

WARREN HASTINGS IN BENARES, 1781.

THE writer of the letter which is appended to this paper, though young in the service of India, was Persian interpreter to the Governor-General, and in that capacity accompanied him on his memorable visit to Benarés in 1781 when he so nearly fell a victim to the insurrection which broke out at that city. Mr. Colebrooke's narrative gives no facts that were not recorded at the time, but it describes clearly the circumstances under which the collision occurred, and which at the time of Warren Hastings' trial were a matter of controversy. It also shows how complete was the isolation of the Governor-General in his perilous situation, from which he was only extricated by the independent action of officers in the command of the military stations at Allahabad and Cawnpore.

The Benares adventure was one of the most noticeable episodes in the career of Hastings. His treatment of the Raja formed the subject of the first charge on which he was impeached before the House of Lords, and was that which decided Pitt to abandon the defence of his public acts and vote for his impeachment. Hastings' conduct in regard to this prince has been severely condemned by two great writers whose opinion will long continue to sway the judgment of their countrymen, Mill and Macaulay, the latter of whom describes the transaction as a deliberate act of plunder of an unoffending vassal of the British Government to meet the pressing wants of the State, and in part prompted by feelings of revenge for the conduct of Cheit Sing three years before in making a demonstration in favour of Hastings' enemies in Calcutta at a crisis of his career. This is a harsh and I think unjust judgment,