



Edwardian Requiem: A Life of Sir Edward Grey

Michael Waterhouse

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Best remembered for his portentous remark at the outbreak of the Great War, 'The lamps are going out all over Europe. We shall not see them lit again in our lifetime', Sir Edward Grey was a consummate Edwardian politician and one of the most notable statesmen of an era abounding with them. In the first biography of Grey in forty years, Michael Waterhouse vividly depicts a man full of contradictions. Deep in his heart he was a country-loving fisherman, a sensitive naturalist and ornithologist who preferred reading Wordsworth to giving speeches in his constituency and answering questions on foreign policy in the House. Yet it fell to this peace-loving gentleman who rarely left his shores to ask his country to go to war with Germany. Grey spent nearly thirty years in Parliament and only reluctantly became Foreign Secretary of a country that presided over the greatest empire the world had seen since Roman times. Yet it was a position he filled for more than a decade, the longest anyone has ever served continuously in his or any age, firstly under Campbell-Bannerman and then Asquith. During this time he battled relentlessly to protect and advance the interests of his country against the volatile backdrop of a Europe in which the balance of power was tilting wildly. Edwardian Requiem is the remarkable portrait of a complex and enigmatic politician who presided over the twilight of old Europe.

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