

CAUGHT.



"I'll give you a penny if you can spell fish."  
"C-o-d."  
"That ain't fish."  
"What is it, then?"

A New Omaha Author.

The winter season always produces an active demand for little story books whose authors aimed to interest and instruct the children. Several Nebraska writers have essayed the task of producing such books and their efforts have met with uncommon success. One of these is Mrs. Anna Taggart Clark of Omaha who has just received from the printer a charming little story styled "The Legacy of Little Blessing." Without waste of words and in good English, Mrs. Clark produced a chronicle of the daily life of a family of children, reciting their joys and sorrows, their triumphs and vicissitudes—portraying the lordly traits of character of the little ones of the family and especially of Little Blessing. Dark clouds now and then put in an appearance to drive out the domestic sunshine only for a time, yet there is a tinge of tragedy in the wandering away of Little Blessing, who mysteriously disappeared, every effort to find her proving abortive. The consequent gloom in the household is told effectively, giving evidence of literary skill upon the part of the author. The irreparable loss of the dear one led at length to a quest among charitable institutions— orphanages, for a bright little girl whose presence in the household might, perchance, enable the heart-sick mother to bear up under her weight of woe. Obviously it was a most difficult self-imposed task, and the disconsolate father and mother (Mr. and Mrs. Sherwood) despaired of finding a child at all acceptable. Finally the matron of the institute told them of a little girl in the invalid's room, and with some reluctance, the visitors went up to see her. Only a glance revealed the identity of Little Blessing. The meeting is most dramatically portrayed. As is usual in children's story books, everything ended happily. The moral of Mrs. Clark's excellent little story is the invaluable work of rescuing homeless children which has been carried on at the Child Saving Institute (which, by the way, is barely mentioned); the author has intimate knowledge of the grand work being done, since her husband, Dr. A. W. Clark, has been superintendent of the institute for many years. But the reference to the institute is only incidental. The book is a child's story, possessing the charm of human interest, recited with unusual clearness and power. Price, 25 cents a copy; 50 or more copies, 25 cents each.

Folly.

Him—I don't see how you can bring yourself to kiss that dog.  
Her—And I suppose the dog don't see how I can bring myself to kiss you. We're a foolish sex, aren't we?

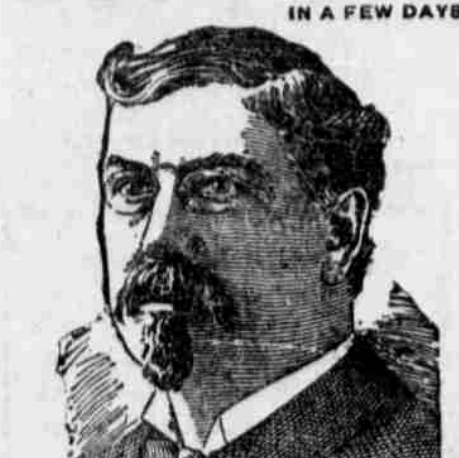
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**FRANTZ H. WRAY, M. D.**  
206 Bee Building, OMAHA

# The VANISHING FLEETS

By ROY NORTON  
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SYNOPSIS.

"Vanishing Fleets," a story of "what might have happened," opens in Washington with the United States and Japan on the verge of war. Guy Hillier, secretary of the British embassy, and Miss Norma Roberts, chief aide of inventor Roberts, are introduced as lovers. The government is much criticised because of its lack of preparation for strife. At the most inopportune moment Japan declares war. Japan takes the Philippines without loss of a man. The entire country is in a state of turmoil because of the government's indifference. Guy Hillier starts for England with secret message and is compelled to leave Norma Roberts, who with military officers also leaves Washington on mysterious expedition for an isolated point on the Florida coast. Hawaii is captured by the Japanese. In turmoil, demands explanation of policy from government. All ports are closed. Hillier going to England on last boat. England learns that Japanese fleet is fast approaching western coast of America. Hillier decides to return to America by any means. Japanese spy, discovers secret preparations for war. He follows auto carrying presidential cabinet. He uncovers source of great mystery and flees, murmuring: "The gods save Nippon."

CHAPTER VI.—Continued.

In constant terror until his nerves became shreds to torment him, alert by night and day, he traversed the continent, and at last entered the gateway of the northwest, where so many of his countrymen had resided prior to the outbreak of hostilities, but where now he might claim neither friends nor sympathizers. Here indeed was a No Man's Land where none extended a welcome. From then on he must depend entirely on his own resources, and he understood perfectly well that he was nearing a hard finish of a long race. He lost no time in making a start.

Under the pretext of going to a camp where he was to cook he induced a launch that was starting out toward the mouth of Puget sound to take him aboard as a passenger and land him at its journey's end a short distance from Port Townsend. He was dropped off late in the evening at a tiny landing, and later saw the little boat speed back toward Seattle. He was without food save such as had been given him, and tightened the belt beneath his Chinese garb in anticipation of a hard trip. Unused to the rougher life, he made painful progress, and nothing save his desperation enabled him to traverse the primitive strip between him and the city. Footsore and dependent, he forged doggedly ahead, until at last by sheer will power alone he gained the outskirts of the port. Its wooden wharf was deserted, and many of the houses were closed and vacant, the fear of Japanese shells and government weakness having driven the more prosperous inhabitants away.

Thoroughly worn out, he waited until night fell, then crawled into a coal shed and slept as only the worn and weary can sleep. He rose refreshed and jubilant because he had gained thus far without accident, hunger being his only immediate discomfort. From his depleted store cloth he extracted the smallest coin, bent on seeking food before the city was awake. He made his way down the hillside to the business section without attracting attention, and entered the doorway of a grocery store, where a sleepy-looking youth was sweeping away the previous day's waste. In broken English he made known his wants, and then, finding the salesman apparently friendly and stupid, lost some of his native caution and began to ask questions regarding the watch kept along the frontier. At his first query the boy looked at him slyly; but after a moment's hesitation fell in and answered everything readily, assuring him, however, that it would be difficult for any living thing to get past the soldiers who kept watch and ward over the boundary line.

Elated by the apparent ease with which he had secured provisions, he again retreated toward the edge of the city, mentally formulating plans for stealing a boat when night came, and by this means to make his way to Vancouver, where he would be on British soil. Had he looked back he would have seen that the boy, broom in hand, watched him with an assumption of mere idle interest for a moment only, then hurriedly threw off his apron, banged the door shut and ran as fast as his legs would carry him to a big building farther down the street. It was where the officials of the port held forth. The alarm had been given!

Seigo rested in a thicket at the edge of a forest and partook of a leisurely breakfast, laughing meanwhile at the dullness of the Americans and the boy in particular. He regretted the loss of his handkerchief, which he feared must have been dropped in the grocery store, but smiled at the thought of being within so few miles of a refuge where others might be bought and where he could find ease and comfort.

From back of him a deep bellowing



Two of the Men on the Beach Kneel Down and Aimed Their Rifles.

sound came faintly through the trees, and he wondered what the unusual noise could be. He rose to his feet, still holding a remnant of food in his hand, and waited for a repetition of the noise, which, borne on the breeze, was heard more sharply. Only once before had he ever known that same sullen bay, and then it was when as a visitor in a southern village he had seen a pack of hounds followed by excited men pass him in quest of a negro criminal. His memory harked back to that time, and his hair raised itself in terror. He threw away his food and dashed madly into the woods, seeking to escape that menacing undertone which his consciousness told him could have but one quarry. He knew in an instant that the boy had betrayed him, and that he, Count Seigo, a nobleman of Japan and descendant of the Samurai, was being hunted by dogs like a wild beast of the woods.

For a few minutes he ran in a panic, taking no heed of direction, and bent only on gaining time to think, and putting space between him and his pursuers. A tangle of undergrowth compelled him to stop and seek for avenues through the wilderness. He ran down what seemed an old deserted road; but on neither side could he find a place favoring a change of course. He was doubling back along the side of a triangle, and was so close at one time to the hounds that he momentarily expected them to break cover, drop the scent afforded by the handkerchief and cut across to where he was. He could even distinguish the shouts of the men behind, continually encouraging the animals in the chase, and heard one exclaim: "It's the Jap, all right, or he wouldn't have lit out so quick!"

His teeth came together with a click at this confirmation of his suspicions, and now he realized that wherever an officer of the law was posted warning had been given of his coming. He swore that he would yet escape, and urged himself in the name of his country to rush ahead; and thus for many minutes the fate of Japan rested on a race between bloodhounds and a fugitive who tore headlong through the undergrowth, careless of thorns which reached out and scarred his face, ripped the false queue from his short cropped bristling hair and rent his clothing.

Once, blinded with perspiration, he plunged into what appeared to be a pathway; but fell through a tangle at the end, to find himself beside a wayside spring. He gulped three or four swallows of water and retraced his steps, cursing fate for the loss of time, and ran with renewed energy down the roadway. A flash of reflected light smote him in the eyes, and he saw that he had reached the water's edge. At his feet stretched only tossing waves, and like a stag at bay he was driven to the open.

The end seemed very near now; for

back of him the harsh clamorings broke out into a triumphant walling note telling those behind that the quarry had been sighted. The hounds were coming on the run, and round the bend of the road emerged an excited and grimly determined lot of men of that stamp which makes a frontier, set jawed, lean visaged, and running with the long, loping stride of those accustomed to sustained violent exertion.

Seigo, distracted and desperate, took a few steps in either direction, uncertain which way to turn, and then discovered but a short distance below a boat in which lay a pair of oars. It was the only way to gain a moment's respite from those great brutes which, with bellies low to the ground, with lolling jaws and flaming eyes, whose red he could discern, were closing in on him. He made three or four frantic leaps and threw himself into the craft, shoving it off almost as the animals were upon him, and then with maniacal energy threw the oars into the locks and bent himself double pulling against them. Even then at the last he experienced one brief moment of exultation as he heard the swish of parted waters against the bow and saw the space widening between him and the beach on which stood his baffled pursuers. He saw the men halt on the shingle and heard them shouting to him; but never ceased pulling, hoping and half believing that he could put himself beyond range. It was Seigo against them all now, and he began to glow with triumph, not knowing the character of those men of the west who still gave him a chance for his life. Drunk with excitement, he shouted back a taunt in his own tongue.

Two of the men on the beach knelt down and aimed their rifles calmly and steadily at that moving target which was drawing away. They were as cool as they would have been if covering a grazing deer in the hills. The rising sun made of the Japanese a fair mark, lighting up even at that distance his sneering face. There were two quick puffs of smoke, which rose simultaneously into the air and floated away in little wisps, two short sharp reports, and Seigo sprang to his feet, dropped his hold on the oars, and clutched his breast in agony, whirled round in his wildly bobbing craft, and then slowly pitched forward and over into the waters of the sound, his days of effort terminated in defeat and his mission at an end.

CHAPTER VII.  
The Missing Fleet.

Japan, grown arrogant through easy success and confident of the supremacy of her navy, cast aside the cloak of secrecy and boldly announced her intention to attack the seaport cities of the western coast of America. No word had come from Seigo to bid her pause. The most formidable armada that ever sailed the seas, attended by

lighters that were to provide coal, and accompanied by transports conveying an army of men, steamed away to the land of easy conquest. In the hope of striking terror into the hearts of those they would subdue, the Japanese announced their purpose, and gave a somewhat exaggerated account of the forces being sent. The newspapers of the world teemed with stories of the sailing of this monster fleet, told how all Japan had shouted "Banzai!" described the flower garlanded maids who sang gay songs, and pictured the remarkable modesty and valor of the admirals in command.

In some quarters of the globe great sympathy was expressed for the United States, which apparently had no chance whatever in such an unequal contest, and was foredoomed to calamity and dissolution. The wisecracks of European powers rose as a unit and told how for more than 50 years it had been repeatedly pointed out that the over-sea colossus was facing destruction through neglect of her navy. Monarchical adherents saw deeper into the cause of a nation's obliteration, asserting that the proof had again been given to the world that a republican form of government was one which, by its very lack of cohesion and unwieldiness, could not exist.

Other advanced thinkers, who looked far into the future, began a discussion as to the final outcome, what partition would be made of the conquered territory, and whether Japan would hold it as a colony for her own surplus population under a regulation colonial government. English writers expressed grave doubts as to Japan's ability to conduct colonies successfully, and were rather of the opinion that the country should be given to Great Britain, whose remarkable success in India and elsewhere had made her the fountainhead in this branch of government. New maps of the world were published in the most progressive periodicals, and souvenir buttons were sold in the streets of Tokyo depicting a very valiant little Japanese soldier kicking Uncle Sam into the sea and taking possession of his land. All the world bowed down to do honor to the "brave little brown men," and many aggressive powers regretted that they had not been the first to think of taking possession of the United States, which their statesmen sometimes spoke of as being a nice little country, and capable under reasonable rule of becoming quite a place.

The nation under discussion remained in the same astounding condition of silence and inaction. At first it had seemed that a clash along the Canadian border was inevitable. The massing of such great bodies of troops in such a position appeared almost a threat, and Great Britain in the first instance began hurriedly concentrating forces at points where they would be available in case of attack; but as day after day passed with no forward move and no action save that of preventing the passage of any person or the transmission of any communication alarm gave way to bewilderment. Canadian secret service men who succeeded in entering the camps of the soldiers soon returned to report that apparently the troops knew no more of the reason for their being stationed there than did the world at large.

In the meantime there gathered into the sounds, bays and harbors of foreign ports American vessels of war, which came to anchor and remained. On board these ships were the most disconsolate body of officers and men that were ever collected in hulls. The last orders any of them had received had been made so positive, so plain and unequivocal, that they had no choice other than to obey. They had been commanded to gain these neutral berths and under no circumstances to leave them. They were not even permitted to assume the slate color which betokens war on the waters, and therefore retained their dress of immaculate white. They, too, seemed under the ban, and like war dogs in leash, strained impotently for action. Nor was there an officer in all these idle and scattered ships who did not wish himself on the waves of the Pacific, across which the enemy's fleet was now forging.

The time advanced until the Japanese warships were due to arrive at Honolulu, where they were to report, coal and prepare for the final struggle. The cable between Hawaii and Japan, now in possession of the mikado's operators, continued its daily reports of most favorable weather; but still no squadron hovered in sight.  
(TO BE CONTINUED.)

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Second Ditto—Yes, friend Shylock.  
First Barn Stormer—Wouldn't it be great if we could only eat all the roasts we get?

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