Invasion Literature
1871-1914
How fiction anticipated and reflected Britain’s fears over security in the Victorian and Edwardian era
Derek Linney
A LESSON FROM HISTORY
COUNTDOWN TO WAR

- Crown Prince assassinated in the Balkans
- Serbian aggression causes Austria-Hungary to invade Serbia
- Treaty obligations escalate the conflict
  - Russia joins the war to support its Slav allies
  - Germany joins in support of Austria-Hungary
  - France supports Russia and declares war on Germany
  - Germany advances through Belgium to attack the French
- Britain initially stands aloof but eventually joins the fray

ON THE SIDE OF GERMANY AGAINST FRANCE & RUSSIA

“The Great War of 189-” by Admiral P. H. Colomb
Published in 1892

An example of “Invasion Literature”
TOPICS

- Introduction to Invasion Literature
- Who were the imagined enemies?
- What weaknesses / fears did the stories exploit
- New technologies of war
- The changing nature of war
- The motives for writing / publishing the stories
- Life imitating Art
SO WHAT IS “INVASION LITERATURE”?  

- Fictional Stories set in near future

- Featuring one or more of:
  - Invasion by an enemy
  - Future war scenarios
  - Espionage

- Sometimes written for commercial gain, but often to lobby the government
WHAT, TO ME, IS NOT “INVASION LITERATURE”

- Works of pure science fiction
- Works set in the far distant future
- Speculative fiction of social unrest, social change and utopias
- Fantasy stories
Probably the only work of Invasion Literature you might recognise ...............
The Riddle of The Sands by Erskine Childers (1903)

- The BEST sailing novel ever
- The first modern SPY novel
- The only work of Invasion Literature remembered today
- A jolly good read
THE RIDDLE OF THE SANDS

In these shifting sands, men can disappear without trace... and their secrets with them.

The Rank Organisation presents

MICHAEL YORK
JENNY AGUTTER - SIMON MacCORKINDALE

in THE RIDDLE OF THE SANDS, with ALAN BADEL as Dollmann

Screenplay by Tony Maylam and John Bailey from the novel by Erskine Childers
Music composed and conducted by Howard Blake · Director of photography Christopher Challis B.SC.
Produced by Drummond Challis · Directed by Tony Maylam
Filmed in PANAVISION
Released by Rank Film Distributors

Now a Best-seller from Penguin
WHEN DID INVASION LITERATURE START?

The conventional answer is:

**1871 with The Battle of Dorking**

But in **1851 ..........**
A history of the sudden and terrible invasion of England by the French (1851)

An anonymous work exposing the defenceless condition of the Britain USA comes to England’s aid when England is invaded by France.

A genuine “Invasion Literature” novel but a one-off example of the genre.
BUT WHEN DID IT ALL START AS A GENRE?

......... 1871

- End of the Franco-Prussian War
- Germany emerged as a new powerful country and a strong commercial competitor
- It became, for some, the new potential enemy of Britain
The Battle of Dorking
by George Tomkyns Chesney (1871)

- First published as a serial in *Blackwood’s Magazine*
- Government is unprepared for war
- Britain is pre-occupied with colonial troubles
- [Germans] invade Holland & Belgium
- Britain sends the fleet but is defeated
- The Germans invade Britain
- The professional German army defeats British reservists
THE BATTLE OF DORKING PRODUCED AN AVALANCHE OF COPYCAT AND FOLLOW UP STORIES

Anonymous (1871) The official despatches and correspondence relative to the Battle of Dorking

Anonymous (1871) Our hero: or, who wrote “The Battle of Dorking”

Anonymous (1871) The Other Side of the Battle of Dorking

Moltruhn, M. (1871) The New Battle of Dorking

Anonymous (1871) The Battle of Dorking: a Myth

Maude, F.N. (1900) The Battle of Dorking
EVEN PUNCH GOT INTO THE ACT - 20TH MAY 1871

PUNCH, OR THE LONDON CHARIVARI

May 23, 1871

FLATTERY.

"So the old Scribe, by putting in our way, "I can answer a hundred when I have but one,"

THE BATTLE OF DORKING.

"The Battle of Dorking" has been a matter of great sensation. It is said that the English were not prepared for the attack, and that they were caught off their guard. However, the British troops fought bravely and managed to hold their ground.

NOMENCLATURE IN NOVELS.

The author of the novel "The Great Unwrapped" has been criticized for the use of the term "Tom Pype's". The term is said to be an insult to the working class.

Thoughtful Gase.

It is said that the government has beencomposition on the role of public officials in providing aid to disaster victims. The report calls for more transparency and accountability in the use of funds.

BY AN UNGRATEFUL GUEST OF ESSEX.

No. "Gentile Study". He is the best painter in the world. The room he paints his studies has a fine view of the city.
AND THEN THE PRINTING PRESSES STARTED ROLLING ......
OUR ENEMIES

RUSSIANS ATTACKING THE BARRICADE IN STRETFORD ROAD, MANCHESTER.
WHO WERE BRITAIN’S PERCEIVED ENEMIES?

- Germany
  - New upstart nation
  - Powerful army and, later, navy
  - Seeking an empire
  - Commercially Britain’s major competitor

- Russia
  - Long-term distrust
  - Threat to the India: The Jewel of the British Empire

- France
  - Traditional enemy
  - Weakened after the Franco-Prussian War
  - Geographic proximity

- New Threats
  - Asia: especially Japan & China
  - Anarchists
  - Irish
  - America
Charts are based upon an analysis of 136 works selected from some 200 stories.
"I express to you my sincere congratulations that you and your people, without appealing to the help of friendly powers, have succeeded, by your own energetic action against the armed bands which invaded your country as disturbers of the peace, in restoring peace and in maintaining the independence of the country against attack from without."

Kaiser Wilhelm II’s telegram to Kruger
THE THREAT FROM GERMANY IN INVASION LITERATURE (1871-1914)

Published Items - German Foe

1871 Birth of Modern Germany
1896 Kruger Telegram
1898 Navy Law
1905-6 1st Morocco Crisis
1906-8 German Dreadnought Programme
1871 Battle of Dorking Copycats
1899-1902 Boer War

Charts are based upon an analysis of 136 works selected from some 200 stories.
Kaiser: “I GO THREE DREADNOUGHTS.”
John Bull: “WELL, JUST TO SHOW THERE’S NO ILL-FEELING, I RAISE YOU THREE.”
THE THREAT FROM FRANCE IN
INVASION LITERATURE (1871-1914)

Published Items - French Foe

1891-4 Franco-Russian Alliance

Anglo-French Tension over African Territories
A typical novel of the 1890s

**The Great War in England in 1897 by William Le Queux (1894)**

- Britain is invaded by coalition forces led by France and Russia.
- English patriots fight on and eventually turn the tide after Germany enters the war on the side of the British.
- Britain and Germany carve up most of Europe between them.
THE THREAT FROM FRANCE IN INVASION LITERATURE (1871-1914)

Published Items - French Foe

1891-4 Franco-Russian Alliance

1898 Fashoda Incident

Anglo-French Tension over African Territories
Fashoda Incident (1898)

Political situation in eastern and central Africa during the Fashoda Incident (1898)

- British colonies
- French colonies
- Italian colonies
- German colonies
- The route of Marchand’s expedition
- Kitchener’s advance

Map showing the political situation in eastern and central Africa during the Fashoda Incident (1898). The map includes key locations such as Fashoda, Congo Free State, British East Africa, German East Africa, and Italian Somaliland. The map also indicates the routes of Marchand’s expedition and Kitchener’s advance.
THE THREAT FROM FRANCE IN INVASION LITERATURE (1871-1914)

Published Items - French Foe

- 1898 Fashoda Incident
- 1891-4 Franco-Russian Alliance
- 1904 Entente Cordial
- Anglo-French Tension over African Territories
Anglo-French Entente – Punch 1906
THE THREAT FROM RUSSIA IN INVASION LITERATURE (1871-1914)

Published Items - Russian Foe

1878 – 1895 Russian aggression in Asia despite various Anglo-Russian agreements

1891-4 Start of Franco-Russian Alliance
Russia defeated by Japan in Russo-Japanese War 1904-5
THE THREAT FROM RUSSIA IN INVASION LITERATURE (1871-1914)

1871-1875
1876-1880
1881-1885
1886-1890
1891-1895
1896-1900
1901-1905
1906-1910
1911-1914

Published Items - Russian Foe

- 1891-4 Start of Franco-Russian Alliance
- 1905 Russia defeated in Russo-Japanese War
- 1907 Anglo-Russian Entente

1878 – 1895 Russian aggression in Asia despite various Anglo-Russian agreements
THE THREAT FROM ASIA IN INVASION LITERATURE (1871-1914)

Published Items - Asian Foes

1895 Kaiser invents phrase “Yellow Peril”
1900 Boxer Rebellion
1905 Japan wins Russo-Japanese War
THE THREAT FROM CHINA & JAPAN

M.P. Shiel (1898)
The Yellow Danger

G.G. Rupert (1911)
The Yellow Peril

K. Mackay (1897)
The Yellow Wave

Jack London (1910)
The Unparalleled Invasion

M.P. Shiel (1913)
The Dragon
THE THREAT FROM ANARCHISTS IN INVASION LITERATURE (1871-1914)
Bombings 1892-94
THE THREAT FROM ANARCHISTS IN INVASION LITERATURE (1871-1914)

Published Items - Anarchists

- Late 1880s-1890s Anarchists from France & across Europe seek exile in Britain
- 1892 Ravachol bombings
- 1893 Vaillant bombings
- 1894 Emile Henry bombings
- 1894 Carnot (President of France) Assassinated
Hartmann The Anarchist by E. Douglas Fawcett (1893)

- London is attacked by anarchists using an airship
THREATS TO BRITAIN’S SECURITY
PERCEIVED THREATS TO BRITAIN

- Britain’s island geography provided security as long as the British Navy had dominance of the seas.

- But new technologies threatened this:
  - Torpedoes
  - Submarines
  - Airships
  - Aeroplanes

- Britain was dependent upon free movement on the oceans.

- Concern over foreigners in the Merchant Navy.

- Army was relatively small and widely spread over the Empire.

- Concern over the poor physical condition of British army recruits.
A small country in Europe has been fighting England. The Royal Navy destroys its fleet. However a flotilla of submarines escape and blockade Britain.

The result is famine in Britain.

Seven “experts” who replied to Conan Doyle’s idea in the same issue of The Strand Magazine all poured scorn on the story. Some of them even doubted whether a civilized nation would use such a barbarous weapon as unrestricted submarine warfare.
Britain’s dependence upon foreign seamen in Merchant Navy

- War between Britain and the allied powers of France and Russia
- France’s first act is to sever international telegraph cables
- Foreign seamen on British ships are ordered by their governments to refuse to cooperate in shipping movements
One of the identified weaknesses of the British Empire is its dependence on “alien” seamen.

The novel quotes Lord Muskerry speaking in a House of Lords debate on the Merchant Shipping (Aliens) Bill in 1905:

“…. alien seamen are increasing, and the danger to the State is greater still. What have the National Defence Committee to say to this? Not to speak of 41,000 Lascars, I find that no fewer than 40,396 aliens are enjoying the hospitality of British ships.”
The Invasion of 1910
by William Le Queux (1906)
(aka, The Invasion & If England Were Invaded)

The novel was originally commissioned by Lord Northcliffe as a serial which appeared in the Daily Mail in 1906.

The story was rewritten to feature towns and villages with high Daily Mail readership.

The idea for the novel is alleged to have originated from Field Marshal Earl Roberts.

An invasion by Germany is countered by a popular uprising and a resistance movement which causes the Germans to withdraw.
The novel was originally commissioned by Lord Northcliffe as a serial which appeared in the Daily Mail in 1906. The story was rewritten to feature towns and villages with high Daily Mail readership.

The idea for the novel is alleged to have originated from Field Marshal Earl Roberts. An invasion by Germany is countered by a popular uprising and a resistance movement which causes the Germans to withdraw.

Lord Northcliffe launched *The Invasion of 1910* with sandwich men in spiked helmets and Prussian blue uniforms parading down Oxford Street, their boards proclaiming imminent invasion.

Each day thereafter, advertisements advised which towns would be invaded the following morning in the *Daily Mail*.

The failure of the British government to prepare for a possible invasion is repeatedly mentioned, as is the phrase “they should have listened to Lord Roberts”, along with many references to Roberts’ patriotism.

Le Queux himself stated that one of his aims was to “bring home to the British public vividly and forcibly what really would occur were an enemy suddenly to appear in our midst”.
William Le Queux (1864-1927)

The most prolific author of Invasion Literature & Spy Literature.

Wrote:
- 170 x novels/stories
- 21 x collections of short stories
- 20 x non-fiction books

He was almost single-handedly responsible for Spy Mania in Britain prior to WW1
An award winning essay sponsored by the *National Review* and the *Navy League* to identify Britain’s weaknesses in the case of war.
The Navy League was formed in 1895 following public pressure from Spenser Wilkinson, military correspondent of the Manchester Guardian, and with the support of radical Liberals who were concerned about the legacy of Gladstone's apparent unwillingness to increase naval expenditure.

Originator of the Boys' Naval Brigades (which later became The Sea Cadets)
An award winning essay sponsored by the National Review and the Navy League to identify Britain’s weaknesses in the case of war.

In a war sparked by a diplomatic incident on North-West Frontier, Great Britain fights France and Russia.

The enemies take advantage of a situation where the British Navy is dispersed handling colonial issues.

The most significant effect is food shortages given Britain’s dependency on imported wheat and provisions.
FORECASTS OF FUTURE WARFARE
The story features “land ironclads,” 100-foot-long machines that are equipped with remote-controlled guns and that carry riflemen, engineers, and a captain.

The story contributed to Wells’s reputation as a “prophet of the future” when tanks first appeared on the battlefield in 1916.
Major General Sir Ernest Dunlop Swinton, was a British Army officer who was active in the development and adoption of the tank during WW1.

He was also a war correspondent and author of several allegorical works of fiction on military themes.

He is credited with having coined the word “tank” as a code-name for the first tracked, armoured fighting vehicles.
The Trenches
by Capt. C.E. Vickers
(Blackwood’s Magazine 1908)

- A machine originally developed for digging irrigation and pipe laying ditches is modified to dig trenches on the battlefield.

- The story describes the siege-like stalemate that trench warfare can get bogged down in.

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"This remains the tactical problem of all ages, how to get men enough together within efficient killing distance of their enemy."
—'War and the World's Life,' p. 97.

"I wish that organ would red tape which confined it dry up! It puts me off like a belt, look through so that I can't read this letter, write something, anything."

"Yes," responded Major big basket which stood on Swann; "the first time it the floor by him. Major came and played 'Sing me Swann seemed to have to to Sleep' outside here, it do with plans and drawing seemed rather a jest. But rather, for there were many the organ - grinder's sense of rolls of them on his desk and humour must be getting less some spread out on an.adjac..."

- A German invasion and occupation of Britain is countered by the use of British airships attacking the Germans.
- France enters the war, on Britain’s side, Paris is besieged but is supported by airship.
- Meanwhile, the Japanese use aircraft to attack the American navy.
A CHANNEL TUNNEL
IN 1882 THERE WAS A RASH OF STORIES ABOUT INVASION VIA A CHANNEL TUNNEL
The scare stories regarding invasion via a Channel Tunnel helped create security concerns over plans for a tunnel. Work on a tunnel had started in 1880 but in 1882 the Government called a halt.
PORTIONS OF MAP OF NEW NAVAL BASE AT ROYETH DISCOVERED IN POSSESSION OF A SPY.
The notes, here translated from German, were written on the British Ordnance Map.
Espionage

- A climate of spy-hysteria dominated not only public discourse in England in the period 1907-14, but also the War Office’s German intelligence subsection.
- It was assumed that there was a large German spy network in Britain.
- At the same time Britain’s spying efforts were trivial.
The first full-length account of German agents at work in Britain

Feelings of anger and contempt, once reserved for the French, are now concentrated on ‘certain dirty little games of the German Emperor himself’, as the hero is briefed for his secret mission.
Espionage

**The Riddle of The Sands by Erskine Childers (1903)**

- Two British small boat sailors encounter secret German preparations for an invasion of England

- Even though they suspect the Germans of no good, they have ambivalent attitudes to spying
Espionage

Spies of the Kaiser. Plotting the Downfall of England by William Le Queux (1909)

*Spies of the Kaiser* raised spy mania to new extremes.

Le Queux’s fantasies had their popularity massively boosted by the *Daily Mail*’s hype machine.

The story was presented as non-fiction.

To lend further credibility to the narrative, Le Queux noted in the introduction:

“As I write, I have before me a file of amazing documents, which plainly show the feverish activity with which this advance guard of our enemy is working.”
In the early 1900s, the British government was increasingly concerned about the threat to its Empire posed by Germany’s imperial ambitions. This led to scare stories of German spies and even the Director of Military Operations was convinced that Germany was targeting Britain. These rumours proved to be overblown, but the Prime Minister, Herbert Asquith, reacted to popular concern. He ordered the Committee of Imperial Defence to look into the matter and they established a Secret Service Bureau in July 1909.”
LIFE UNDER OCCUPATION
MANY OF YOU WILL BE FAMILIAR WITH A GERMAN OCCUPATION OF LONDON IN COUNTER-FACTUAL OR ALTERNATIVE HISTORIES OF WW2
When William Came: A Story of London Under the Hohenzollerns

by Saki (H.H.Munro) (1913)
British Lion to Russian Bear: 
“Look here! You can play with his head, and I can play with his tail, and we can both stroke the small of his back.”

Persian Cat: 
“I don’t remember having been consulted about this!”

Punch 1907
INVASION LITERATURE, LIKE ANY SUCCESSFUL GENRE, CREATED ITS OWN SATIRICAL SUB-GENRE

Heath Robinson (1910)
England is invaded by a mixture of Russians under Grand Duke Vodkakoff, the Germans under Prince Otto of Saxe-Pfennig, the Swiss Navy, the Monegasques, a band of Moroccan brigands under Raisuli, the Young Turks, the Mad Mullah from Somalialand, the Chinese under Prince Ping Pong Pang, and the Bollygollans in war canoes.
An Englishman’s Home by Guy Du Maurier (1909)

Not just literature, but theatre as well ....

• ‘An Englishman’s Home’ caused a sensation in London when it opened in 1909.

• The story concerns an attack on England by an unnamed foreign power, generally assumed to represent Germany.

• The play stressed Britain’s unpreparedness for attack, and has been credited with boosting recruitment to the Territorial Army in the years immediately before WW1.
A Nation in Arms
by B.S. Townroe
(1909)

Produced on behalf of the National Service League as a counter to An Englishman’s Home

It stressed the importance of regular service in the army rather than relying on the Territorial Army.
The National Service League was a British pressure group founded in February 1902 to alert the country to the inadequacy of the British Army to fight a major war and to propose the solution of national service.

MR. KIPLING'S WARNING.

NEITHER MEN NOR MEANS TO PREVENT INVASION.

At Burwash, the old world village high on the Sussex Downs, in the vicinity of which Mr. Rudyard Kipling has made his English home, Mr. Kipling last night presided over an open-air assembly and delivered an address on the aims of the National Service League. Mr. Kipling, who addressed his audience of villagers as “Ladies and gentlemen and friends and neighbours,” said he proposed merely to introduce the speakers, Mr. Coulson Kernahan and Mr. Nevill Edwards, who are touring the Sussex countryside in the cause of national service.

Mr. Kipling continued.—They are here to give us their arguments in favour of the system of national training for the young men of England. To show you that I am a perfectly impartial chairman I may repeat some of Mr. Edwards’s arguments, for they are quite plain and straightforward. The country is rich, yet we have not trained our men...
A Nation in Arms
by B.S. Townroe
(1909)

Produced on behalf of the National Service League as a counter to An Englishman’s Home

It stressed the importance of regular service in the army rather than relying on the Territorial Army.

“A NATION IN ARMS” AT THE SAVOY THEATRE.

Yesterday’s performance by Miss Flora Campbell-Patterson’s Company of Mr. B. S. Townroe’s play Nation in Arms was marked by a considerable amount of patriotism in various parts of the Savoy Theatre. There was stage patriotism on the stage, patriotic tunes and brazen instruments of music in the orchestra, patriotism rather languidly applauding with kid gloves in the stalls, and shrill-voiced, eager-eyed Boy Scout patriotism in the gallery. And in one of the boxes there was Lord Roberts, the soldierly field-marshall who would fain see the manhood of this country prove that there is something real in its talk of patriotism by the testimony of personal service.

Mr. Townroe’s play is frankly propagandist. The interesting fact about it is that it was written with the design of attracting the men of Lancashire and Yorkshire to the subject of universal service, and that it so far succeeded in its mission that they are now far more interested in the question of their share in the defence of their country than used to be the case. Apparently they like their patriotism flavoured with melodrama and comic relief, some of which has the effect of making the experience of a foreign invasion and the conquest of England appear a less terrible affair than it would be in reality. But the Boy Scouts at all events followed the play, in spite of its limitations, with the heartiest enthusiasm. They were a model gallery audience, and cheered every reference to the soldierly duties of the true patriot to the echo. Beyond them there were unfortunately not many possible defenders of the country in the house, so that no great accession to the strength of the Territorials is to be expected as a result of the performance. But whenever it could count upon a more masculine audience the play might doubtless do useful recruiting work.

The Times Friday, Jul 26, 1912
The "Dogs of War" are loose and the rugged Russian Bear, All bent on blood and robbery has crawled out of his lair... It seems a thrashing now and then, will never help to tame... That brute, and so he's out upon the "same old game"... The Lion did his best... to find him some excuse... To crawl back to his den again. All efforts were no use... He hunger'd for his victim. He's pleased when blood is shed... But let us hope his crimes may all recoil on his own head...

*Chorus:*
We don't want to fight but by jingo if we do... We've got the ships, we've got the men, and got the money too! We've fought the Bear before... and while we're Britons true, The Russians shall not have Constantinople...

**Macdermott's War Song**
*(aka. By Jingo)*
by G.W. Hunt
(1878)

Often erroneously attributed to the Boer War it actually originated from concerns regarding Russia’s intentions towards Turkey

Note: It became popular again during WW1 – with words appropriate to fighting Germany – the Russian Bear being replaced by the German Eagle

And Musical Hall –
The Airship Destroyer (1909)

- *The Airship Destroyer* can be classed as part of the invasion scare stories so popular at the time and includes the futuristic menace of aerial warfare and inventions such as guided missiles.

- The film was re-released in January 1915, reflecting the then very real fear of aerial attacks from Zeppelins.
Fiction vs Reality
SOMETIMES LIFE IMITATES ART

- Dogger Bank Incident
  - In October 1904 the Russian Navy attacked a fleet of British trawlers in the North Sea mistaking them for Japanese warships
SOMETIMES LIFE IMITATES ART

- On a number of occasions English yachtsmen were arrested as “spies” in Germany (1910-12)
The Fenian Submarine

- The **Fenian Ram** was an early submarine (1881) developed by John Holland in the United States for the Fenian Brotherhood for use by the Irish Republican Brotherhood.

- It completed sea trials but a funding dispute broke out between the Fenian Brotherhood and the IRB.

- The IRB stole the submarine (1883) and took it to New Haven, Connecticut, but discovered that no one knew how to operate it. Holland refused to help. Unable to use or sell the boat, the Brotherhood had the Ram hauled out into a shed on the Mill River.

- In 1916, the Fenian Ram was exhibited in Madison Square Garden to raise funds for victims of the Easter Rising.
A Ride to Khiva (1876) & On Horseback through Asia Minor (1877) by Fred Burnaby

Fact can exceed Fiction

- It is 1875, the time of the ‘Great Game’, when the British and Russian Empires are vying for power in central Asia.

- A British officer rides for Khiva, a Russian city closed to European travellers. He is on a dangerous mission, to learn if Russia plans to invade India, the ‘jewel in the crown’ of the British Empire.

- On Horseback Through Asia Minor details how Burnaby set off in the winter of 1876, convinced he could once again outwit the Czar’s secret police.
CHILDREN’S (BOYS) BOOKS
Cecil D. Eby (1988), *The Road to Armageddon: The Martial Spirit in English Popular Literature, 1870-1914*
“It needs no gift of prophecy to foretell that in the not distant future the fate of empires will be decided neither on land nor on the sea, but in the air. We have already reached a stage in the evolution of the aeroplane and airship at which a slight superiority in aircraft may turn the scale in battle. Our imperial destinies may hinge upon the early or later recognition of the importance of a large, well-equipped, and well-manned aerial fleet.”
The Great Russian Invasion of India – A. Dekhnewallah (almost certainly a British Army officer) (1879)

- *The Great Russian Invasion of India*, published during the Second Anglo-Afghan War, is addressed to a home readership who are accused of “*indulging in complacent dreams of the invincibility of British arms in Asia*”.

- Advancing through Afghanistan, Russian troops occupy the Punjab and Central provinces. Their attack is well prepared by the numerous spies who provoke mutiny among lower castes.

- British India is saved by an artillery officer who organizes cunning attacks on the invaders and eventually by British Navy expeditions sent into the Black Sea and the Baltic.

- The British government had ignored repeated warnings of malevolent Russian intentions.
An account of an imaginary invasion of Australia by a Russian fleet.

After a hard fought battle the combination of professional soldiers and civilians drive back the Russians.
The Commonwealth Crisis was serialised in The Lone Hand, Sydney and later published in book form as The Australian Crisis.

Japan secretly lands soldier-settlers on the unpopulated coasts of the Northern Territory.

After learning of the Japanese incursions, the Australian government appealed to the British for diplomatic and naval support in bringing about the removal of the alien intruders.

The British, caught up in a web of European troubles and tensions, are unable to send a fleet to the Far East.
The Back Door - Anonymous (1897)
Serialised in The China Mail

- The Back Door was an anonymous work of invasion literature written in the form of a historical account.
- It describes an imagined Russian and French landing in Hong Kong and the defeat of the British forces.
- The story was intended as a criticism of the lack of British funding for the defence of Hong Kong; fears of invasion were driven by French expansionism in Southeast Asia and increasing Russian influence in Manchuria.
FOREIGN LANGUAGE INVASION LITERATURE
INVASION LITERATURE WAS NOT JUST A BRITISH PHENOMENON ......
According to one German writer, Karl Eisenhart, the Great War began on the grey morning of a nameless day in an unknown month when swift German cruisers steamed out from North Sea ports.

Their task, as Eisenhart explained in *Die Abrechnung mit England* in 1900, was to destroy British commerce on the high seas—the indispensable preliminary to the final defeat of the United Kingdom.
An unnamed overpowering enemy (meaning certainly England) forces Germany to war.

The novel describes the various naval battles of the German Navy up to the victorious final battle off Heligoland.

A detailed, well-illustrated account of the modern German navy and a future war at sea by a naval officer who was later a bestselling writer.
Who before the First World War, most accurately predicted to the public the shape of the world that we now live in?

Who best foresaw the scientific and technological miracles that we take for granted?

At the same time, who most clearly perceived and warned of the environmental and ecological dangers that would accompany these advances?

And finally, who predicted the close co-operation between science and the military that would result in biological, chemical, and other doomsday weapons?

The answer to all four questions is the same person……..

The man who most clearly and accurately predicted the shape of the technological revolution that has marked the twentieth century was not Verne (nor H.G.Wells), but rather a now-forgotten French writer and illustrator named Albert Robida (1848-1926).

La Guerre au Vingtième Siècle (1883)

...
Kaitei gunkan [The Submarine Battleship] by Oshikawa Shunro (1900)

- Invasion literature had its impact also in Japan, at the time undergoing a fast process of modernization.

- Shunrō Oshikawa’s best-seller Kaitō Bōken Kidan: Kaitei Gunkan is the story of an armoured, ram-armed submarine involved in a future war between Japan and Russia.
Banzai!, by Parabellum [Ferdinand Heinrich Gautoff] (1909)

Published in Berlin in 1908 and published in English translation in 1909 it describes a Japanese attack on the American fleet.
James Gillray (1803)
James Gillray (1803) *Consequences of a French Invasion*
“The great globe itself ... is too small to satisfy such insatiable appetites.” (1805)
1870

LATEST WAR MAP OF EUROPE,
AS SEEN THROUGH FRENCH EYES.

England enraged, forgets what he did but still keeps it in her power. Spain & Portugal smoke away lastly France tries to overthrow Russia who advances one hand on Holland a knee over Austria have advised Bismarck to keep off Corseca & Sardina laugh on all. Denmark hopes to recover Holstein. Turkey is drowsily awaking from smoke Sweden crouching like a panther Russia as a beaver trying for anything to fill his basket.
1885 – Imperial Ambitions
"If I return your love, will I get your coat for winter?"
Anglo-French Entente – Punch 1906
Naval Rivalry – *Punch* 1908

**POKER AND TONGS:**

*Or, how we've got to play the game.*

Kaiser. *I go three Dreadnoughts.*

John Bull. *Well, just to show there's no ill-feeling, I raise you three.*
This cartoon in the U.S. magazine *Puck* shows nations engaged in a “no limit” naval race game.

Seated at the table are:
- Uncle Sam representing U.S.A.
- German Emperor Wilhelm II Kin
- Edward VII of Great Britain
- French president Armand Fallières
- Emperor Meiji of Japan.
German Tar: 'We don’t want to fight, but, by jingo, if we do, we’ve got the ships, we’ve got the men, we’ve got the money too.'

John Bull. 'I say, that’s my old song.'

German Tar: 'Well, it’s mine now.'
Reality was bypassed; Le Queux’s files were the original sexed up dossiers. Thoroughly convinced of Hun infiltration, the government approved the founding in 1909 of a new Secret Service Bureau, which was soon split into MI5, charged with counterespionage at home, and MI6, tasked with running spies abroad.

Placed in charge of MI5 was Major-General Vernon Kell. He diligently set to work. While Kell did not discover the mass spy ring of Le Queux’s mad make-believe, he did find German spies. Between 1911 and the outbreak of war, 41 German agents in Britain were identified and arrested.

It is easy to be snide about Le Queux (I have done so here) but ponder this: at the start of the Great War the entire British Expeditionary Force was able to slip across the Channel unnoticed by Germany, and frustrate Berlin’s plans for conquest. The Kaiser was furious at the failure of German intelligence. “Why have I never been told we have no spies in England?” he shouted. Well, there were no spies because they had all been rounded up by MI5.

And MI5 existed only because of a novelist by the name of William Le Queux.
SUMMARY

- Invasion Literature was a significant literary genre that is now all but forgotten.

- It was used to alert or shame government into action on security.

- Had a very real effect on British government policy on spying.

- It reflected changing concerns about:
  - Britain’s enemies
  - The invincibility of the British Navy
  - Lack of conscription in Britain
  - New weapons and types of warfare
IF YOU WANT TO LEARN MORE: VISIT MY WEBSITE:

www.theriddleofthesands.com
FURTHER READING:

Many of the original stories can be read at www.archive.org

The Books of I.F. Clarke provide most comprehensive discussion of Invasion Literature

Other Books:

- Michael Paris: *Winged Warfare: Literature and Theory of Aerial Warfare in Britain, 1859-1917*

- A.J. Echevarria: *Imagining Future War: The West’s Technological Revolution and Visions of Wars to Come, 1880-1914*

- Stephen Wade: *Victoria’s Spymasters – Empire and Espionage*

- Anthony Morris: *The scaremongers: the advocacy of war and rearmament 1896-1914*

- Paul Kennedy: *The Rise of Anglo-German Antagonism*