

**CHAPTER III : M.M. KAYE'S SHADOW OF THE MOON AND  
THE PROBLEM OF HISTORICAL ACCURACY**

### CHAPTER III

The inherent feature of the historical novel is a serious concern with the political events and personages of the past. The present chapter attempts to study the degree of historical accuracy as maintained by M.M. Kaye in her novel. However, at this juncture it is important to distinguish between the political novel and the historical novel. As seen earlier, the historical novel concerns itself with the past, and the novelist's point of view towards the same. The political novel, as rightly pointed out by M.K. Naik, denotes :

either (a) a piece of fiction devoted to a presentation of political ideas or (b) a species of fiction in which action, characters and setting are all grounded in politics.<sup>1</sup>

The present novel cannot be considered as a political novel because, the writer's aim is not to present the political ideas at any stage. It simply recreates the past and political events and personages as they appear as a part of that past. The main historical events considered in the novel are as follows :

1. Nasser-ood-din Hyder, the King of Oudh, pays the amount of subsidy to the East India Company - 1799.
2. Temporary assumption of Oudh by Colonel John Low - 1834.
3. The death of Nasser-ood-din Hyder and the problem of succession - 1837.
4. The Tripartite Treaty of Lahore - 1838.
5. The death of Ranjeet Singh - 1839.
6. Shere Singh surrenders himself with his army to the British Government - 1849.
7. Annexation of Punjab - 1849.

8. Annexation of Oudh - 1856.
9. The story of the greased cartridges.
10. The story of Mangal Pande - March, 1857.
11. Henry Lawrence takes over as Commissioner of Lucknow - March, 1857.
12. Dandu Pant or the Nana Sahib of Bithoor pays visit to Lucknow Residency - April, 1857.
13. Colonel Carmichael orders a parade to gain confidence in Meerut - April, 1857.
14. The 7<sup>th</sup> Oudh regiment refuses to touch cartridges and they mutiny - May, 1857.
15. The sepoys of Meerut reach Delhi - May, 1857.
16. The great magazine, full of ammunition, blown up by the British officers at Delhi - May, 1857.
17. Ghazi-ood-din proclaims himself the King of Delhi - May, 1857.
18. Revolt in Allahabad, Zhansi, and Cownpore.
19. The massacre of Cownpore garrison - June 1857.
20. Sir Henry Lawrence killed in the explosion of the shell - July, 1857.
21. Delhi recaptured by the British - August, 1857.
22. The death of Nicholson - August 1857.
23. Havelock's attack on Lucknow - November, 1857.

Taking into consideration these historical facts and their role in the development of the contemporary politics, we shall examine major historical events with the help of the facts selected by M.M. Kaye and the history records maintained by some renowned historians like J.W. Kaye, R.C. Majumdar, Robert Sewell and G.W. Forrest.

The first two historical facts referred to by M.M. Kaye are, "the payment of a large amount of subsidy paid by Wazeer of Oudh to the East India Company and also the temporary assumption of Oudh by Colonel John Low." In this connection; it is essential to note down the brief resume' of the event. Lord Wellesley was appointed the Governor-General of India, in 1798. At that time, Saaudut Ali was on the throne of Oudh. There was a treaty signed between the King of Oudh and the East India Company by which it was decided that "the king of Oudh was to pay 76 Lakhs of Rupees to the Company, for his subsidized British troops." By this Lord Wellesley wanted to keep Oudh under the control of the Company, and he wanted to destabilise the financial status of Oudh. This he hoped, would render the King helpless and would lead to the annexation of Oudh eventually. M.M. Kaye mentions the events of the treaty - 1799, and the consequent annexation of Oudh in 1834 :

The rulers of Oudh had been among the most corrupt of Eastern potentates - though this had not deterred the East India Company from lending troops to the king, in return for a large subsidy, in order to help him keep his dissatisfied subjects in a proper state of subjection. The present ruler, Nasser-ood-din Hyder, was easily the worst of a long line of evil men, and he had already been exhorted by Sir William Bentinck to mend his ways. But neither warnings nor threats had weighed with the king, and at long last the Court of Directors of the East India Company had taken action. They had sent a dispatch to Colonel John Low, the Resident of Lucknow, authorising the temporary assumption of government in Oudh by the Company.<sup>2</sup>

Though Kaye mentions Nasser-ood-din Hyder as an evil man, he doesn't appear to be so from the historical accounts regarding him. At the most he can be said to be a shrewd ruler.

This indicates that the writer has selected two different important events  
 a) The payment of subsidy by Wazeer-in 1799 and b) a temporary assumption of  
 Oudh in 1834. Both the events put together, are of vital importance as they  
 prepared suitable ground for the revolt in 1857. Sir John William Kaye, refers  
 to the same events in his work, A History of the Sepoy War in India, and says :

Now, already the Wuzeer was paying seventy-six lakhs of rupees, or more than three quarters of a million of money, for his subsidised British troops and though he was to disband his own levies, and thereby to secure some saving to the state, it was but small in proportion to the expense of the more costly machinery of British military defense now to be substituted for them ...<sup>3</sup>

Colonel John Low, of whose character and career I have already spoken, was then Resident of Lucknow. The dispatch of the Court of Directors, authorising the temporary assumption of the Government of Oudh, was communicated to him, and he pondered over its contents.<sup>4</sup>

Though both the events mentioned above took place by the margin of thirty five years, they are linked together by the novelist. M.M. Kaye has seen a cause and effect relationship between them. The situation in Oudh became more critical after the death of Nasser-ood-din Hyder in July, 1837. Consequently, it created the problem of succession, as the Company had disallowed the adoption. M.M. Kaye puts up a straight record of the event in the novel and says :

On a hot night in July Nasser-ood-din Hyder died by poison; and immediately all Oudh was in a ferment. The succession was in dispute and the streets of Lucknow surged with gangs of lawless troops ready to strike in support of their particular nominee, and only the firmness and courage of Low and a handful of British assistants saved the seething city from a bath of violence and blood. Eventually, with the consent of Lord Auckland the Governor-General, an aged and crippled uncle of the late king ascended the throne of Oudh.<sup>5</sup>

The foregoing passage brings to our notice, M.M. Kaye's personality as an Anglo-Indian writer. She admires the British officers, as she believes in the moral superiority of the British. It clearly indicates that she wants to justify in her work the high-handedness of the British officers, as other Anglo-Indian writers do.

J.W.Kaye has also given the account of the problem of succession of the state of Oudh in the following words :

But, before anything had been done by the Government of India; in accordance with the discretion delegated to them by the Court of Directors, the experiment which Low had suggested inaugurated itself. Not without suspicion of poison, but really, I believe, killed only by strong drink, Nasser-ood-deen Hyder died on a memorable July night. It was a crisis of no common magnitude, for there was a disputed succession; and large bodies of lawless native troops in Lucknow were ready to strike at a moment's notice. The cool courage of Low and his assistants saved the city from the deluge of blood. An uncle of the deceased Prince, an old man and a cripple, respectable in his feebleness was declared king, with the consent of the British Government; and the independence of Oude had another lease of existence.<sup>6</sup>

Both the above mentioned historical narratives are concerned with the same event and bear maximum similarity. Both differ from each other, only in their mentioning of doubtful death-cause of Nasser-ood-din Hyder. M.M. Kaye mentions it, as an act of assassination, but according to John Kaye -- Nasser-ood-din Hyder died of strong drink.

Kaye's conjecture of assassination does not have support of any motivation. Had there been a potential successor, the case of assassination

would have been plausible. John Kaye hints at the suspicion of poisoning, but he too fails to point out possible motivation. The theory of assassination, however helps the novelist to create the impression of greed and corruption prevailing in the small princely states in India. She has preserved historical accuracy here which does not conflict with her general reading of the times.

The historical accuracy is maintained by the novelist, with the help of the events like Tripartite Treaty, signed by Ranjeet Singh, Shah Shuja and the British Government - on 26<sup>th</sup> June, 1838. The successive year of the Treaty witnessed the death of Ranjeet Singh, "the Lion of Punjab", on June 27<sup>th</sup> of 1839. After that M.M. Kaye has also mentioned the event, when the crown of Punjab had fallen into the hands of Shere Singh in 1842. M.M. Kaye has taken notice of only one important event during the period from 1842 to 1844, and that is the close of the Afghan War. Then she has moved towards the most important event of the annexation of Punjab. Shere Singh, one of the sons of Ranjeet Singh, had submitted himself with 16000 finest men in army to the British Government on 12<sup>th</sup> March 1849. To hold up the value of historical accuracy in the novel M.M. Kaye narrates the event of annexation of Punjab.

The Marquis of Dalhousie, Governor-General in India, had every reason to feel pleased with his achievements. He had added the Punjab and lower Burma to the British Empire, the koh-i-noor diamond to the British crown, secured the western frontiers of India and brought to the country the blessings of civilization in the form of the railway and the telegraph.<sup>7</sup>

The annexation of various princely states was an important activity of Lord Dalhousie. Though it decreased the confidence of the rebels, who were preparing for the nation wide revolt, it also created intense hatred for the British among all the Indians. The annexation of Punjab was, one of those events which contributed most to the creation of atmosphere proper to the revolt. It can be examined with the help of the record kept up by Robert Sewell :

Annexation of the Punjab - Lahore was immediately occupied, and the decision of the Governor-General was soon known. It was a severe sentence. The kingdom of Ranjeet Singh was declared to be at an end; the Punjab was to be annexed to England; the young Maharajah Dhuleep Singh was to place himself under British protection; and the army of the Khalsa was to be disbanded. The "Kohi-noor" diamond was at the same time delivered up to deck the crown of the Queen of England. '

The above mentioned event of annexation, recorded by Robert Sewell, shows maximum resemblance with the event narrated by M.M. Kaye in her novel. She has narrated the event with necessary information but without speaking of the day, date and the place of action. It indicates that her interest lies in the use of historical facts to maintain historicity in the novel, without making her novel a history book.

In this respect, the annexation of Oudh is, another important historical event mentioned by M.M. Kaye in the novel. It was the last action of Lord Dalhousie as the Governor-General of India. It is important to note that the rulers of Oudh had been friends of British as many people recruited by the Company were from Oudh state. British wanted to annex Oudh to the Empire,



due to its important geographical central location. Though the Nawab of Oudh had territory, subjects and money, he had not been able to organise his own army sufficient for all the external and internal requirements of the state. So whenever he was in need of some extra force, he used to rely upon the British troops to manage the internal and external affairs. At first it was an irregular job-work but afterwards it assumed a more formal and recognised shape. Lord Dalhousie was looking for an opportunity of cornering the Nawab, and wanted to bring the state of Oudh under the power of the Company. He implemented his plans concerning Oudh accordingly, and annexed the Oudh state to the British Empire. To mention this significant event M.M. Kaye states :

The annexation of Oudh had been one of the last acts of Lord Dalhousie's reign, but settling of the province had fallen to Lord Canning, whose appointment of Coverley Jackson as Chief Commissioner of this newest of the Company's possessions had not proved a happy one.'

The above cited event of annexation can be examined in the light of the record kept up by Robert Sewell :

Annexation of Oude, 1856— Lord Dalhousie's last important act was the annexation of Oudh. It was forced upon the Government by precisely the same system of mal-administration and compression which had characterized the downfall of the states of Mysore and Carnatic. The Nabob Vizier or "king", as he was now called, had plundered and harassed the people on all sides; he had been frequently warned by the Resident, but had refrained from any attempt at amendment, and matters had grown to such a pass that a commission was now appointed to make a progress through the territories of Oude, and examine the actual condition of the country. This was accordingly accomplished, and the result was the exposure of a system of government so radically bad that the Governor - General felt the deposition of the king and the establishment of English supervision throughout the country to be

the only course which offered the slightest benefits to the populace at large. The arrangement was accordingly made, and in 1856 the decision of Lord Dalhousie, fully supported by the Court of Directors, transferred the ownership of the territories of Oude from the king to the East India Company.<sup>10</sup>

Taking into consideration the foregoing event, M.M. Kaye appears to be critical of the Nawab. She condemns his rulership and favours the action of annexation by the British suggesting that they were better administrators. The event mentioned earlier and its record show the essential difference between the novelist's attitude and also of the historian's towards the same fact. Where Robert Sewell gives a detailed description of the event as a historian, there M.M. Kaye avoids it and narrates only the major developments of the event.

The Story of the greased cartridges was an immediate cause of the revolt. Basically, majority of the soldiers in the Company's army were from peasant families. They were treated contemptuously by their English officers. They were deeply hurt to see their families under the burden of poverty. Under such a dual pressure, they heard the episode of greased cartridges. The cartridges, which were used in the rifles, had a casing coated with the fat of cows and pigs. This casing had to be bitten off with teeth. This offended the feelings of Indian soldiers. The newly created problem had one more dimension. It was said that the cartridges had been intentionally greased to hurt the religious feelings of the soldiers, both the Muslim and the Hindu soldiers. In this respect M.M. Kaye writes:

Those cartridge papers have to be bitten, and if there is any doubt as to the composition of the grease, it is a thing that will affect the

caste of every sepoy in the Army. A grievance that will unite men of every regiment a common denominator." '—— If it should contain any lard or animal fat', said Alex harshly, 'no sepoy should be asked to touch it, let alone bite it. The pig is an unclean animal to a Mussulman and the cow a sacred animal to the Hindu, while the fat of any dead creature is an abomination to both .<sup>11</sup>

The novelist is trying to portray Alex - the hero - as the straight forward British Officer, who did not know whether the cartridges were really greased by any animal fat. The 'if - clause' in the quotation above shows his innocence. But it does not rule out the possibility that some other British officers could have done it. The novelist does not say anything about it. She does not categorically say that the cartridges were not greased by animal fat. But her hero condemns it, if it were so. Since, this is the most important historical reason for the revolt, it can be examined with the assistance of the record of the revolt given by a distinguished Indian historian R.C. Majumdar :

In particular, the conversion of Hindus to Christianity — by force or fraud as the Hindus thought — embittered the relations, sometimes almost to a breaking point. There was a general dread among the Indians that it was the deliberate policy of the British Government to convert them *en masse* to Christianity.<sup>12</sup>

All the historians of Indian history have considered the story of greased cartridges as an immediate cause of the uprising of 1857. But as seen above this story is reported by M.M. Kaye in a guarded manner neither denying it nor supporting it. It is quite natural because she had to paint her hero as innocent of any crime.

The next important event is Nana-Sahib's visit to Lucknow Residency in April 1857. Dandu Pant or Nana Sahib of Bithoor was the adopted son of Peishwa Baje Rao. Though, he used to appear as a friend and well-wisher of the Company Government, he took a very active part in plotting conspiracy against the British. He paid visits to various states to ask them for a united revolt. But there is not any authentic source of information about his activities during the journey. In this respect R.C. Majumdar states :

There is no evidence to show that he visited any place besides Lakhanau and Mirat. But even if he had done so, there is nothing on record to show what he did during his journey. <sup>13</sup>

But the novelist ascribes clear motive to Nana's visit to different places. As given below, she clearly states that Nana nursed a grievance against the British, though outwardly he was quite friendly and quiet.

Perhaps the most spectacular guest, and certainly the one who aroused most interest, Dandu Pant, the Nana of Bithaur, who attended the party accompanied by an impressively large retinue. The Nana was a man who cherished a grievance against the British, the Government having refused to recognize him as the legal heir, or to allow him the pension granted to the Peishwa, Baje Rao, who having no son had adopted him under Hindu Law. He was most friendly and affable towards the British guests, with several of whom he seemed to be on excellent terms and Winter saw him in animated converse with Sir Henry Lawrence. <sup>14</sup>

The historical accuracy of Nana's visits to various places can be verified through J.W. Kaye's account of the same event :

This man was Dundoo Punt, commonly known as the Nana Sahib of Bithoor — the adopted son of the Peishwah, Baje Rao. He was not given to distant journeyings, indeed, he was seldom seen beyond the limits of his own estate. But in the early months of 1857,

having visited Calpee, he made a journey to Delhi, and, a little later in the year, paid a visit to Lucknow. <sup>15</sup>

That, within so short a time, he should make these journeys, was a fact to exact speculation; but he was held to be a quiet, inoffensive person, good-natured, perhaps somewhat dull and manifestly not of that kind of humanity of which conspirators are made, so no political significance was attached to the fact. What likelihood was there, at that time, that such a man as Dundoo Punt, heavy and seemingly impressive, who had for some years quietly accepted his position, and during that time done many acts of kindness and hospitality to the English gentlemen, should suddenly become a plotter against the State ? <sup>16</sup>

Nana's visits to various North-East provinces were not, thus, suspected by the British as possible conspiracy, but they had great significance from historical and political points of view. The account of Nana's activities given by J.W. Kaye and the narration of the same by the novelist bear resemblance. Both the accounts show that the British officers were not at all aware of the activities of the mutiny leaders and the uprising came to them as a shock. To this extent the novelist is successful in maintaining historicity in her novel. The novelist, during the course of a narration, has directly stated or alluded to the major causes behind the mutiny - the discontent among the sepoys the religious dimension, the political atmosphere created by the high-handed annexation of the princely states etc. But so far as apportioning the blame is concerned, she is rather partial to the British. She would not describe annexation as humiliation of the princes, and the sepoys could be the victims of misunderstanding. She nowhere makes allowances for patriotic feelings of the Indians. The first outbreak of the mutiny was

witnessed on the 2nd May, 1857. It was the 7th Oudh Infantry, which had refused to accept the cartridges. M.M. Kaye narrates the event in these words :

The telegraph did not as yet operate in Lunjore, and so it was not until two days later that the news trickled over the border from Oudh that on Sunday, May 3<sup>rd</sup>, the 7th regiment of Oudh irregulars had refused to accept their cartridges, and had mutinied. <sup>17</sup>

In this context G.W. Forrest, Ex-Director of official record-Government of India, gives an account of it and says :

In this letter to the Governor-General, Sir Henry Lawrence incidentally mentions the following : "Two hours ago Captain Carnegie came to tell me that there has been a strong demonstration against cartridges in the 7<sup>th</sup> Oudh irregulars this morning, I hope and expect the report he hears is exaggerated; but I tell it for his commentary. He also told of an intended meeting of traitors tomorrow night, and asked whether he might put prisoners taken at such a meeting into jail, as the Kotwali is not safe". The report did not prove to be exaggerated. On the following day Henry Lawrence wrote : "I am sorry that the report I mentioned in my letter of yesterday is too true : the 7<sup>th</sup> Oudh Infantry positively refuse to use the cartridges. <sup>18</sup>

The ground was already prepared for the uprising by the soldiers, as they were assured that they will be assisted by the humiliated princes of several states. It was the 7th of Oudh Irregular, which had shown remarkable courage in breaking out first. The event of the defiance shown by 7th Oudh, is stated by M.M. Kaye with historical accuracy.

As the 7th Oudh Regiment had started the mutiny, it became easy for the other regiments to rebel openly. The problem of disobedience and disorder was faced by almost all the regimental heads, however there were some British

officers like Henry Lawrence, who were aware of this problem of uprising. Sir Henry Lawrence had taken an immediate action to disarm the 7th Oudh, but rather than discouraging other regiments, it inflamed the mutineers. Some British officers tried to imitate Henry Lawrence but very few succeeded in it. They had to use extra military force to keep the sepoy under control. Officers, like Colonel Carmichael had great faith in his regiment, but as the atmosphere of the revolt had pervaded the whole area, his regiment too could not remain an exception. There was open mutiny at Meerut, on 24<sup>th</sup> April, 1857. To state the event of rebellion of the 3rd Light Cavalry M.M. Kaye says :

In a large bungalow in the Cantonment of Meerut, forty miles to the north-east of Delhi, Colonel Carmichael Smyth, the commanding officer of the 3rd Light Cavalry, sat at breakfast. 'The sentence was entirely just !' said Colonel Smyth. — The ninety men were duly paraded — and eighty-five of them had refused to handle the caste-breaking cartridges. They were immediately tried by court-martial and sentenced to ten years' imprisonment, and a parade of all troops had been ordered by the aged divisional commander, Major-General Hewitt, to watch the sentence put into execution. <sup>19</sup>

Let us see how this narration compares with the historical account of the event given by J.W. Kaye .

So, in the beginning of the fourth week of April, the excitement, which for many weeks had been growing stronger and stronger, broke out into an act of open mutiny. The troopers of the 3rd Cavalry were the first to resist the orders of their officers. They had no new weapons; no new ammunition. The only change introduced into their practice was that which substituted the pinching or tearing off, for the biting off, the end of the cartridges which they used with their carbines. This change in the drill was to be explained to them on a parade of the skirmishers of the regiment, which was to be held on the morning of the 24<sup>th</sup> of April. On the preceding evening a report ran through cantonments that the troopers would refuse to touch the cartridges. The parade was held,

- and of ninety men, to whom the ammunition was to have been served out, only five obeyed the orders of their officers. In vain Colonel Carmichael Smyth explained to them that the change had been introduced from a kindly regard for their own scruples. They were dogged and obdurate, and would not touch the cartridges. So the parade was dismissed, and the eighty-five troopers of the Third Cavalry were ordered for Court-martial.<sup>20</sup>

The presentation of this identical situation, by M.M. Kaye and by the historian J.W. Kaye, is quite similar. The only difference is the mention of the day and date of the event by the historian, which is avoided by M.M. Kaye in her capacity as a historical novelist. The novelist dramatizes the narration of the event bringing in the characters of the subordinate officers while the historian states the facts blandly.

The outbreak of the mutiny at Meerut was witnessed on May 10, 1857. Just after some hours all the mutineers made their way to Delhi, where they were assisted by Delhi regiments. Not only European men and women, but children were also inhumanly killed by the mutineers. M.M. Kaye selects this event to describe the horror and massacre experienced by British people in India :

All through that long hot day frantic officers in Meerut - where the terror had broken out and from where the mutineers, after a night of murder, had ridden for Delhi — ground their teeth and waited, or pleaded for permission to ride after them ... All through that long hot day the Delhi garrison waited and hoped, watching the Meerut road for the help that they could not believe would fail them. And every moment that the help delayed, the mutineers of the 3rd Cavalry and those who had joined them grew bolder, and more and more of the city rabble gathered before the Palace where the tatterdemalion court of the aged King of Delhi grew hourly more confident.<sup>21</sup>



As it is mentioned earlier, a parade of all the forces was held in Meerut on 9<sup>th</sup> May, 1857. On 10<sup>th</sup> May, 1857, the entire Indian regiment in Meerut camp rose in rebellion. They marched to Delhi and were joined by Indian soldiers in Delhi. The event of rebels' flight to Delhi, recorded by M.M. Kaye, can be examined with the help of the event mentioned by G.W. Forrest :

The opportunity was well chosen. The next day, May the 10<sup>th</sup> being Sunday, while the European residents of Meerut were driving to church in the evening, they were startled at hearing the sound of musketry, and seeing columns of smoke rising to the sky. That sound marked the opening of the Indian Mutiny. The native troops had revolted, and were murdering their officers and burning their homesteads.<sup>22</sup>

Colonel Finnis, a fine soldier, beloved by officers and men, whilst imploring his own regiment, the 11th to be faithful, fell riddled by a volley of the 20th Native Infantry. Then half mad with excitement and aided by the scum of the city, the sepoys began the work of pillage and murder. Soon, however, the cry was raised — " Quick, brother, quick; Delhi, Delhi !" and the mutineers fled along the road to the Moghul capital, expecting every moment that the white soldiers would pursue and overwhelm them.<sup>23</sup>

The event recorded by G.W. Forrest, and the account of the same given by M.M. Kaye are both similar in broad details. The inhuman act of the slaughter of the Europeans is described by both realistically.

When all armed sepoys reached Delhi, they started the work of destruction. They released prisoners. There was a large magazine, full of ammunition, at Delhi. It was protected by very few British officers. But when they found the situation out of their control, they blew it up. The narration of the novelist goes like this :

The case with which Delhi had been captured had horrified him; as had the news that although young Willoughby had blown up the Magazine in the city rather than allow it to fall into the hands of the rebels, the far larger magazine near the river about Metcalf House had apparently not been destroyed, which meant that an ample supply of ammunition of every description would by now be at the disposal of the mutineers.<sup>24</sup>

The record maintained by Robert Sewell, strengthens the historical accuracy of Kaye's narration, when he says :

During the night some of the mutineers galloped into Delhi, and immediately every Sepoy in the great city was in arms and commencing the work of destruction. The commissioner, the chaplain, the officers were one and all murdered; and the whole of the 54th, 74th, and 38<sup>th</sup> Native Infantry vied with one another in the works of cruelty and violence. The magazine was defended with desperate energy by nine English officers, and blown up only when resistance was hopeless, two of their number were perishing in the explosion. The remainder of the Europeans in the city fled into the jungles, where most of them perished by the hands of the excited natives or the terrible heat of the weather .<sup>25</sup>

The presentation of the event, blowing up of the magazine at Delhi, clearly indicates that M.M. Kaye wants to refer to the event; only to keep up the historicity in the novel. She has avoided all the other details of the event i.e. the day, date etc. The fact, that the situation had gone beyond the British control; and so they all had fled into the jungles provides a background to her story in — Book five *Hiran Minar* of Shadow of the Moon. Robert Sewell in his account has dealt with the same event in a similar way.

As all the mutineers reached and captured Delhi, they approached Ghazi-ud-din, the king of Delhi, to lead the revolt. The novelist has described this event in the following words :

It was Niaz who had brought him a copy of a pamphlet that was being circulated in the city calling on all Mohammedans to prepare for *Jehad*—a Holy War. 'This thing is in the hands of Mussulmans', said Niaz, 'and in the mosques also they preach a *Jehad*. I have heard too that it has been promised that Ghazi-ud-din Bahadur Shah, the King of Delhi, shall be restored to his own, so that once more the Moghul will rule in Hind.'<sup>26</sup>

R.C. Majumdar, the historian, supports the details such as rebels reaching Delhi and Bahadur Shah accepting the kingship again. He states :

The sepoys of Mirat reached Delhi soon after daybreak on the 11th of May. Those who arrived first went straight to the Red Fort, and requested Bahadur Shah to take the lead in the campaign which they had already begun. After a great deal of hesitation, Bahadur Shah at last agreed, and was proclaimed Emperor.<sup>27</sup>

The event of the restoration of the Moghul Empire is an important event as it vitalized the mutinous spirit of the rebels. M.M. Kaye anticipates the news of proclamation of the restoration of the Moghul Empire, at Delhi.

The next important event is the public slaughter of the Europeans which is said to have taken place at Cawnpore. All the major and minor provinces were in the same state as was Delhi in the hands of the mutineers. M.M. Kaye describes the massacre at Cawnpore thus :

He had heard too — the news had been told to Mr. Climpson by the headman of the village where they had lain hidden before being brought to Pari of the massacre of the Cawnpore garrison who had accepted the offer of surrender and safe-conduct by Dandu Pant,

the Nana Sahib. If Mr. Climpson's informant was to be believed, the exhausted survivors had been allowed to embark in boats that were to take them to Allahabad; but once the last man was on board the thatched roofs of the boats had been set alight by the boatmen, who then leapt out into the water as the watchers on the bank opened fire on the blazing, drifting targets. In this manner the last of the Cawnpore garrison had died, with the exception of some two hundred women and children — of whom there had been close on four hundred in the entrenchments on the fifth of June - who had struggled ashore and been taken captive . <sup>28</sup>

In support of the event cited above Robert Sewell's record of the event is worth noting :

The position became more and more hopeless, and when, on the 26<sup>th</sup>, Nana offered a safe retreat for all the Europeans if Cawnpore was delivered up, Sir Hugh Wheeler felt compelled to accept the terms. The place was evacuated on the 27<sup>th</sup>, and some four hundred of the survivors were allowed to embark in the boats and proceed down the river. But no sooner had they started, than the fiendish Lord of Bithoor opened fire upon the helpless fugitives. One boat only escaped, but it was attacked lower down, and of the whole garrison, only four men survived to tell the tale of horror. Another boat which had stuck fast on a sandbank, and was filled with ladies and children, was seized, and the whole party were marched into Cawnpore, where they were shut up close prisoners. <sup>29</sup>

In Kaye's narration of the event Nana is not directly condemned for ordering fire, while Sewell feelingly records how 'the fiendish lord of Bithoor' opened fire on the helpless fugitives. The historian Sewell does not say anything about setting fire to the thatched roofs of the boats, but Kaye's account graphically describes the blazing boats being fired at by the sepoys. Kaye appears to give more gory details than the historian.

On 1<sup>st</sup> July, 1857 the mutineers made their first attack on Lucknow, which was defended by the commissioner incharge Mr. Henry Lawrence. He received a serious wound in the attack and died on 4th July, 1857. The event of Sir Henry Lawrence's death recorded by M.M. Kaye is as follows :

Sir Henry Lawrence was dead. He had died in beleaguered Residency at Lucknow, and all over India men heard the news with a catch of the breath. Now that he had gone it would surely be only a matter of days before the Residency was captured, and its defenders massacred as the garrison of Cawnpore had been .<sup>30</sup>

The report of Henry Lawrence's death can be confirmed with the help of the record maintained by R.C. Majumdar :

At first the sepoys confined themselves to cannonading from a distance and a galling musketry fire from the neighbouring buildings, causing nearly fifteen to twenty deaths every day during the first week, one of the victims was Henry Lawrence himself, who was wounded by the bursting of a shell on July 2 and died two days later.<sup>31</sup>

The death of Henry Lawrence indicates the bitter hatred spread among the mutineers against the British. In fact, as it is mentioned by M.M. Kaye, Henry Lawrence was one of those few British officers who were loved and respected by Indians, but the rebels did not spare even him.

The rebellion was in full swing everywhere in India by the end of July. By this time General Havlock had marched towards Cawnpore, and the Europeans, who had survived the attack, received reinforcement to bring order and peace. When we consider all the events discussed earlier, we can say that the revolt of 1857 was the event of great magnitude. But it could not put an end to the British

power in India. The nationwide revolt failed at last because there was no centralized leadership and the rebels did not have modern weapons as the British had. At last, the Capital City was once again captured by the British. Towards the end of the novel M.M. Kaye mentions the last actions of the revolt dying down :

Haveclock's army, which had crossed the border into Oudh in the last days of July and had subsequently fought and won two battles, had suffered heavy losses in the fighting, and finding their communications threatened by Nana Sahib's forces had fallen back on Mangalwar to wait for reinforcements. Twice in early August Havelock had advanced again towards Lucknow, only to be checked : the first time by an outbreak of Cholera, and later by the mutiny of the Gwalior Contingent which had compelled him to secure his base and fall back on Cawnpore. <sup>32</sup>

For the confirmation of the description given above, let's see the event registered by Robert Sewell, which also tells us about Havelocks march on Lucknow and the predicament that he suffered :

Havelock's march on Lucknow — Havelock had, as before stated, left Colonel Neill in Cawnpore, and marched towards Lucknow on July the 25<sup>th</sup>. Crossing the Ganges into Oude, he fought the enemy at Oonao; and then his troops being decimated by sickness, fell back on Mangalwar to await reinforcements. <sup>33</sup>

The account of the event given by M.M. Kaye and the mention of the event made by Robert Sewell are the same and reflect no distinction. M.M. Kaye narrates recapturing of Delhi by the British and the fall of Moghul Empire very briefly towards the end of the novel :

The news that Delhi had been recaptured by the British had reached the Gulab Mahal two days after Alex had left. Delhi had been taken, but the price had been high, for Nicholson was dead. <sup>34</sup>

The event of taking of Delhi once again by the British has also been recorded by Robert Sewell :

Taking of Delhi — The city was finally captured on August 19th. No quarter was given , and terrible was the slaughter of the rebels by the avenging comrades of those who had been murdered at Cownpore and shot down at Lucknow. Thus after six days of actual fighting, was Delhi won .<sup>35</sup>

Though the British recaptured Delhi, they had to pay a very high price for it in the death of Nicholson. When we compare the two accounts, we find that M.M. Kaye's interest lies in the role played by Nicholson, but she ignores how the British slaughtered the rebels in turn.

In chapter I, as it is stated that M.M. Kaye represents the 20<sup>th</sup> century British in India before the Indian Independence. It is important to note that the British people belonging to this period were born and brought up in this country. So a strong bond of relationship was developed between them and this country. For them the Empire was already dead. There were some British officers who were respected and loved by Indians. In Shadow of the Moon Henry Lawrence, Alex Randall and Winter represent this image of the British in India. In the same way, she mentions with the gratitude the love and affection shown by all the Indians and Europeans towards Nicholson as he was one of those respected officers. The following quotation from M.M. Kaye bears testimony to the respect shown by all towards Nicholson after his death :

'Nikal Seyn' was dead, and the men at frontier who had fought at Delhi — Pathans, Multanis, Afghans — had wept above his grave, and many, who had cared nothing for the Raj and had given

allegiance only to him, had gone back to their own country. *'There be many sahibs — but only one Nikal Seyn ...'*<sup>36</sup>

By the mid-1930's the British image of India had taken a new colour. They were about to fix their position either in favour of or in opposition to the British Empire. However, they knew that the Empire would not last anymore. M.M. Kaye is aware of this change of feelings and brings it to the notice of her readers. The creation of characters such as Alex and Lawrence in the image of Nicholson shows how the novelist wishes to retain the benevolent impression of the British in India in the passing phase of the Empire.

Taking into consideration all the foregoing major events narrated by M.M. Kaye and their examinations with the records maintained by renowned historians, it is clear that the writer's aim has been to recreate the past and not to present political ideas. All major political personages and events occur in the course of the novel as a part of the same past. We can say that M.M. Kaye has set a straight record of the 1857 rebellion, the major events and personages in it without as little prejudice as possible.

A History of the Sepoy War in India written by J.W. Kaye is a primary source of information for M.M. Kaye. This historical narration is regarded as a pioneering work in this respect, consequently the events in the novel and its records by J.W. Kaye bear great similarity. The novelist has remained faithful to history in her references to the major events and personages of the 1857 rebellion.



M.M. Kaye has selected the places like Oudh, Delhi and Lucknow, as the history retold by her is itself concerned with these places. But the most important place, Lunjore District is imaginatively created by the novelist where the major actions take place. No reference has been made to any location on any map, to describe the geographical situation of Lunjore city where the major events take place. The description of the imaginative district shows close resemblance to the description of the contemporary Lucknow province.

To make the narrative authentic and to give historical dimension to her novel, M.M. Kaye frequently refers to some important historical personages- Henry Lawrence, Lord Dalhousie, Rani Laxmibai etc. She also relates these historical personalities to some imaginary characters like Alex Randall, Winter and Niaz.

Thus the novel is plotted on two levels - imaginative and historical. The love story of Alex and Winter is the main thread which runs through the major historical events of the mutiny in chronological order.

Though M.M. Kaye appears to be less careful in mentioning the days and dates of the events, she takes care to maintain maximum historical accuracy by which the novel does not suffer from the loss of historicity. Thus the novel appears as a closely interwoven story of love and war, in which the novelization of the uprising of 1857 and the love story of Alex and Winter cannot be separated from each other. Her keen observation of Indian mind and her

admirable knowledge about Indian Geography, culture and psychology, decide her distinctive position as an Anglo Indian novelist. Its ~~a~~ states as the historical novel is justified by the faithful presentation of the hisrorical events as they affect the life of the two young persons, who go through deep emotional crisis and face the horror of death. The history and personal life are intertwined in this novel because the characters in the novel dare a role to play in the very historical events which took place at the time. The history, therefore, does not appear merely as a backdrop, but has a part of their very life.

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