

# The Vanishing Fleets

BY ROY NORTON

ILLUSTRATED BY A. WEIL

## 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 criticized because of its lack of preparation for strife.

### CHAPTER I—Continued.

"Listen," he commanded, again leaning toward her. "There is something which makes me think you love me. I shall ask nothing more of your father, or of your plans, because I want to make you see the position." He frowned at the waiter, who came toward them and then retreated. "Norm," he went on, "there is to be war. Your country is unprepared. It will be overrun by an enemy that is ruthless and that will come to conquer. The end may not be defeat; but as certain as death this country will write and suffer before it can regain the ground it will lose in the outset. Can't you see that? Can't you understand what it will be for you and your father here under such conditions? Don't you know that for your very safety you must leave? As my wife, or even my betrothed, I can make the way so much easier for you! Give me the right, dear, give me the right!"

"It is impossible," she replied, turning toward him again; and he looked hurt. "It is the very danger of war that makes it so. You don't know how much I wish I could say yes to you; but it's impossible. I must be with my father. I owe it to him. He can't go away, nor can I leave him. So until the way is clear we can be friends only, and no more."

He sat stunned for a moment, vainly striving to understand a circumstance or combination of conditions which could have dictated such an answer. Then the thought came that perhaps the girl before him was making a sacrifice to some awful menace, and it could be only one thing—the threatened insanity of her father. But what had the war to do with that? Perhaps she would never be more to him if her father went insane, because then she would say no because of her very love for him, and the fear for posterity. Their happiness, then, was to depend upon the condition of an old man's mind.

"Norm," he asked, softly, "is it insanity?" She turned toward him in amazement, not fathoming his line of reasoning. "I can tell you nothing more." She spoke as one under stress and suppression. "You must ask nothing more. You must take my love on faith or not at all until you know it is time for you to tell me again that I am necessary to you."

He felt that it was a crisis with them, and slowly thought of what he might say to break away this barrier or induce her to remove the embargo. They sat looking into the distance; but before he could formulate an argument the sound of a horse's hoofs madly clattering over the pavements caught their attention. It came nearer and nearer, and then past them on the street below a man in soldier's uniform flashed by. They looked at each other wonderingly, half starting to their feet, and as they looked a sudden pandemonium broke forth.

From an alleyway nearby burst an army of newsmen, the streets suddenly became alive with pedestrians belched forth from cafes and hotels, and above all other sounds came the cries of "Extra! Extra! War broken out! War! War! War!" She turned away from him as if in those cries were an irrefragable sentence of misery, parted the vines and stood silently looking out into the night; and he knew without seeing that in her eyes were tears.

### CHAPTER II.

The nation was in a turmoil. Throughout the night and the following day the newspapers of the country sent forth a more or less trustworthy account of the opening of hostilities. It had been known for weeks that the transports of Japan guarded by her entire navy had assembled off Nagasaki. It had even been reported that they had sailed away for southern waters; but this had met with later denial. The blow had fallen as swiftly as would that of a rattlesnake which for weeks had been coiled and sinuously moving its head in preparation for attack.

Strangely enough the first reports of war came from foreign sources; but they were undoubtedly official, having been imparted by Japan to her ally, Great Britain. The bulletins issued by the London papers bore the undoubted ring of semi-official utterances. That of the Daily Mail, cabled in full to the American press, read:

"Japan, reluctantly abandoning hope of peace by ordinary methods, has been driven to the extreme recourse and has officially declared war against the United States of America."

Within half an hour after the issuance of this bulletin a second announcement was made, which took cognizance of the fact that the official declaration must have been preceded by decisive action:

"The Japanese war office has been advised that on the 27th instant at noon the Philippine islands were compelled to surrender to the Japanese fleet, which appeared off Manila. Not



The Ambassador Rose from His Seat.

only did the city itself capitulate, but possession of the entire islands had been given over. The Japanese government announces with due modesty that it has gained a complete and unqualified victory without the loss of a man.

"Later,—it is announced by the Japanese government that the parole of all officers and men of the United States army in the Philippines has been accepted, and the men of the vanquished army have been allowed to sail for San Francisco on board foreign ships, which were lying in the harbor at the time of surrender."

From every quarter of the land came insistent demands for official news from the government, coupled with requests for detailed accounts of the defeat. The administration replied with the brief statement that no verified report of the action in the Philippines could be given out at that time. It did state, however, that the official declaration of war had been duly received, that the Japanese ambassador had been withdrawn, the legation closed and that the officials would leave New York for their own country that evening, sailing by way of Liverpool.

Public clamor gave way to popular indignation. The country was aflame with war spirit. Guardsmen gathered in their armories, awaiting official bulletins and the expected call to arms; and yet no orders came. The governors of several states telegraphed to the war department for advice; but their only satisfaction was in the following message sent broadcast by the secretary of state:

"The government, recognizing the patriotism and readiness of the National Guard of the United States, desires its services. It is well to bear in mind, however, that a sudden call may be issued at a later date and to be prepared for emergencies. It wishes to announce further that in its judgment there will be no necessity for fighting on land, and that the situation is completely under control. So far there have been no casualties reported from the Philippines."

Whatever may have been the state of the public mind before the issuance of this declaration, the country now gasped with amazement. Some of the more violent and outspoken journals demanded of the men at Washington a statement of what they purposed to do in this emergency, and the most radical intimated in no uncertain terms that incompetent administrations were subject to impeachment. But to all of this outburst the government officials most directly interested presented only the same calm, placid and indifferent front. There was nothing to be detected in their demeanor to indicate that any action whatever had been taken.

The various members of the diplomatic corps, even to the highest of the foreign ambassadors, gathered no new information. They were invariably told, first, that the United States knew there had been a declaration of war; second, that the United States knew that the Philippines had been surrendered; third, that no orders had been issued up to that hour for the sailing of any fleet, but that it was expected orders would be given before the day was over. The men of the foreign representation one and all felt at a gentle rebuff tantamount to being told that the United States was attending strictly to its own business and desired neither to be advised nor to be compelled to answer questions. None felt this more keenly than the members of the British legation, and

Guy Hillier in particular. His meeting of the night before with Miss Roberts had not terminated satisfactorily, but had come to an abrupt close when he bade her good night at the door of her home, and with all his questions unanswered. Since that moment there had been little time for him either to brood over the situation or to conjecture over her strange attitude.

Throughout the early morning he hurried this way and that, receiving visitors and answering requests for information from Great Britain. His superior, heated and exasperated, broke in upon him almost as he was starting to call up Miss Roberts' residence.

"Guy," the ambassador said, "we are in a country of lunatics. There is something in this government's attitude that is inexplicable. It can't be that they are all cowards, and yet I have something to show you."

The ambassador drew a handkerchief from his sleeve and wiped the perspiration from his forehead, after which he reached a large pudgy finger over to the secretary's desk, pressing there on a pearl-topped electric button.

"Walters," he said to the usher who came into the room in answer to the summons, "neither Mr. Hillier nor myself is here, and we won't be back for an hour; that is what you are to say without exception." Then as the attendant bowed himself out he beckoned the secretary to follow him into the seclusion of his private office.

"Hillier," he began, throwing a paper on the desk before the secretary, who had seated himself on the opposite side, "read that."

The secretary saw before him a code telegram neatly interpreted between the lines. It was evidently an official order addressed to a fleet commander at Callao, Peru.

"What do you make of that," he asked in a tone of great disgust, and then, as Hillier started to question him, he put up his hand for silence. "No, it doesn't matter where I got it, or how I had it decoded; it is genuine, all right."

The secretary stared at him with a look of blank interrogation on his face, while the ambassador rose from the seat into which he had thrown himself only a moment before, leaning over his desk, resting himself on the knuckles of his clenched hands, and said:

"That is an order from the secretary of the navy positively commanding all the vessels owned by the United States in Pacific waters to return without delay to Baltimore. It's a shame, that's what it is! The other nations of the world should intervene and prevent this country from committing suicide. Conditions are so extraordinary that I don't dare trust anyone but you to make a report of the situation, and you have got to do that in person."

He walked up and down the room excitedly for a few moments, freely expressing his perplexity over the turn of events, and ended by abruptly ringing for a timetable and a sailing list, which he consulted before again addressing himself to his secretary. "Get out of here as quickly as you can," he ordered. "Go to your rooms, throw what stuff you need into a bag, and take the first train you can get for New York! I shall meet you at the station here and give you such reports of conditions as I can write in the meantime. When you get to New York, go as quickly as you can to the Cunard dock, from which the Lucania is due to sail early in the morning. I shall hold her up until you arrive. De-

liver my letters in person to the foreign secretary's office in London, and answer such questions as you can regarding this remarkable situation and this incomprehensible government. These matters are too important to admit of delay and ordinary official reports. Go quickly!" he concluded, almost shouting Hillier through the door. "I'll attend to everything here. Don't let there be any delay on your part!"

The secretary hurried away to make preparations for his departure, leaving the perturbed ambassador to prepare his reports. He called a cab and drove to his apartment, intent on first telephoning to Miss Roberts. He met her at the door and handed him a letter addressed in a familiar hand, which he hastily tore open and read as he stood in the open doorway:

"Dear Guy: I have been called away very suddenly, and am going to my father. He needs me now more than ever. I cannot alter anything which I told you last night, nor can I add anything, save to say that sometime, somehow, God willing, we shall be together again, under circumstances where I can tell you all the truth. It will do no good to write to the old address; for I shall not be there. There will be no means of our communicating, I fear, for an indefinite time. It is always within the realms of possibility, when war is on a hand, that friends may never meet again. If such should be our case, I pray that you will remember this even up to the last—I loved you. Good-by. NORMA."

Stunned by this unexpected message, he hurried to the telephone, and in a fever of haste and anxiety called up her home, only to be told that she had departed in the earlier hours of the morning after receiving a message presumably from her father. He could learn nothing further of her. He was stopped as if by an insurmountable wall. He cursed the fate which separated them and the order which sent him away without giving time to see her, and almost in open rebellion thought for a moment of refusing to act as king's courier, resolving rather to resign from his position and abandon his post; but he was bound by the training of years and the demands of duty, and at the last moment boarded the train which was to take him from the country and the woman he loved.

And even as he went the object of his solicitude was speeding away into the south on a special train. The train consisted of only two Pullmans and a dining car. Before it in its southern flight the way seemed always open, and hour after hour it rushed onward, drawn by the most powerful locomotives that could be obtained. Norma was the only woman passenger aboard; all the others were grim-faced, sun-tanned men of the sea, who had been summoned to Washington from various navy yards and ships within the month. Of all on board she was the only civilian, and yet the one whom the government seemed most anxious to transport. The officers themselves gathered into little groups, discussing the war which had opened so abruptly, and speculating as to why in such an important crisis they had been ordered from their posts of duty to report for further advice and sealed instructions at so unimportant and isolated a seaport as the small one on the coast of Florida to which they were heading.

Another singular feature of this journey was that all aboard, from the distinguished admiral to the junior lieutenant commander, were, by order, in the plainest of civilian dress. That it had been the intention of the war department to maintain their identity secret was proved by the comments of a railway official who stood near one of the coaches while waiting for a change of locomotives.

"You understand, don't you," he said to a man apparently a train dispatcher, standing beside him, "that this train has the right of way over everything? Sidelined the flyer if necessary; get this through. There can't be anything in front of her, and the only limit to her time is the speed of the engine that pulls her. I understand it's a party of secret service people the government is sending to Cuba. That's all I know about it, and it's in line with everything else you naturally can expect from such a lot of insane men as they seem to have in Washington."

They whirled away from the station, looking at each other blankly, and wondering what the outcome of all this mystery could be. Every action so far was without precedent. There was a disposition on the part of some of them to bemoan the fate which had detached them from their ships at a time when the country was to be defended and glory won; but this was brought to a sudden end by grim old "Fighting Bob" Bevin, the admiral, who reprimanded them for daring to criticize their superiors or their orders.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Just So.

"Second thoughts," remarked the moralizer, "are always best."

"That's right," rejoined the demoralizer. "By the time you think them the chap who might have mopped up the sidewalk with you is several blocks away."

## HISTORIC CHURCH IN ENGLAND.

Was Attended by Benjamin Franklin's Forefathers.

London.—Few spots in England have more American interest than the little village of Ecton, in Northamptonshire, and particularly the churchyard in that quaint town. It was here that the forebears of Benjamin Franklin were "gathered to their fathers," and in the little churchyard one may see to-day many monuments with the name of Franklin upon them. The father and mother of Franklin were born in the village and when Franklin visited the place years afterwards he was able to identify the blacksmith's forge so well known to his parents. It was in this little village that the Franklins lived their frugal



Ancient Church at Ecton, England.

lives, and here it was that the future signer of the Declaration of Independence acquired the habits of thrift which, perhaps, as much as anything else, helped to frame his future greatness.

Indeed the whole district is interesting to Americans, for not far from Ecton is the home of the family of George Washington, known as Sulgrave Manor. Ecton and Sulgrave Manor are visited nowadays by hosts of the descendants of the man who is said to have said that he could not tell a lie. Aside from the American interest of Ecton, the village itself has been immortalized by Hogarth, the great painter. It was he who painted the sign of the "World's End" inn in that place. Nobody knows to-day exactly what Hogarth's idea of the end of the world could have been, as a souvenir hunter many years ago added this interesting sign to his collection and ever since that time, the "World's End" inn has been without a sign.

Canon Arthur W. Jepson, who was a member of the famous Mosely commission which toured 7,000 miles of America to study educational problems a few years ago, recently has been presented by King Edward with the living of the beautiful church at Ecton. He is a great believer in the American system and his report on the commission strongly advocated the adoption of American methods. Canon Jepson, who has many friends all over the United States, hopes to rebuild his church with American money. He points out that this church is referred to in Franklin's autobiography and the name Franklin appears frequently on the register.

## DUVALL TO SUCCEED WESTON.

Change in Commander of Troops in the Philippines.

Washington.—Maj. Gen. William P. Duvall, who has been selected to succeed Maj. Gen. Weston in command of the troops in the Philippines, has had a long and honorable career in the army. Born in Maryland, he graduated from West Point in 1859 at 22 and was assigned to the Fifth artillery. When the Spanish-American war came he was captain of the First artillery and was promoted first to the lieutenant colonel of the Twenty-sixth Volunteer Infantry and later colonel of the Forty-eighth Volunteer colored regiment, recruited in the south, and in two months' time he brought it into such perfect shape that it received the highest praise in the Philippines.



Maj. Gen. W. P. Duvall.

Wireless Telephony. By the Poulsen method on wireless has been carried on between wireless telephone exchanges across the whole breadth of Denmark, from Lyngby to Esbjerg, a distance of 170 miles, the voice of the speaker being not only distinct but recognizable. The music of a phonograph played in Berlin was clearly heard, by the same method, at Lyngby, 290 miles distant. Mr. Poulsen, in a lecture in London on April 15, enabled his auditors, with the aid of telephone receivers, to hear music radiated from a phonograph to a telephone box in the roof of the London Institution, where the lecture was given.

Lubricating a Door Lock. A door lock may be lubricated by using some lead scraped from the lead in a pencil and put in the lock. This may be done by putting the scrapings on a piece of paper and blowing them into the lock through the keyhole.

## A POSER.



Mrs. Whim—You needn't say woman has no mechanical genius. I can do anything on earth with only a hair-pin.

Mr. Whim—Well, sharpen this lead-pencil with it.

An Experienced Walker. Champion Hayes of Marathon fame, grazed at a dinner in New York a walker.

"He is a walker?" someone said. "Yes," said Mr. Hayes, "and the next race he enters, mark me, he will win." "Why, I didn't know he had had any experience as a walker," said the other in a puzzled voice. "No experience as a walker, eh?" Mr. Hayes laughed. "No experience as a walker, eh?" said he. "And the fellow's owned an \$80 second-hand motor car for the last two years!"

Bessie's Task. "Mamma," said little Bessie, at table one noon, "I'm to write something to read at school next Friday, but I've forgotten what the teacher called it." "An essay, perhaps," suggested Bessie's father.

"An oration," offered the little maid's high-school brother, teasingly. "A valedictory," prompted a senior sister. "No," said Bessie, suddenly brightening. "I remember now what it is—it's an imposition."

\$100 Reward, \$100. The readers of this paper will be pleased to learn that there is at least one dreaded disease that science has been able to cure in all its stages, and that is "Cancer." Hall's Catarrh Cure is the only positive cure now known to the medical fraternity. Catarrh being a constitutional disease, requires a constitutional treatment. Hall's Catarrh Cure is taken internally, acting directly upon the blood and mucous surfaces of the system. Destroying the foundation of the disease, and giving the patient strength by building up the constitution and assisting nature in doing its work. The proprietors have so much faith in its curative powers that they offer One Hundred Dollars for any case that it fails to cure. Send for list of testimonials. Address F. J. CHENEY & CO., Toledo, O. Sold by all Druggists, 75c. Take Hall's Family Pills for constipation.

She Spoke Too Quick. Mr. Crimsombank—I see by this paper that women are barred from the Island of Ferdinand de Noronha, be longing to Brazil. Mrs. Crimsombank—That's like the selfish men! Don't want the women to have any privileges! "I forgot to say, dear, that the island is only used for convicts!"

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Sometimes a woman is known by the company she avoids. It Cures While You Walk Allen's Foot-Powder for corns and bunions, hot, sweaty, swollen, itching feet. 25c. All Druggists.

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