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 near 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 leaves Washington 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 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 sent with a message. Fleet mysteriously disappears. The kaiser is missing. King Edward of England is confronted by Admiral Bevins of the United States. The Dreadnaught, biggest of England's warships, is discovered at an impassable point in the Thames. The story now goes back to a time many months before the war breaks 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. A city for the manufacture of the mysterious discovery is built. The mystery of true levitation is solved. Roberts evolves a great flying machine. The cabinet plans a radioplane war against Japanese. The start for the scene of conflict with a large fleet of monster airships is made with Norma in command. The Japanese fleet, believing Nippon supreme, suddenly discerns the radioplane fleet. After maneuvering the airships descend, and by use of strong magnets lift the airships, one by one, from the sea. The trip to the west coast of America is then commenced. Because of a partially disabled radioplane, one of the warships is dropped into the sea after the men are transferred to another. The vessels are deposited in a mountain lake in the United States to await peace.

CHAPTER XIX.—Continued.

"Men," he said, "I take no credit for the result, and I'm big enough so to report to Washington. This battle brought out three heroes. Brockton, Jenkins and above all this little girl, Norma Roberts." His "God bless her!" was lost in the tumult. They were men intoxicated with the wine of victory. They yelled themselves hoarse. They patted one another on the back, hurled their caps into the air, and finally formed escorts of honor to conduct the men and officers of the fleet to their cabins, asking over and over for details of the fight.

And even as those tired fighters went to rest, in a city across the continent newsboys were crying their extras through the streets, and the citizens of a great city were asking one another how the night had worked its miracle. A lounging patrolman in Ravenna park, which bordered on Lake Washington, had sleepily rubbed his eyes as the sun was tinting the everlasting snows of the Olympics, and had come to a sudden stop, leaning against a tree and wondering if he was still asleep; but with his knuckles he could not obliterate the floating vision before him. He convinced himself by a lusty hail: "Hello, out there! What are you doing? Get off that lake!" and back to him there volleyed a storm of objurgations in an unknown tongue. Not until he had called a fellow officer and rowed a boat round those fallen monarchs of the deep did he learn that they were captive to his country, and then, elated with the news, he hastened to impart it.

But this was not the only surprise for Seattle. For some days preceding troops had been pouring into the port, and it had been the general belief that they were being mobilized preparatory to embarkation for the Philippines or Japan. On this morning, however, there was an exodus. Nearly all the troops had disappeared in the night. Likewise there were strange happenings in the telegraph offices. When men went to consign messages they were met with the intelligence that the wires were in charge of military operators, that nothing could be received for any point beyond the borders of the United States, and that all messages without exception would be censored before transmission. The newspapers fumed and roared, until they learned that all incoming news would pass uninterruptedly; but that for purposes known only to the government the story of the presence of the Japanese fleet would be closely guarded for the time being. For once the Post-Intelligence, the Times and Star united in attacking the administration.

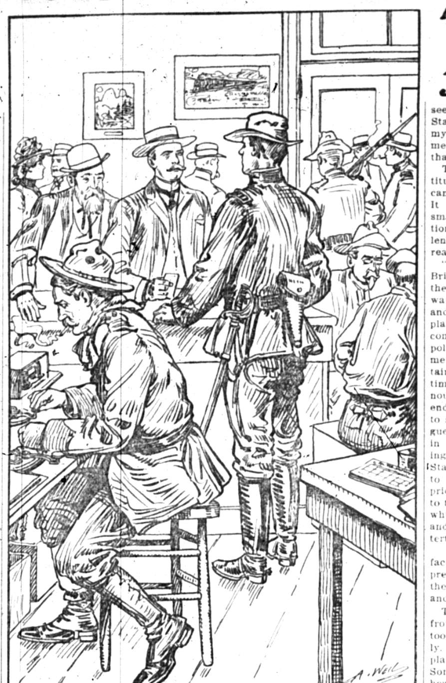
Polite officers forwarded appeals from the chamber of commerce to Washington; but the government answered that there was no alternative, because if the secret was known throughout the United States the chances for its leakage across the lines would be augmented. All Sound traffic stopped, and from the great union depot no departing trains rumbled. Within an hour it was known that a cordon of soldiers surrounded the city, and that all traffic or communication with the outside world was interdicted. Seattle had been isolated.

Thus it was that the presence of the captured fleet and the method of its taking were unknown to the country at large. Seattle extended all consistent courtesies to the vanquished; but it afforded little balm.

And thus it was that for many days, imprisoned, powerless, and lost, with crippled tops, crushed stacks and under the white flag of surrender, the flower of Japanese prowess floated on an inland sea in sullen mourning, while the gasping world shuddered in contemplation of its fate.

CHAPTER XX.
What Befell the Emperor.

Like a lonely rock that has withstood the fury of a storm and the battering of the seas to emerge again into sunlight, the president felt his time of justification approaching. His hour of triumph was at hand, and his prayers were being answered; but the task was not yet done.



The Wires Were in Charge of Military Operators.

The unqualified victory over the Japanese fleet made the outcome of the war a certainty; hence it was with patience that the administration waited for the next move in the far east, which must of necessity come China. There was no doubt that she would assist her ally. At first this seemed an imminent action; but several days passed bringing through the secret service no news save that her fleet, huge and well manned, was making preparations to sail. The president, knowing that for the accomplishment of his purpose oriental power must be broken, indulged in the fervent hope that the attack might come soon.

There was less trouble internally, as the people were beginning to have faith in the administration, though they were speculating as to what course of procedure was being followed. It was while affairs were in this condition that the sailing of the British fleet was duly announced through secret channels of information. The coterie saw before it the necessity of either abandoning the hope of teaching China a drastic lesson and announcing its secret to the world or meeting the British squadrons and holding them hostage in the interest of peace. They chose the latter alternative, and thereby was caused the strangest chapter in the history of war.

Like that other sally outward to the western seas, this one was timely. It was made when the British fleet might be met beyond the reach of wireless telegraph communication, and the departure from the key was also under cover of darkness. Again there was a resemblance to the Japanese affair, in that the appearance of the radioplanes created surprise and consternation on the warships. Here, however, the similarity ended. The Anglo-Saxon mind knows no such thing as surrender when once it is stirred to the depths of its stubbornness. It can read only two answers to the riddle of conflict—victory or death—as has been attested by many a hard-fought battle on land and sea.

The armada of Great Britain had sailed with apprehensions, being fully cognizant that it was invading a territory of mystery and danger, and the vigilance of its watch, therefore, was never relaxed. The consternation caused by the first sight of the aerial fleet was immediately followed by a hurried clearing of the decks for action, although defeat in a battle against such overpowering odds was a foregone conclusion. No gun was fired, however, and all stood expectantly awaiting a declaration of intent from the monsters of the air which had come upon them in the full glare of the afternoon sun.

With slow and stately majesty the radioplanes approached, each flying the flag of the United States and beneath it the emblem of truce. The Dreadnought, answering sluggishly to the swell and hurling great cascades of water from its bow, was in the heart of the formation, and in its ponderous might seemed fearless of anything afloat. Toward it the foremost radioplane directed its course, dropping steadily down until full abreast and on a level with the great fighting tops, while the officers of the battle ship watched with amazement its splendid control. Not till then was there a visible display of life aboard it. A port opened and into the blackness of its frame Bevins emerged, while directly behind him stood the scientist, who had recovered, and was to witness the first full demonstration of the power he had evolved. On the bridge of the battle ship the British admiral stood, surrounded by staff officers.

"Good afternoon, admiral," the American hailed. "Glad to see you. How do you like the looks of us?"

Across Fields' face flitted a half smile. "We are very well indeed, Admiral Bevins; but can't say we are particularly glad to see you, or sure that we like you until we know more. Clever invention that. Must have been conceived by an Englishman."

Behind the United States officer a withered little figure became imbued with a sudden frenzy of passion that threatened to interject an unpleasant remark; but Bevins checked him with a laugh and grew serious again.

"Admiral," he said, "my country isn't at war with yours. You understand that."

Fields looked relieved, and lost somewhat of his air of set defiance. At the head of his men he crossed to the end of the bridge where he might be nearer the one addressing him. The nervous strain of the situation was being rapidly diminished. "Frankly, I'm glad to be reassured," he replied. "There are a lot of things we'd rather know."

"And which I shall be glad to explain if you and a dozen of your immediate subordinates will come aboard as my guests."

The invitation was immediately accepted; but it was a trying interview for the Britons. The machine on which they were received was the Roberts, which was the latest production of the plant on the key. It was larger than its predecessors, and had been made the most pretentious. It was elegantly appointed. Amidships it contained a drawing room on which the most careful workmanship had been lavished. The guests gathered round a huge mahogany table, whose polished top reflected the light from the colored ports of the dome, and were served with refreshments before Bevins recurred to the object of his visit. He drew from his pocket an official packet and laid it open before him.

"Gentlemen," he began, "of course you are interested in all that you have seen, and in the attitude of the United States. What I shall read to you are my orders. I have come out here to meet you for the purpose, first of all, that you may hear them."

The Roberts had ascended to an altitude above the others of the American fleet, and was resting in mid air. It was very still, the light hum of a small dynamo from behind the partitions being the only disturber of silence. He opened the document and read:

"You are instructed to intercept the British fleet and assure its officers of the good will of the United States toward his majesty, King Edward VII., and all his subjects. You are to explain to them that the United States is compelled, in pursuance of its adopted policy formulated at the commencement of the war with Japan, to maintain the secret of its power until such time as it is deemed expedient to announce it to the world. You will then endeavor to induce the British fleet to surrender itself into your hands as guests of this country, assuring those in command that all damages accruing will be repaired by the United States. You are to use all due caution to avoid injury to life, property, or pride, and to transport the entire fleet to the waters of Chesapeake bay, after which for a brief period the officers and men of Great Britain will be entertained by the United States."

Bevins stopped and looked into the faces confronting him, which expressed a variety of emotions, running the gamut from stolidity to wonder, and from compliance to indignation.

The British admiral's visage was a frowning one. "Your country asks too much!" he said, almost explosively. "And really it volunteers no explanation of its acts or intentions." Some of his companions nodded their heads in approval. "We can't accept."

Bevins reopened the parchment. "I must then read you the concluding clause," he said, and began:

"It is strongly desired that there be no clash at arms; but in any event you are to return with the fleet."

There was brief silence in the room, which was broken by Fields, who jumped to his feet. Bevins rose, and the other officers did likewise. The situation threatened unhappy conclusions; but Bevins held up a restraining hand and went on:

"Here! Before you underestimate the force of this last clause, let me give you a demonstration of what we can do and how difficult it would be for you to offer any defense or effective resistance whatever."

He turned to a speaking tube, gave a curt order and requested his visitors to look through the transparent ports, which were suddenly opened beneath their feet. The Roberts swept up into the air to such a prodigious height that the internal pressure against her shell became terrific. She was at such an altitude that no mortal being could have withstood the strain, and only her splendid anchorable construction and cohesive qualities kept her from flying apart. The world below was reduced in appearance until its surface was obliterated in a dull haze and the shadows of the sun were marked against its eastern outline.

In great circles she descended, until the water again became visible, then the vessels upon it, and last of all the crests of the waves. Now she swooped lower, and then at a speed of nearly 600 miles an hour whipped a straight line close above the tops of the fighting masts, slowed down, and whirled in and out, about and above the British ships as easily as would a swallow in playful flight. On the decks of the vessels men stared in wide-eyed amazement at this demon of the air, at first fearing that control had been lost and the lives of those aboard were in jeopardy. Then at the splendid exhibition of speed and handling they were dumbfounded. The Roberts then rose in one quick lift until it was above the plane of altitude assumed by the other machines, poised for a moment, and came to a stop. In all this time no one had spoken a word. Now they turned to the American, unloosing their convulsive clutches from the seats and liberated from the spell.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

NEIGHBORS KNEW HER HABITS

Matter That Puzzled Mrs. Lawton Really Was Quite Simple.

When the Lawtons had lived in Willow park about a month they were invited to a succession of little dinners at the houses of their new neighbors. Mr. Lawton was on a dyspeptic's diet, and Mrs. Lawton was endeavoring to reduce her weight. "I suppose we shall have to eat all sorts of things we don't wish, or else seem rude," said Mrs. Lawton, mournfully, as they set out for the first dinner.

To their growing surprise the bill of fare placed before them at each dinner, although not remarkably varied, was composed of such dishes as they could both enjoy.

"I don't see how you all hit on just the right things, when Mr. Lawton and I are such difficult guests," said Mrs. Lawton in a burst of confidence one afternoon when the neighbors were taking tea with her.

The ladies looked at each other, and then one of them spoke.

"You know Mary Sloan, who comes to wash for you Tuesday mornings?" she said. "Well, I have her Mondays, and Mrs. Green has her Wednesdays, and she irons for Mrs. Porter Thursdays and scrubs for Miss Homer Fridays, so you see—"

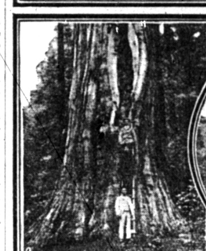
Her voice trailed off into silence, but Mrs. Lawton no longer wondered; she "saw."—Youth's Companion.

Character Shown in Face.

An amiable face is trustworthy. If eyes are shifting and you have discovered insincerity—then beware.

CALAVERAS BIG TREES
NOW SAFE IN NATIONAL FOREST RESERVE.

LOGGING BIG TREE



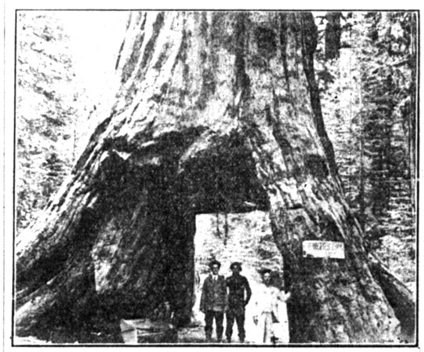
FIRE SCAR IN A BIG TREE

BIG TREES HOTEL

One of the acts of the closing weeks of President Roosevelt's administration for which he will be remembered by the present and coming generations whose privilege it may be to visit the region of the big trees of California was the signing of the bill creating the Calaveras National forest, California. This act saves for all time the most famous grove of trees in the world.

The people of California, particularly the 500 women of the California club, have been working to interest the government in this wonderful grove of big trees for more than nine years, but not until now has it been possible to arrange a plan satisfactory alike to the owner of the land and to congress.

The land to be acquired under the bill includes about 960 acres in what is known as the North Calaveras grove in Calaveras county, and 3,040 acres in the South Grove in Tuolumne county. The North Grove contains 93 big trees and in the South Grove there are 1,380 of these giant sequoias. Any tree under 18 feet in circumference, or six feet through, is not considered in the count of large trees. Besides the giant sequoias there are hundreds of sugar pines and yellow pines of astonishing proportions, ranging to the height of 275 feet and often attaining a diameter of eight to ten feet. There are also many white firs and incense cedars in the two tracts. A government study of the land was made by a field party under the direction of Fred G. Plummer, United States forest service, in 1906.



Pioneer Cabin. The Hollow Butt Is Exposed in the Roof of the Driveway.

The Calaveras big trees are known the world over. The North Grove contains ten trees each having a diameter of 25 feet or over, and more than 70 having a diameter of 15 to 25 feet.

Perhaps no one is more entitled to credit for saving the big trees than is Mrs. Lovell White, one of California's charming daughters, who has been persistent in her efforts to secure proper action from congress. Mrs. White is the wife of Mr. Lovell White, a prosperous and conservative banker in the Golden state. She is notable among California's great army of noble women for the uplift of the people, morally and materially. She is the chairman of the Calaveras Big Tree committee, of the Outdoor Art league of California, and of other clubs and public bodies whose chief aims are the civic, industrial and artistic betterment of San Francisco.

Mrs. Lovell White.

When she arrived in Washington as a delegate to the Woman's National Rivers and Harbors congress she frankly told every United States senator and member of the lower house whom she met that she "intended to remain here until she had succeeded in inducing congress to pass the Calaveras bill," which had been introduced early in the session by Senator Perkins. Her announcement, made in her characteristically modest and refined yet determined manner, was smilingly received; and, sometimes, she was gently reminded of the fate that befell similar bills presented by Senator Perkins and other California congressmen. "Let us forget the past and its mistakes," was her courteous and apt retort, "and make amends by uniting in this feasible plan of preserving to the world the greatest living marvels now extant in the universe."

TRUE ENOUGH!

"But who speaks all the languages on your notice board?"
"Those who read it, sir."

TIRED OF THE REPETITION.

Plausible Argument Advanced by Youthful Tactician.

Dorothy, aged eight years, was very fond of going to church, and when a severe cold made it unwise for her to be allowed to attend services one Sunday morning she was disconsolate.

"Frauline will read the Bible to you," her father assured her.

"I don't want to hear the Bible read. I want to say my prayers," objected the child.

"God will hear your prayers just the same if you say them at home as if you were in church," she was told.

"But I don't know any without the prayer-book," argued Dorothy.

"Why, you know 'Now I lay me down to sleep,'" papa said.

"But God has heard that so often," she remonstrated.—Harper's Weekly.

WHOLE TEAM.

Ida—Yes; that is Mrs. Petleigh. Her husband is a famous coach.

May—That's a good combination. She's a regular nag.

Fate of the Dutchman.

Patrick arrived home much the worse for wear. One eye was closed, his nose was broken and his face looked as though it had been stung by bees.

"Glory be!" exclaimed his wife.

"Thot Dutchman Schwartzheimer—'twas him," explained Patrick.

"Shame on ye!" exploded his wife without sympathy. "A big shpalpeen the loikes of you to get bate up by a little omadhoun of a Dootchman the size of him! Why—"

"Whist, Nora," said Patrick, "don't spake disrespectfully of the dead!"

Safe and Sure.

Among the medicines that are recommended and endorsed by physicians and nurses is Kemp's Balsam, the best cough cure. For many years it has been regarded by doctors as the medicine most likely to cure coughs, and it has a strong hold on the esteem of all well-informed people. When Kemp's Balsam cannot cure a cough we shall be at a loss to know what will. At druggists' and dealers', 25c.

We are ruined, not by what we really want, but by what we think we want; it is wise, therefore, never to go abroad in search of our wants.—Punshion.

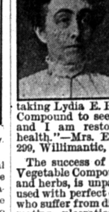
ONLY ONE "BROMO QUININE."
That is LAXATIVE BROMO QUININE. Look for the signature of E. W. GROVE. Used the World over to Cure a Cold in One Day. 25c.

If duty would use a megaphone more of us might hear the call.

AFTER DOCTORS FAILED

Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound Cured Her.

Willimantic, Conn.—"For five years I suffered untold agony from female troubles, causing backache, irregularities, dizziness and nervous prostration. It was impossible for me to walk upstairs without stopping on the way. I tried three different doctors and each told me something different. I received no benefit from any of them, but seemed to suffer more. The last doctor said nothing would restore my health. I began taking Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound to see what it would do, and I am restored to my natural health."—Mrs. Etta Donovan, Box 299, Willimantic, Conn.



The success of Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound, made from roots and herbs, is unparalleled. It may be used with perfect confidence by women who suffer from displacements, inflammation, ulceration, fibroid tumors, irregularities, periodic pains, backache, bearing-down feeling, flatulency, indigestion, dizziness, or nervous prostration.

For thirty years Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound has been the standard remedy for female ills, and suffering women owe it to themselves to at least give this medicine a trial. Proof is abundant that it has cured thousands of others, and why should it not cure you?

FITS

If you suffer from Fits, Falling Sickness, Spasms or have children or friends that do so, my New Discovery will relieve them, and all you are asked to do is send for a FREE Bottle of Dr. May's Epilepticide Cure.

It has cured thousands where everything else failed. Sent free with directions. Express Prepaid. Guaranteed by May Medical Laboratory, under the National Food and Drugs Act, June 30th, 1906. Guaranty No. 971. Please give AGE and full address.

DR. W. H. MAY,
548 Pearl Street, New York City.

SICK HEADACHE

CARTER'S LITTLE LIVER PILLS.

Positively cured by these Little Pills.

They also relieve Distress from Dyspepsia, Indigestion and Too Hearty Eating. A perfect remedy for Dizziness, Nausea, Drowsiness, Bad Taste in the Mouth, Coated Tongue, Pain in the Side, TORPID LIVER. They regulate the Bowels. Purely Vegetable.

SMALL PILL. SMALL DOSE. SMALL PRICE.

CARTER'S LITTLE LIVER PILLS.

Genuine Must Bear Fac-Simile Signature

Brentgood

REFUSE SUBSTITUTES.