The Vanishing Fleets

By Roy Norton

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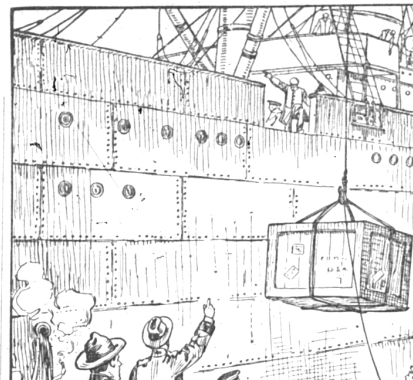
Illustrated by A. Weil



Great Cases of Machinery Swung Up from the Holds.

SYNOPSIS.

"Vanishing Fleets," a story of "what might have happened" opens in Washington with the United States and Japan on the verge of war. Guy Hillier, secretary of the British embassy, and Miss Norma Roberts, chief aide of Inventor Roberts, are introduced as lovers. Japan declares war and takes the Philippines. 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. 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 as a Canadian protection against a war. The British shipping is a terrific submarine flotilla. Hillier is also sent to Canada to attempt to force his way through American lines with a message. British fleet departs amid misgivings of English. Fleet mysteriously disappears. Hillier makes a desperate effort to deliver message to Washington. War between Great Britain and Germany is threatened. The kaiser disappears. King Edward of England is confronted by Admiral Benton of the United States, and upon promising to present missing British admiral, the monarch agrees to accompany Benton on tour. In the latter says will uncover the secret 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. The story goes back to a time many months before the war broke out, and Inventor Roberts visits the president and cabinet, telling of and exhibiting a metal production. This overcomes friction when electrified and is to be applied to vessels to increase speed to over 50 miles an hour.

CHAPTER XIV.—Continued.

The secretary of the navy, obeying a suggestion from the chair, read off a long list of figures, explaining them as he went, and concluding with an unqualified indorsement of the plan. So infectious was his blunt enthusiasm and confidence, that those who at first had hesitated at the irregularity of the procedure found themselves won over, and bound with complete unanimity into a coterie which was to assume responsibility for a war. And thus was the issue accepted.

The early hours of the morning were upon them as they dispersed, but Norma resting back in the corner of the cab which conveyed her homeward, did not share the elation of her father, who was already building workshops, conducting new experiments and equipping a navy. Yesterday she had looked forward to confiding the story of their great success to Guy Hillier; for in the preceding month, when she and her father had been trembling on the very edge of a great discovery in unknown fields, she had given no intimation of their work or their prospects, planning this surprise, and now, by the rigid embargo of silence thrust upon her, her dream was dissipated. To her the production of the radioactive metal had meant a goal; but now that it was reached and she was anxious to satisfy a heart hunger, she had been given another task, and was to undergo more silence and repression and another siege of work in a world of figures, of test tubes and retorts, a slave to the lamp of science and her father's success. Not even the knowledge that she was sacrificing herself on the altar of duty to country, whose protection and welfare were burdens that she must share, palliated the bitterness of holding love aloof. And in this light the triumphs of invention seemed hollow and the night filled with dreariness.

There were no more regular meetings of those who conspired for the national good; but it was a season of terrific activity, and February was yet young when there sailed away from New York harbor one night a gunboat, a collier and a small transport, whose destinations were unknown, and which slipped their moorings in silence and passed down the bay with scarcely a sound to announce their departure.

On board the gunboat were men accustomed to unquestioning obedience, and on the transport was a little army of skilled mechanics and engineers who had been called from their usual occupation by imperative orders and requested to tell none but their families that they might be absent for several months. There was not a man aboard any of the craft who had not taken a pledge of absolute secrecy.

The collier, black and massive, was loaded almost beyond her carrying capacity, and even on her decks were piled lumber and great sheets of corrugated iron, bearing evidence of full holds below. And all this cargo had the history of rushed work behind it. Strange pieces of machinery, sections of engines, powerful dynamos, and unheard of apparatus were stowed away with cases of chemicals, and the mines of the north, the west and the south had contributed crude metals or partially smelted ores to the assortment. Driven by expert minds and masters of machine work, an army of men in different walks of life had given their ingenuity and effort toward something of which they knew not, and then the result of their labors had poured out upon a wharf, been swallowed up by the cavernous holds of a collier, and were now being carried out into the broad reaches of the Atlantic, with destination unknown.

A general order had been issued and made public, that, inasmuch as the poaching of Cuban fishermen on American grounds round lower Florida and the key demanded attention, the gunboat Pensbscot had been detailed to patrol those waters. In the United States this attracted no attention; but the swarthy fishermen of the tropics took warning and no longer steered their smacks to the forbidden waters, shrugging their shoulders in impotent wrath.

Rumor had it that the transport was carrying mechanics and laborers to the Philippines, where a new drydock was to be constructed, and the collier was generally supposed by men of the waterfront to be laden with materials for this work. And so, despite the momentous significance of the sailing of these three ships, the world remained in ignorance, paid little heed, or forgot.

Those voyagers who were in the secret looked forward with eagerness to the task before them, realizing to the full that on them depended much. And of those was Norma, who leaned over the stern rail of the Penobscot as it dropped down the harbor, watched the lights of the city grow dim in the distance, saw the great, silent statue of liberty rear itself against the sky, and felt the first free swell lift and sway the deck beneath her feet. Her departure had not been pleasant.

There on the land behind was the man whom she seemed doomed forever to hold at arm's length. She had parted from him with the announcement that her father was compelled to go south for a time, and had insisted on her accompanying him. For how long? Ah, that could be but conjecture; perhaps for two or three months. Was he ill? No, not exactly; but he was going away and needed her. Yes, she would write occasionally from Miami, Fla.; but not often, because her charge would demand her time. And so, answering and evading, filled with yearning, and yet debarred from giving confidence, she had bidden him good-by and come to this. Sailing away in the night with all the furtiveness and mystery which enshrouded pirate ships of old bent on plunder and rapine.

The days of the voyage were much alike; filled with work. Down in the cabins the engineers and machinists drew hasty plans of buildings, then marked spots where machines were to have floor space, drew diagrams for transmission of power, and consulted charts showing the depths of water round their prospective shipyard. They had not even time to watch the devious course in and out among the islands which marked their entry to the scene of toil. When the pulsations of the screw stopped and the ship ceased her vibrations, they were still at their several tasks, and were disturbed when the anchor chains went rumbling through their hawser pipes.

Like an army of ants, drilled and acclimated, they swarmed out upon the land, the sappers clearing the way, the carpenters donning their aprons and grasping their tools while piles of lumber, kegs of bolts and nails, and mountains of iron sheathing accumulated upon the beach. And then, as the ringing of a multitude of hammers and the steady biting song of the saws filled the air with sounds of industry, great cases of machinery swung up from the holds, floated gaily to the bulwarks, and went slowly down to the lighters. A city of tents sprang up as by necromancy, with gutters to carry off the rains, and sewers to prevent disease. Camp surgeons accustomed to sanitation superintended these outposts, paying as much attention to the spreading of a mosquito net to keep away the dread stygomia, as to tautening the canvas roofs and [illegible] the grounds.

All available means of a resourceful nation had been gathered together as an expert driver seizes the reins of a four-in-hand and guides his horses along a known road to a given destination, and all with the regularity which would distinguish the work had it been the most unimportant action of every day industry.

Norma, having no part in this task of construction, wandered idly up and down the decks or round the clearing throughout the day; and as she watched she saw the birth of a miniature city, saw the heaps of material on the beach dissipated, saw tall steel smoke stacks poke their summits upward supported by spider-like cables, saw shining, corrugated roofs spread themselves protectingly over floors whereon machinery was already being placed, and wondered at the accomplishment.

The sun went down, losing itself among the keys and waters of the farther west, before a bugle gave a quick, imperative summons and the toilers dropped their tools for the evening meal. Many of the officers, some of them grimy and stained with work, their linen no longer immaculate, and their hair unkempt, came aboard the gunboat for dinner. They ate hurriedly like men in the field, and one by one, with scant apology to their fellow diners, disappeared. Norma was almost the last to leave the cabin and appear on deck, which to her surprise was vacant. Even as she glanced along its deserted length there came a whistle from the shore.

Darkness had descended abruptly and piled its blackness over the islands and the seas of the tropics. The palm trees and shrubbery out to the west were silhouetted against the last faint light of day, and from the swamps of the island came the cries of night fowl, the whir and chirruping noise of insect life, and the monotonous croaking of frogs. Swinging here and there in erratic circles, like fairies of the jungle carrying lighted lanterns, went the fireflies on aimless journeyings, not a few but many thousands of them, as if in a wild dance of curiosity, looking through the night to learn what manner of things these were that had come upon them so suddenly, ripped away their forests and built strange mansions in their solitudes.

It was not this, however, that chained her attention. High up over this mushroom city where all had been silent and darkening when she went below, now gleamed myriad lights, strung as by a genii of the lamp while others rested from their toil. White, flaring streaks of brilliance thrust spearlike rays into the gloom, illuminating below them the creation of a day. From the distance came the steady hum of steam driven dynamos, tellingly with monotonous insistence that there would be no cessation until the last spike was driven, the last machine set and the last belting hung. Into this spot of the night began to come black figures answering the call of the siren. On a sudden, as if by pre-concerted signal, the echoes again awoke to the clang of hammers on steel and the hum of voices in command. Like weird pygmies doomed to twist their thews in never-ending effort, she saw them resume their uncompleted task, exerting themselves unceasingly for its accomplishment.

A launch which had come alongside on some errand was sputtering spasmodically at the foot of the ladder below as if impatient to be off. She boarded it, and in a few minutes a smart young naval officer stepped into the stern, gave a curt order, and they raced away toward the shore.

"Ah, good evening, Miss Roberts," he said, suddenly spying her. "Looking for your father, who went ashore awhile ago, I presume? I'm going right in his direction, and will be glad to guide you." He seemed too busy for further conversation, and almost before the boat had come to a stop sprang to the shingle and offered his hand.

Through steadily working groups of men, past unfinished buildings, and over lighted floors where machinists wrought with levers and wrenches, they went to the far side of the camp. Here were officers with coats cast off and sleeves rolled up, and laborers in overalls intent on setting a huge blast furnace; and in the very heart of this activity, besmirched with dirt, his hat discarded and his shirt thrown open, she found her father. Not even he with all his weight of years could resist this terrific call of energy. She stood and watched for a few minutes while he, the master spirit of the group, directed the work. It seemed to have passed its critical point, and after some final instructions to the engineer in charge he straightened up and looked round.

"Hello, here's the assistant," he said, walking toward her and looking fondly into her eyes. She besought him to rest, and her appeals were seconded by those of the officers who feared for the physical strength of this man on whom they depended, and who would have guarded him as a precious jewel of untold worth. He protested at first, and then, like one waking from a dream and suddenly conscious of a great weariness, made no objection when the rear admiral, who now looked like a workman, put his hat upon his head and rendered him his coat. He permitted them to throw it over his shoulders, and finally, with a look of infinite satisfaction at the growing structure before him, took his daughter's arm and tramped away.

He was an old man again, yielding the tribute of age to the toil of youth.

They boarded the boat and sought their cabins; but even as they retired there came to them through the open portholes, like a lullaby, the sounds of unremitting labor intermingled with the lap of waves on the coral beach. The first, creative step toward a national victory and supremacy had been taken in a day, even while the war cloud across western seas was gathering strength for its overcast; and, waiting, wondering, and expectant, the world was unaware.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Happy Despite Their Poverty

Residents of Sunny Naples Seem Never to Repine.

It is estimated that a quarter of a million people in Naples live from hand to mouth, and there are hundreds of children who subsist out of the garbage boxes, and who sleep in churches and on doorsteps.

The taxes in Italy to provide warships and to keep the nation on a war footing with the other powers are really stupendous. There is a tax on everything, says the Delineator—grain in the field, fruit on the vine, old bottles. Fuel and foodstuffs are very dear—only labor is cheap. For the very poor, meat is a luxury unheard of and even macaroni is too dear to be indulged in often. There are any number of perambulating street kitchens, where various kinds of soup, cakes and fruits are sold in portions costing one cent. And yet these people seem very happy. Bands of musicians are always playing in the streets; the guitar and the mandolin are to be heard everywhere—on the boats, in the hotels—and the stranger is lulled to sleep by a soft serenade under his balcony.

The story teller thrives in Naples, as there are so many idlers there. He collects a little crowd around him and proceeds in the most dramatic way, gesticulating wildly and working his face into the most excruciating expressions, to relate stories of adventure or other events, much to the edification of his hearers, who, to show their appreciation, are often betrayed into giving a sou which might have been better spent for bread or polenta.

The public letter writer is another street dignitary of importance, and in great demand, especially with timid and buxom maids of Naples who have themselves neglected to learn the art of writing. Of such the public letter writer holds all the secrets of their loves and is often their adviser as well as amanuensis.

Discoveries in the Air.

The growth of ballooning has led to many curious investigations touching the atmosphere and its inhabitants. By the use of anchored balloons with self-registering instruments some of the experiments of deep-sea sounding have been repeated aloft. At Strasburg sounding balloons have been sent to a height of nearly 26,000 yards, and 19,000 yards to 20,000 yards is not an uncommon height. One of the astonishing things said to have resulted is the discovery at a height of 14,000 yards of an isothermal zone in which, contrary to experience up to that height, temperature does not diminish with recession from the earth.

Centenary of Mendelssohn

Born February 3, 1809

THE YEAR 1909 marks the one-hundredth anniversary of the birth of Felix Mendelssohn, the famous German composer, conductor, pianist and organist. He was born February 3, 1909, at Hamburg, North Germany, died at Leipzig, Saxony, November 4, 1847.

He was son of a banker, grandson of a celebrated Jewish scholar and reformer. In mature life the father was influenced to renounce the Jewish faith and add Bartholdy to the family name to distinguish his branch from the orthodox members of the family. Father and mother, the latter also of the Jewish race, adopted the Christian religion, the children were baptized and brought up as Christians.

The life of the Mendelssohn family was very interesting and beautiful, the children unusually gifted, in the home an art atmosphere making for full development of the individual gifts. Felix received his first piano instruction from his mother, from his earliest days both parents were devoted to the fostering of his genius. The story of Mendelssohn's life is not the record of bitter poverty and Herculean efforts in overcoming obstacles; he stands out a genius accustomed all his days to wealth and refinement.

The Mendelssohn family moved to Berlin when Felix was scarcely three years old, and in this city his childhood and youth were passed. The parents were strict disciplinarians; the children kept hard at work at their music; rising at five in the morning to begin their tasks. During a visit to Paris Felix studied under Mme. Bigot; in Berlin was under the instruction of Carl Zelter and benefited for a season by work with Moscheles. At the age of nine he made his first public appearance, the youthful pianist winning favor. In his eleventh year Felix entered the Singakademie; the following year he began systematically to compose. To this period belong a trio for piano and strings, a sonata for piano and violin, a sonata for piano, pieces for the organ, songs, a comedy and a cantata.

It was the custom in the Mendelssohn family to hold musical performances at their home every other Sunday, a small orchestra assisting, and these musicals were of the greatest value to the young musician. He enjoyed the opportunity of having his works presented, and he always conducted.

For the Sunday musicals Felix constantly wrote new works; at the age of 17 produced the delightful "Midsummer Night's Dream Overture"—"conceived by a genius and executed by a master." His one opera was brought out publicly the year following the overture, and though given a favorable reception on its presentation at the Berlin opera house, the piece was shortly withdrawn. The year 1829 is marked by an important event; the performance under Mendelssohn's direction of Bach's "St. Matthew's Passion," which created a great sensation and led to the great Bach revival. Succeeding this event, an invitation to visit London was accepted. Mendelssohn made his first public appearance in England at a philharmonic concert, the concert opening with his C minor symphony, the author himself conducting the presentation of his work. The newcomer was most enthusiastically received, and it was from England Mendelssohn's fame as composer spread abroad.

In London he published the first book of his "Songs Without Words." In that city to the end he had an enthusiastic army of admirers, loved and was beloved by the English public. In all he made ten visits to England. A short time before his death he journeyed to London to conduct a series of philharmonic concerts.

Of his work as conductor there stand forth most prominently his distinguished services while director of the Gewandhaus, Leipzig. In this city of Saxony he was very much at home, very happy, his work much appreciated—as it was not always in his home city of Berlin. In 1836 the University of Leipzig created him doctor of philosophy. From 1835 to 1841 he resided in Leipzig; the latter year yielded to the solicitations of the king of Prussia to return to Berlin. Official and court interference attended his efforts in Berlin, and he finally asked for liberty to withdraw, and found his way again to Leipzig. For a brief season he served as musical director at Dusseldorf conducted at the Lower Rhine festivals; in England performances of his oratorio "Elijah" were given under his direction.

Mendelssohn's compositions from the first were marked by finish and neatness. He corrected and revised with utmost fastidiousness. Of the mass of work left behind by him only the briefest mention can be given. The "Midsummer Night's Dream," the overture work of his youth, stands as one of his best productions. His oratorios, "Elijah" and "St. Paul," are ranked as the most notable of his works. Other notable vocal works with orchestra are the symphony-cantata, "Lobgesang," the "Gutenburg Cantata," the ballade "Die Erst Walpurgisnacht," music to the choruses Antigone," "Athalie" and "Aedipus in Colonus." He was author of much important church music in addition to that mentioned; his orchestral works include four symphonies and several concert overtures; the chamber music includes seven string-quartets, a sonata for violin and piano, an octet for strings, and various other works. He wrote for the organ three preludes and fugues, six sonatas, preludes in C minor; the piano compositions are numerous and distinguished. Fluency, grace and elegance are considered the chief technical characteristics of his music.

Mendelssohn was deeply interested in the establishing of a school of music in Leipzig, and in 1843 saw this cherished wish fulfilled, this the date of the opening of the Leipzig conservatory. He labored unremittingly for the success of the school, brought to it not only his prestige, but a practical business ability of much value.

Mendelssohn married at the age of 28, in his marriage good fortune still faithful, young Cecile Jeanrenaud of Frankfort, as amiable and interesting as she was beautiful. His domestic life was idyllic, center of all Cecile, as is shown in the letters. Five children were born to the pair.

Overwork and sudden shocks are thought to have been the cause of his death. The unexpected loss of his father was a great blow; his mother's end occurred in the same way, suddenly; and last came word that his sister Fanny, close friend and counselor, had been stricken while conducting a rehearsal of her little choir. Felix never recovered from the shock of Fanny's death, a few months later death coming to him. He was laid to rest in the Alte Dreifaltigkeits Kirchof in Berlin, his resting place marked by a cross.

KATHERINE POPE.

Found Immense Mountain Chain.

In describing his latest journey in Thibet, ended during the present year, Dr. Sven Hedin says that the greatest result achieved is the discovery of a continuous mountain chain, 2,000 miles long, stretching east and west, and which, taken as a whole, is the most massive range on the crust of the earth. Its average height above sea level is greater than that of the Himalayas, and, although its peaks are from 1,000 to 5,000 feet lower than Mount Everest, its passes average 2,000 feet higher than those of the Himalayas. The eastern and western parts of this range were known before, but the central and highest part, in Bongba, was unexplored, previously to Dr. Hedin's visit. He crossed ten passes in the range.—Youth's Companion.

Barnyard Bickerings.

"Get out of my way, you ignorant fowl," bleated the calf. "You don't amount to anything."

"Don't I," chuckled the old hen. "If you could hear folks grumble when they find veal in their chicken salad you'd change your tune. Run along now, and take your milk."—Chicago Daily News.

IMPUDENCE PERSONIFIED.

Robert Rustler—What did you say was the title of your new song?

Successful Chorus Lady—I call it "The Proposal."

Robert Rustler—And the key?

Successful Chorus Lady—B minor.

Robert Rustler—B mine—eh? How would you like to change it for a key in A flat?

THE PERUNA ALMANAC.

The druggists have already been supplied with the Peruna almanac for 1909. In addition to the regular astronomical matter usually furnished in almanacs, the articles on astrology are very attractive to most people. The mental characteristics of each sign are given with faithful accuracy. A list of lucky and unlucky days will be furnished to those who have our almanacs, free of charge. Address The Peruna Co., Columbus, O.

The Auctioneer's Hourglass.

An auctioneer of Philadelphia collects all sorts of objects pertaining to his ancient calling. He has, among other things, an interesting set of auctioneer's hourglasses.

The auctioneer, a century or so ago, concluded a sale, not by saying "Going—going—gone!" and rapping the counter with his hammer, but it was his better method to turn up a free-running glass toward the end of the bidding, and to end the sale irrevocably when the sands ran out. This saved confusion and dispute.

The auctioneer's glasses in the Philadelphia collection are picturesque. One is of tortoise shell and mother of pearl. Another is of amber and gold. A third is of teak and ivory.

Awful!

"We had such a protracted farewell," remarked So-and-So, "that I lost my train."

"You should have left farewell enough alone," he remarked.

For a moment they looked at him with the Chopin "funeral march" expression. But eventually they resolved to let him live.

Important to Mothers.

Examine carefully every bottle of CASTORIA a safe and sure remedy for infants and children, and see that it

Bears the Signature of *Chas. H. Fletcher*

In Use For Over 30 Years.

The Kind You Have Always Bought.

The Rev. William Y. Chapman of Newark, N. J., thinks that the uplift movement should be extended to the kitchen girl. "There is no one," he declares, "I sympathize with so much as the woman who things upon dishes and then has to wash the dishes again. It is the most thankless job on the planet."

Prof. Munyon says: Cure a cold and you prevent Consumption. His opinion is now shared by the leading physicians of the country, and the wonderful cures that are being made by Munyon's Cold Remedy have attracted the attention of the whole medical fraternity. These little sugar pellets break up a cold in a few hours, and almost universally prevent Bronchitis and Pneumonia.

There is in man a higher than love of happiness; he can do without happiness, and instead thereof find blessedness.—Carlyle.

PE-RU-NA TONIC FOR COUGHS, COLDS, CATARRH.

JOSEPH HALL CHASE

Peruna Drug Co., Columbus, Ohio.

Gentlemen: I have used Peruna, and find that it can be regarded as a tonic, as well as a cure for coughs, colds and catarrh.

You are authorized to use my photo with testimonial in any publication.

Joseph H. Chase,
804 Tenth St., Washington, D. C.

Cold and La Grippe

Mr. C. Happy, Hardin, Ray Co., Mo., writes: "I can safely recommend Peruna as a remedy that will cure all catarrhal troubles.

"It was of great benefit to me, as it cured me of catarrh of the throat, and I took a very bad cold and had la grippe last February. It settled in my throat and lungs. I took three bottles of Peruna and it cured me.

"I highly recommend it to all who are sick, and I am glad to add my endorsement to that of others."

Pe-ru-na for Colds

Mr. L. Clifford Figg, Jr., 2929 East Marshall St., Richmond, Va., writes that when he gets a cold he takes Peruna, and it soon drives it out of his system. For several years he was not entirely well, but Peruna completely cured him.

People who object to liquid medicines can now secure Peruna tablets.

For a free illustrated booklet entitled "The Truth About Peruna," address The Peruna Co., Columbus, Ohio. Mailed postpaid.