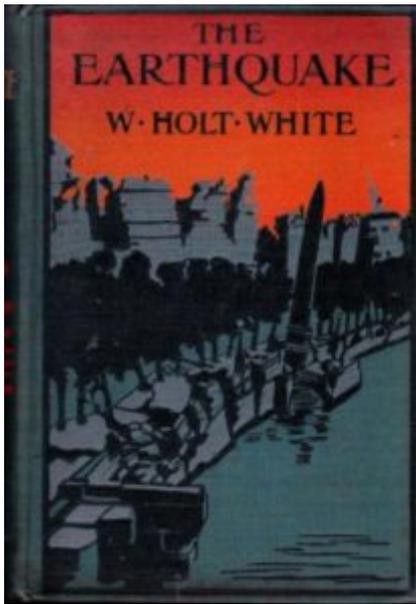


W. Holt-White (1906) *The Earthquake: A Romance of London in 1907*



London is hit by an earthquake and Germany takes advantage of the situation. In *The Earthquake: A Romance of London in 1907* (1906) a ruined London is taken in hand by an aristocratic Prime Minister; Holt-White explicitly stated that he based the tale on the San Francisco earthquake of 1906. [SFE]

Mr. W. Holt White gives us a romance of London in 1907. Very sensational, indeed, is the romance in question, which its author calls "The Earthquake." London is visited by a tremendous earthquake, and streets and houses are destroyed. There is also a German invasion, and things look very bad for poor old England. In the end, however, we are relieved by the assurance that "from the ruins of old London arose a new London that could show a clean face to the world," and as to the Teuton he does not get practically a look in. Incidentally there is a love story mixed up in these tremendous happenings. It ends happily. [The Irish Times, Dec 14, 1906, pg. 7]

A British sci fi alt history classic from a successor to Jules Verne. In the early hours of September 8, 1907, an earthquake of unprecedented power strikes London. Nelson's Column topples over. St. Paul's Cathedral is shaken to pieces. The Houses of Parliament subside into a great heap of rubble. Westminster Abbey partly collapses. Bridges across the Thames tumble into the river. And the Thames itself is blocked below Gravesend, cutting off shipping and threatening England with starvation. So begins *The Earthquake*, a work of alt history and natural disaster fiction by William Holt-White from the early years of science fiction. With appalling death, destruction and chaos in every direction, Britain's Prime Minister Blair declares martial law and begins restoring order. But the situation is worse than he can imagine. For evil forces in the person of Baron Von Prosen of Saxony are at work, plotting to permanently cripple England and bring the Empire down. Standing against Von Prosen is Blair's nephew, the Earl of Wilmers, and the woman Wilmers loves, American heiress Virginia Newcombe. After discovering the enormity of the scheme, Wilmers and Virginia must race against time and Von Prosen's henchmen to save England from violent uprising and economic collapse before it's too late. Inspired by news reports of the San Francisco earthquake of 1906, William Holt-White's *The Earthquake* moves with breakneck speed through the broken streets and perilous back alleys of London across the Atlantic to a breathtaking denouement in the United States. A popular disaster thriller in its day, it was the first of ten novels in the science-fiction, fantasy and mystery genres that Holt-White would write between 1906 and 1916, earning for himself a place alongside contemporaries H. Rider Haggard, Edgar Rice Burroughs and H. G. Wells as a successor to Jules Verne.

**Other posts of possible interest:**

[Le Queux, W. \(1906\) If England Were Invaded / The Invasion of 1910 / The Invasion](#)

[Wodehouse, P. G. \(1909\), The Swoop! or How Clarence Saved England](#)

[Tracy, L. \(1901\) The Invasion / The Invaders](#)

[Mill, E.E. \(1905\) The Decline and Fall of the British Empire](#)

[\(1871\) Reactions to The Battle of Dorking](#)