry to marry. But I always believed in a little discipline, too. When young people have merely to cry for a thing to get it—it doesn't do them any lasting good."

To escape the quizzical eyes of auntie, I looked back down the stairs; and if there weren't Carmen Whiffle and General Podesta sitting at a table and the fat majordomo himself opening a bottle of wine for them!

"Well!" I gasped to Ned.

"Yes," said Ned. "The rumor is that she may be the Señora Podesta any time she pleases. And if she had learned from Ned or some other indiscreet young or old

officer that we were to land to-night—it would have saved Podesta from making a rather ridiculous entry into the city, wouldn't it?"

"What a schemer!" I cried.

"Yes," smiled Ned—"everybody schemers but our own selves." "I spoke a word to the flag-lieutenant to-day—he's a classmate—to put in a word for me for the landing party to the Old Man."

"Your courage and your brains," I began—"or was it your knowledge of the language——"

"The fleet," interrupted Ned, "is crowded with officers of courage and brains. And I am not alone on the language end of it. But I was the only officer with a wife and two children ashore. And, as we hadn't seen each other for a year, the Old Man thought it mightn't be a bad idea for me to come ashore and have an eye out for them."

By this time Nan and Larry had passed onto the latticed balcony, and Nan's mother to her room; and Ned was hugging Neddo and Anna together.

"Perhaps," I said, "I'm not such a strategist after all!"

"Nettie," said Ned, "cheer up. You have your share of brains. I, your husband, say it. And if your husband admits it, it must be so. But, Nettie dear, don't forget that here with the children is your bidding suit. Lead the play up to the children, Nettie, and they will sure have to hold some cards to set you."

"I haven't seen you in a year—go ahead and laugh at me," I said. But I didn't care—he was my own Ned, and I had him, and told him so.

"And haven't I you!" said Ned—and swept me with the children into his arms.

And Nan and Larry were sitting out on the balcony—I could hear their murmuring voices through an open window; and from the patio below I could make out the tinkle of a fountain and some kind of a native instrument, and a voice chanting—not of pride or glory or riches, but of love—human, humble, eternal love. And before I even knew I was crying Ned was kissing the tears from my eyes.

AFTER READING "LAVENGRO"

By Adin Ballou

I HAVE been still enough; time it is to wander,
Time to take the wide road that breaks above the hill;
I have dreamed in sun and shade but now I'm going yonder,
By Young Duncan's cottage and past Old Duncan's mill.

Many a happy mile of mine shall wind among the valleys;
Many a faint and fragile dream shall blossom sweet and strong;
Dawn and noon and twilight tossed in dark night's ancient chalice
Shall make my feet a stirrup-cup, a stirrup-cup of song!

For I shall sing the dream-songs I made before my going—
The words I linked below gray roof shall ring beneath blue sky;
And every little stream I cross shall echo with its flowing,
Shall ripple to my music as my heart and I go by.

And I shall meet a young child, and I shall know new faces,
And I shall sleep the guest of stars and close my eyes to rain;
And down green hillsides I shall come to streets of old far places,
And singing I shall enter there and singing go again!

Yea, with my wallet and my staff, I now must go a-questing,
I'll take my little book of songs—O I have long been still!
For here I've dreamed in sun and shade and here my heart's been resting,
But now I take the wide road that breaks above the hill!