

The VANISHING FLEETS

ILLUSTRATED BY A. WEIL

BY ROY NORTON

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. Japan declares war and takes the Philippines. The Hillier starts for England. Norma Roberts with military officers also leaves Washington on mysterious expedition for the Florida coast. Hawaii is captured by the Japs. All ports are closed. Tokyo fears of invading 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 suspect is a terrible submarine flotilla. Hillier returns to Canada to attempt to force this way through American lines with a message. British fleet departs amid misgivings of English. Fleet mysteriously disappears. Hillier makes a failure of effort to deliver message to the president. War between Great Britain and Germany is threatened. The Kaiser disappears. King Edward of England is confronted by Admiral Bevis of the United States, and upon promising to present the missing British admiral, the monarch agrees to accompany Bevis on tour, which the latter says will uncover the agent of war and end all conflicts. The dreadnought, biggest of England's warships, is discovered at an impossible point in the Thames, much to the mystery of the king. The story goes back to a time many months before the war breaks out, and inventor Roberts visits the president and cabinet, telling of and exhibiting a metal production.

CHAPTER XIII.—Continued.

The others looked eagerly at them as the president held them, wondering what connection the two little strips of metal could possibly have with the defense of a nation against a multitude of battle ships. Nothing but Roberts' known ability prevented them from looking upon him as a crank. They inspected the objects before them in turn, passing them from hand to hand with blank looks. Only the secretary of war, who in his earlier years had been a metallurgist, showed any signs of surprise or amazement. He turned excitedly away and crossed the room to a side light, against which glinted he held the little plate, staring at it fixedly. The inventor smiled, and the others renewed their interest. The secretary hurried back.

"What on earth is it, Dr. Roberts?" he asked, and then without waiting for an explanation continued: "I never saw a metal that looked or felt like it. What is it?"

"Gentlemen," said the inventor, recovering the slab and balancing it in his hands, "that is a new plate that can be made cheaply and quickly. It does what the laboratory tests show, it will, when applied to cruisers which can now steam 20 knots an hour, make 50 knots an easy gait for them."

There was a group of astonishment amounting almost to incredulity among those who crowded round, and the scientist, enjoying the effect of his words, smiled and smoked. A moment's pause ensued while the possibilities of the discovery dawned on them. Those who knew him least were again questioning his sanity, and then, as if all at once they could wait no longer for him to explain, they burst into a chorus of questions, which he did not answer. He waited until no voice was heard, and then began.

"That plate practically overcomes friction. My assistant, my daughter Norma, and I have made several tests before I came here with it. These were cast and tested last night. I am not going into scientific details; but this much I'll make plain: A ship coated along certain lines with that metal, electrified only to a point where she would not sink for lack of support, can reduce her skin friction caused by the water to a point where her speed would be something hitherto unknown. It would, of course, mean lighter armaments, because the lighter the dead tonnage the greater the buoyancy. But a cruiser with a few long range, high explosive guns, that can travel at the rate of 40 or 50 miles an hour, or a submarine that can make that speed for 24 hours at a stretch, would play havoc with any navy in the world."

The room was alive with excited men now as the full force of his statement came in on their clearness. If that unknown metal had that property, and sufficient fighting ships could be armored with it in time to meet the demands made upon them, the seas would be whipped into submission and legions of troops transported before they could be interfered with. The president himself had lost his calmness and was gripping the arms of his chair. The secretary of the navy, having the practical point of view, came out of his trance, and snapped out a question:

"How long would it take to equip a cruiser with those plates?"

Roberts turned toward him. "Depends on the plant. The plates can be cast and electrified just as rapidly as you could cast sheets of plain iron and turn a current into them; but I wish to experiment a little further first and try them out on some old gunboat that wouldn't amount to much if lost."

The room was again filled with a babel of sound, as the officials began an argument; but on one point they were agreed. The man before them was so well known that the government was taking no great hazard in affording him every means within its power to carry out his work, and if he could do what he believed, and of

that there seemed no room for doubt, the solution of the approaching war, or any other, was in their hands. The president alone sat buried in thought, his brows drawn into a frown.

"Gentlemen," he said, and there was that in his voice which demanded attention, "I should like to ask Dr. Roberts a few questions. I wish to know if this work of his can be carried on so secretly that no other power—not one, nor even the people of this country—can become aware of his discovery; if he can suggest a means for such concealment; if his work can be done so expeditiously, with full government support, that within three months from to-night the American navy can be re-equipped as to make it the most powerful in the world; and whether he realizes the importance of such haste."

The scientist threw his half-finished story into the ash receiver before him and became grave. He was the dignified, thoughtful man again, weighing his words and speaking with deliberation. "Mr. President," he answered, "I am not completely beyond the experimental stage; but I believe I can plan such secrecy as you desire, and with the aid of men and money make the United States navy invincible in less than three months. I would almost stake my life and reputation on



The President Walked Up and Down the Room.

it. But why, may I ask, do you desire to keep it from the world's knowledge that you have such power?"

The president walked up and down the room with his hands behind his back as if in a dream, while the others waited for his reply. "Because we are facing war with Japan, a skillful, advanced and cunning enemy, and there must be no risk of its discovering our secret. Its spies are everywhere in the land. Hostilities are to be courted in this emergency rather than declined, provided they can be rendered harmless to ourselves and humane to our adversaries. To talk of power without demonstrating it, is as idle as a braggart's boasting. To maintain silence and then prove ability, is to make one's action doubly impressive."

He started to say more, his big somber eyes glowing with some new thought, and then, as if afraid of his own conceptions, stood expectantly before his lifelong friend who was facing him. "Bill, Bill!" he said, brokenly, "do you see what depends upon you? Why, man, the nation itself, the lives of thousands of fathers and an army of our boys; yes, more than all that, the peace of the world! Good God, man! Try to realize what you have, and what we can do, if those two pieces of metal will do all you think they will!"

His long ungainly arms reached out, and he put his hands upon the smaller man's shoulders. Those within the room awoke to a realization of the magnitude of the power that was possible, and stood in awed silence, spectators of a tableau. From the broad sweep of the river without came the

ailing whistle of a belated steamer, seeking its way through the fog that had settled down. The measured tramp of a patrolman in front of the huge white building came reverberating to their ears, cast back from the empty street, and thus they stood, centering their attention on a little, wizened old man who had grasped one of nature's secrets and was now offering it as a nation's salvation. In this light he loomed to gigantic proportions, and seemed possessed of Titanic power. Oblivious to the others in the room, his restless eyes gleamed and probed those of his friend.

"Paul," he said in an oddly constrained voice, dropping back to the boyhood phrase, "I can make good. I'm at my country's service, and I've made no mistake in what I said." He swung sharply round to the others, and his clenched hands swept the air in a sudden frenzy of determination. He was the enthusiast once more, daring, dreaming, positive and sanguine.

"Send me the two best engineers in the navy and the two best supply men to-morrow morning. I'll tell them what we need and they can tell me how soon they can deliver it where I want it. I'll want machinery and apparatus, supplies and assistants. Money and men! Money and men! They can't beat us! They can't beat us!"

His hands came back to his sides. He folded the precious pieces of metal into their coverings, while the others stood silently by, and as if abashed by his own outburst, laid them a curt "Good night," and walked from the room. The others, with the burden of reticence upon them, filed after him one by one, contemplating the strange change which might be wrought by this night's work, and wended their way to their homes.

The fog settled down closer and impartially spread itself over the river, the White House and the patrol-

The entrance of Norma was the signal for an abrupt halt in the conversation, and some of those who were not entirely familiar with the part which she played in her father's work looked at her disapprovingly.

He, interpreting these glances, introduced her as his assistant, and concluded by saying: "I can't do anything without her. She knows more about my work than I do myself, and as far as I know she's the only woman living who can keep her mouth shut."

They smiled at his manner and cynicism, while the president tendered her a seat at his side and waited for the others to resume their chairs.

"All of you are familiar now with the possibilities of the invention offered by Dr. Roberts—"

"And his daughter Norma," interjected the inventor.

The president accepted the alteration and continued without a halt—"and have gone over the reports of the four most expert men in the United States, who have passed the day with the inventor and his daughter in their laboratory, and are convinced of the merit and practicality of the discovery, and have prepared statements of what supplies would be needed, the time in which they could be obtained, and their approximate cost."

There was a look of acquiescence, and the secretary of the navy, who had been paying no heed whatever to the chief executive's remarks, rustled the reports in his hand as he turned another page to scan its contents. The room became still again, and the speaker went on.

"Dr. Roberts tells us that he does not regard himself as beyond the experimental stage; but further experiments cannot decrease known values, and may perhaps add to them. This invention as it stands, in the opinion of the four men who have passed the day in testing it, is sufficient to enable us within three months to combat successfully any nation which might begin hostilities."

Norma looked at her father admiringly; but he seemed oblivious to all those round him, and sat absorbed in thought, his eyes fixed in a blank stare of concentration into space, and the thumbs of his clasped hands revolving round each other aimlessly. The president reached over to a mass of papers before him, referred to some of them in quest of data, and then looked very grave and earnest as he continued in a lower voice:

"Extraordinary times demand extraordinary measures. We are without precedent, and are confronting an emergency of such immense import that those of us who were here last night believe it is a time when all rules, official routine and regular methods must give way in behalf of quick accomplishment. We have no time in which to seek special appropriations; but must take it upon ourselves to levy upon the various budgets which are now open for the considerable sums of money necessary to prosecute this work."

One or two, who were evidently late arrivals and had not heard the earlier discussions, looked at each other with some hesitation. It was hard to drop routine and dip into the nation's treasury on such short consideration. The high dignity of the presiding officer, however, forbade any interruption, and he went on unchallenged.

"The absolute preservation of our secret is recognized by all as a vital necessity, and to obviate all leakages the members of the army and navy board suggest that our work be carried on in one of the most secluded of the Florida keys. On this they purpose to erect a plant adequate to cast and perfect this metal on which we depend, and as rapidly as possible apply it to the vessels of our navy, which will be sent there as quickly as preparations can be made for their reception."

Norma, who had not been informed of this part of the project, gave a start of protest, foreseeing that she, too, would have to share in this isolation and become an exile until the experiments were concluded. Her father turned a questioning look toward her, and then reached over and patted her hand in sympathy. The president was steadily summing up the situation.

"The navy department will attend to purchasing supplies, including machinery and crude metals necessary for the first work, while Dr. Roberts will place his orders for apparatus, and all will be consigned to the collier Penobscot, which will transport them to the chosen spot. The gunboat Harper will accompany her, and will be the first boat to be experimented upon and equipped with the new plates. Rear Admiral Brockton will be assigned to her command for the present. These two ships will sail from New York harbor, together with a small transport which will carry such engineers and mechanics as the navy department may select for a work of this importance. Communication will be maintained by such means as seem best to Admiral Brockton, and more men and supplies will be dispatched from time to time as required. It is needless to say that the entire experimental work, the casting of the plates, and the general supervision of everything, will be under the direction of Dr. Roberts."

"And his assistant," the inventor again interjected.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Deep Breathing.

A woman who has learned deep breathing almost always is a good sleeper, for nerves and mind are kept in healthy condition by the good chest expansion. Then, too, there is an absence of facial wrinkles and lines, and she is apt to keep her freshness long after the time that most women lose it.

A TRAIN LOAD OF TOBACCO.

Twenty-four Carloads Purchased for Lewis' Single Binder Cigar Factory.

What is probably the biggest lot of all fancy grade tobacco held by any factory in the United States has just been purchased by Frank P. Lewis, of Peoria, for the manufacture of Lewis' Single Binder Cigars. The lot will make twenty-four carloads, and is selected from what is considered by experts to be the finest crop raised in many years. The purchase of tobacco is sufficient to last the factory more than two years. An extra price was paid for the selection. Smokers of Lewis' Single Binder Cigars will appreciate this tobacco.

—Peoria Star, January 16, 1909.

She Earned It.

Mabel liked candy. However, she was not allowed nearly as much as she would like. One day her father told her that she could have three pieces if she would kiss a visitor who was coming to dinner. As soon as the front door was opened she rushed up and implanted the kiss with much gusto, and then turned to her father.

"Now, papa, give me the candy for kissing her."

Starch, like everything else, is being constantly improved, the patent Starches put on the market 25 years ago are very different and inferior to those of the present day. In the latest discovery—Defiance Starch—all injurious chemicals are omitted, while the addition of another ingredient, invented by us, gives to the Starch a strength and smoothness never approached by other brands.

Breaking the News Gently.

A good example of the extremely courteous in public correspondence was the notice sent to Charles James Fox that he was no longer a member of the government of George the Third. It read thus: "His gracious majesty has been pleased to issue a new commission, in which your name does not appear."

What a Woman Will Not Do.

There is nothing a woman would not do to regain her lost beauty. She ought to be fully as zealous in preserving her good looks. The herb drink called Lane's Family Medicine or Lane's Tea is the most efficient aid in preserving a beautiful skin, and will do more than anything else to restore the roses to faded cheeks. At all druggists' and dealers', 25c.

The assistance we get is seldom satisfactory. The best way is not to need it.

A pessimist needs Garfield Tea, the Herb laxative which regulates the liver, corrects constipation and brings good health and good spirits.

A good sermon is often spoiled by a bad dinner.

Lewis' Single Binder Cigar has a rich taste. Your dealer or Lewis' Factory, Peoria, Ill.

The professional tramp never punctures his tire.

Use Allen's Foot-Paste. Cures tired, aching, sweating feet. See Trialpackage free. A. S. Ulmsted, Le Roy, N. Y.

It is what it is "cracked up to be," if it is ice.

Quaint Oath Taken in Court.

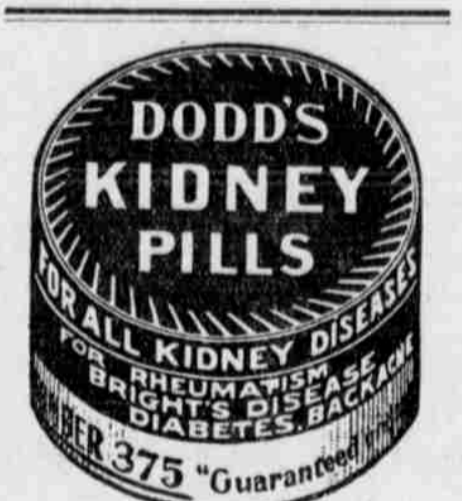
What is regarded as the quaintest oath still in use is that taken by the high court judges in the Isle of Man, the terms of which are as follows: "By this book and the contents thereof, and by the wonderful works that God hath miraculously wrought in the heaven above and the earth beneath in six days and six nights, I do swear that I will, without respect of favor or friendship, loss or gain, consanguinity or affinity, envy or malice, execute the laws of this Isle justly between party and party as addifferently as the hearing backbone doth lie in the midst of the fish. So help me God, and the contents of this book."

Beware of Ointments for Catarrh that Contain Mercury.

As mercury will surely destroy the sense of smell and completely derange the whole system when entering it through the mucous surfaces. Such articles should be avoided by all persons who are afflicted with Catarrh of the Nose, Throat, Lungs, or any mucous surface of the system. In buying Hall's Catarrh Cure be sure you get the genuine. It is taken internally and made in Toledo, Ohio, by F. J. Cheney & Co. Testimonials free. Sold by Druggists. Price, 75c. per bottle. Take Hall's Family Pills for constipation.

And It Was Overruled.

Judge Hoar and Gen. Butler were opponents in a case of a new trial. Gen. Butler quoted: "Eye for eye, skin for skin, tooth for tooth, yea, all that a man hath, will be given for his life." To which Judge Hoar replied: "Yes, the devil quoted that once before in a motion for a new trial."



SICK HEADACHE

Positively cured by these Little Pills.

They also relieve Distress from Dyspepsia, Indigestion and Too Hearty Eating. A perfect remedy for Dizziness, Nausea, Drowsiness, Bad Taste in the Mouth, Coated Tongue, Pain in the Side, TORPID LIVER. They regulate the bowels. Purely Vegetable.

SMALL PILL. SMALL DOSE. SMALL PRICE.

Genuine Must Bear Fac-Simile Signature

REFUSE SUBSTITUTES.

DISSATISFIED: If you own OIL or MINING SHARES that you will sell for cash, write at once. MINES INVESTIGATION CO., 1005 Hibernia Bldg., San Francisco, Cal.

Women Who Suffer

from woman's ailments are invited to write to the names and addresses here given, for positive proof that Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound does cure female ills.

- Tumor Removed.**
Chicago, Ill.—Mrs. Alvina Spring, 11 Langdon Street.
Lindley, Ind.—Mrs. May Fry.
Kinsley, Kans.—Mrs. Stella Gifford Beaman.
Scott, N.Y.—Mrs. S. J. Barber.
Cincinnati, O.—Mrs. Wm. Boughton.
Cincinnati, O.—Mrs. W. K. Housh, 726 View Ar.
Milwaukee, Wis.—Mrs. Emma Isaac, 883 1st St., Germantown.
- Change of Life.**
South Bond, Ind.—Mrs. Fred Carter, 1014 S. Lafayette Street.
North Columbus, Mo.—Mrs. Lizzie Holland.
Brookfield, Mo.—Mrs. Sarah Louisa, 297 S. Market St.
Paterson, N.J.—Mrs. Wm. Somerville, 133 Hamburg Avenue.
Philadelphia, Pa.—Mrs. K. E. Garrett, 2407 North Garnet Street.
Kewauqua, Wis.—Mrs. Carl Dahlke.
- Maternity Troubles.**
Worcester, Mass.—Mrs. Doylva Coté, 117 Southgate Street.
Indianapolis, Ind.—Mrs. A. P. Anderson, 1207 E. Pratt Street.
Big Run, Pa.—Mrs. W. E. Pooler.
New York, N.Y.—Mrs. Anton Muehlaupt, 2145 Gilbert Avenue.
Cincinnati, Ohio.—Mrs. Lee Manges, Box 131.
Dewittville, N.Y.—Mrs. A. G. Giles.
Johnstown, N.Y.—Mrs. Homer N. Seaman, 108 E. Main Street.
Bartonsville, Ill.—Mrs. Peter Langenhahn.
- Avoid Operations.**
Hampstead, Md.—Mrs. Jos. H. Dandy.
Adrian, Ga.—Mrs. Lena V. Henry, Route No. 3.
Indianapolis, Ind.—Mrs. Emma V. Piper, 29 South Addison Street.
Louisville, Ky.—Mrs. Sam Lee, 322 Fourth St.
South West Harbor, Maine.—Mrs. Lillian Robbins, Mt. Desert Light Station.
Detroit, Mich.—Mrs. Frieda Rosenau, 644 Madison Avenue, German.
- Organic Displacements.**
Moulter, Ill.—Mrs. Mary Bell.
Ligonier, Ind.—Mrs. Eliza Wood, R.F.D. No. 4.
Melbourne, Iowa.—Mrs. Clara Waterman, R. F. D. No. 1.
Bardonia, Ky.—Mrs. Joseph Hall.
Leviston, Maine.—Mrs. Henry Cloutier, 66 Oxford Street.
Minneapolis, Minn.—Mrs. John G. Moldau, 2115 Second Street, N.
Shanook, Mo.—Mrs. Joseph Ham, R. F. D. No. 1, Box 22.
Marion, N.J.—Mrs. Geo. Jordy, Route No. 3, Chester, Ark.—Mrs. Ella Wood.
Ocala, Fla.—Mrs. T. A. Grubb.
Fondulton, Ind.—Mrs. May Marshall, R.R. 44.
Cambridge, Neb.—Mrs. Nellie Moslander.
- Painful Periods.**
Goshen, Ala.—Mrs. W. F. Dalton, Route No. 3.
Chicago, Ill.—Mrs. Wm. Tully, 465 Ogden Av.
Law Paw, Mich.—Mrs. Emma Draper.
Fushing, Mich.—Mrs. Burt Loyd, R. F. D. No. 3, care of D. A. Sanborn.
Coffeyville, Miss.—Mrs. S. J. Jones.
Cincinnati, Ohio.—Mrs. Flora Abr, 1262 Erast Street.
Cleveland, Ohio.—Miss Lizzie Steiger, 6519 First Avenue, S. E.
Wesleyville, Pa.—Mrs. Maggie Ester, R.F.D. 1.
Dyersburg, Tenn.—Mrs. Lue Hilliard, R.R. 1.
Hayfield, Va.—Mrs. Maynoe Waddle.
- Irregularity.**
Herrin, Ill.—Mrs. Chas. Folkel.
Winchester, Ind.—Mrs. May Deal.
Dyer, Ind.—Mrs. Wm. Oberlin, R. F. D. No. 1.
Baltimore, Md.—Mrs. V. S. Ford, 428 Lansdowne Street.
Roxbury, Mass.—Mrs. Francis Merkle, 11 Field Street.
Clarkdale, Mo.—Miss Anna Wallace.
Gouville, Ohio.—Mrs. Ella Michael, R. F. D. 3.
Dayton, Ohio.—Mrs. Mrs. Lue Hise, 103 National Military Home.
Lebanon, Pa.—Mrs. Harry L. Hittle, 252 Lakeland Street.
Sycot, Mich.—Mrs. Louise Jung, 329 Chestnut St.
Detroit, Mich.—Mrs. E. J. Jerald, 608 N. Tenth Street.
Vineennes, Ind.—Mrs. S. A. Williams, R. F. D. No. 14, Box 23.
Gardiner, Maine.—Mrs. S. A. Williams, R. F. D. No. 14, Box 23.
Philadelphia, Pa.—Mrs. Chas. Eoall, 2407 N. Garnet Street.
Plattsburg, Miss.—Miss Vera Wilson, R.F.D. 1.
- Female Weakness.**
Williamston, Conn.—Mrs. Etta Donovan, Box 229.
Woodsdale, Idaho.—Mrs. Rachel Johnson.
Rockland, Maine.—Mrs. Wm. Young, 6 Columbia Avenue.
Scottville, Mich.—Mrs. J. G. Johnson, R.F.D. 3.
Dayton, Ohio.—Mrs. F. R. Smith, 431 Elm St.
Erie, Pa.—Mrs. J. P. Endlich, R. F. D. No. 7.
Beaver Falls, Pa.—Mrs. W. F. Boyd, 229 Seventh Avenue.
Fairchance, Pa.—Mrs. I. A. Dunham, Box 122.
Fort Hunter, Pa.—Mrs. Mary Jane Shatto.
East Earl, Pa.—Mrs. Augusta Lyon, R. F. D. 2.
Vienna, W. Va.—Mrs. Emma Wieston.
- Nervous Prostration.**
Oronogo, Mo.—Mrs. Mae McKnight.
Garden, N.J.—Mrs. Thilo Wafers, 451 Liberty Street.
Joseph, Oregon.—Mrs. Alice Hoffman.
Philadelphia, Pa.—Mrs. John Johnston, 210 Regal Street.
Christiana, Tenn.—Mrs. Mary Wood, R. F. D. No. 3.
Peaco, Texas.—Mrs. Ada Young Eggleston.
Greenville, Vt.—Mrs. Chas. Barclay, R.F.D.