

The Vanishing Fleets

BY ROBERT NORTON
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SYNOPSIS.

"Vanishing Fleets," a story of "what might have happened," opens in Washington with the United States and Japan in 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 entire country is in a state of turmoil because of the government's indifference. Guy 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. Siego, Japanese spy, discovers secret preparations for war. He uncovers source of great mystery and does, murmuring, "The Japs save Nippon. Fleeting to Pacific coast, Siego is shot down just as journey to get awful news to Japan seems almost completed. Japanese intention to attack supports. 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 in a state of protection against what the British suppose a terrible submarine flotilla. Hillier is also sent to Canada to attempt to force his way through American lines with a message to the president in order that protection for the fleet may be assured. Japan appeals to Britain for aid. British fleet departs, amid misgivings of England. Fleet mysteriously disappears, a sailor picked up on a raft being the only evidence of the loss. Powers begin to fear for their safety. 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 United States, and upon promising to present the missing British admiral, the monarch agrees to accompany Bevin on tour, which the latter says will uncover the agent of war and end all conflicts. The dreadnaught, biggest of England's warships, is discovered at an impassable point in the Thames, much to the mystery of the kingdom.

CHAPTER XIII.

In the Beginning.

It was January of that momentous year when the world's unrest reached a climax, and the president of the United States, his official day done, sat alone in his study, perusing a report from an agent of the state department and mentally comparing it with preceding ones. The shaded light threw into relief against the darker shadows behind the long, lean jaw, the grimly determined mouth and the somber eyes, but lent a touch of softness to the queer little lines which told that on occasion the man could show infinite kindness and humanity.

Thrust forward from the ranks of the people into the most important office of the land, driven reluctantly into the arena of action from a seclusion which had for him the charms of peace, he was still a man in peculiar isolation. In this, the third year of his term, he was yet unknown and under constant discussion. Half of his countrymen hailed him as the Lincoln of his time, and the other half declared him a tyrant in embryo. He had fought so doggedly for his principles that he had estranged those who had been his most ardent supporters. His disregard for party projects had cost him the friendship of politicians; his advocacy of certain reforms had subjected him to caustic comments; his very dignity and sensitiveness had been mistaken for austerity; and only his most intimate friends understood that in him beat a great heart filled to overflowing for his country and fellow men. These comprehending friends were few; but among them, perhaps the most intimate, was the friend of his boyhood, "Old Bill" Roberts, the inventor.

Between these two there existed that singular affection found rarely among master minds where each admires qualities in the other which he himself lacks. To Roberts the president was the greatest statesman of the century, and to the president Roberts was the most accomplished scientist and inventor who had ever lived; but on this night, laden with fate in which each was to play his part, the mind of neither was on the other. The inventor was absorbed in the last of a series of experiments that had enmeshed him in a dream whereby he hoped to eradicate friction, and the president was perturbed by reports for which he had waited many weeks.

These latter, in recapitulation tersely predicted that it would be almost an impossibility to avert war with Japan as soon as she reached a state of preparation. They summed up her naval strength, which they declared almost equal at the time of writing to that of the United States, and told how every navy yard in Japan was rushing construction with all available speed both night and day, so that her augmented squadrons when built would be superior to those of the great republic. They reviewed the land preparations by showing that a greater number of men were being drilled than ever before in the country's history, and that the redoubtable army sent against Russia would be small in comparison with that which could be mobilized for another invasion. The reports expressed the belief that Japanese capitalists were anxious to seize the Philippines, and were encouraging the ambitions of the emperor of Nippon to the full extent of their purse, hoping ultimately to find another outlet for investment under their own flag. As if in proof that the government was supporting this bellicose attitude, the reports gave as a certainty that some high authority was dictating the editorial policies of the Japanese press, and in all ways possible fomenting the ill feeling against the United States.

There could be no underestimation of the ability of the naval officer who had made these statements; for he had passed more than ten years in



The Inventor Entered the Room.

that station of the orient, spoke the language thoroughly well, understood the people, and above all was no alarmist. He gave it as his final opinion that within six months, Japan, her navy completed, her soldiers drilled to perfection, and her treasury well supplied with gold, would find pretext for a declaration of war. The only means of preventing this deplorable event, in his judgment, was to place the American navy in such a state of pronounced superiority that it would stay the warlike Japanese and hold them in the leash of awe.

The president read the last clause again, and with a sigh of discontent leaned back in his chair. Hour after hour he brooded over the complexities of the situation, and late at night came to the conclusion that he must lose no time in calling together his most trusted advisers. In the report before them, and then by consultation and discussion decide which would be the most promising policy to pursue in so grave a crisis. Before he retired the orders were given to his secretary which resulted in the first meeting of that coterie of men who were to assume the full responsibility for the conduct of war which afterwards fulfilled the expert's prediction.

They gathered informally on the following night, nor could it have been observed by their demeanor that they were to discuss a situation of vital importance to the nation; but, forewarned by the president's call, they expected news of distressing import, and therefore were not surprised in the least at the tenor of the statement which was read to them. They listened attentively, and remained silent when the last words were spoken, each waiting for the other to express an opinion. The president, grave and calm, looked from one to the other as if inviting freedom of speech, and then turned to the secretary of the navy, a crusty man who was given to open expression.

"Mr. Sessions," he said, "you are probably better informed than any other man of the possibilities of bringing the navy to a point where it may be regarded as resistless. What have you to say?"

The latter showed signs of ill temper. He wiped the shining dome of his head and stared across the tops of his horn bowed glasses at his colleagues. "For three years now," he replied, bitterly, "I have endeavored to get appropriations consistent with the needs of the country; did everything I could with dignity and a little more; tried to get friends to pass bills, and gave them statistics showing just what our position would be in this event; but there were always a few watch dogs of the treasury who succeeded in defeating everything I attempted."

"The president looked at him reprovingly, but said nothing. The others gave him silent sympathy, knowing that in case of disastrous war he would be the one to stand in the line of light and defend himself for not working miracles unaided. The gratitude of kings was no more open to sarcasm than the gratitude of republics.

"The report says," continued the secretary, gloomily, "that war may be anticipated in six months at the furthest, and that our only safeguard is to bring our navy up to a formidable force before that time. Well, we can't do it! With all the facilities at our command we can't build ships in a night, nor drill men to man them

in a day. We shout about our resources, and we have them; but it takes time to utilize them."

His outspoken pessimism loosened his hearers' tongues; but the most optimistic could find nothing encouraging to say. It was obvious that the country in any event would be unprepared. They were discussing emergency plans, when the president's secretary appeared in the doorway. They turned to him, wondering what could claim the chief executive's attention at that time of the night. The secretary walked over to the president and addressed him in a low tone. They caught scraps of the conversation.

"Says he wants to see me to-night?" "Yes, and I don't like to refuse a man of his prominence, or one who is so closely your friend?" "Won't he talk to you?" "Not much! Just laughed, and said he wanted to see you personally."

ILLUSTRATED BY A. WEIL

larious ones, grown grave, looked at each other in astonishment and wonder. Here at this very moment of distress was a man who had done more toward strengthening the nation's agents of offense and defense than any other individual, confidently asserting that he could show them the way out of their difficulties. The president ordered that the caller be conducted to the room at once.

Had it been any less a personage than the famous inventor they would have paid small heed to the promise of hope; had they been informed in less troublous times that such an invention was pending, they would have looked upon it with great interest and curiosity; but now, when all avenues of escape seemed closed, when the eagle's perch was rocking beneath its talons and it was threatened by mercurial furies, they stared at each other in amazed silence like men who had been relieved.

It was in the midst of this stillness that the inventor entered the room and stood bewildered for a moment, peering from beneath the thatch of his brows at one and another. Then, satisfied that his visit was opportune and that none was present whom he did not know, he gave them individual greetings as his acquaintanceship warranted.

"You were not expecting me," he addressed the president; "but it appears to me that there is no one here who should not know what I have to say, and who is not directly interested in what I have to show. I am glad you are all here, gentlemen," he concluded, turning to the others. And then, following the example of the president, he seated himself, and the others did likewise. They were struck with a suspense which he did not share. "Informal, isn't it?" he asked the president, and when assured that such was the case he calmly drew a handkerchief from his pocket and swept it across the dome of his forehead.

All were waiting for him to speak; but, with exasperating slowness, and without asking permission from the president, he thrust a hand into the roomy folds of his sack coat and produced a bundle of long stogies, one of which he carefully withdrew and examined with great care. He thrust it into his mouth and revolved it, apparently for the purpose of tightening a loose wrapper. He turned to the chief executive. There was an air of expectancy in the room and a leaning forward, that no word of the great secret might be lost. They caught all he said.

"Got a match, Mr. President?" he asked with the most nonchalance. They dropped back into their seats, some with exasperation and other smiling. The president gravely supplied his want, and then, as the evil odor of the weed was wafted round the room, he sat back in his chair, with the tips of his fingers touching each other. The secretary of war was beginning to fidget with impatience. Roberts puffed three or four times, fixed his eyes on a cornice as if he was the sole occupant of the room, then calmly reached into a pocket and drew out a parcel which he laid on the president's desk. While every eye was fixed upon him he tilted the stogy in his mouth to an angle where the smoke would not interfere with his operations, and began unwrapping the package, throwing the newspapers on the floor at his feet. Then came a fold of silk, and last of all a sheet of tissue paper, whose crackling crispness sounded startlingly loud in the stillness of the room.

"There!" he remarked triumphantly, exposing two small plates of metal not differing greatly in appearance from two pieces of burnished steel. Eagerly all those in the room crowded forward, while the president gingerly took one of the slabs in his fingers. "New explosive?" he asked. "No, they're harmless." The inventor smiled.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)



Lapland Has Many Resources

Recent Efforts to Develop Them Are Full of Promise.

Within a recent period efforts have been made to develop the natural resources of Lapland, and there seems to be a considerable economic future in store for this region, which is especially due to the large deposits of iron ore. A great step was the building of the trans-Lapland railroad, which was finished in 1903. With the annex lines which are building it will soon put Lapland in connection with Tornea, in Finland, with St. Petersburg and with the eastern region. The Stockholm-Narvik railroad line, which runs north and south, has a length of 950 miles. The transverse east-west line starts from Lulea, a Swedish Lapland port on the Gulf of Bothnia, and ends at the Norwegian port of Narvik (299 miles), passing by the mines of Gellivara and Kiruna. These latter mines, which have been worked only since 1902, were known as long back as 1735. The ore is taken out from the surface in an open digging.

Child Saved Father's Life. When D. Curtis fell and his head went through a window at Chapinville, Conn., an artery in his nose was severed. His wife was sick in bed, and the children couldn't stop the blood. His five-year-old daughter climbed on a chair to the phone and called a doctor. Curtis was nearly dead when the doctor came. He said the child had saved her father from bleeding to death.

A CURE FOR FITS. The Treatment is to Accomplish What Science Has Been Struggling to Attain for Centuries.

The intense interest that has been manifested throughout the country by the wonderful cures that are being accomplished daily by epileptics still continues. It is really surprising the vast number of people who have already been cured of fits and nervousness. In order that everybody may have a chance to test the medicine, large trial bottles, valuable literature, History of Epilepsy and testimonials, will be sent by mail absolutely free to all who write to the Dr. May Laboratory, 518 Pearl Street, New York City.

Easy. Once there was an old woman who lived in a shoe. She had so many children that at first she didn't know what to do. A friend of the family who happened to come along just then, however, made the following suggestions: To put one of them in a factory. To have a couple more operated on and otherwise fussed over by the doctors. To put a couple of them in a coal mine. To send one to a modern public school. To bring up another on a pure food diet. Which no sooner having been carried into effect than the old woman settled down to a life of ease and loneliness.—New York Herald.

Second Thought. "It cannot be," sighed the maid. "I respect you highly, Mr. Hunter, but we are incompatible." "Well, I suppose it cannot be helped," the young man replied, pocketing his chagrin and looking about for his hat. "But it defeats all my cherished hopes. I had planned a house, in which I fondly imagined we might be happy. It was to have had a pantry twice as large as the ordinary size, with a roomy closet in which to stow away the new cooking utensils, and things that a woman naturally buys when a peddler comes around."

"Stay, George," she said falteringly, "perhaps I have been too hasty. Give me a day or two to think it over. It is not impossible that—that—" "The Grip of Spring. During the last twenty years many of our citizens have been attacked in the spring months by grip. Some have had serious or slight attacks every year or two. All know it to be a dangerous disease. If Lane's Pleasant Tablets (which are sold at 25 cents a box by druggists and dealers) are taken when the first symptoms are felt, there is hardly a chance of the malady getting a foothold. If you cannot get them in your home, send 25 cents to Grator F. Woodward, Le Roy, N. Y. Sample free.

Mobby's Argument. Mrs. Hoyle—My husband declares that corsets are unhealthy; he insists that they shorten life. Mrs. Doyle—Is that so? Mrs. Hoyle—Yes; he says he knew of a man who lived to be 100 years old who never wore them.

A Domestic Eye Remedy Composed by Experienced Physicians. Conforms to Pure Food and Drug Laws. Wins Friends Wherever Used. Ask Druggists for Murine Eye Remedy. Try Murine in Your Eyes. You Will Like Murine.

Like Producing Like. "How did that manager come out on his beauty show?" "I think he made a handsome profit."

Pettit's Eye Salve 100 Years Old, relieves tired eyes, quickly cures eye aches, inflamed, sore, watery or ulcerated eyes. All druggists or Howard Bros., Buffalo, N. Y.

What is defeat? Nothing but education, nothing but the first step to something better.—Wendell Phillips.

Rheumatism, Neuralgia and Sore Throat will not live under the same roof with Hamlin Wizard Oil, the best of all remedies for the relief of all pain.

It's not difficult to judge some men by their clothes—policemen and letter carriers, for example.

You will respond very quickly to the Garfield Tea treatment, for this Natural laxative corrects constipation, purifies the blood, and benefits the entire system.

It's the easiest thing in the world to point out the proper course for others to pursue.

"Brown's Bronchial Troches" relieve Bronchitis, Asthma, Catarrh and Throat Diseases. 25 cents a box. Samples sent free by John J. Brown & Son, Boston, Mass.

Things gained are gone, but great things endure.—Bishop.

THE BEST REMEDY

For Women—Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound

Noah, Ky.—"I was passing through the Change of Life and suffered from headaches, nervous prostration, and hemorrhages. Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound made me well and strong, so that I can do all my housework and attend to the store and post-office, and I feel much younger than I really am."

Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound is the most successful remedy for all kinds of female troubles, and I feel that I can never praise it enough.—Mrs. LIZZIE HOLLAND, Noah, Ky. The Change of Life is the most critical period of a woman's existence, and neglect of health at this time invites disease and pain. Women everywhere should remember that there is no other remedy known to medicine that will so successfully carry women through this trying period as Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound, made from native roots and herbs.

For 30 years it has been curing women from the worst forms of female ills—inflammation, ulceration, displacements, fibroid tumors, irregularities, periodic pains, backache, and nervous prostration.

If you would like special advice about your case, write a confidential letter to Mrs. Pinkham, at Lynn, Mass. Her advice is free, and always helpful.

A Safe and Sure Cough Cure. Kemp's Balsam Does not contain Opium, Morphine, or any other narcotic or habit-forming drug. Nothing of a poisonous or harmful character enters into its composition. This clean and pure cough cure cures coughs that cannot be cured by any other medicine. It has saved thousands from consumption. It has saved thousands of lives. A 25c. bottle contains 40 doses. At all druggists, 25c., 50c. and \$1. Don't accept anything else.

Low Fares To Montana

Crop figures for 1908 prove that Montana is an excellent field for profitable farming. Secure a farm of your own there now. Fertile land at reasonable prices. Homestead lands are still plentiful in Montana close to the new towns on the

Chicago Milwaukee & Puget Sound Railway Low settlers' fares to Montana on March 23 and 30, and April 6, 13, 20 and 27.

\$19.25 from Omaha to Miles City, Forsyth, Musselshell and Roundup; \$19.50 to Lavinia; \$19.95 to Harlowton; \$20.40 to Moore; \$20.60 to Lewistown. Low fares from and to other points on these dates. Complete information, with new Montana folder free.

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As further inducement to settlement of the wheat-growing country in the Northwest, the Canadian Government has increased the acre that may be taken by homesteader to 320 acres—160 less and 160 to be purchased of \$3.00 per acre. These lands are in the grain-growing zone, where a good harvest is also carried on with sheep and cattle raising. The lands are mostly built in Hudson Bay, being the world's markets a thousand miles across these wheat fields, where schools and churches are convenient, climate excellent, railways close to all settlements, and local markets good.

It would take time to enumerate the restrictions that a visit to the great engineering works in the Northwest can establish at every turn. Correspondence of a National Editor, who visited Western Canada in August, 1908.

Lands may also be purchased from railway and land companies at low prices and on easy terms.

For pamphlets, maps and information as to low railway rates, apply to Department of Immigration, Ottawa, Canada, or the authorized Canadian Government Agents.

V. V. BENEY, 881 New York Life Building, Omaha, Nebraska.

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NOTHING LIKE IT FOR THE TEETH Paxtine cleans any dentition and removes tartar from the teeth, besides destroying all germs of decay and preventing tooth decay. Paxtine is the best tooth powder ever used.

THE MOUTH Paxtine used as a mouth wash disinfects the mouth and throat, purifies the breath, and kills the germs which collect in the mouth, causing sore throat, bad breath, grippe, and such ailments.

THE EYES Paxtine is a powerful germicide, disinfectant and deodorant. Used in bathing the eyes, it cleans and leaves the body antiseptically clean. FOR SALE AT DRUG STORES, 50c. per bottle. LARGEST SAMPLE FREE! THE PAXTINE TOILET CO., BOSTON, MASS.

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Millions of acres of school land to be sold by the State. \$1.00 to \$5.00 per acre; only one-fourth cash and all balance on 10% interest. 1000 acre tract cost only \$12.00 cash for 100 acres at \$120 per acre. Invaluable opportunity for good investment. 10 cents for Book of Instructions. How to Buy State Land. J. J. Boyler, School Land Examiner, Box 111, Austin, Tex. Reference, Austin Standard.

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