

# The Vanishing Fleets

BY ROY NORTHON  
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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 Robert A. are introduced as lovers. At the most inopportune moment Japan declares war. Japan takes the Philippines. 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. Hillier is captured by the Japs. All ports are closed, Jap fleet is fast approaching western coast of America. Stego, Japanese spy, discovers secret preparations for war. He follows a courier carrying presidential cabinet. He uncovers source of great mystery and flees, murmuring: "The gods save Nippon." Fleeting to Pacific coast, Stego is shot down just as journey to get awful news to Japan seems successful. Japan announces intention to attack seaports. Tokyo learns of missing Japanese fleet and whole world becomes convinced that United States has some powerful war agency. England decides to send a fleet to American waters as a Canadian protection against what the British suppose is a terrible submarine flotilla. Hillier is also sent to Canada to attempt to force his way through the lines with a message to the president in order that protection for the fleet may be assured.

## CHAPTER VIII.—Continued.

The people of England were much divided in opinion as to the advisability of the government's move when it became public. A strong conservative element feared the danger of Great Britain being involved in the war through this action, while the liberal partisans and jingoists asserted that it was the only method of upholding the country's dignity, demonstrating to America that England would do her best, and at the same time assuring Canada that the mother country intended to support her in case of attack along her border line. That Britain still ruled the waves was generally doubted, for if the Americans had in their possession means of so easily overcoming a fleet as important as that which Japan had lost, there was almost a certainty that she could conquer any adversary sent against her on the water. It was no longer a question of warfare on land; for all the transports in the world would be powerless against such submarines as the nations now possessed. The United States must proceed.

Before sailing, the fleet commanders had been called into a council and given positive instructions that they were not to permit themselves to be drawn into action in any event before reaching Canada. On their arrival they were at once to cooperate with the dominion government in whatever way seemed advisable at that time, and follow such orders as might be given from London.

The clearance, however, unlike the sailing of that fleet from Japan, was not accompanied by any gala demonstration. It was rather with dire misgivings that the public witnessed this departure, which were to a certain extent shared in by those aboard the vessels; and it was fully realized that the flower of England's navy might never return from its voyage into an unknown danger.

The conservative press lent a funereal attitude to the occasion in its treatment of the situation, one journal declaring that "England is sending to magnificent martyrdom men who had better have been retained at home for their country's good." Another paper characterized it as a "useless sacrifice." This became the general public opinion within a few days, as reports from Canada continued gloomy and showed no prospect of a rift within the clouds.

The music halls, always an index to the popular view, found their greatest hits in topical songs which were generally of the tenor that the great grand, glorious and gorgeous British tar had sailed away to do or die—with the accent on the "die." A general air of melancholy prevailed over all England, and as the days went on and the fleet itself got beyond reach of the wireless telegraph stations and far out on a deserted ocean, the sentiment was one of acute expectancy.



The Man on the Lookout Had Sighted an Object.

change of signals. The men on shore, as these advanced, looked at each other with blank dismay, and then, fearing that there had been a misunderstanding, and failing to grasp suddenly a significance so terrible in its import, requested that the signals be repeated. There could be no doubt of their correct interpretation. In one hour all England knew beyond cavil that her fleet had met the same fate as that which had overtaken Japan's. The message in brief was that the Esperanta had picked up in mid ocean, floating on a life raft torn from its moorings, a sailor wearing the uniform of the Dreadnought. The man was almost dead from exposure, and had not yet recovered sufficiently to give a coherent account of what had taken place.

No ship ever sailed into Southampton that attracted the attention given to the Esperanta. Trainload after trainload of excursionists, farmers within a day's drive, and pedestrians from near by swarmed to Southampton, forming an excited and almost uncontrollable gathering. Tugboats hastened out to meet the incoming steamer, which carried the only living link between reality and the terrible unknown, and long lines of constables strove to hold back the excited crowd, the noise of whose mutterings filled the air with an ominous drone.

Between these ranks of blue-clad men there came four surgeons, carrying on a stretcher a wreck of humanity who laughed insanely and rolled his head from side to side. The crowd fell into an awed hush as the litter passed to the special train which was to convey this most important witness to a hospital. Next in public interest were the officers and men of the Esperanta, who, feeling themselves in the limelight, became each the center of great crowds, to whom they recounted as best they could the story of how the man was found.

The exact details of this as given by the captain of the Esperanta to the ministers of the cabinet who were summoned threw meager light upon the case. The Esperanta had gone out of her usual course, following the Gulf stream to the northward, until warned by an American cruiser to take a more easterly tack. She had done so, thus bringing her into a less frequented path of travel.

beneath a cleat of the raft, were the words "H. M. S. Dreadnought." The man evidently had lashed himself securely before his strength had failed, knowing how small were his chances for rescue, and how certain his coming weakness. When picked up by the Esperanta he was thought to be dead; but being taken aboard he showed some signs of life, and after hours of work recovered sufficiently to give some slight hope of survival.

So terrible had been his sufferings from privation that his mind seemed unbalanced, and they had been unable to gather any information from him save that of some overwhelming disaster. He was now in the throes of brain fever, and talked only the speech of the delirious. His fragmentary mumbled words were beyond all understanding; his mind seemed to be a confused jumble of hallucinations, in which he cried for water and made absurd comments on what was passing in his dreams. There were strangely interwoven babblings of submarine boats, sea serpents and unheard of monsters which harried the ship and sent her to her doom. Piteous exclamations of helplessness and fear, interjections of overwhelming dread, and brief snatches of prayer came from his lips throughout all the days in which they had attended him. The strangest part in all the incident of picking up the castaway was that the captain of the Esperanta, seeking other survivors, had cruised for hours in the vicinity; but had found no other sign of wreckage or of humanity. He had coursed to the northward, thinking it possible that the trend of the wind had driven this lone mariner away from the scene of catastrophe; but the ocean itself was a blank. The crest of no wave carried even a piece of flotsam, nor was there anywhere a clew to the mystery.

The rocking of the foundations of the world could have created no more suspense or terror than did the fear of this unknown agent of destruction which threatened the downfall of governments and the eradication of boundary lines. England suffered the woes of the bereaved in the certainty that thousands of men who were fathers, brothers, husbands or friends had been annihilated by this terrible republic across the sea. From every throat came a despairing cry for retaliation; but England, rich, mighty and powerful, felt herself without means of appeasing it. It was well enough to talk of revenge when the means were at hand; but the country in the face of this dread enemy was helpless, and so it was that the bitterness of defeat gave way to the hopelessness of terror when a calmer and more judicial spirit prevailed. It was beginning to be comprehended that the full that not only Great Britain in all her strength, but the combined forces of the world, would stand no chance of conducting even a defensive war against the United States—now

become a swordfish ravaging and depopulating the seas. In the meantime, while all this consternation prevailed and the heads of nations, fearful and trembling, speculated as to the outcome, the sailor from the Dreadnought was being watched and cared for by the most distinguished savants and specialists of the old world. There hovered over his bedside through every minute of the day men dispatched by every European power, who were doing all that science might suggest to bring this lone and stricken mariner back to sanity and let him give tongue to what he knew of this scourge of the waters. Hourly bulletins of his condition were posted on street corners, and round these stood men and women in suspense. His least word was recorded as of monumental importance, in the hope that from some cranny of his wrecked mind might come some elucidating phrase, however slight. The most important thing that apparently could be relied upon was that whatever the form of attack had been, it was observed before the blow was struck. This was shown by his repeatedly exclaiming: "It's coming! It's coming! It'll get us, sure, and we can't fight back!"

And so the nations watched by the bedside of a common sailor. From Japan came long messages of condolence to her ally, which were received in a spirit of fellow suffering. The peculiarities of the situation were in nowise lessened by reports from Canada, where the troops still massed along the border maintained a friendly spirit, committed no acts of encroachment, showed no apprehension of war, and seemed as ignorant of their own government's plan as what it had done as were the Canadians themselves. Indeed, their mystification over the disappearance of the Japanese and British fleets was as complete as that of the most humble farmer on the Canadian frontier. Their officers, shocked by the terrific news, hastened to give statements to the effect that their instructions were to avoid giving offense, as the United States had no intention of engaging in war with Great Britain. Coupled with the loss of the fleet, these interviews seemed singularly inconsistent, it being impossible to reconcile annihilation on the sea and a cry for peace on land.

It was generally admitted in England that Canada was now in a helpless position and completely at the mercy of a well-drilled and well-equipped army along her borders, which was undoubtedly within constant reach of supplies and reinforcements. The futility of any attempt either to relieve or to aid her by sending more men across the Atlantic, now absolutely under the control of the Americans, was obvious. It began to appear to the British government that the United States was deliberately planning to take the dominion of Canada whenever she deemed the time opportune. That she could now do so at her own convenience was unquestioned.

An exasperating condition was the attitude of the Canadians themselves, who, as far as appearances went, were in a state of the utmost placidity. Indeed, the farmers along the border were prosperous and thriving through the increased demand for their supplies, which the American quarter-masters purchased liberally, and for which they invariably paid American gold. It actually seemed as if an era of good feeling was being established across the boundary. The loss of the fleet threatened a rupture for a brief time; but the province, now convinced of the hopelessness of taking an active side either way, showed an inclination to stand aloof and remain absolutely neutral. It was agreed between the officials of the dominion and those of Great Britain that Canada could do nothing but endeavor as best she might to remain passive pending further developments.

This lack of partisanship proved anything but an assistance to Hillier in his attempt to break through the cordon, and it was this as much as anything else that hampered him in his mission.

Enough Said.

"Tea and coffee," said the doctor, "are both bad for you. Your life will be shortened many years if you continue to drink such stuff."

"Oh, but doctor," she replied, "I couldn't think of getting along without a cup of coffee in the morning and a cup of tea at luncheon."

"Very well. I've told you as plainly as I can what the effect will be. And, furthermore, both tea and coffee are bad for your complexion."

"I shall never drink another drop of either."—Chicago Record-Herald.

fact that led me to smile, for my nose hurt like the very old Dickens."

"I don't see exactly where the tact came in, however," said Alexander.

"Why," explained William, "I did not wish to convey to my British hosts the idea that I had not enjoyed my trip."

His Idea.

Sammy (admiringly surveying his lately-arrived twin sisters)—Did you get them cheaper by taking the two, papa?—Smart Set.

Important Points Covered.

"I suppose you have asked that titled suitor about his pedigree?"

"No," answered Mr. Camrose. "We were both too tactful to let anything happen. He gave me a book in genealogy that covers his case, and I presented him with a marked copy of a commercial agency report."

Advice.

Enough good advice is given every day to make a heaven of earth and to forever remove the blight of failure from human endeavor.

## KINGDOM HIS BY RIGHT

Tact Shown by William the Conqueror at Critical Moment.

It is known to be a historical fact that when William the Conqueror first invaded Britain, in his haste to get ashore the duke caught his foot in the gunwale of his landing boat and fell on his nose. It was also remarked by those about him that instead of losing his temper over the accident

and using some of the good old Norman terms with which he was doubtless familiar to express his feeling he rose up from the sands with a pleased expression on his face. Many years after, when questioned concerning the episode by Alexander the Great, the great Norman confirmed the accepted reports of the incident.

"But," he added, "my amiability was more seeming than real. It was only

## EXTRAORDINARY INCREASE IN FARM LANDS.

"SOUTHERN ALBERTA IS A MIGHTY GOOD COUNTRY."

No stronger or better evidence can be given of the merits of a country than that which comes from the testimony of the settler who has determined to succeed. This is why we reproduce the following letter, which speaks for itself. These people were induced to go to Western Canada through the solicitation of a Canadian Government agent, who secured for them the low railway rates.

"Carmangay, Alta., Canada, 12-15-08.  
"Mr. C. J. Broughton, Canadian Government Agent, 135 Adams Street, Chicago: We had audacity enough to tackle the proposition of buying four sections of land in Southern Alberta, thirty miles east of Clairholm and heading up on the Little Bow, and our two boys each got a homestead adjoining. We fenced three sections and the two homesteads, and built a house, barn, corrals and granary, and have since enlarged some of these buildings. We have broken 200 acres of land, which has been sowed to oats and wheat. During the severe winter of two years ago the winter wheat killed out somewhat, and our crop yielded only ten bushels to the acre, but the spring wheat went 24 bushels to the acre. In this country we must be prepared for storms and cold, at times 20 to 30 below zero, yet on the whole the winters are mild; and while there are exceptional crops, it is fair to say that the average farmer can depend on having a yield in average years of from 20 to 25 bushels to the acre for spring wheat; and winter wheat in our immediate neighborhood yields from 25 to 30 bushels to the acre on the average.

We have now quite a bunch of horses, over 50 in all, about 350 sheep, after having sold 140 for mutton this fall. We have 20 head of pure bred registered Shropshire, which are worth \$20 each. The average price received for mutton sheep was \$5.00 and a little over. Pork brings 5 and 6 cents a pound. We have about 30 head of cattle on our ranch now, and last winter they picked their entire living from our pasture, running to the straw stacks for shelter at night.

"The increase of land values has been extraordinary. Our land four years ago cost us a little less than \$6.00 an acre. We have sold one section for \$15.00, but we would not sell any more for less than \$25.00 per acre, as we expect the railroad within four miles of our ranch within the next 18 months. Southern Alberta of Western Canada is a mighty good country for any man or woman who loves outdoor life, and who wants to get good returns for their labor and investment.

"We have been pleased with our treatment from the Canadian Government, and can heartily commend Southern Alberta as a splendid country in which to locate.

"Yours very truly,  
(Signed)  
"JAMES S. AINSLIE AND SONS."

Woman to Conduct Large Estate.

Mrs. Jennie L. Doane of Brockton, Mass., has been appointed to administer the half million dollar estate of the late R. N. Packard and also to have complete control of his large shoe factory. Mr. Packard died suddenly without making a will. His heirs were a brother and two sisters, none of whom knew anything about his business. Mrs. Doane had been in the employ of Mr. Packard for a number of years and he had often spoken of her ability to his relatives, declaring that she had more brains than any two men of his acquaintance. For that reason his heirs asked to have her appointed and put in full charge of his business.

Cause for Complaint.

Jones, the dairyman, loved his little bouts occasionally, and at such times celebrated riotously. He was prevailed upon to sign the pledge, and this piece of news was given wide publicity. But in a few weeks Jones turned upon his temperance friends and again sought old-time friends and acquaintances.

"The idea," grieved Jones, as he told the writer to duplicate an order. "He draws a milk wagon, and those fellows advertising that I am on the water wagon!"—Judge.

WHY suffer with eye troubles, quick relief by using PETTIT'S EYE SALVE, 25c. All druggists or Howard Bros., Buffalo, N. Y.

Take time by the forelock.—Swift.

Be wise to-day; 'tis madness to defer.—Young.

PILES CURED IN 6 TO 14 DAYS.

PAZO OINTMENT is guaranteed to cure any case of itching, bleeding, or protruding Piles in 6 to 14 days or money refunded. 25c.

The words coined in the mint do not increase our vocabulary.

Smokers appreciate the quality value of Lewis' Single Binder cigar. Your dealer or Lewis' Factory, Peoria, Ill.

You might say of a legal wedding, "Certainly knot."

# Ask Her This Question

"Do you know of any woman who ever received any benefit from taking Lydia E. Finkham's Vegetable Compound?"

If any woman who is suffering with any ailment peculiar to her sex will ask her neighbors this question, she will be surprised at the result. There is hardly a community in this country where women cannot be found who have been restored to health by this famous old remedy, made exclusively from a simple formula of roots and herbs.

During the past 30 years we have published thousands of letters from these grateful women who have been cured by Lydia E. Finkham's Vegetable Compound, and never in all that time have we published a testimonial without the writer's special permission. Never have we knowingly published a testimonial that was not truthful and genuine. Here is one just received a few days ago. If anyone doubts that this is a true and honest statement of a woman's experience with Lydia E. Finkham's Vegetable Compound write and ask her.

Houston, Texas.—"When I first began taking Lydia E. Finkham's Vegetable Compound I was a total wreck. I had been sick for three years with female troubles, chronic dyspepsia, and a liver trouble. I had tried several doctor's medicines, but nothing did me any good.

"For three years I lived on medicines and thought I would never get well, when I read an advertisement of Lydia E. Finkham's Vegetable Compound, and was advised to try it.

"My husband got me one bottle of the Compound, and it did me so much good I continued its use. I am now a well woman and enjoy the best of health.

"I advise all women suffering from such troubles to give Lydia E. Finkham's Vegetable Compound a trial. They won't regret it, for it will surely cure you."—Mrs. Bessie L. Hicks, 519 Cleveland St., Houston.

Any woman who is sick and suffering is foolish surely not to give such a medicine as this a trial. Why should it not do her as much good as it did Mrs. Hicks.

**Do You Love Your Child?**

Then protect it from the dangers of croup to which every child is subject. Keep

**DR. D. JAYNE'S EXPECTORANT**

in your home all the time, then you're ready for the sudden attacks of croup and colds. Neglect may cost you the life of your child. It's safest to be on your guard.

Dr. D. Jayne's Expectorant is the best remedy known for croup; it gives quickest relief.

Sold everywhere in three size bottles  
\$1.00, 50c., 25c.

**COLDS**

CURED IN ONE DAY

**GRIP**

Munyon's Cold Remedy Relieves the head, throat and lungs almost immediately. Checks Fevers, stops discharges of the nose, takes away all aches and pains caused by colds. It cures Grip and obdurate Coughs and prevents Pneumonia. Price 25c.

Have you stiff or swollen joints, no matter how chronic? Ask your druggist for Munyon's Rheumatism Remedy and see how quickly you will be cured. If you have any kidney or bladder trouble get Munyon's Kidney Remedy. Munyon's Vitalizer makes weak men strong and restores lost powers.

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Other starches only 12 ounces—same price and "DEFIANCE" IS SUPERIOR QUALITY.

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The greatest grass of the century. Same grows everywhere and yields from 12 to 15 tons of hay, and lots of pasture besides per acre.

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