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. At the most inopportune moment Japan declares war. Japan takes the Philippines. The entire country is in a state of turmoil because of the government's indifference. Guy Hillier starts for England with secret message and is compelled to leave Norma Roberts, who with military officers also leaves Washington on mysterious expedition for an isolated point on the Florida coast. Hawaii is captured by the Japs. All ports are closed. Jap fleet is fast approaching western coast of America. Biego, Japanese spy, discovers secret preparations for war. He follows auto carrying presidential cabinet. He unearths source of great mystery and fleet murmuring, "The gods save Nippon." Fleeing to Pacific coast, Biego is shot down just as journey to get awful news to Japan seems successful. Japan announces intention to attack seaports. Tokio learns of missing Japanese fleet and whole world becomes convinced that United States has some powerful war agency. England decides to send a fleet to American waters as a Canadian protection against what the British suppose is a terrible submarine flotilla. Hillier is also sent to Canada to attempt to force his way through 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 English. 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.

Told Them They Might Search Him.

CHAPTER IX.—Continued.

The motor car was placed at Hillier's disposal as promised, and before night fell he found himself back in his room at the hotel no worse and no better for his experience. For ten days thereafter he made useless attempts to forward his message by every means that his ingenuity could suggest. Once he allowed it out of his hands, intrusting it through extremity to the care of a fisherman, and on the following day, with seals unbroken, it was returned to him by a police officer of the United States army in civilian dress. Were it not for the gravity of his task he would have come to regard it as a joke, a boy's game of prisoner's base or tag, in which he was always "it."

And then, as if to reproach him for his failure, there came from the clearness of the sky a swift and terrible thunderbolt. It was a message from England reporting the disappearance of that immense fleet which was to follow on his heels, and of speeded upon the delivery of his message for its immunity from attack. He had taken too long!

Stunned by this overwhelming disaster, shuddering in each nerve, and with every fiber of his body quivering, he sought the seclusion of his room, threw himself upon his bed and buried his face in the pillows. Repeatedly there ran through his mind the self-reproach that had it not been for his failure this shocking toll of war might never have been collected. An armada of greater strength than that which had fought off Cape Trafalgar had sailed gallantly out to its doom, trusting to him to avert disaster, and he in this hour of stress, when the fate of nations hinged upon his resource, had proved inefficient! Over and over he reviewed the struggle he had made to accomplish his mission, but found even in this stern self-criticism no flaw of endeavor. But in his hour of bitterness he thought that God might have more kind.

CHAPTER X.

An Emperor Disappears.

Such was the effect of the strange happenings of May and June that the poise of all Europe seemed trembling and unstable. Men who in all their lives had respected law and society began to question the value of communal authority, when even the most carefully reared power proved unable to protect itself against what appeared to be only one invention. Taxation had created government, which in turn had devised armies and navies and expended more and more money in their equipment. It had now been demonstrated that the discovery of some one new force, some one engine of destruction more powerful than any other known, could destroy the values of navies and armies in a day. And yet in this frame of mind, where anarchy seemed less terrible and governments at best but weak organizations, the greed for aggrandizement and conquest reasserted itself.

In Russia the revolutionists took heart and hoped to possess the land in the Balkans, reeking with the blood of past strife, new forces were forming for independence. Rulers of neighboring powers studied the map of Turkey, dreaming of what portion might be seized. China, rehabilitated for aggression by Japan herself, regretted a compact with the smaller country which prevented its seizure, now that it was so terribly weakened.

But the most threatening attitude of all was that of Germany toward Great Britain. The Hohenzollerns, a line of warriors, still held the ancient throne, and the kaiser was ambitious for his country's advancement. An astute ruler of exceptional capacity, he already had advanced Germany's flag of trade beyond all seas, and by this means alone practically dominated all of South America. In all earlier days of this trade conquest the United States had been busied in her home enterprises, saying to herself that when she chose she could find a way to take the traffic of the southern continent with ease. With her eyes swaddled in silly egotism, she had waited till too late, and then, when her bandages were removed, suddenly learned that commercial brains were not confined to America alone. The sleeping giant had lost commercial supremacy in a continent which was hers by right of location and needs, to a race of industrious workers across the sea.

Nor had Germany neglected her fight for trade at home. There, too, she found egotists, so swollen with self-sufficiency that by disastrous tariff methods they had been bested. England, failing to protect her producers had driven her own farmers and carriers from the field, until, as one disgruntled farmer said: "You can't pick up a cabbage in a stall which don't bear the words 'made in Germany,'" and if a new crown was needed for the king, Germany would have stood a fair chance of booking the order. In a natural revulsion which had reached fever heat before the Japanese-American war broke out, England was trying to obstruct this encroachment. The feeling thus engendered between the two nations culminated in one of envy on the part of Great Britain and one of hatred on the part of Germany. The kaiser, calmly reviewing times and conditions, decided that the time had come to strike.

England, with power sadly diminished through the loss of her great fleet, and at the mercy of the United States in her richest colony, stood open to attack. While she was still mourning defeat, Germany took exception to the tariff laws in a very carefully worded message. It was one that under normal circumstances would have provoked demands for apologies, or, in a refusal of such, almost instant war. But now the lion was driven to temporize. That the kaiser hoped for an open rupture and intended to leave no stone unturned for such an outcome, was demonstrated by his sending more curtly worded notes.

The English press retailed these to the public, and accused the kaiser of deliberately plotting war with a foreign country to offset the spread of socialism which threatened him at home, hoping by combat abroad to reunite his own people.

The kaiser demanded an apology from the British press; but Englishmen were not accustomed to bending the knee, even though the lack of flexibility might cause the loss of life. Lacking nothing in bravery, they reluctantly faced a crisis rather than brook humiliating domination. Their answer therefore was bellicose.

Germany at once began an ominous assembling of her fleets in strategic waters from which on a moment's notice they might sail forth. France stood diplomatically aloof, hoping perhaps that when the world had wearied of fighting she might be in a position to gain by plunging into the fray. Alsace Lorraine was still mourned, and her monument in the Place de la Concorde draped.

Then, at the very moment when it seemed that England would be compelled to beat back an invading army from her shores there came an unexpected lull. The British press had been predicting a declaration of war within 24 hours, when the change took place. At the first day's delay the well informed wondered, and when two days had passed and finally three, it became certain that some very unusual event had taken place in Berlin.

Rumors began to creep to London, to Paris, and soon the whole world knew, despite Germany's attempts to keep the matter a secret, that on the very eve of a crisis the kaiser, the most dominant figure in Europe, had disappeared. Nor was that all.

As if to emphasize the fact that it could have been through no mental aberration that he had gone, the chancellor of Germany had disappeared at the same time. That something inexplicable had taken place was known within a few hours after the kaiser and chancellor were last seen. On the night of their disappearance they had been closeted together with the most trusted military adviser of the empire. This latter officer, fatigued by duties which had tried him beyond his years, had left the consultation at midnight. In the room where it was held there was a telephone used only by certain privileged ones who, by means of a stated signal to the switchboard operator, could gain communication. Who these were none but the kaiser knew.

This operator told the secret service men of the empire that a few minutes past midnight he had answered a call and received the password which caused him to make the desired connection with the emperor's telephone, and a conversation of some minutes ensued, which, owing to the arrangement of the instruments, he was unable to hear.

The guards of the palace were called to the council room and instructed by the kaiser in person to admit a man who would present a plain card within a few minutes. They reported that a carriage drove up to the outer gates and a gentlemanly appearing stranger who spoke perfect German handed out a slip of pasteboard on which nothing whatever was printed or engraved. Fearing, despite their master's instructions, that the man might be an anarchist, the guards had hesitated, whereupon the visitor, reading their suspicions, told them that they might search him if they wished, which they did. This was carried out with even more than ordinary care, and the man was found to have absolutely nothing in his pockets. He was dressed in the regulation dinner suit, as if he had lately come from some club.

Still suspecting something unusual in such a singular visit and admission at this hour of the morning, the guards escorted him to the council room and waited at attention in the doorway when his presence was announced. To their surprise the emperor smiled as if in recognition, bade his visitor "Good evening" in English, and dismissed the soldiers. Reassured by this action, the men had resumed their accustomed posts, thinking no more of the matter, and regarding it simply as one of the unusual appointments which are made in such troublous times.

In less than an hour, during all of which time the guard at the door had heard voices in seeming conversation participated in by the three persons with the room, he heard the emperor and the chancellor burst into most unnatural and hearty laughter. A few minutes later he was surprised when the emperor came from the room and went to his dressing chamber, from which he emerged in the plainest of civilian clothing, after which he beckoned to his two companions.

His imperial majesty cautioned the guard to let no one know that he was leaving or of the nocturnal visitor, and, still accompanied by the unknown man and the chancellor, passed from the palace. From this on he was traced to the very carriage door, which was closed behind the party by an other attendant. The vehicle drove away in the night, the glow of the men's cigars being the last thing noticed by the man who escorted them, thus showing that all were on very friendly and intimate terms.

The conveyance itself was traced for several miles into the country, through the fact of its having passed several other rigs. There was nothing in its appearance to distinguish it from any other, and only the fact that the streets at that time of night were deserted enabled the officers to gather any idea of its direction. Others had been observed; but all were identified and accounted for, and it was by a process of elimination only that the one carrying the kaiser and his companions was tracked. The return journey of the vehicle, if such there had been, was not noticed, and therefore led to the theory that somewhere within the empire the kaiser and chancellor were being held prisoners.

The puzzling feature of the occurrence was that the emperor must have been acquainted and even on terms of friendliness with the man who decoyed him away. No anarchistic attempt could be deduced from the situation, because with the careful search that had been made it was certain that there could have been no assassination unless a most remarkable concealment had been made of all evidences of the crime. Nor was it even tenable that the party had crossed the border line, because the condition of threatened war all travelers were being closely watched.

Over every foot of the empire and into the most inaccessible portions, search was being made for the place where the nation's ruler and the chancellor might be held; but so far there had been nothing whatever that threw even the faintest ray of light on their whereabouts. The attempts of the secret service men and members of his majesty's family to keep his disappearance a secret failed, and indeed was unnecessary, for the people themselves had to be enlisted in a quest involving the whole country.

It was at this juncture that a Romany horse trader, scenting a reward, offered his services and a suggestion to the police which was promptly acted upon. He described having met the carriage which was supposed to have taken away the emperor, and, following the instincts of the horseman, he scrutinized the animals more closely than the conveyance. He said he was walking round a turn in the road, and was almost run over before he had time to gain a free way. One of the horses almost brushed him in passing, and he noticed not only a singularity of gait, but a peculiar white mark on the animal's flank.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

PLAN GREAT CANAL SCHEMES

Immense Waterway to Connect the Baltic and Black Seas.

Canals more wonderful than those of Panama and Suez are already in prospect. The early summer is to see the commencement of an inland waterway that will dwarf them both into comparative insignificance. This is the long-projected Baltic and Black sea canal, which will intersect Russia from north to south, a distance of 1,900 miles, and the total estimated cost of which is put officially at $500,000,000, although it will probably largely exceed even this sum.

Another wonderful canal scheme which is being enthusiastically taken up in Italy, contemplates nothing less than the joining by this means of Genoa and Lake Constance. To do this it will be necessary, of course, to cross not only the Apennine mountains, but also the Alps.

This it is proposed to do by means of a new invention of locks, involving the construction of a series of inclined tubular water lifts. It may yet be possible to travel by steamer over the loftiest mountain range in Europe.

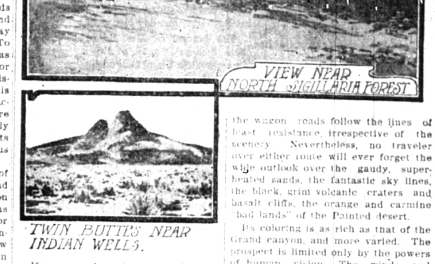
Takes Time.

It is true that the civilized world is gradually shedding its superstitions, but the process is slow. We have in this country the finest hospitals in the world, surgery and pathology are in a high state of development, but we have countless citizens, of more or less eminence, who carry potatoes in their pockets to cure rheumatism.

The Painted Desert As a Park

Arizona Seeks Its Preservation by Nation

View Near North Sigillaria Forest



Twin Buttes Near Indian Wells.

If present plans do not miscarry, and if the people of Arizona are permitted to have their way, a little corner of the Painted Desert, equal to two townships in area, will soon be declared a national monument, and set aside for preservation forever in its present condition, for the use and enjoyment of the whole people.

There is no more beautifully indefinite term in American geography than "the Painted Desert." There are railroad maps that confine the name to a narrow strip of territory along the Little Colorado river, but anyone familiar with the southwest knows that there are at least a half score of other regions of equal or greater evidently as deserving of the title. George Wharton James defines the Painted desert region as extending from the Rio Grande west to the Cañon mountains, the Salton sea, the Mojave desert. Its northern limits are somewhere among the plateaus of southern Utah, while its southern boundary must be sought somewhere down in northern Mexico. It includes the Colorado desert, the Grand cañon, the Mongollon plateau, the Tonto basin, the Verdi, Hassayampa and Salt river valleys, the Petrified forest and the Superstition mountains. Not all of this vast region is desert in character, and only a relatively small portion of its desert expanses deserves to be described as painted.

Yet the conditions of color and bareness that first suggested the name exist in places throughout this whole vast stretch of country. Parts of it are as fertile as any of the world's garden spots. It contains some of the noblest virgin forests in America, including a number of national forests, aggregating many millions of acres in extent. It is crossed by the Continental divide. The lofty peaks of the San Francisco and San Mateo mountains, as well as the lesser heights of the Zuni, Superstition, Mogollon, Pinal and other ranges are within its borders. It is crossed by one of the great rivers of America—the Colorado, and a hundred smaller streams, such as the Little Colorado, the Gila and Virgin rivers, Bill Williams Fork and Havasu, Walnut, Oak, Diamond and Bluewater creeks drain other portions. Portions of the desert area are mere wastes of natural sand—but other portions are chaotic "bad lands," upon which the Master Painter of the universe has spread a divine harmony of color that shames the wildest flights of the imagination.

Transcontinental travelers never fail to wonder at and admire the standing rocks, red cliffs, black lava precipices, extinct volcanic craters and tall white walls that lend variety to the view the whole way from Isleton to Gallup. West of the Colorado river, the chocolate-colored mountains and hills that shade from gray to black and from brown to crimson compel the notice of the least observant. All these are of the Painted desert—but they are no more than tantalizing hints of the greater glories that lie beyond the car window perspective.

Most of those who forsake the Pullmans and ever after boast of a close view of the Painted desert inspect it only as an incident of a trip to the strange towns of the Hopi Indians—a long and wearisome journey of a hundred miles or more from Canyon Diablo, Winslow or Holbrook. The portions one sees on such a trip are not those most worthy of inspection—to the wagon roads follow the lines of least resistance, irrespective of the scenery. Nevertheless, no traveler ever either rode will ever forget the wide outlook over the gaudy, superheated sands, the fantastic sky lines, the black, grim volcanic craters and basalt cliffs, the orange and carmine "bad lands" of the Painted desert.

Its coloring is as rich as that of the Grand canyon, and more varied. The prospect is limited only by the powers of human vision. The winds and storms and rushing waters of ages have chiseled basalt, clay and sandstone into images, columns, monuments, towers and strange, fantastic forms that have no names. Irrespective of its coloring, it would deserve to rank among the world's wonders. Yet its coloring is the greatest wonder of all. Here may be seen a red wall 500 feet high and 100 miles long. Yonder is a coal black cliff of hardened lava rising from a valley floor of snowy alkali. From any vantage point, one may survey a glowing landscape that boasts 100 shades of pink, gray, red, chocolate, carmine, crimson, mauve, brown, yellow and olive. Near Indian Wells is a seemingly interminable line of tall rock sentinels, all garbed in different hues, on guard in this land of enchantment. No wonder the Spanish explorers, when they first beheld it more than 350 years ago, named it "El Pintado Desierto."

Nine miles north of Adamana is Dead River canyon, from the rim of which one obtains a view of the Painted desert that can hardly be matched for scenic interest. The drive requires not more than two hours, over a road that derives more than ordinary interest from the circumstance that it crosses the old Central Overland stage route, the far western extension of the historic Santa Fe trail. Although this has not been traversed for more than a quarter of a century, the deep ruts worn by the wheels of the stage coaches, freighting caravans and prairie schooners of the emigrants, bound for the far-off land of gold in the exciting years that began with '49, are still plainly visible.

Just on the brink of the canyon is an ancient cedar tree, the only one for miles around. Tradition has it that here was the famous rendezvous and camping place of a band of desperadoes and cattle rustlers that terrorized this part of Arizona for many years. Here the spot is locally famous as the "Robbers' Roost."

To describe even the small portion of the Painted desert visible from Robbers' Roost is as hopeless as to describe an Arizona sunset. As far as the eye can carry is a succession of buttes, terraces and castellated hills that seem to display all the colors of the rainbow. Pervading all is the mystic purple haze of the arid lands that blends chaos itself into a symphony of color more celestial than of this sordid earth. Away off to the northwest is a black, flat-topped mesa, beyond which lies the land of the Hopi Indians. To the north is the land of the Navajos—the American Bedouins. But this is desolation itself, uninhabited even by the hardy tribes that find in the desert a congenial home. At one's feet is the sandy, boulder-strewn bed of a forgotten river whose healing flow ceased ages ago, when this gorgeous land of thirst bore a far different aspect—green with tropic vegetation and melodious with the songs of birds. From the parched desolation rise shimmering heat waves, so that one shrinks from the descent into the canyon as from a fiery furnace.

However, it is not as bad as it looks. A circuitous path leads to the canyon floor, over glittering beds of gypsum and thick deposits of mineral paint. Without the aid of the voice of a vast deposit of silicified wood is reached. This is not the famous Petrified forest of Arizona, which is 15 miles south, but in many respects it is not less wonderful.

There Was Something Wrong.

Mild-Mannered Man Undoubtedly Made Out Good Case.

A well-known chaperon in real politics, Maj. Pierce of Rhode Island, was one of those men who think they are orators, and of him the story has often been told that he evolved in a certain speech this most marvelous peroration:

"There is not a man, woman or child within the sound of my voice to-night who has not heard this truth ringing in their ears for centuries!"

But the old major was not the only political orator whose enthusiasm has carried him into statements passing the furthest flight of human imagination as the following little story shows. The pessimistic speaker, addressing the usual "large and intelligent audience," smote the table beside him with an impressive fist and thundered forth:

"Fella-citizens, what, I ask again, is our country coming to? What is it coming to? And echo answers 'what?'"

During his pause for breath a mild-mannered man, in spectacles, arose in the place and craved permission to put a query. "Great Cæsar!" cried the orator, after a reviving drink of water. "Did I understand your question to be, 'what is our country coming to?'" asked the mild-mannered citizen.

"Yes, sir."

"And you say echo answers what?"

"That is what I said, sir!" declared the orator belligerently.

"Then there is something wrong with the acoustics of this building," said the inquiring man, shaking his head slowly and sitting down.

Science.

"Did you know that if all the salt in the ocean were gathered into one solid body it would make a cube measuring 500 miles each way?"

"No, but I don't doubt it. Who has figured it out?"

"Nobody. I was just trying to find out how big a lie you would swallow."—Chicago Tribune.

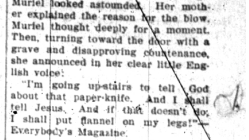
A Variety of Expedients.

Little Sinner Was Providing for Future Emergencies.

Muriel, a five-year-old subject of King Edward VII., has been thought by her parents too young to feel the weight of the sword, and has been ruled by moral suasion alone. But when, the other day, she achieved disobedience three times in five minutes, more vigorous measures were called for, and her mother took an ivory paper-knife from the table and struck her smartly across her little bare legs. Muriel looked astounded. Her mother explained the reason for the blow. Muriel thought deeply for a moment. Then, turning toward the door with a grave and disapproving countenance, she announced in her clear little English voice:

"I'm going up-stairs to tell God about that paper-knife. And I shall tell Jesus. And if that doesn't do, I shall put flannel on my legs!"—Everybody's Magazine.

Fact Verified.



Kid—Say, mister, got change for five dollars?

Kind Gentleman—Yes, my boy; here it is.

Kid—Thanks, boss; I just wanted to see it. I'd kinder got to thinkin' dere wasn't dat much money in circulation!

Eczema All Over Him.

No Night's Rest for a Year and Limit of His Endurance Seemed Near —Owes Recovery to Cuticura.

"My son Clyde was almost completely covered with eczema. Physicians treated him for nearly a year without helping him any. His head, face, and neck were covered with large scabs which he would rub until they fell off. Then blood and matter would run out and that would be worse. Friends coming to see him said that if he got well he would be disfigured for life. When it seemed as if he could possibly stand it no longer, I used some Cuticura Soap, Cuticura Ointment, and Cuticura Resolvent. That was the first night for nearly a year that he slept. In the morning there was a great change for the better, in about six weeks he was perfectly well. Our leading physician recommends Cuticura for eczema. Mrs. Algy Cockburn, Shiloh, O., June 11, 1907."

Personal Observation.

"Boys," said the sweet young teacher, as she smiled graciously upon her Sunday school class, "it seems to me that this lesson teaches that what one begins another continues or completes. All work does not devolve upon any one person. Can you illustrate with an incident from your own observation?"

"I've know father to be on a tear all night," timidly informed little Bobby, "and then mother would continue to rip him up the back all next morning."

The Family Skeleton.

Visitor—By George! But you've added a great many beautiful volumes to your library since I was here last. Must cost something, old man?

Mr. Meeker—On the level, Bill, I'm on the verge of bankruptcy buying souvenir post card albums and bookcase sections to hold them.—Puck.

Mrs. Winslow's Soothing Syrup.
For children teething, softens the gums, reduces inflammation, allays pain, cures wind colic. 25c a bottle.

It's awfully hard for a crooked man to keep in the straight path.

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. 25c.

Work is only done well when it is done with a will.—Ruskin.

This woman says Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound saved her life. Read her letter.

Mrs. T. C. Willadsen, of Manning, Iowa, writes to Mrs. Pinkham:

"I can truly say that Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound saved my life, and I cannot express my gratitude to you in words. For years I suffered with the worst kinds of female complaints, continually doctoring and spending lots of money for medicine without help. I wrote you for advice, followed it as directed, and took Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound and it has restored me to perfect health. Had it not been for you I should have been in my grave to-day. I wish every suffering woman would try it."

FACTS FOR SICK WOMEN.

For thirty years Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound, made from roots and herbs, has been the standard remedy for female ills, and has positively cured thousands of women who have been troubled with displacements, inflammation, ulceration, fibroid tumors, irregularities, periodic pains, backache, that bearing-down feeling, flatulency, indigestion, dizziness, or nervous prostration. Why don't you try it?

Mrs. Pinkham invites all sick women to write her for advice. She has guided thousands to health. Address, Lynn, Mass.