

**WARREN
HASTINGS**

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Warren Hastings by Thomas Babington Macaulay Macaulay & Hannaford Bennett

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**THOMAS BABINGTON MACAULAY
MACAULAY & HANNAFORD BENNETT**

WARREN HASTINGS

JOHN LONGS CARLTON CLASSICS

Warren Hastings

Edited by HANNAFORD BENNETT

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By

Lord Macaulay, *Thomas Babington*
Macaulay, 1st Baron

With Biographical Introduction

by

Hannaford Bennett



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BIOGRAPHICAL INTRODUCTION

THOMAS BABINGTON MACAULAY, the great historian and essayist, was born at Rothley Temple, Leicestershire, on the 25th of October 1800. He was the eldest son of Zachary Macaulay, an African merchant of Scotch Presbyterian descent, who, with Wilberforce, led the agitation for the abolition of the slave-trade. Tom, as he was always called, showed remarkable precocity as a child. From the age of three he "read incessantly," and talked in "printed words." When he was four years old he replied to a lady who had consoled with him on having hot coffee spilt over him: "Thank you, madam, the agony is abated." At seven he had projected a Compendium of Universal History, and two cantos of an epic poem composed at this period are still in existence. He was always a great talker, though he had "brilliant flashes of silence." At a breakfast to men of letters it was once remarked that Macaulay was expected presently: "If anyone has anything to say let him say it now, while there remains a chance." His sister recorded in January 1832: "Tom dined . . . and talked almost uninterruptedly for six hours." His memory was wonderful, and he once said that if every copy had been

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lost he could reproduce *Paradise Lost* and the *Pilgrim's Progress*, and "any fool could say his Archbishops of Canterbury backwards."

Macaulay went to Trinity College, Cambridge, in 1818. He continued his omnivorous reading, but did not pursue any very deep study, and mathematics being uncongenial to him, he was debarred from competing for the Chancellor's medals. Nevertheless he won honours; he twice gained the medal for English verse, and obtained a prize for the best essay on William III. In 1821 he gained a Craven scholarship, and in 1824 a fellowship. Leaving Cambridge, he studied for the Bar, and was called in 1826; but the bent of his mind was towards politics and literature rather than towards law. He had written a few things in Knight's *Quarterly*, a magazine established by Cambridge students. Francis Jeffrey, who was on the look-out for new blood for the *Edinburgh Review*, accepted from him an article on Milton, which appeared in August 1825: "The effect on the author's reputation," says Sir George Trevelyan, "was instantaneous. Like Lord Byron he awoke one morning and found himself famous." Jeffrey wrote a compliment that Macaulay was fond of repeating: "The more I think the less I can conceive where you picked up that style." During the next eight years Macaulay was the mainstay of the *Edinburgh*, and the sale was large or small according to whether the issue contained an essay by him.

In 1830 Macaulay entered Parliament as the Liberal member for Calne, and his brilliant oratory soon won for him great influence in the House. His services to the party were rewarded by his appointment to the Secretaryship of the Board of Control, which represented the Crown in relation to the Directors of the East India Company. It was this connection with Indian affairs that turned his thoughts to the history of that country and thus gave birth to the brilliant essays on Lord Clive and Warren Hastings. The Crown had the right to nominate one seat to the Supreme Council of India outside the servants of the Company, and Macaulay accepted the post, in 1834, partly to escape parliamentary contests, and partly to be able to save from his salary of £10,000 a year a competency for life. He felt that freedom in parliamentary life was only secure to those who were independent. Back again in London in 1839, he became member of Parliament for Edinburgh, a seat which he retained until 1847, when he lost it by his refusal to vote for the abolition of the Maynooth grant. In 1842 he proposed that copyright should last for forty-two years from the date of publication; and carried it into law. He held the office of Secretary of State for War from 1839 to 1841, and was Paymaster of the Forces from 1846 to 1848.

Macaulay now gradually retired from public affairs in order to concentrate himself upon his *History of England from the Accession of James*

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the Second, the first two volumes of which had appeared with unprecedented success in 1848. In 1857 he was raised to the peerage under the title of Baron Macaulay of Rothley. He died on the 28th of December 1859, and was buried in Westminster Abbey. On his fifty-first birthday he had written in his diary : " I have had a happy life. I do not know that anyone, whom I have seen close, has had a happier."

HANNAFORD BENNETT.