



The Last Days of Glory: The Death of Queen Victoria

Tony Rennell

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Queen Victoria's death in January 1901 shook Britain to its core, and reverberated not just throughout the Commonwealth, but around the world. She was a woman in her eighties, and yet it seems no one could contemplate the end of a reign that had lasted so long. Most could not remember a time when she was not Queen, and the very stability of everyday life seemed to depend on her regency. The anxiety of the government and the royal family about the prospect of the Queen's death was such that the news of her illness was deliberately concealed from the public for more than a week. When it came, people from England to Jamaica wept in the streets, and this grief was surpassed only by fear for the future. "God help us" was the standard reaction from all strata of society.

The Last Days of Glory is the definitive account of those last 23 days in January 1901, when Victoria traveled to Osborne House to die. The momentous reaction to the Queen's passing attached to it more significance and a greater sense of change than the turn of the century had carried just a year earlier. Through the prism of those last days Tony Rennell presents us with a series of resonant and absorbing snapshots of a fading Empire at the end of the Victorian Age, and captures a nation coping with change, balancing comfortable nostalgia with the arrival of a new order.

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