CALCUTTA
THE PROFILE OF A CITY
Calcutta
The Profile of a City

Nisith Ranjan Ray
*Director, Institute of Historical Studies, Calcutta*

K P Bagchi & Company
CALCUTTA
PREFACE

The present volume is neither an exhaustive book of history nor a mere directory or traveller's guide-book. It endeavours to give in outline the story of the city from its origin dating back to the days before Job Charnock's landing at Sutanuti Ghat, tracing it through varied phases till it became what it is today, the largest metropolitan complex in India. The story analyses the features which combined to lend to the city a distinctive character of its own, marking it out from most other cities in the country. It attempts to shed more light on the origin, antiquity and growth of the city in its early years and to fill in the lacunae by telling more about the life and people in the Indian town of the Settlement than has been done in any single volume. In unfolding the story of the last three centuries, the author has relied not only on the European records—factory papers, correspondences, journals, memoirs etc.—which are plentiful and easily available, but also on contemporary source-material—archaeological and literary—derived from Indian sources, largely neglected so far, even though available.

The aim of the author has been to present, in a readable manner, the background and story of a city which may rightly claim to be a unique one, a city bewildering but fascinating, a city of many faces which is likely to detract some but is sure to attract many. The book is intended to serve as an introduction to deeper studies on Calcutta in its various aspects—pre-colonial, colonial, urban and metropolitan.

Nisith R. Ray