

Warren Hastings as Macaulay Saw Him.



MACAULAY states, in the very beginning of his essay, that he believes Warren Hastings was such a man that, if he were now living, he would have sufficient judgment and sufficient greatness of mind to wish to be shown as he was.

Hastings must have been aware that there were many blots on his career, but, at the same time, he might have felt, with his inborn pride, that the magnanimity of his career could support many blots. It is not at all likely that Warren Hastings would differ in this respect from Oliver Cromwell who said to young Sely—"Paint me as I am, if you leave out the scars and wrinkles, I will not pay you a shilling."

Hastings descended from a great and hardy people. It is said that his ancestors can be traced back in a direct line to the Danish sea kings, who were only conquered by the fortitude and ingenuity of Alfred the Great.

Warren was the son of Pynaston Hastings, whose father had been obliged to give up the old family seat at Daylesford, which was bought by a London merchant. Pynaston was wild in his youth. He married before he was sixteen years of age. Warren was born in December, 1732. His mother died a few days after his birth. Pynaston died a few years after, and left an orphan boy to the care of his unfortunate grandparent.

Warren was sent to the village school. He took to books more readily than the little rustics who sat on the bench with him. While he was still very young, his great ambition was to get control of the estates that had once been owned by his ancestors. As his intellect expanded, this aim grew stronger.

At the age of eighteen, his uncle procured him a writership in the East India Company. Upon arriving at Bengal he was immediately drafted to the Secretary's office at Calcutta, where he worked constantly for two years, at the expiration of which he was transferred to Moorshedabad. He was now a sort of broker, making bargains with the natives in the interests of the Company. While he was here, Surajah Dowlah declared war against the English. The story of this war will readily be recalled when reference is made to the Black Hole of Calcutta.