

PREFACE

There is one argument other than those which the text has augmented to sustain the research that has resulted in this dissertation. All the major hill stations of India with the exception of Darjeeling have had their historians who had expended labour to record their annals and antiquities. It has been largely through their enquiries that the hill stations emerged not only as a concept of Colonialism but in the distinctiveness of each of them in the exotic urban phenomenon of imperial India. Shimla, Ootacmund, Mahabaleshwar, Nainital, Mussoorie, in spite of their superficial similarities, have had their urban personality being delineated in the objectives for which they have been set up in as much as in the manifestations of their cultural traits.

Darjeeling has been singularly unfortunate not to have its Todd to write its annals and antiquities. Barring a few gazetteers and a couple of tourist guide-books, none of which had presumably travelled beyond the display of impersonal statistics and the cosmetic surgery performed on it by Capt. Lloyd and Dr. Campbell, Darjeeling had no history. Although it had enjoyed an important place as the 'queen' in the British pantheon of hill stations and had been a part of the mythology of the local people, it sadly remained more mystified by it not being felt in the throbs of its urban heart than by the mists which often embrace it beyond public gaze.

Once it was born, Darjeeling appears to have become autonomous both in the shape it has assumed prompted convincingly by its topography and in the hybridization of its culture. Anglicisation had penetrated far deeply in the British encounter with the Indians of Darjeeling than perhaps in any other hill station, which obviously makes it into an important underpin. The Indianization of Darjeeling too was not devoid of a cultural specificity having had Nepalese, Lepchas, Tibetans, Eurasians, vagabonds, North Indian peddlars, Bengali bureaucrats and a host of Bengali *baboos* being thrown in the urbanization process. Despite all of them struggling to remain within their diverse and competitive cultural universe they had developed a common cultural dialect in their survival interest.

While anglicization as the surface cultural current was articulated by the language of the British which became the *Lingua franca*, its other cultural icons were flaunted by the commodities which the British consumed and in the quiet pursuit of the mannerism which they brought in their lives to differentiate them. The Indian culture flew as an undercurrent not being felt at the surface but very stable in its being able to weave all the streams of local cultures into a pattern of common respect and adulation. All these aspects of Darjeeling not being thoroughly explored suggest the idea for this research and justify it to be drawn to a conclusion.