



The War of the Roses

J.G. Edgar

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J.G. Edgar's comprehensive history looks at the seminal War of the Roses, one of the most famous conflicts in British history. From the preface: "My object in writing this book for boys is to furnish them with a narrative of the struggle between York and Lancaster—a struggle which extended over thirty years, deluged England with blood, cost a hundred thousand lives, emasculated the old nobility, and utterly destroyed the house of Plantagenet. It is generally admitted that no period in England's history is richer in romantic incident than the three decades occupied by the Wars of the Roses; but the contest is frequently described as having been without interest in a political point of view. This idea seems erroneous. That struggle of thirty years was no mere strife of chiefs, ambitious of supremacy and unscrupulous as to means. Indeed, the circumstances of the country were such that no hand would have been lifted against sovereigns—whether reigning by Parliamentary or hereditary right—who showed a due respect to ancient rights and liberties. But the tyranny exercised,[Pg viii] first by the ministers of the sixth Henry, and afterward by those of the fourth Edward—one influenced by Margaret of Anjou, the other by the Duchess of Bedford, both "foreign women"—was such as could not be borne by Englishmen without a struggle; and evidence exists that Richard Neville, in arming the people against these kings, did so to prevent the establishment of that despotism which John Hampden and Oliver Cromwell afterward fought to destroy. With such impressions as to the origin of the war which, during the fifteenth century, agitated England and perplexed Continental rulers, I have, in the following pages, traced the course of events from the plucking of the roses in the Temple Gardens to the destruction of Richard the Third, and the coronation of Henry Tudor, on Bosworth Field. And I venture to hope that a book written to attract English boys of this generation to a remarkable epoch in the mediæval history of their country will be received with favor, and read with interest, by those for whose perusal it is more particularly intended."

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