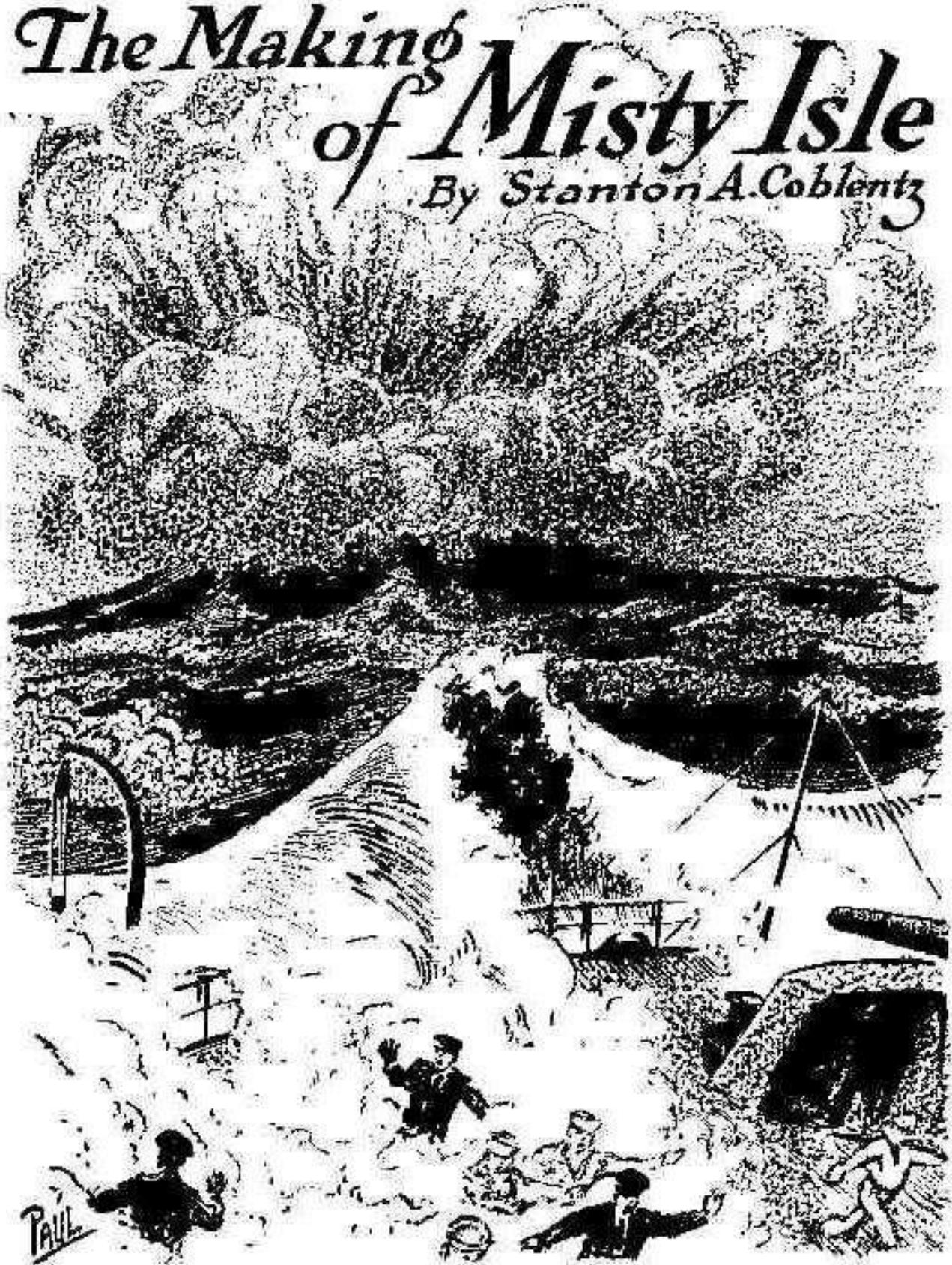


The Making of Misty Isle

By Stanton A. Coblenz





The Making of The Misty Isle

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CHAPTER I - Four Conspirators

WITHIN an oak-paneled office in one of the capitals of the western hemisphere, four men were gathered in sober consultation. Three of them were advanced in years, with the wizened looks, the crafty eyes, the confirmed cynicism of aspect common among elderly politicians; the fourth, a man not yet out of his thirties, appeared in some ways the shrewdest of the group, and in his large sagacious eyes there was a light as cold as that glimmering from winter ice. It he was who, with a chart unfolded before him, was addressing the small gathering; and they listened to him with intent, calculating glances as his fluent words came forth.

"Yes, Mr. President," he was saying, with a nod toward the grayest and most shrivelled of his companions. "The scheme is entirely practicable. And you, Mr. Secretary, and you, General Blackfoot"—here he pointed toward the two other men—"will have to agree. For ten years I have been working out the plan, and there is no engineering detail that my experts and I have not thoroughly weighed and tested."

"Then you mean," drawled the individual addressed as "Mr. President," "you mean that it will be possible to create an island artificially? And the procedure will be safe and efficient? We may contemplate the completion of the work within two years? Is that the idea, Mr. Turnbull?"

Turnbull nodded gravely.

"Beyond that," put in General Blackfoot, "may we be sure that the island will be in a position of strategic importance? And that the operations can be kept scrupulously secret?"

Again Turnbull nodded. "Just look at this chart," he requested, pointing to a spot somewhere in the northern Pacific. "You see here a location well off all the regular ship lanes. It is hundreds of miles from any known island, and yet not much over a thousand miles from the eastern coast of Asia. Now at one point, where we have investigated, the sea-bottom rises out of a tremendously deep trough to within fifty fathoms of the surface. This is evidently the

peak of a submarine mountain—or, rather a submarine volcano. And it is this peak which we propose to elevate until it overtops the waves.”

The speaker paused, and, with heavy fingers stroking his huge square chin, looked out across the long room with its neat, even rows of desks, its tall filing cabinets and high sectional bookcases.

"Are you perfectly sure no one can overhear us?" he whispered.

"Perfectly sure," returned the President, with a confident glance toward the barred door.

"I gave advance orders to the Secret Service. There is no danger of spies."

A furtive light flashed into Turnbull's chilly eyes. "Well, then, this is what I should propose," he continued, in low, significant tones. "We will induce the legislature to vote an extra ten millions under the blanket term of 'military appropriations.' With those ten millions we will set about, in absolute secrecy, to carry out our scheme. The main thing, of course, will be to keep the facts concealed. When our island has been created, its uses will be many. It will be invaluable as a military center. It will serve as a naval coaling station; it will be a center for the harboring and re-embarkation of military forces; it will be indispensable as a submarine and aviation base, from which our undersea craft may harry Asiatic commerce and our bombing planes destroy the coastal cities. Then at last the conquest of eastern China or Siberia, or of Japan itself, will not be beyond our grasp."

General Blackfoot, had come almost to swords' rapacious glitter appeared in his small keen eyes. "A magnificent project," he approved. "Really, a patriotic service of the first rank. But I still am not convinced of its feasibility. You will have to make the first part of your plan a little clearer, Dr. Turnbull. Just how are we to lift this island out of the ocean?"

Turnbull smiled tolerantly, and explained, "As I was saying before, the idea offers no exceptional technical difficulties. The region we have chosen is not only volcanic, but actively volcanic, and innumerable reports, seismographic and otherwise, show that constant

disturbances are occurring beneath the surface, indeed, the record of tidal waves alone would prove the occurrence of submarine volcanic eruptions. Now what does all this imply Clearly, that not far beneath the sea-bed, there is an enormous vein of the molten rock, or magma, which is believed to give rise to volcanic eruptions. This overheated rock, together with tremendous quantities of hot vapor, is continually pressing upward in the attempt to escape; and only the opposing pressure of the solid crust prevents it from spouting forth violently. But occasionally the fuming torrents below, breaking through some fissure or fault in the earth, become powerful enough to overcome the pressure of the crust; and then we have a volcanic eruption. Such eruptions hitherto have been due wholly to natural causes; but there is no reason why they cannot be created artificially. If the crust above is weakened sufficiently, they can be produced almost at will. And it is my object actually to produce one — and to produce it beneath the sea. By means of a new super-explosive — ‘hyperblast’ I call it — I will be able to blow away the bed of the sea to a depth of hundreds of feet, thereby diminishing the pressure upon the molten magma beneath, and enabling the white-hot liquid and the torrid fumes to break to the surface in an eruption of exceptional violence. The released material will be certain to pile up to a considerable height, surmounting the surface of the sea and giving birth to a new island. You may take my word for it when I tell you this can be done. As chief engineering consultant for the government, and the inventor of hyperblast,

I have had the opportunity to test the project to the last detail.”

An impressive silence followed this recital. General Blackfoot leaned far back in his swivel chair, a gleam of exultant interest in his ferret eyes; the President sat pulling meditatively at his thin shred of a grayish beard, for all the world like a ruminant chewing its cud. Only the Secretary seemed still not quite persuaded.

“This hyperblast of yours makes me wonder, Dr. Turnbull,” he confessed. “How is it to be planted at the bottom of the sea? By divers? By submarine? Or are you to shoot it down with a powerful gun?”

The grim face of Dr. Turnbull brightened with just the suggestion of a smile. “You are becoming frivolous, Mr. Secretary. No, I should not like to try shooting the explosive down with a gun. My method, however, is simpler than that. Wrapped in waterproof containers, and weighed down with lead, the hyperblast will be dropped in neat half-ton packages from the side of a vessel. Dozens of such bombs will be released, all of them operating by means of slow time-fuses, and all calculated to explode at the same instant. Needless to say, we will first allow ample time for the vessel to reach port. You may judge of the efficiency of hyperblast when I tell you that it is ten thousand times more powerful than dynamite. I discovered the secret of it quite by chance; it is made of a thorium oxide, associated with radioactive compounds; and its peculiar quality is due to a method I have found for accelerating the radio-activity to the point of explosiveness. By comparison with it, TNT appears like a child’s cap pistol. Six or eight of the bombs would be sufficient to make kindling wood of the city of New York.”

“Good!” declared the Secretary, with an enthusiastic nod. “Splendid ! Then you have no doubt at all, Dr. Turnbull? Your new explosive can blow away the surface of the sea and release the subterranean forces?”

“Unquestionably!” affirmed Turnbull.

“Well, I for one move that we adopt the recommendation,” urged General Blackfoot, rubbing his thin hands together as at some appetizing prospects. “I feel sure that the measure will make military history.”

And he laughed a dry, sly laugh that had in it a faintly malicious suggestion.

“It will make world history,” concurred the President, also laughing furtively. . . . “Well, then, if every one is agreed, I personally will point out to the legislature the need for higher

military appropriations. The necessity for self-defense will be my plea. . . No one except us four, of course, will know what the additional funds are to be used for.”

And all four conferees smiled, and congratulated one another. And a few moments later, when they took their way out of the big oak-paneled room, it was with the stern and serious looks of men who contemplate momentous deeds.

CHAPTER II - Great Preparations

DURING the early months of the following year, the world was startled by the account of a gigantic disturbance in the northern Pacific. Seismographs from London to Tokio recorded an earthquake of exceptional intensity and of several minutes' duration ; and all accounts agreed in placing the point of origin somewhere in the northwestern Pacific, at a spot not more than a thousand or fifteen hundred miles from the Asiatic mainland. For this reason, authorities concurred in connecting the earthquake with the tidal wave of almost simultaneous occurrence, which was felt from Hawaii to the Aleutian islands, and from the Chinese mainland to southern California. No one knows how many fishing smacks were overwhelmed, how many sailing vessels were swamped and capsized in that cataclysmic swelling of the waters, which sent the waves pounding into many an island village, which lifted great steamers and left them high and dry upon sloping beaches, which drowned by the thousands the inhabitants of coastal lowlands, and brought mourning and anguish to twenty nations. No one can calculate the losses; and, in the horror of that first unexpected shock, no one could trace the source of the clouds of thin dust and cinders, accompanied in places by Sulphurous vapors, which were blown over half the surface of the Pacific, and far inland into China and Siberia, as though from some wide-reaching volcanic outburst. Scientists, of course, were not slow to recognize that there must actually have been a volcanic disturbance—probably an eruption on some remote and uninhabited island well out of the ordinary ship-lanes. The one inexplicable fact was that, even

after the passage of months, no island had been observed which showed signs of a recent upheaval.

But what the world generally did not surmise was that strange and strenuous activities were in progress at some unmapped spot in the Pacific. Where the charts designated no island, an island had come into existence—a bleak, black affair of jagged lava, six miles long and three miles wide, and rising in places to a height of seven or eight hundred feet above the sea. "Misty Isle" it was called by the few who knew the secret of its existence; and the name was well chosen, for the land was shielded from the possible sight of approaching vessels by a perpetual veil of fog.

The fog, however, owed its existence to none of the whims of nature. Had one approached to within a few yards of the shore, one would have observed a multitude of little pipes, from which torrents of steam continually hissed; and one would have seen that these pipes, connected with a central heating plant, extended completely around the island, discharging their vapors in such volume that the land was invisible a quarter of a mile away. From the point of view of sunlight and cheerfulness this may have been a disadvantage, since the mists and drizzly rains that perpetually overhung the place were a trial to all except the least susceptible of nerves; yet from the practical point of view, the darkness scarcely mattered, since work on the island could be pursued as well by electric light as by the light of the sun. And when—as happened now and then—the sneaking gray form of some naval collier, or some inconspicuous supply ship or transport, came gliding toward the shore, the hazes would always open miraculously, and the vessel would find safe anchorage in a little harbor cut out of the jutting rocks. It is said, however, that on several occasions an unwanted ship came blundering toward the shore; that once a Japanese tramp, lost in the fog, foundered on the outlying reefs, and that several merchant steamers and one Japanese gunboat, afterwards reported missing, came to grief among the uncharted shoals of Misty Isle. But whether the presence of these craft

were deliberate or accidental, it is certain that no member of any of their crews ever returned to make public the story of his adventures.

It is certain, also, that had any such individual returned, he would have had a tale that would have made the world sit up with a gasp and a shudder. For the things that were occurring would have been sufficient to send a wave of apprehension from one end of the earth to the other. In spite of the heat of the cooling lava—a heat which, even after six months kept the temperature of Misty Isle hovering about the nineties—prodigious engineering activities were in process of completion. Almost every inch of the island's thirteen square miles was the scene of vigorous operations; the uneven surface of the land, the deep furrows and chasms, the ragged ridges and cones, had been smoothed down and made passable; a line of rocky fortifications was appearing along niches and eminences of the shore; an aviation landing field had been cleared in the center of the island; an artificial harbor for submarines and surface craft had been excavated; rude wooden shanties for the housing of thousands of men had been installed; a large concrete building for military supplies was being erected; a plant for distilling sea-water, and for engendering electrical power from the waves, had been established; an enormous depository for coal had come into existence, and some of the black mineral was already in use to produce the clouds of steam about the island. As yet, of course, the designs of Dr. Turnbull and his associates were far from fulfillment; but the naval department, reporting in strictest confidence the progress of the work, informed him that all things were proceeding according to schedule, and that there was every reason to look for the ultimate triumph of his plans.

Ready to Strike

A YEAR later, another secret meeting occurred in the large room of the oaken panels. The same four dignitaries participated; they convened in the same sedate and earnest manner

as before. One might, in fact, have observed in them the same expression of confident self-importance, of cynicism, and craft, and world wisdom. In the intervening twenty-four months, they had not changed except in one respect; about the eyes of all four there was a look of exultation that had not been there previously; and, as they conferred in whispers and from time to time slyly chuckled, they had something of the jubilant, gloating expression of beasts of prey contemplating a prospective victim.

"Well, Turnbull," declared the President, after taking care to see that the door was securely barred and that there was no danger of eavesdroppers, "the long-awaited moment has come! Misty Isle is in readiness. It remains only to make use of it."

Turnbull withdrew the cigar from between his heavy lips, and slowly made reply, "Yes, it only remains to make use of it. Before leaving the island on my last tour of investigation, I found every detail in order. My part is done. The rest is in the hands of the government."

Turnbull's three companions rubbed their hands in shrewd self-satisfaction, and the predatory gleam in their eyes became more pronounced.

It was General Blackfoot who broke the pleased silence that ensued. "I am sorry to have to confess, Dr. Turnbull, that I have always had one fear. As yet, of course, no one outside the inner circle suspects what we have done. The two thousand workers—members of our naval and marine forces, who were transported to the island involuntarily—have never been allowed to leave, and all their letters have been censored. And so no inopportune word from them is going to spread the news. None the less, I have been afraid that some treachery among those in high command might betray our secret. For that reason, I have been anxious to strike, and strike in full force, and strike soon. It is an axiom of military strategy that the speed with which a blow is delivered——"

“Yes, yes, I realize all that,” interrupted the President, with an understanding nod. “Do not think that I, too, have not been anxious for quick action. The Secretary here will tell you that he and I have passed many a long night together working out the plans——”

“Indeed we have!” acknowledged the Secretary, scarcely permitting his superior to finish. And, drawing a small chart from an inner pocket, he unrolled it on the table before the eager eyes of his companions.

“This is the scheme,” he continued, hastily, while the others bent over him with absorbed attention. “General Blackfoot and Dr. Turnbull may, of course, have amendments to offer. We will begin by sending two hundred bombing planes, of various types, by carriers to Misty Isle. At the same time, fifty submarines will concentrate about the island, and twenty battleships and cruisers, along with double that number of destroyers and colliers and a hundred transports, will proceed to the base, and will be coaled to capacity. All that will then be left to attend to will be the official declaration of war. This is a bothersome technicality, which none the less we may settle by arranging to insult the Japanese ambassador, or proposing such a vicious anti-Japanese law that Tokio cannot help protesting. I take it, of course, that Japan will be our first target. We can then follow at our leisure as regards eastern China and Siberia. The moment war is declared, it will be won; for, by that time, our bombing planes will be approaching the enemy's coast, and the discharges of hyperblast will not leave two stones standing in any of the important Japanese cities. Naturally, however, we will not cause any more damage than is necessary for strictly military purposes.”

“No, naturally not,” agreed General Blackfoot, with a low chuckle.

“It will be the most sudden and skillful invasion in history,” proceeded the Secretary. “The blow will be delivered so quickly that no one will know where it comes from. The troops from the transports will finish up what our air forces and our fleet leave uncompleted. I propose that we strike immediately!”

“So do I!” seconded the General.

“Just one minute,” counselled Turnbull, eyeing his companions speculatively. “It seems to me that General Blackfoot, before planning his campaign, should see the island in person. And so should you, Mr. President, and you, Mr. Secretary. I personally recommend that a man-of-war be commissioned to take us all for a brief visit of inspection to Misty Isle. After that, we will be in a better position to act. The delay will not take up more than a month, at most.”

The three officials rubbed their gray heads thoughtfully, and a long discussion followed. But the arguments of Turnbull were persuasive, and little by little he made it plain to his companions that haste was likely to mean waste. And both the President and the Secretary ended by confessing a secret desire to see the island.

A few days later, the newspapers bore the tidings that the President, being overtaxed with the cares of office, had been ordered by his private physician to take a few weeks’ vacation in absolute seclusion. Speculations as to his whereabouts were many, but nothing was known definitely except that his Secretary and General Blackfoot were to accompany him. At the same time, it was noted that Dr. Turnbull—as very frequently of late—was not to be observed at his offices at the National Bureau of Engineering.

CHAPTER III - The Inspection

THE two thousand marines and naval recruits busy with the routine of work and drill on Misty Isle, did not guess the identity of the four aloof and closely mantled individuals who, accompanied by an armed guard, made their way slowly among the barracks and the fortifications, pausing now and then to inspect some interesting detail or to give some order, but never overheard to make any except the most trivial remarks. Had any of the watching men pressed closely enough, however, he might have heard the visitors occasionally grunting in

satisfaction, in wonder, in pleasurable anticipation; and he would have known that something nameless and mighty was being agitated in the minds of the inscrutable four.

In all respects but one, the island had met the expectations of the unknown dignitaries. With the planning and execution of the scheme they could find no fault; the harbor, the aviation field, the storage depots seemed to them to have been designed faultlessly; even the abominable climate, with the damp heat and the yellow electric light shining perpetually through a foggy glare, seemed to them necessary and consequently praiseworthy. But one thing there was that caused them some slight concern. On an outlying northern spur of the island, an unlooked for manifestation had been observed. A torrent of steam and boiling water had leapt up from amid the lava; and investigation proved that the rock, a few feet below the surface, had been heated to a white glare. Considerable annoyance and even a little alarm was occasioned by this lingering evidence of volcanic activity; but Dr. Turnbull and his experts, conducted a careful examination, concluded that this represented but the last dying gasp of the eruption that had brought Misty Isle into being. None the less, one of the group, taking a pessimistic view, whispered in secret a prophecy that made the cheeks of his fellows turn pale.

But his remarks were greeted with vigorous denials, and in the end were discredited. And the preparations on Misty Isle went on much as in the past. . . .

Before the visiting officials took passage for home, they were to see those preparations reach the final stage. They were to see huge ships come gliding into the harbor like ghostly marauders, and other ships leaving like thieves in the night; they were to watch troops disembarking by the hundreds and the thousands, and marching into barracks made ready long in advance; they were to observe the unloading of guns and torpedoes and gas-masks and huge parcels of high explosive; they were to hear mysterious messages whispered in the darkness, and to catch sight of sentries standing guard on every hazy eminence; in their ears the tramp of training myriads was to resound, the sharp orders of the captains and lieutenants, the clicking

of rifles and the thudding of bayonets as the recruits charged dummy targets; a droning of airplane motors was to fill the air, and now and then the dull bursting of bombs; while, within the secrecy of well guarded offices, ageing men in uniform were to pore over red-marked charts, pointing meaningfully to spot after spot on the islands or mainland of Asia, and issuing orders to subordinates who stole in to them stealthily, and as stealthily disappeared.

At the same time, the four dignitaries were frequently to be seen in the vicinity of the island's well equipped wireless station; and many a message in a secret code was flashed between them and their home country. It may have been for this reason that, just before their visit drew to a close, strange and disquieting events began to agitate the world at large. With the unexpectedness of a blast from an untroubled sky, a diplomatic rupture appeared between two of the great nations of the earth. Japan, and that western empire which was the home of Dr. Turnbull and General Blackfoot, had come almost to swords' points—and for no good reason that any one could explain. Even to those who claimed to share in the secret, the source of the disturbance was somewhat obscure; there was some question of the violation of some unimportant treaty, the very existence of which was unknown except to diplomats; and over this treaty, which involved the right to self-government of a few dozen half-civilized islanders somewhere in the South Seas, an imperious message had been sent to the Mikado, worded so arrogantly that no ruler who retained his self-respect could disregard it. As a result, both countries were suddenly in a ferment, and rumors of war filled the air. . .

The Volcano's Revenge

GENERAL BLACKFOOT and the President, seated with two companions on a cruiser which steamed slowly from the harbor of Misty Isle, were well aware of the demonstrations that agitated two lands. They knew what a tumult had been caused by the ostentatious drilling

of troops, and the waving of flags, and the blaring of bugles, and the booming of drums; they knew of the inflammatory speeches, the military parades, the fierce mass gatherings that were fanning the battle flames. They looked upon their handiwork, and were satisfied.

Yet they were not so satisfied but that they perceived the need for quick action. “The preliminaries are now over,” summarized the President, as, surrounded by his colleagues, he gazed toward the fog-veiled shore of the island. “We have allowed time enough now for every one to go war-crazy. Therefore it cannot be said that we struck without warning. No one, of course, suspects what lies ahead. We must give the enemy no chance to prepare. Now is the time! What do you all say?”

The others nodded in keen-eyed approval, and the President resumed, “Then I shall send a wireless command immediately to the Vice-President. He will act in my absence, and issue the official declaration. And then for the actual test! Tomorrow at this time there will be not a man or woman or child alive in all the cities of Japan!”

And, with an attempted witticism that somehow drew no response, the President arose, and went off in search of the wireless operator.

While he was gone, Dr. Turnbull addressed his companions gravely. “By the way, that geyser of steam at the northern end of the island seems to be giving trouble again. I saw it this morning, and did not like its looks. It was squirting like a whole fire department, and was twice as high as yesterday.”

General Blackfoot shrugged. “But, of course, it will subside in time,” he suggested, with a confident smile.

“Of course!” put in the Secretary.

Dr. Turnbull merely gave a wry grimace, and did not reply. And thenceforth, until the return of the President, the conversation lagged. . .

“Done! It is done!” that official announced, reappearing and laughing, with a laugh that was like a cackle. “All that remains is to touch off the final fuse!” And his three fellow conspirators joined him in low, clandestine chuckles.

For a moment they glanced in silence toward the gray seas and the gray misty heavens, and toward the island’s hidden shore, from which, before another day had passed, a host of winged marauders were to fly like a breath of destruction toward unsuspecting cities...

But destruction of a different nature lay in store.

It was only half an hour later when the four men, closeted in secret conference, were aroused by the sudden shaking and trembling of the vessel. Although the sea a moment before had been as calm as glass, the ship was buffeted as if by storm waves, and rolled and shuddered as though battling with a tempest. After a moment, the disturbance had subsided, and the vessel proceeded on an even keel; but Dr. Turnbull and his companions, rushing excitedly to the deck, were to learn that their alarm had not been unjustified.

For, although the ocean, except for the waning whitecaps, showed no sign of anything amiss, there was manifestly something wrong on Misty Isle. What was that flare of red flame which, surmounting the intervening hazes like a recurrent signal fire, appeared intermittently from the direction of the island? What was that rose-hued glow in the heavens? What that dull rumbling in the air, as though from a series of remote explosions? And what those yellow flashes which every now and then streaked through the skies, like far-off lightnings—except that they had an intensity and a lingering brilliance that lightning rarely possesses? And why that air of dull, indefinable oppression which overhung all things, of something terrible impending, as of some tumult about to descend, a silence and a heaviness that hovered threateningly over the world, weighing like unseen lead upon the nerves, as though the atmosphere were thick with gloomy omens and gathering spirits of evil?

From among the watching men, few words came to break the long, slow interval of waiting. All the joy of a few moments before had been drained from their expression; and the quivering of their lips and hands betrayed an agitation that they dared not put into words. Had a bomb of hyperblast exploded? Or had the volcanic forces beneath the island again burst into action? Had Turnbull's experiment dangerously weakened the crust of the earth? Such were the thoughts which, one may conjecture, flashed into the minds of the officials; for only two explanations of the disturbance were possible, and neither was to be welcomed.

But while Turnbull and his associates stood at the rail in silent reflection or meditatively retired to their cabins, the vessel drove on and on at a steady pace through the bleak seas. During the first hour, it maintained a twenty-two knot speed; yet its progress, though rapid, was not rapid enough. Once more some power from the unknown reached out after ship; once more a wave of terrific intensity overtook it, sweeping across the decks and making the craft stagger like a rowboat among rapids. Simultaneously, above the fog-bound shore of the island, a geyser of carmine light shot heavenward, bursting outward amid torrents of sun-bright sparks and scintillations. Then fountain after fountain of bloody flame was hurled aloft as from the discharge of cyclopean cannon; hissing red firebrands scattered with phosphor-escient trails like great meteors; low rumblings filled the air, and growled from the fire-tinged clouds; and all the skies were a blazing fury, in which torn flags and tatters of orange light and glaring electrical streamers danced and glittered. And the billows, shaken and tortured, leapt up in tempestuous masses, in which the ship began to heave and rock like a toy; while four terror-stricken passengers, watching amid the jolting confusion of the cabins, clung helplessly to the flying furniture and offered up wordless prayers.

Perhaps it was well that they did not see the greatest wave of all, which, swollen to the height of a tall hill, came sweeping from above the horizon. Perhaps it was well that they did not know what frantic efforts the captain was making to turn and meet that wave prow forward.

All that they realized was that suddenly there came a jolt as of whole mountains piling upon them; that all things outside their cabin were lost amid a dull thundering fury; that there was a ringing in their ears and an overtowering dread in their hearts; that it seemed to them as if the ship were turning bodily, was falling upon its side; and that, while it rose and shuddered and then fell with a world-drowning roar and crashing the blind waters came rushing in upon them, lashing out at them, choking them, quenching all things amid a chaos of mad, hopeless struggling. . .

During the following days, the newspapers bore interesting reports. It was stated that there had been a volcanic eruption of unusual intensity, which a passing vessel ascribed to some previously uncharted island in the northern Pacific. At the same time, it was announced that the tidal wave resulting from that eruption had overwhelmed many ships, including the man-of-war on which the President, along with Dr. Turnbull and General Blackfoot, had been taking a vacation cruise. But, mitigating the evil tidings, there came a more cheerful bit of news: Japan and her neighbor across the Pacific, shocked profoundly by the disaster, had seen the way of sanity, and had submitted their differences to successful arbitration.

Today, if one were to voyage to Misty Isle, one would see half a dozen black reefs, the longest not a hundred yards in length, which project above the immensity of the waters. Seabirds have occasionally been known to roost there; seals from time to time choose the rocks for a sunning-place; mussels and barnacles and tangled seaweed are thick on their lower reaches, and sometimes the great snout of a whale or the long slimy arms of an octopus may be observed projecting above the surf. But the fogs that gave the island its name have disappeared, and man and the works of man are found no longer amid that stormy desolation.