



# Dawning of the Raj: The Life and Trials of Warren Hastings

*Jeremy Bernstein*

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## **Dawning of the Raj: The Life and Trials of Warren Hastings** Jeremy Bernstein

Nothing in the history of empire is stranger than the creation of British rule in India, when a small European island became master of a subcontinent ranging from the Indian Ocean to the Himalayas. In the late eighteenth century the person most responsible for this was Warren Hastings, Britain's first governor-general of India. In *Dawning of the Raj*, Jeremy Bernstein brings to life in vivid colors Hastings's story amidst the rise of British power. Orphaned early, Hastings worked his way up from the lowest clerk in the East India Company to its highest office in India. His concern for native cultures led him to sponsor the first British expedition to Tibet and the first translation into English of the Bhagavadgita. Brilliant and autocratic, he also made enemies, and upon his return to England they charged him with "high crimes and misdemeanors." His impeachment trial, one of the great spectacles of the age, lasted seven years and pitted Hastings against the likes of Edmund Burke and the playwright Richard Sheridan. It attracted the novelist Fanny Burney, who wrote of it with passion in her Journals. This parliamentary drama, replete with the trappings of state, forms the conclusion to Mr. Bernstein's fascinating, unusual, and completely captivating narrative. With 22 black-and-white illustrations.

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