

# The Vanishing Fleets

By ROY NORTON  
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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 troubled because of its lack of preparation for strife. At the most important 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 messages and is accompanied by Norma Roberts, who with military officers leaves Washington on mysterious expedition for a hidden point on the Florida coast. Hawaii is captured by the Japanese. In turn, demands explanation of both governments. All ports are closed. Hillier goes to England on last boat. English learns that Japanese fleet is first approaching western coast of America. Hillier decides to return to America by some means. Seigo, Japanese spy, discovers secret preparations for war.

CHAPTER V.—Continued.

In his anxiety he was on the verge of rushing out and trusting to any convenient pretext, when a boy came hurrying past him, whistling as he went and homeward bound. There was the spy's opportunity, and he accepted it. He hailed the lad, and in pigeon English told him he wanted to get aboard the vessel if he could.

"Well, you can't do it," came the response. "If you wanted to sit on, why didn't you run after the ship instead of stopping me?"

"Where she go?" queried Seigo.

"Oh, you want to know where she's going now, do you, Mr. Chink. Well, a fellow on the dock said she was going to Guantanamo, and that means you couldn't go on her if you wanted to."

Then with a derisive laugh he took up the strain of his melody at exactly the same place he had left off when accosted, thrust his hands into his pockets and continued his way.

Seigo was elated. That accounted for it, then! The United States was playing some crafty game, using its Cuban naval station as a base; was conducting some experiment or outfitting some strange expedition with necessities that could not be obtained in the big island to the south. The only perturbing thought was that the navy, instead of being inactive, had some secret task on hand which had been taken away from home stations. He decided he must return to Washington with this single strand of information and there endeavor to secure others. He watched the lights of the ship grow dim, and then as furtively as he had come returned to the home of the laundryman.

The latter counted his pay and wondered why his guest departed for the north on the early train of that morning. Seigo offered no explanations for his erratic action, and as he traveled to Washington he was in a gleeful mood. In due time he arrived, and once more ensconced himself in his headquarters, hoping within a few days to gain more complete knowledge. He was handicapped in his quest, however, because he had no actual means of access to government circles where such data as he wished might best be obtained. But again accident favored him, and again it was in the night when he sallied forth.

The hour was late when Meredith brought him word that several visitors had called upon the president, and, not trusting to others a mission so important, he took upon himself the task of spying upon the great white building where the ruler of the country lived. From the darkness of his alleyway he emerged into a broader street, when an automobile went chugging past him, and then, just as it came beneath the rays of an arc light, a face leaned to the window, an arm was extended evidently for the purpose of shaking the ash from a cigar, and Seigo shrank back. In the shimmering white rays he recognized as one of the messengers in the machine no less a personage than the president, and with him was another man whom he believed to be the secretary of war.

From down the road came the sound of another motor, which in turn whizzed rapidly along, taking the same direction as the previous car. Seigo was not certain, but conjectured that within it were other officials, and, being a man of action, unhesitatingly dashed after it, neared the closed tannery, and after a breathless run succeeded in swinging himself to the springs behind, maintaining his place by clutching the overhang of the fenders.

Away through the outskirts he rode, hearing nothing from within and in constant danger of falling off his precarious perch. The car gained speed until his peril was great, for to be thrown would be to receive certain injury. His fingers were strained convulsively in their effort to hold on, and once he was almost cast off by a sharp declivity in the road. Now he could only trust to chance that the automobile on which he rode was following that of the president; but as mile after mile was reeled off without a sight of the other machine on either hand, he felt assured that the party was all one. He leaned out across one of the great rubber tires and peered ahead to where now and then he could catch the glow of a red back lamp, and was content. His journey was not without discomfort, for the dust of the road whirled upward and into his nostrils in stifling volume, until he was begrimed and almost strangled; but he clung on grimly,



Clambered Through the Side Door of an Empty.

waiting for the mysterious trip to end. The big car stopped so suddenly that he had scant time to loosen his hold, fell off into the dirt and rolled hastily into a ditch by the roadside where he might be hidden from sight. To his surprise the vehicle turned through a gateway into a field, where he heard the slow crunching of the great wheels over the stubble. He raised himself to his knees, and then in a crouching posture essayed to follow it in its wanderings, when he was arrested by a sharp challenge, betraying the fact that although the visitors had been expected no chance was being taken of entertaining others. Again he threw himself on his face, waiting patiently for other sounds. The great fat before him showed dimly in its yellow bareness, stretching down to where the broad expanse of river gleamed dully, and he could discern other lights than those of the motor on which he had been an undisclosed passenger. These suddenly vanished, and he surmised that the chauffeurs had extinguished them preparatory to leaving the cars. He could trace out no other shapes in the gloom. Not even a building raised its dark bulk in the night. He felt the necessity of advancing farther.

Foot by foot he wriggled forward, the splinters of the field imbedding themselves in his flesh unheeded, straining every nerve to avoid making a noise, and listening at intervals in the hope of catching some word of conversation which might give him a clue to the cause of this nocturnal mission. From a short distance ahead came the mutterings of low-pitched voices, and then a period of silence. He was past the machines now, still crawling carefully. Once more he paused, when he heard a sudden muffled crash from the direction of the water, and in an agony of surprise and terror rose to his knees, forgetting that he might be observed. His hands interlocked themselves in stress as he watched in breathless suspense for a moment, and then, almost moaning in despair, he crept rapidly back to the road, went cautiously down it for a hundred yards, and took madly to his heels with fright.

All caution was thrown aside, and as he ran like an insane man through the night, with his overworked lungs bellowing in and out until they felt a flame, he burst into sobs, muttering to himself again and again: "Only the gods can save Nippon! The gods help Nippon!"

CHAPTER VI.

The Flight of Seigo.

Seigo understood at last that the sleeping eagle was preparing to descend from its aerial perch by mercilessly bared talons. In his light to the city he counted every moment of value, and through his mind went but one thought: How to get news to Japan in time to avert disaster. What he had witnessed was so convincing that he was amazed at the devilish ingenuity of the Americans, who had led the whole world to believe them defenseless when they were in reality only luring other nations on to their doom. He was filled with resentment. The shoe was on the other foot now, and it made a noticeable difference. When he believed the United States powerless to defend itself, it had been only fit and proper that Japan should hurry her, conquer if possible, and gain concessions of territory and money indemnity; but with the knowledge that the country was not only in

a position to care for itself, but also to conquer an enemy, he viewed things in an entirely different light. Worst of all, he realized that he was more largely responsible for the outbreak of war than any other man, and aside from the ignominy which must be imposed upon his people was the appreciation of what might happen to his own precious head when resentment chanced to act against him. Yesterday he had been smiling, supercilious and confident. To-night as he ran, he was terrified, ashamed and despairing.

Information had come to him that the blockade was complete, and in so instance was he certain that any of his reports had passed through the lines. He rapidly reviewed the chances, and decided that he must get word to every man at his command to strive to pass a warning through to Canadian territory where it might be cabled to Japan. He counted, with Japanese reasoning, on his ability to bribe some one along the border, forgetting that when American patriotism is at full tide money has little weight. He had large funds at command, and in a crisis like this was ready to pour them out lavishly.

His return to the capital was rapid, as he strained his physical powers to their utmost, and he was almost exhausted when he reached the section where his Chinese ally dwelt. With dragging steps he was turning down a street, when a sharp whispered calling of his name from the depths of a hallway arrested him. Stepping in, he recognized his friend. The instant he was under the cover of darkness he was grasped by the arm and hurried through a doorway and up a flight of stairs. He would have remonstrated at this strange proceeding had not his conductor mumbled: "Come fast and ask nothing! It's your only chance to save your life!"

Through a long corridor where there were no lights, out to a back porch which overhung skeleton-like from the building in which the residents were evidently all asleep, down another flight of rickety stairs, and into a vacant space, presumably a back yard, he followed. Not until they reached this secluded place did he have a chance to ask an explanation, and then, before he could formulate a question, it was volunteered.

"The American secret service men have been after you. They are watching the house inside and out. They've seized your papers and everything else in the place. I escaped and brought you money with which to go."

"But my men?"

"Arrested as fast as they came; taken quietly away, and now in prison."

"Meredith, too?"

"Yes, he was taken in the street above."

Seigo gasped in astonishment. "But there must be some who got away?"

"No, not even one. You're the only man left. The Americans are a terrible people. They have hoodwinked you until the time was ripe, then reached out and caught you all as a fisherman with his net takes in a school of minnows. Even now they are waiting for you, and you'll have to act quick or they will get you too."

The spy felt suddenly that he had underestimated the enemy completely. An involuntary shudder contracted his muscles when he comprehended that not only had he been watched until the propitious time for his taking, but

that he had been deliberately played with, an unconscious mouse beneath the eyes of a vigilant cat. Worst of all, this in itself was confirmation that none of the later reports he had sent out to Japan had reached their destination. Probably every message he had dispatched was now in the hands of the Americans. His only hope of conveying warning to his countrymen and for his own life depended on his escape from the clutches of these men, who could appear ignorant and timid when in reality they were advised and alert. In a burst of impatient rage he shook his fists at the stars. His companion caught his arm.

"Listen!" he said. "You have but one chance. You must get away from Washington to-night. I have a friend, a Canton man, who is a gardener in the outskirts. If we can reach him he will take you in his wagon to a railway crossing before the light comes. There you can get aboard a freight train."

"Go as a tramp?"

"Yes, because all other trains will be searched."

Seigo shrugged his shoulders in disgust. He would have uttered a protest in words had not his companion checked him and continued:

"If you are careful you can get to Chicago, where other friends of mine will help you. Then you must try to reach Canada as best you can."

Seigo hesitated a minute before deciding; but it was obvious that no better means was available. Together the two men crept through alleyways and back streets to the outskirts of the city, until they came to the hovel where lived the truck farmer on whom they placed their hope. He, experienced in the ways of the Americans through long residence in California and standing in dread of the law, was at first loath to undertake the part assigned to him; but the clink of gold coin overcame his fears, and in the end Seigo sought sleep in the bottom of a covered wagon while being driven to the place where he was to assume a new role. He felt alone and deserted when the gardener departed, leaving him standing at an intersection of railway tracks waiting impatiently for a freight train on which he was to make his first excursion into trampdom.

It came at last, a heavy snorting locomotive pulling a long trailer of empties. It whistled shrilly for the crossing, little tower, and came to a full stop. Seigo, with his heart in his mouth, clambered through the side door of an empty car and was soon traveling westward to the rhythmic clank of wheels on rails. Fatigue at last overcame him and he slowly dropped into a restless sleep in which he was pursued by demons and confronted by unknown terrors. He was aroused by a brakeman, who roughly punched him in the ribs with the toe of his boot and told him to "Hike out!" He sat up and blinked his eyes until again ordered to vacate, and then came to his senses sufficiently to make a plea for himself, which was unavailing. The brakeman was obdurate and threatening, until the spy crawled stiffly out.

He sat wearily down on a pile of ties, and the brakeman, still watchful, stood in front until the long train dragged past, then reached out a grimy hand, swung lightly onto the steps of the caboose, and shook his fist at the supposed Chinaman as he disappeared. A tramp of the most degraded sort approached him and with the camaraderie of the homeless dropped into conversation with him. Food and rum made him an ally, and, finding an easy source of assistance without effort, the tramp avowed that he, too, was bound for Chicago.

Under this expert tutelage the Japanese reached the metropolis of the west, where he bade his friend good-bye and sought the Chinese to whom he had letters. Again he faced a reverse; for these men with one accord told him there was no possibility of evading the sentries to the north, and that his only means of escape must of necessity be in the far northwest. Sympathizers first, but traffickers always, they mulcted him of his money, and in return made it possible for him to travel to Seattle. They bought a ticket, provided him with a Chinese certificate of entry whose pictured corner was sufficiently close in resemblance, and saw him off on his journey.

Time and again in that long trip he was dragged out and compelled to show his papers, proving that he was always a suspect. Once a threat was made to hold him over; but his persuasive tongue secured immunity from arrest.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Leech a Weather Prophet.

A leech confined in a vat of water will prove an excellent weather prophet.

If the weather is to continue fine the leech lies motionless at the bottom of the vat and rolled together in a spiral form.

If it is to rain, either before or after noon, it is found to have crept up to the top of its lodging, and there it remains till the weather is settled.

If we are to have wind, the poor prisoner gallops through his limpid libation with amazing swiftness, and seldom rests till it begins to blow hard.

WHY NOT OWN LAND?  
ONE OF THE BEST WAYS TO MAKE MONEY IS TO INVEST IN WESTERN CANADA.

"Deep down in the nature of every properly constituted man is the desire to own some land." A writer in the Iowa State Register thus tersely expresses a well-known truth. The question is where is the best land to be had at the lowest prices, and this the same writer points out in the same article. The fact is not disguised that the writer has a personal interest in the statement of his case, and there is no hidden meaning when he refers to Western Canada as presenting greater possibilities than any other part of the American Continent, to the man who is inclined to till the soil for a livelihood and possible competence. What interests one are the arguments advanced by this writer, and when fairly analyzed, the conclusion is reached that no matter what personal interest the writer may have had, his reasons appear to have the quality of great soundness. The climatic conditions of Western Canada are fully as good as those of Minnesota, the Dakotas or Iowa, the productiveness of the soil is as great, the social conditions are on a parity, the laws are as well established and as carefully observed. In addition to these the price of land is much less, easier to secure. So, with these advantages, why shouldn't this—the offer of Western Canada—be embraced. The hundreds of thousands of settlers now there, whose homes were originally in the United States, appear to be—satisfied. Once in awhile complaints are heard, but the Canadians have never spoken of the country as an Eldorado no matter what they may have thought. The writer happened to have at hand a few letters, written by former residents of the United States, from which one or two extracts are submitted. These go to prove that the writer in the Register has a good basis of fact in support of his statements regarding the excellence of the grain growing area of Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta. On the 29th of April of this year W. R. Conley, of Longwood, Alberta, wrote a friend in Detroit. He says: "The weather has been just fine ever since I came here in March, and I believe one could find if he wanted to some small bunches of snow around the edge of the lake. There is a frost nearly every morning; at sunrise it begins to fade away, then those blue flowers open and look as fresh as if there had been no frost for a week. . . . There is no reason why this country should not become a garden of Eden; the wealth is in the ground and only needs a little encouragement from the government to induce capital in here. There is everything here to build with: good clay for brick; coal underneath; plenty of water in the spring lakes, and good springs coming out of the banks."

The Idealist.  
The Bride—I want a piece of meat without any bone, fat or gristle.  
The Butcher—Madam, I think you'd better have an egg.—Harper's Weekly.

Hon. Emil Kiang, Vienna, Aus., one of the world's greatest horsemen, has written to the manufacturer, SPOHN'S DISTEMPER COMPOUND has become the standard remedy for distempers and throat diseases in the best stables of Europe. This medicine relieves horses of great suffering and saves much money for the owner. 50c and \$1 a bottle. All druggists. SPOHN MEDICAL CO., Goshen, Ind.

One woman can be awfully fond of another—if they are a hundred miles apart.

Garfield Tea, the Herb Laxative, agreeably stimulates the liver, corrects constipation and relieves a clogged system. Write for samples, Garfield Tea Co., Brooklyn, N. Y.

Many a man thinks he is charitable because he gives advice.

ONLY ONE "BROMO QUININE"  
That is LAXATIVE BROMO QUININE. Look for the signature of E. W. GROVE. Used the World over to Cure a Cold in One Day.

Cleaning upsets a house almost as badly as it does a watch.

Lewis' Single Binder straight 5c cigar. Made of extra quality tobacco. Your dealer or Lewis' Factory, Peoria, Ill.

The secret of success is a secret women never tell.

**Syrup of Figs and Elixir of Senna**  
Cleanses the System Effectually.  
Dispels colds and headaches due to Constipation; Acts naturally, acts truly as a Laxative.  
Best for Men, Women and Children—Young and Old.  
To get its beneficial effects, always buy the Genuine, manufactured by the  
**CALIFORNIA FIG SYRUP CO.**  
SOLD BY ALL LEADING DRUGGISTS one size only, regular price 50¢ per bottle.  
**DEFIANCE Gold Water Starch** makes laundry work a pleasure. 16 oz. pkg. 10c.  
W. N. U., OMAHA, NO. 3, 1912.

## Answer This Question

When shown positive and reliable proof that a certain remedy had cured numerous cases of female ills, wouldn't any sensible woman conclude that the same remedy would also benefit her if suffering with the same trouble?

Here are two letters which prove the efficiency of Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound.

Red Banks, Miss.—"Words are inadequate to express what Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound has done for me. I suffered from a female disease and weakness which the doctors said was caused by a fibroid tumor, and I commenced to think there was no help for me. Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound made me a well woman after all other means had failed. My friends are all asking what has helped me so much, and I gladly recommend Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound."—Mrs. Willie Edwards.

Hampstead, Maryland.—"Before taking Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound I was weak and nervous, and could not be on my feet half a day without suffering. The doctors told me I never would be well without an operation, but Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound has done more for me than all the doctors, and I hope this valuable medicine may come into the hands of many more suffering women."—Mrs. Joseph H. Dandy.

We will pay a handsome reward to any person who will prove to us that these letters are not genuine and truthful—or that either of these women were paid in any way for their testimonials, or that the letters are published without their permission, or that the original letter from each did not come to us entirely unsolicited.

What more proof can any one ask?  
For 30 years Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound has been the standard remedy for female ills. No sick woman does justice to herself who will not try this famous medicine. Made exclusively from roots and herbs, and has thousands of cures to its credit.  
Mrs. Pinkham invites all sick women to write her for advice. She has guided thousands to health, free of charge. Address Mrs. Pinkham, Lynn, Mass.



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**BUSTER BROWN** SEE THE BROWN SHOES FOR MEN  
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Ask for the Baker's Cocoa bearing this trademark. Don't be misled by imitations  
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