CHAPTER-II

POLITICAL IMAGE

OF

INDIA IN THE NOVELS

OF

MRS. B.M. CROKER
Mrs. Bithia Mary Croker (nee Sheppard) 1849-1920

A Brief Biographical Sketch of Mrs. B M. Croker

The biographical information available on Mrs. B. M. Croker is very brief and sketchy. Mrs. Bithia Mary Croker (1849-1920) was one of the prolific Anglo-Indian novelists. She was the only daughter of Rev. William Sheppard, Rector of Kilgefin Church of England. She married Lieutenant Colonel John Stokes Croker (1844-1911) an officer in the Royal Scotts and the Royal Munster Fusiliers in 1871. Soon after marriage she followed her husband to Madras where he worked and then went to Bengal. She lived in India for fourteen years. She spent sometime in a hill station in Wellington, Newzealand. There she wrote many of her works. After her husband’s retirement in 1892 the couple went to live in Co.Wicklow, and finally settled in Folkstone. She had one daughter who was educated at Rockferry, Cheshire. She was immensely interested in reading, traveling and theatre. She passed away on 20 October 1920.

Beginning with 1882, when she was 33 years old, her literary career spans until 1999. During this long period of 37 years, coming more than a quarter century, she never looked back and enriched the field of fiction enormously. She wrote nearly 46 works of which some are short story collections dealing with variety of themes. In the stories and also in the novels she occasionally employs an element of ghosts and eeriness for which she seems to have had special infatuation. Most of her novels have been set in India and other parts of the East including Africa, Egypt, etc., the then other colonies of England. They usually deal with Indian military life. Most of her novels reveal the troubles and tribulations of the unswerving and dedicated lovers who are destined to unite after a considerable delay. She also reveals an indomitable interest in human relations. The heroines and heroes delineated by her, breathing an air of patience and adventure, emerge as Griseldas and Achilles respectively. Her power of picturing the scenes and situations is unsurpassed. The moral aim of her novels like that of the novels of Charles Dickens is quite commendable. Her novels are delightful entertainers. She is comparable,
in this regard to her Senior Victorian contemporaries like Thomas Hardy (1840-1929) etc. But surprising it is to note that a writer with such fecundity and proficiency has remained unrecognized unjustly and unjustifiably.

Out of her forty-six novels twenty works exclusively deal with India. In these works she has made a very sincere attempt to understand the Indian culture, which is very complex, heterogeneous and riddled with several contradictions. Her attempt to understand India from outsider's, especially a Britisher's, point of view is highly admirable though we may not agree with her evaluation of Indian culture.

It is intended here to make an in-depth and a detailed study of her novels with special reference to the image of India as depicted in them and evaluate them critically. Her image of India is classified into Political, Economic, Socio-cultural, and Religio-philosophical ones, for the convenience of discussion.

INTRODUCTION:

History holds testimony to the fact that in the early days of their entry British held sword and scale in their hands and soon abandoned the scale and held the sword and political power firmly in one hand and the Bible and the church bell cord in another till their last days in India. This hold continued to strengthen itself and metamorphose in various ways under the guise of ruling, educating, culturing and other such colonial attempts, or to name them better “colonial projects” \(^1\) as Edward Said calls them, through which they struggled hard relentlessly to obliterate the memory of the glorious past of India from the mind of the residents of this land. The white men firmly believed in the superiority of their race, culture and civilization. They also firmly held the view that India, their colony, was far back from them on the path of progress in all respects. Their firm idea was that India could be “restored to prosperity, regenerated by wise and enlightened administration... would shed its civilizing rays upon all its Oriental...” \(^2\) Therefore they took the mask of
civilizing, culturing and educating the Indian masses declaring avowedly that they were the “God-sent race” to deliver India from the darkness of ignorance, from stupor of mysterious religious practices, by lighting the lamp of knowledge in the hearts of Indians, totally directing this land towards civilization and culture. That cultural renaissance alone is a powerful panacea for this deep-rooted disease of India was the unshakable idea of the white man. Therefore the British people attempted to hold the power in their hands and introduce the laws, rules, regulation, and code of conduct by way of governance. Their ulterior motive of profit of the patronizing population (English men of England) was well guarded by the mask. But in the process of governance, the white man, as a ruler, had to undergo innumerable difficulties and risks, which involved many times the very claim over his life. That the European colonizers marginalized, silenced and thereby tried to dismantle the knowledge systems of the colonized, a process known as “deterritorialisation” and thereby established the supremacy of European knowledge’s and gained cultural hegemony is much reiterated fact by the critical theorists. Macaulay’s view of contempt for Indian customs and literature when he said, “a single shelf of a good European library is worth the whole native literature of India and Arabia... whoever knows that (English) language has ready access to all the vast intellectual wealth... the great impulse given to the mind of a whole society... arts sciences planted in countries which had recently been ignorant and barbarous” at this point gets underscored and saying thus he recommended that the English education system be introduced in India. Thus we witness the influential evangelical ambitions assuming the mask of convincingly civilizing mission of Company’s administration. In this way “the study of English and the growth of Empire proceeded from a single ideological climate and that the development of the one is intrinsically bound up with the development of other... as the object of a reforming zeal.” Even the literature produced by the Imperialist writers cannot be read without any reference to imperialism completely. For, it employs the content, which indicates the consolidation of Imperial Authority over the colonized. Edward Said’s words “Imperialism and the novel fortified each other to such a degree
that it is impossible... to read one without in some way dealing with the other go a far way with the reader of Anglo-Indian fiction.

2.1 CONTEMPORARY POLITICAL SCENE

Although the political image of India of her time, as held out by Mrs. B. M. Croker in the total corpus of her literary harvest, is very slender, it adds up in its own way and enables her to form one of the prominent figures of her times. The images created by her conform to the contemporary norms as are noted above.

In *A Bird of Passage* (1886) Gilbert Lisle who likes the unconventional life and therefore to ward off the boring life of politics, postcards, express trains, telegrams and other things happens to spend his carefree days at Port Blair. He is a great lover of art, scenic beauty of nature and sailing life. Mrs. Durand accidentally meets him and asks the reason of his finding himself in Port Blair. When Le says he likes the place and above all wants to escape from the normal routine and politics of England, Mrs. Durand says, “As to politics, we have our politics here. Have you not discovered that we are an absolute monarchy?”

The imperialist British government often held itself superior and believed firmly that providing all civic amenities and progress is possible only under its own aegis. Many times, even the British authors supported this view. They not only supported the view but also went to the extent of distortion of historical truth and attributed many things of Indian antiquity to the credit of the Company Sirkar saying that it acted always very actively in alien Indian soil. Here is the description of the building rest houses (Serais) for the tourists, (a system which was introduced by Shershah and latter followed by philanthropist Indiars) in the story “The Secret of the Amulet” narrated as if to have been done so by the Company Sirkar that is praised for its ‘ever active’ reformist zeal.

If you know the city of Hassanpur, where it lies between two capricious rivers, and surrounded by a vast gran country, you must be familiar with the long red bridge over Kanat, on the parapet of
which a mendicant sits, who rests not from dawn till dusk calling, “Blind man – blind man”. Just at the foot of the bridge is the great Serai, or way side house, for travelers, with its lofty walls spacious in-closure, and entrance gate worthy of a mosque – both it and the bridge were built by a native, who wished his name to go down to posterity; but to thousands who cross the one and hundreds who halt at the other, it is unknown – no doubt they imagine both to be the work of the all-powerful and ever-active Sivkar (Government)* (emphasis added).

The white man’s idea of ruling in India was to exercise not only the duty but also an authority. Further the need to exercise the authority necessitated certain traits of characters like prowess, forcefulness, masculinity, self-honour etc. These and many such other qualities were expected of a British man, for these were “looked upon as being the true test of an individual’s or more importantly, a race’s worth. The crucial thing... ability to lead in terms of race.” 9 And that such a thing was more demanded of a white man in India is a recurrent idea in the novels of Mrs. B. M. Croker also. Scruby’s words to Trafford, “Orientals do not think it worthwhile to respect one who does not respect himself. That is your tip for them”, 10 subscribe to the idea referred afore.

In ruling, especially an alien population a lot of risk is involved. Managing and meeting the risk of ruling is often the topic of talk of the after dinner conversant who are anxious about British Empire in India. Here is Dr. Collins, a learned man who was well versed in many Indian languages, served in Central Provinces. Surveying the situation of Indian politics and predicament he says,

“But there is no doubt we live in anxious times. The Indian Empire wants a strong and steady hand to guide her – in fact, a man to ride the storm; or, to choose another metaphor, a spark, and – like one of your forest fires, (emphasis added) Trafford – who can tell where it may end?” 11.

As rulers British people had to employ every possible means to make their existence impressive to the natives. This motif often pushed them into the moments of epiphany. It would be a matter of insult on the part of British to be overheard or spied on by the natives. This made them to pledge their freedom and reduced their existence merely to a show-
before the natives. In, *In Old Madras* (1913) this idea becomes explicit when Nancy Brander warns Captain Mallender of his proposal of wandering as a photographer outwardly with an intention of searching for his missing relation (uncle) in India. She says, “Natives are so vitally interested in us, and our concerns. We are always on the stage – they are the audience.” All this acrobatics of white man to hide his secrets and pose as leader is the risk that gets involved in the process of mastering the natives.

The terrible tornado that made the tree of British Empire groan at its roots was the First War of Indian Independence. If for the Indians it was an exalted war of liberation, exhibition of nationalism, for British Imperial personalities it was *wanton mutiny*, unmerited act of turpitude and resurrection. The Indian nationalists like Nanasaheb, Rani of Jhansi, Baba Saheb of Naragund etc., were viewed as murderous and villainous elements against the British Raj. Though the novelists that deal with this theme proceed from the belief of being faithful to the facts of history very soon their sense of superiority and racial bias led them astray and with some honourable exceptions most of the practitioners of fiction are prone to paint and present the predicament in the light of this preoccupation. In the novels of British authors “Things have been presented and proved from the English point of view, and that Indian viewpoint has been ignored.”

Although in the novels of Mrs. B. M. Croker, we come across many references to the traumatic experiences of the mutiny that the characters underwent, only prominent pictures are considered here. Sometimes there are also passing remarks about the unforgettable incident, such as we come across in the novel *Angel* (1901), wherein it is depicted as a ghostly incident reported before Philip Gascoigne by the eponymous heroine Angel, who aged only nine, talks about ghosts! Thus the memory of the mutiny dodges the consciousness of the novelist and gets narrated itself very naively in many other novels like *A Bird of Passage* etc. Sometimes they are harrowed by the very memory of mutiny, like a child that has
suffered a nightmare. Among the characters that make repeated references to the heart-rending experiences and memory of mutiny Mrs. Nussiband’s story, in the novel Mr. Jervis (1897), narrated before Miss Gordan in the darkness, demands our unfailing attention. Mrs. Nussiband was wife of an officer in some Corps, in the storm of Great Mutiny she was separated from her husband and was considered to be dead. However Fate pushed her into some native Persian family where she was compelled to marry ‘a half-witted feeble creature’ and then became a widow and was put to exploitation by the women folk. During her stay with the native family she mastered Hindustani to such an extent that it was impossible even to most critical eyes to identify her as a white woman. Ultimately after spending many years she was liberated and went to the hills and established herself there and ran a dormitory for the lepers. Here are her words, which describe the difficulties and dangers faced by the white ladies during the days of the mutiny.

I have seen them — and offered themselves to the sword — those who were butchered and slaughtered like oxen... (emphasis added) how can I tell this... who were carried away and lost for ever — in native life? ... I am one of those lost honour- lost life- lost soul! God help me! ... One Sunday we were all at church- I remember well; we were in the middle of the Litany, praying to be delivered from ‘battle, murder and from sudden death,’ when a great noise of shouting and firing began outside, and people rushed, too late, to close the doors and some were cut down... and many others and myself escaped into belfry, whilst our husbands held the stairs. They kept the wretches... after setting fire to the church, rushed off to the cantonments and the treasury; then we all ... drove away at a gallop to a neighboring rajah, to ask for his protection; but many of the men, including my husband, remained behind to ... save the arsenal and treasury. The rajah ... we knew him well ... fifty of us sought his protection, but he pretended he was afraid to shelter us, and he turned us all out... but alas! ere we had gone five miles we met two native regiments who had mutinied- met them face-to-face. We were ordered out in turn, just as we drove up; and, as each man or woman or child alighted, unarmed, and quite defenceless, they were shot or cut down. Oh, the road- I shall never forget it- that red, red road between two crops of sugarcane! Miss Miller, - how brave she looked! ... and never uttered word or cry as she faced her horrible death... Mrs. Earl and her two little children and poor young Clarke (emphasis added)... I had fainted, and they thought I was dead, I believe, and threw me into a ditch. Presently I crawled out, and crept into the sugar-cane; (the native master of the field)
came at sundown... swung me up on the crupper of his troop horse, and I rode behind him into Lucknow... I eluded him and, turning down a narrow lane, fled. I stood inside a doorway as he ran by, and I breathed freely, but alas! an old man suddenly opened the postern door... and drew me within. Of what avail to cry out! I was in a veritable den of lions.  

Here is another roll of memory of the Mutiny from *Her own People* (1905), Miss. Verona Chandos came to India (Rajahpore) with a strong desire of meeting her own people. On coming here she was very much disillusioned to find her mother Roza Chandos to be a half-caste and her father Mr. Paul Chandos degenerated into an opium addict. The girl was disturbed a lot by these thoughts. She caught high fever and also thought of committing suicide by plunging into the river Jumna. At this time she was rescued by Mr. Brian Salwey. During her convalescence her grandmother Mrs. Lopez (Nani) sat beside her and talked of many things. She also talked of the memory of the mutiny on being asked by Verona. She talked of the Bee-Bee Ghur incident at Cawnpore where two cousins of her husband were murdered and hence he went there. At that time he had taken her to Cawnpore. Here is what she narrated before Miss. Verona:

...The walls—oh, I wept when I looked— they were covered with writing, prayers and bits of hymns and loving messages and goodbyes and names. Yes, the walls were white once; but oh, Bapre' Bap! Such awful splashes, and high up in one place, the full mark of a great red hand; (emphasis added) and floor—though damp and full of horrors and fear and death. ... in two minutes I had run out, and there before me was the well. Yes, they were all down there, and the top was bricked over. I could scarcely see for crying, (emphasis added) but I hid away behind a little wall and fell down. Oh, I could not help it and prayed for those souls, so cruelly, cruelly put to death. ... as I speak to you, I can see it, and staring out at me from the wall, the—hand—the butcher's hand!  

If the memory of Mrs. Lopez, unpacked before Miss. Verona is harrowing one, the recounting of the reminiscences of the martial moments of fights, and cold blooded murders that took place during the mutiny are the kernel of the conversation that took place between Captain Mallender and the retired General Richard Beamish a: Wellunga. Captain Mallender came to India searching for his missing uncle. During his search he visited Wellunga and came in contact with the old man. The
octogenarian often engaged Mallender in easy banter. During the talks he mentioned of his youthful days and adventurous acts. He spoke of the mutiny too making a show of the row of the medals won by him. These are the words spoken by the General as he touched those medals.

...I put these on to do you honour. I only wear 'em Sundays. ... Here you see ... the Mutiny medals, I was all through that, ... (Emphasis added) I marched up to Delhi, with the first Madras Regiment, and I was in the first Brigade, under Mc Neil. Mc Neil was a hard man; hard on himself, as well as others; the forced marches were terrible; and in those days we wore shakos- no pith helmets then! At most of our halts, we had a firing-party, and left a couple or more graves- (Emphasis added) I served at the Siege of Delhi. - I saw Cawnpore, when one hundred and sixty five women and children were in the well. (Emphasis added) I- well, young man for all our sakes, native and British, those times are best forgotten...\(^{16}\)

Along with such important thematic concerns the Anglo-Indian novelists also display immense interest in their works- towards many other topical and contemporary elements. Mrs. B. M. Croker makes her characters indulge in conversations where through enough light on contemporary political scene is thrown. Quarrels between the native rulers and the Company Sirkar, which resulted as the latter hastened the policy of extension of empire through various measures, form a recurrent theme in her novels. The rulers who were regarded as weak rulers and looked with askance by the Company Sirkar hated the white rulers. In the novel Babes in the Wood (1910) we witness the controversy between the Rajah of Jambore and the official of Forest Dept. over the borders of forestlands. The king refused meeting with forest departmental officers, in spite of their repeated letters of request for meeting, as he considered the whites as ‘little people’. Here is such a description of Captain Trafford who,

delivered his card to a pompous functionary... and after waiting for hour, with a patience based on a determination not to be annoyed, received a message announcing that His Highness sota hai- in short was sleeping. So there remained nothing for the Forest Officer but to turn about and ride away, carrying his grievance with him.\(^{17}\)

At such a kind of insult hurled at the white man here is a reaction of contempt for the native potentate who is merely “a jungly fourth-class
Rajah, with five guns, next to no education, and sodden with opium, refusing to receive an English gentleman... soaks his brain in mudduck”.18

Another instance of contemporary political affair often alluded to, by the Anglo Indian novelists, is the system of appointment of regents. The power mongering Company Sirkar, adopted unfair and unjust methods such as divide and rule etc., unscrupulously, to extend the empire. The tentacles of Imperial authoritarianism were made more elastic and also elongated with the issue of regulations like the Disarmament Bill, the Doctrine of Lapse etc. Whenever a native ruler died, with the prince still young, the throne of such a princely state was immediately captured by the British Raj. The Company Sirkar would appoint the regents to extract the wealth and control the princely state, a wise way of extending the empire. In, The Cats Paw (1902) of Mrs. B. M. Croker also we come across a reference to the practice of the Raj, of appointing regents. Mr. Maxwell Thorold as he speaks to Miss Pamela Ferrars, is appointed to look after the Kingdom of Royapetta, as the young rajah of the kingdom was only six years of age. He was deeply troubled by Rani Sundaram the grand mother of the rajah, who was

as ambitious as Napoleon, as cruel as the sea, as clever as the devil, but now the ‘Raj’ has stepped in and snatched her victim from her. She has had to stand by and see him handed over to me... I am regent, ruler, and Rajah, being called by the less high-sounding title of political agent.19

Here is another reference to the death of Rajah of Jambore and the immediate step taken by the Company Sirkar.

Yes the funeral ceremonies were already begun. His heir a puny boy of four succeeded to the Guddce; (throne) The British Raj now took up the reins, prepared to elect a Regency, and nurse the shattered estates through a long minority.20

Though she alludes to many contemporary political happenings, it surprises the conscious reader to find that she makes few references to the movements and campaigns launched by the Indian freedom fighters whose voice rent the contemporary air and filled the political ambience of the
time almost unignorably. The fact why she remains rec\'inent in this regard, as may be so with many other writers of this period, would prove a fruitful study, if undertaken from the colonizers' point of view in the backdrop of contemporary philosophy of writers.

2.2 POLITICAL AND BUREAUCRATIC POWER

The British people firmly believed that the Indians, their colonized population did not have any sense of Government. Therefore Governor General after Governor General stressed the point of their defensive mask of their continuance in India. Bureaucracy entered as an important political agenda of British Imperialism. Bureaucracy binds not only the files of cases but also the people under innumerable causes. The colonized population, most of which, was agrarian, was under the rule of the British Government in a particular area was often put to heartless exploitation especially with regard to tax and land revenue. The British officials and political agents who were appointed to look after the administrative affairs of the local Samsthans, where the ruler was a minor, never exhibited an iota of clemency towards the subjects of such Samsthans. In the story "If You See Her Face" Daniel Gregson, the Political agent to the Rajah of Oonomore (a child of seven years of age), and his junior assistant, Percy Goring visit Kori, "A bleak desolate looking region, and save one or two miserable huts and some thorn bushes, there was no sign of tree or human habitation", 21 there the political agent and his assistant are encountered and surrounded by the suffering subjects, who are exploited by the British Raj under the pretext of protection. Apparently the area is arid and draught - hit. To make matters worse the farmlands in the surrounding area were constantly pestered by the blackbucks and deer that were in the king's hunting reserve. Here are the angry and agonized words of a farmer to the exploitative political agent whose sole concentration is tax and revenue.

"You say we have land – true!", shouted a haggard, wild-eyed ryot: "but what is land without crops? What is a remission of five percent to wretches like us? It is but as a caraway seed in a camel's mouth! The wild beasts take our cattle and destroy our grain and yet we
The sense of superiority of the race and position of importance either as an official in bureaucratic set up or as a powerful military personnel in martial matters gave the white man a position of unquestioned authority over Indian people and places and predicaments. Many times they continued to enjoy this exalted position of unquestioned power even after their retirement from service. For the exercise of such unquestioned power during their days of retirement they chose rural areas. Of this phenomenon A.J. Greenberger writes, "...rural India was a place where the British could do things which every one accepted as being valuable. In one way they were again protecting the borders of civilization from the invasion by barbaric forces... Most often it is evident that... the British could feel at home there or at least be comfortable and... relatively secure." 23

In, *In Old Madras* (1913) Captain Mallender came to India in search of his uncle, who many years previously had disappeared mysteriously. He was given the information by his agents that his uncle was at a remote place called Wellunga. Therefore he went there and stayed in the Rest House. He was surprised at the tidiness of the Rest House and the things there, for it was in so remote a place that it was not visited by anybody in recent past five years. On enquiry with the butler he came to know that it was the order of the General who stayed there. Further when Mallender asked about the General the butler replied:

Yes, saar, that is the order – *everything in Wellunga is as the General Commands*; (emphasis added) the bungalow is kept ready and in good repair; the old places of course, are ruins- but no one may touch one bit of wood, or one brick- though many wanting them for house, and cattle sheds; and plenty good dheby stones and curry stones, in cemetery- but once he goes- all goes! 24

The white man's bureaucratic life in India was a great magic shadow show so long as he was there within the circumference of imperial atmosphere. Throughout his stay in India the white man was expected to display heroism in all walks of his life. Any element of dishonour in the
demeanor of an official in his departmental life was regarded suicidal not only of the individual but also of the whole Anglo-Indian community or Anglo-Indian station. However, wherever there is a human element there is an amount of weakness, as there is darkness at the very bottom or back of a lamp. Though the British people considered themselves always superior endowed with superior qualities there were scandals in their bureaucratic system too. Whenever such scandals occurred the British authorities would become alert at once like a child that has touched the hot bowl and stoop to hush up such scandals by transferring the officials involved in them to some other distant quarters and cement up the affair. In, *Quick sands* (1915) Ronnie, the protagonist, is found guilty of the misappropriation of regimental funds and was given two years' imprisonment. The enquiry was held at the station of Secunderabad. However the officials had decided to remove Ronnie from Secunderabad to Bangalore. But however the day before he was taken away to Bangalore his sister Eva was granted permission to have an interview with her brother as a special favour. The day after this meeting when Eva was informed of his transfer, she says: “I was informed that my brother had been taken away by night, *the authorities sparing him as much publicity as possible*” 25 (emphasis added)

In the bureaucratic set up an Englishman who was usually endowed with enough monitory as well as manpower was capable of converting the ambience into a cozy and convenient quarter. Here is the description of an officer of the Company Sirkar, in the story “On the Grand Trunk Road”, who acquires a bungalow built, in grand style, surrounded by a beautiful garden, once owned by an officer now almost abandoned and in tumble down any moment condition. “*Being an officer, with an unlimited supply of labour,* (emphasis added) he set to work to restore his spacious but tumble down residence. The roof was repaired, the rooms were whitewashed, the garden was put in order, and he began to sink a well.” 26.

The British officials acting with their bureaucratic power were the stern masters and always expected their subordinates to be disciplined,
clean handed and sincere in their departmental affairs. It was impossible on their part to overlook any element of insincerity. Especially if the officers employed were new entrants in the department they always had the ideal framework of the Empire before them and gauged the personality of the subordinates with an indomitable zeal, which was almost like a distinguishing mark of British Empire. Such officials were eager to win the appreciation from their superiors, which meant promotion, to higher positions, imminent. Those who did not fit well into the framework were viewed seriously and action was taken against them. Here is one such example from Babes in the Wood (1910). Philip Trafford is a newly posted Assistant Conservator of Forests. Soon after taking over the charge of the office he stoops to introduce improvements.

"Trafford realized his responsibilities; he was aware that a struggle was imminent, and the conviction of this gave a certain force and elevation to his character. He no longer looked a mere boy in his teens, but a serious official with the cares of a great district on his shoulders" 27

He undertook the tour of his jurisdiction and prevented poaching and immediately summoned the subordinates and warned them to carry out their job properly. The following description shows this.

"The clear-headed Trafford- who never muddled his brains with "Whisky Schrab" -spent one or two wet days in going over the books, and examining accounts, and had discovered several inexplicable matters,- in short serious defalcations. Mr. Beaufort was summoned to his presence" 28

After the serious enquiry Beaufort was dismissed without delay. Immediately after the dismissal of Beaufort, Philip Trafford corresponded with the head quarters and won the appreciation of his authority who said, "I didn’t believe the chap had it in him! and can exercise his judgment and administrative functions" (emphasis added) 29

Another important aspect of the British bureaucratic image of India that is shown by Mrs. B. M. Croker in one of her stories that deserves our serious attention is that women were also employed by the Company Sirkar in
certain departments wherever and whenever necessary. Though the posts sanctioned for women were of soft natured work and though they were treated with as much softness as possible by their superiors there arose some such moments at which they were issued stern orders and warnings. Here is an instance of such incident from the story 'The Missing Link'.

Mrs. Mills was appointed in the Department of Pensions to oversee the zenana pensions, as men were not allowed into them and see the women there. Her duty was to inspect and ascertain the fact that the persons of the royal families, who were sanctioned the pension by the Government, after the mutiny, "were alive to draw their pay and, not having it made over to substitutes, after their death" and report the same to the department regularly. She was expected to be on tour and visit the families and persons who received the pension. However in the case of Begum Sona-bee, who stayed in Lucknow, whose pension was considerably great, a serious fraudulence was suspected. She claimed half the amount of her pension in the name of her granddaughter along with her own. Therefore the secretary of the Department of the Pensions summoned Mrs. Mills before him. He said to her:

You must be most particular in visiting the descendants and next-of-kin of the old Begum Sona-bee in Lucknow. She is failing fast. Her pension is a fine one, and half of it goes to her granddaughter. Have you ever seen her? ... That is not the way to carry out your duty. Your duty is to see the pensioners, so as to swear to their identity. You must be resolute...or we shall have to get some other person to deal with them, and you lose your fine post. (Emphasis added)

After so much warning Mrs. Mills visited the palace of the Begum Sona-bee to get deluded by the people there of the fact that the granddaughter (Moti Mahal) had caught smallpox. Or hearing this report, the superior officer of Mrs. Mills became angry and ordered her:

...Frighten them into their senses. See this woman, they don’t want you to see- or consider yourself dismissed. You are too gentle, and easily imposed on. You must be firm- or you will be superseded (Emphasis added)

Thus we witness Mrs. B. M. Broker offering us the image of bureaucratic set up of the British India wherein the women too had a
share, a rare phenomenon. A detailed study of this aspect of women's involvement in the Administrative and Activist set up (such as of Annie Bessant etc.) would be an interesting study if done painstakingly as it appears unattempted.

It is not only with the presentation of the British bureaucratic set up as all the while wise and welfare-oriented system that Mrs. B. M. Croker seems to remain satisfied but she also makes occasionally her characters to undertake a journey through the portals of criticism of the schemes and plans that the British officials who came forward with a fervor to put them into practice. Usually such criticizing characters are drawn from the paradise of the pensioned officers or from the world of experienced old men who are on their journey to homeland after completion of their service here. In her novel *Angel* (1901) we see Philip Gascoigne, an engineer in the Department of Public Works compelled to run to take preventive measures, against a catastrophe of dam-burst in Gharwal district. Due to a massive landslide into a deep ravine where through flowed a river. As a result, 'a lake five miles long and four hundred feet deep was formed.' To make matters worse, due to continuous torrents of lashing rains it was getting filled 'at the rate of three feet a day.' Therefore there was every possibility of its giving away anytime and create an artificial and immense deluge devouring the neighboring villages claiming many lives. Philip Gascoigne, as an authority to prevent the accident, was asked what could he do by way of prevention. The following conversation that ensued would hold a mirror to the situation.

"And what measures are you engineer chap: taking?" Inquired general Bothwell, with his mouth full of bread.

"Merely precautions. We cannot let the water eff under control; all we can do is to ensure that it escapes down the river bed- without loss to life."

"Can't be many lives to lose up there", he argued.

"Yes; besides the villagers there are thousands of pilgrims who pass down to Hurdwar in May and June, and we are bound to know to a day- infect to an hour- when the flood is due."
"What can you do?"

"We have established a temporary telegraph line from the lake to ten stations, where pilgrims halt, at good points, from which to control the traffic. Pillars are erected every half-mile to show the safe limits out of reach of the flood, and all the principal bridges are being dismantled. As soon as the water reaches the crest of the dam, the official incharge will send a warning telegram, for the flood will travel fast."

"I suppose the natives are terrified out of their senses?" asked Mrs. Lucy.

"No, not in the least; think it will pass quietly over the river bed, and this is the view of the pilgrims, who are furious because their ordinary route is forbidden."

"By Jove, and I don't wonder", said General Bothwell, combatively. "Instead of arranging for the outlet of the water, a telegraph line has been created - no doubt at immense cost- "to apprise people of the danger of a flood which may come in a month, a year or never!" And he laughed derisively. "I think who ever has it on telegraph as a means of dealing with an engineering difficulty will look uncommonly foolish." (Emphasis added)

"I am the culprit", coolly confessed Gascoigne. "To divert the lake otherwise would cost two million of rupees; India is poor and there is not time to erect masonry weirs, out falls, and shoots."

... 

"Well Gascoigne", said General Bothwell, "... I must confess that I am amused at this scheme of yours - I don't believe in scaring people you know I think you are on the wrong track - the wrong track - but you engineer chaps are in my experience the most pig-headed branch of the service." (Emphasis added)

From the discussion carried forward hitherto it is evident that Mrs. B. M. Croker shows a keen interest in every walk of Anglo-Indian life. While picturing the image of imperial bureaucracy she attempts to capture the various sides of it with all the meticulousness In capturing these pictures and presenting her characters she takes an impartial stance and presents her characters in their predicaments very candidly and exactly.
2.3 CORRUPT OFFICIALS

The British often held the view that they were the god-ordained race sent to provide security and firm government to the Indians. As a result of their attempt to establish a system of administration, various departments were opened and a bureaucratic system was evolved. In order to maintain a strong government they posted many well-trained officials to India for service in various departments. Often, enough care was taken that the persons employed in such departments should be the paragons, patterns and examples for straightness and honesty of British Virtue. They were expected to serve their respective departments selflessly with ineffable devotion and dedication to the population as well as the Raj. There are innumerable references, to the bureaucratic life and moral codes of the officers of the Raj in the vast body of literature produced by the British on and about India. Such references go far a way in holding the mirror to the administrative system that was in vogue during the days of British occupation in India. Most of such references say emphatically that the official system was totally free from bribery and corruption. Lord Mountbatten, the last Viceroy of India appreciated the dedication and love of British officers towards India, a phenomenon, which he witnessed awestruck. John Morris asserts that the Victorian Values like truthfulness, loyalty, dedication to duty etc., were strictly adhered to and followed flawlessly by the British officials. He avers “I would have no hesitation in saying that during the years I was in India, bribery and corruption were unknown among the British”.34 Novels after novels, populated with heroes and heroines who were the very replica of such values, were published and underscored the view that absence of bribery and corruption were the hallmarks of ruling English society in India.

But bureaucracy is not a utopian world. Being a reality, consisting of human beings and being operative for and in the midst of human beings, it is prone to possess all the human weaknesses and selfishness. As Indian masses were an ignorant lot there was always a large margin for exploitation of such ignorant masses by shrewd selfish and crafty British
officers, who were dragged and driven astray by their own flaws and foibles and ever-present temptation of Mammon, Bacchus or Cupid.

Unlike many other novelists of her time Mrs. B. M. Croker stands on an altogether different and distinguished pedestal and taking a critical insider's view, presents before her readers the conditions prevailing in the society of her times candidly. As regards the existence of corruption and bribery she appears to hold a diametrically opposed view to that which is expressed by John Morris, the stern critic of the moral codes of the Raj. But very soon she generalizes such cases making either a native or a Eurasian a responsible element for such infernal motivations in the whiteman and breathes a sigh of relief of having given the truthful account of situation of her times. In all such cases, it seems, the personality of an honest artist of fiction in her soon gets eclipsed by the race consciousness and force her to take recourse to subsumption, subterfuge, and appropriation, letting her critical starce get enmasked by the imperial and colonial personality, a wise strategy employed by many other novelists of the period.

In more than one of her novels and short stories, we witness her commenting fervently on the predicament that leads the characters into the conditions of either corruption or bribery. In the story “The Missing Link” we encounter Mrs. Mills. She was a widow with two children. She was appointed in the Department of Pensions. The nature of her job was to visit the zenanas inspect them and ensure it to the office the fact that the persons who received their pension were alive and it was getting disbursed to the proper persons of the zenana. In those days, after the Mutiny, when Delhi was won back by the British, the Emperor was arrested and sent to Burma. His family members were sanctioned with the pension by the Company Sirkar for their maintenance. But there are some cases of deceiving the Department by way of claiming pension in the name of deceased individuals. When it was sensed by the Authorities they would press the officials into the case and force them to unearth the truth. It was smelt by the Department that certain begum, by name Sona-bee claimed
almost half the amount of pension in the name of her granddaughter Moti Mahal in addition to her own. But there was no trace of Moti Mahal. Therefore Mrs. Mills was compelled to visit the family of the Begum Sona-bee at Lucknow to enquire into the case and report the findings immediately to the office. By her repeated visits the Begum was angry and finally she was cornered and caught in duress. Finding Mrs. Mills stubborn the Begum tried to coax her and enticed her with enough bribe by offering her “a splendid diamond and emerald belt.” The honest lady-officer refused it out rightly. This enraged the Begum severely; she said that Mrs. Mills must die of hunger. But much to her surprise, Mrs. Mills saw a white woman, with brown hair, on the fourth right. She was Moti Mahal. Then Begum Sona-bee appeared on the scene and said that although she (the white woman) was there with them and the pension was claimed in her name she was a motherless child of an English soldier who had gone to the war. The ayah had sold her to the palace. Since her own daughter was childless at the time she suckled her. This was the truth. She confesses and promises a rich reward to Mrs. Mills for hiding the truth:

Knowing how stern and foolish are the pension rules I hid her, for I love her as mine own. Nay, she is my own- suckled at my daughter's breast. When thou tellest the tale, be wise. Speak not of the white woman with yellow hair; but say, "Lo! There was a mistake and there will be no claim." Otherwise the Sirkar will be wroth with me, and I lose my pension. If thou wilt hold thy peace I will send thee the richest carpet in India, as a reward, not a bribe. It came to the house of Oude from the Lord of the Sun himself- (emphasis added) but of what availedeth it to me? Since I desire but peace and death.

Soon after this Mrs. Mills went to the office and gave her information, though equivocal, it meant saving of five thousand pounds to the Government. Any way the pension of the Begum who was old would lapse with her death. The Secretary was very happy. There was an increase of her salary as well as appreciation from the authorities. The readers wonder at the recourse taken by Mrs. Mills. This example shows that contrary to the general British belief that the British officers are generally non-corrupt, Mrs. Croker shows how Mrs. Mills yields to corruption and...
bribery by receiving a Persian carpet from the begum and is consequently punished by the unexpected death of her daughter in a supernatural way.

In, *The Company's Servant* (1907) John Vernon (Jack Talbot) and Charlie Booth worked as guards on railway at Tani-kul railway station. Both of them fell a prey to Eurasian beauty, Rosita Fontaine, a coquette. However while the earlier was saved by the timely advice given by Gojar (Algernan Craven), the latter got ensnared by her beauty and married to her. She went on sucking money from him. To appease the ever-increasing demands of his wife he got entangled in a vortex of corruption. As a result Charlie Booth took a bribe of four hundred rupees from an anonymous man and allowed him to travel in the guards van that stole the box of gold belonging to the government. The matter was viewed seriously and the legal search was ordered and the police inspector was about to be at Tani-Kul to elicit further truth about the missing box of gold. The stationmaster Mr. Sharratt summoned the workers to his office and asked whether any one had anything to say. Immediately Charlie Booth came forward to say:

“To begin with, all you fellows,” glaring round, “know pretty well how it has been with me, the last few months, and how hard up I am, I've had terrible calls on me... I had not two annas for my breakfast. I sold my mother's wedding-ring, and everything I could get a price on... and still I had to find money for - One night, as we were pulling out of Arconum, a man, a well-dressed chap like a Portuguese, swung into my van after me. I was about to chuck him out, for I had the box of specie aboard, but he clung on for all he was worth, and as I was afraid of an accident, I let him drag himself in, and then abused him, and told him I'd drop him first stop.”

“Well, he began to cry... He said mine was the last train to Raichore, and it was a case a life and death- for charity's sake to be merciful, or he would never see his mother alive... he knew the rules, and that I was risking my post, but the journey meant so much to him, and he would make it well worth my while and he gave me a note for one hundred rupees. I wanted money desperately- it was an awful temptation- and ... I took it! (Emphasis added). The man was very choop, and no trouble; he sat in the van never s'irring. I believed he was asleep. At Raichore he thanked me with sobs and tears in his eyes, and got out- he had no luggage. Well, about a week ago, I saw the same fellow again on the platform at Arconum. This time he came strait up to me and said, 'There are two people in the train... I dare not meet them. You have been so kind, please let me travel
with you privately— I did you no harm before, and this time I will give you four hundred rupees'. (Emphasis added) And I said, 'come'. He had a little luggage, a box tied up in a brown rug, with a bundle on top of it; it seemed a good weight, and another man helped him to hoist it in. He gave me four hundred rupees notes (emphasis added) and many thanks, and got out here in Tani-Kul- a coolie was waiting, and carried off the box, I now remember in a great hurry, and I know also, what he really took away was the box of specie. When he traveled the first time, of course, he took size, weight, and all measurements. He had a little book and did this, when I was engaged."

"And he gave you four hundred rupees a week ago" (emphasis added) said Sharrat; "What have you done with them, Charlie?"

"I oh" in a voice of despair, "you all know! I gave them to Rosita Fontaine... then running fast, he made straight for the platform, regardless of a warning yell, and with one wild leap cast himself in front of the up-going mail, which, roaring through the station shook it with its velocity, and cut the victim of Rosita, into a hundred pieces."

And thus he left all gathered there in the sea of surprise and fear. This extract shows how Charlie Booth yielded to corruption, repented and committed suicide by falling across the railway tracks.

If Charlie Booth's personality was disintegrated and shattered by a Eurasian Siren Rosita Fontaine, in the novel referred above, the personality of Charlie Frost, an officer in the department of Forests was distracted, diluted, deteriorated and ultimately devoured by death welcomed by his own hands, in, Babes in the wood (1910), due to his falling a prey to the bottle of narcotic drug. Eliot Scruby speaks to Philip Trafford, a recently gazetted Assistant conservator of Forests who is posted to an outlying district in the wildest circle of the Central Provinces', about Charlie Frost's corruption and consequent suicide.

"This is a lonely station, and Frost had no self-control, no resources. Another chap would have started collecting bugs or skins or stamps- or learning the banjo, or writing a play; but Charlie had no inside tastes; he smoked and soaked and brooded. The whisky fiend got hold of him, and he was never out of debt and scrapes. (Emphasis added) His bills for stores- that is to say; liquor- were a caution- a bottle of whisky a day. He let his subordinates do the work. His hand was so shaky he could scarcely write his name; he
was so nervous he dared not ride Gehazi. By the way, I bought him for you for eighty rupees. Underlings shot and stole and took bribes, and played the mischief. (Emphasis added). Then he had a bad go of ‘D.T.’ and swore that this place was full of blackness and devils. I spent a couple of awful nights with h.m, and I tell you I won’t forget it in a hurry.”

“And was nothing known at head quarters?” asked Trafford, after a considerable pause,

“Not for sometime; the jungle has certain manifest advantages, and of course the Kennedy’s helped to shield him. However by and by things leaked out. Someone was playing hanky panky with Government revenue and Government timber. Kos by Kos and inch by inch the business was tracked to this very bungalow.”

Trafford turned his head, and looked at the speaker steadily.

“A letter from Stenhouse, showing Frost that everything was burst up, summoned him to Calcutta. So, after drinking himself crazy, he went and cut his throat in the bathroom, (emphasis added) and- that was his end.”

Corruption need not essentially manifest in the form of a suck-bribe official infesting the department. Very often it appeared in the personage of perfidious officials that haunted various departments of the British Raj. Such officers of fissured personality were often looked down upon, fished out, followed and punished by the ever-alert police department. Once identified by the departmental intelligence such officials were viewed seriously. Disciplinary action was taken immediately against them either by their superiors, which entailed their dismissal or by the legal authorities that penalized them heavily. Mrs. B.M. Croker pictures such officials in her novels in their true colours and thereby holds mirror to the predicament prevailing during her time in the realm of bureaucracy. In, The Company’s Servant’ (1907) Mr. Carlo Mocatto late of the Indian Ink Department bagged the documents containing official secrets and dodging the police he hired a tonga and travelled through cross-country to reach Bowen-villay station. On the station, he was caught by the emissaries-who were on his heels. He got tangled in their hands just when he was about to board the railway compartment. When caught by the authorities
he tried to evade them by giving false identity. But the obstinate officers pressed him to confess saying,

"Government have made the painful discovery that you have been disposing of certain information to a foreign power. Your position gave you great facilities for supplying another ration with our most important official secrets...(emphasis added). Now you will pursue the journey in our company as far as Poona Jail; the chain of evidence against you is absolutely complete."39

Knowing that his position was precarious as the police spoke of their confiscation of some important papers from Arokasawmy and Rungasawmy two natives, his accomplices, he confessed the crime before the police officers and agreed to follow them. But he begged for moments, went into the waiting room and shot himself into the head and died on the spot. Further the two officials examined the portmanteaux and found "plans of lines, number of rolling stock, power of engines and the weight bridges could carry" 40 and other such important bureaucratic secrets all intended for another nation.

So is the case of Mr. Beaufort, a Eurasian, officer in the Forest Department, in, Babes in the Wood (1910). Philip Trafford, a young and enthusiastic officer, with a burning heart for reformation and thorough over hauling of the department, examined the departmental documents and confirmed an unadjustable defalcation and also involvement of Mr. Beaufort in the group of poachers and smugglers and ultimately dismissed him. "There was much loud talk, but the young sahib was too strong- oh, he was very strong, and Beaufort, so fierce and angry at first, had at last fallen on his knees and wept like a butcha (baby), and departed. 41

Failure to perform the duty punctually, in whatever capacity one is employed, is also viewed as corrupt behaviour many times in the novels by Mrs. B. M. Croker as an Anglo-Indian novelist. Most commonly such persons, who failed to perform their duty and were dubbed as derelicts, were the natives. This kind of dereliction is often alluded to in several books by the writer under discussion. For instance in the story "The Dak Bungalow at Dakor", here is a brace of brave white ladies one, Mrs. Loyd,
wife of a Forest officer, and another Mrs. Julia Goodchild, wife of a Police Officer, who undertook a journey of three days to join their husbands at a fixed place-Chanda, in order to celebrate Christmas in the jungle. On the way they are compelled to sojourn. Therefore they go to a nearby dak bungalow. There they unloaded their luggage and waited for the arrival of the caretaker of the bungalow, who was away, to open it for them. On his arrival and seeing the ladies he felt very uncomfortable and refused to open the bungalow, for their use on the pretext that it was out of repair and not opened for years. Further he said that the place was full of rats and unhealthy and then also urged the ladies to go to another bungalow at Chanda, the next station refusing to open it. At such an audacious behavior of an ordinary caretaker of the bungalow- the officers' wives' anger was at the height. The police officer's wife said hotly "Drawing government pay, and refusing to open a government travelers' bungalow! (Emphasis added) Let us have no more of this nonsense; open the house at once and get it ready for us, or I shall report you to the Commissioner Sahib" 42

From the study of the instances cited from various works of Mrs. B. M. Croker it becomes incontrovertibly evident a fact that corruption, although as was averred not to be found in the white man's administrative domain in India by many chroniclers of the period, existed in different and diluted form. In all such cases wherever a white person was found involved in corruption, he is shown to embrace death and thus escape the disgrace. This kind of artifice employed goes in tune with the concept of white man's ideal character as was held by the colonizers. "Giving up of any part of the British way of life was believed to be the worst thing that one could do... Death before dishonor was the way the British believed they had to act in India" 43
2.4 WHITE MAN'S BURDEN

Although a novel cannot be regarded as a historical document in the strictest sense we cannot marginalize the elements of historical connections, circumstances which bear either direct or indirect references to the contemporary happenings, practices etc that were in vogue in the society during the time when the writer was writing his novel. Whether a writer wants or does not to participate in the movements prevailing in the society of which he is a part and wherefrom he draws his material he cannot keep himself quarantine from the influences of such movements or happenings around him. Sometimes consciously and sometimes unconsciously he alludes to them and thereby achieves the sterling value of a successful writer in the given moment of time. The novelists are, as is held by critics, supposed to entwine fact and fancy in their books, in the backdrop of autobiographical experiences. Though the pleasure derived from the perusal of fiction does not attach much importance to this amalgamation of fact and fancy in it, while reading a novel written in the colonial context by a colonizer it becomes a matter of serious attention, for belonging to a ruling community the novelist is likely to breathe into the text all those weal and woes that affected the community of which he is a part. And a novelist's ideas are also prone to be influenced considerably by the tradition of the other practitioners. In this regard A.J. Greenberger's words about Anglo Indian fictionists "in historical terms, the period since Kipling's first works appeared in the 1880s is a short one. However, in terms of the history of the British Empire, these years cover the enormous changes from a secure worldwide empire at its height, through the first serious attacks on it, to its dissolution. The writers of fiction mirrored this development."\(^{44}\) deserve our special attention. The authors of the period, of which Greenberger called, the 'Era of confidence' (1880-1910), always wrote with a stance of unshakable belief in the superiority of their civilization. However the First war of Indian Independence (1857), which they regarded as the Mutiny against the Raj had made them introspect and reassert outwardly the need for their presence in India as rulers. As an advertising agency of the ideas of
imperialism, the characters, delineated by different novelists of this period, voice their view of the need for the British rule for India, their continuance in this sub-continent, their civilizing zeal, their educating agenda etc the white man’s burden the trajectory of Imperialism. This white man’s burden involved many risks. Novelists after novelists have reiterated this fact or rather a fancy (!), which was launched by the policy makers in London. “...the British had won India by the sword; British rule was impartial and efficient and ensured peace and prosperity for the mutually hostile peoples; British rule functioned in the interest of the masses, of the poor, the silent millions, the real India”. Foregrounding the afore mentioned ideas again and again the British asserted the need for their presence in India. In many novels of Mrs. B. M. Croker, who wrote during the above-mentioned period, we come across such innumerable references. In, Babes in the Wood (1910), we witness Dr. Collins, who was a great scholar and well versed in many Indian subjects including the languages, was held in high respect by the people of the station. He joined Mr. Kavin Meguire, Mr. Eloit Scruby and Mr. Philip Trafford, the other officials of the station, for dinner. Over the table at dinner they get steeped into conversation about the predicament of colonial India. When the doctor said:

Ninety percent of Indian populations have no part in the agitation. They don’t love us, and never will. We, for one reason or other, have failed to make ourselves understood. Some believe we have introduced the plague! They suppose we scare the nature of malignant gods and have their power... In spite of what is said, The English have brought prosperity to India and poured out money and men’s lives without stint (emphasis added). Look at the railways, the roads, and hospitals; but we want to bring too much of the West into the East, and there is no doubt an active and malicious propaganda, and a genuine evil does exist at the root of our Indian system... the native aristocracy, the small land owners, and commercial class are sound; so are the troops, which are generally loyal to the bone... many awful lies are deliberately spread... They preach treason, and the downfall of the Raj... However, we have one point in our favour: natives especially of different castes don’t trust one another. But there is no doubt we live in anxious times (emphasis added). The Indian Empire wants strong and sturdy hand to guide her in fact, a man to ride the storm... who can tell where it may end...
Almost in the same tenor runs the paragraph culled and quoted hereunder from *In Old Madras* (1913) wherein captain Mallender who had come to India in search of his missing uncle in this sub-continent. Given to his knowledge, by his agents here, that his uncle was living at a place called Wellunga and therefore he visited the place and there found a prodigiously old man living in full glory. He met him at Wellunga and engaged him in the conversation wherein we witness Mallender speaking about the superiority of the British Raj and implicitly conveys the meaning that it was only with the British occupation of India that the winds of civilization began to blow across the Indian lands, otherwise Indians would have remained still embracing the primitive life style. Therefore there is inevitable need for the British occupation and continuance of their rule in India. Here are the words of young man charged with a sense of superiority addressed to the old man General Beamish, soon after his return from the visit of the bazaar.

Well, Sir, it gives an idea of what India is – without us. It might still be 1700, for the signs of advancement – I saw people wearing horn spectacles writing with wood and buying spells! 47

In this way it becomes an apparent fact that these writers asserted the point that there was an unavoidably urgent need for the British Raj and further the presence of English people in India was a providential predicament for Indians that had ushered many improvements in different walks of life. Once established this view among the natives they further stressed the view that it was not only the material reforms that imperial rulers and policies provided for this primitive land but also the white man was the protector, law giver, dispenser of justice and deliverer of the credulous country folk and responsible for internal peace. In the story “Secret of the Amulet” we see the white man Mr. Colebrook, the collector acting as the protector of the poor. In the story he makes all attempts to read and decipher the cryptograph rolled and stuffed into an amulet. The parchment, upon which the information regarding the buried wealth was written, “was about two inches long by one wide and was covered on both sides with closely written quaint characters.”48 After deciphering the
The White men employed in various departments in different capacities, especially the officers in charge of the district or a particular area, regarded themselves as the rulers of that province and also firmly held it their responsibility to attend to the demands of time and territory. They were required to undertake tours of their districts and to look into needs of the people there. Whenever there were floods or famines, plagues or pestilences, malaria, mafia or malady their service was smartly pressed into action. In the novels of the period therefore we come across a picture of such officials traveling to the spot like lightning and listening to the grievances of the population and dispensing suitable remedial measures in, *Angel* (1901). Philip Gascoigne was endowed with the responsibility of seeing the child grown up well and also well educated. This responsibility was shouldered to him by the dying mother of Angel. Accordingly he took her to England and introduced the child to her grand mother Lady Augusta. After his return to India he had to attend to various jobs of his department. Here is a vivid and picturesque description of the growth of a mature officer of the department.

(Gascoigne) had developed into an enthusiastic worker, a would be Empire builder. At first his duty had been among the canals and distribution of the water supply; he had to see that every village received its due share of water; in the slack season he had to superintend the works of construction and repair. (Emphasis added). He met no society and no amusements. These years of solitude had a certain effect on his character. He spent his time marching from one canal to another, accumulating stores of experience regarding the conditions under which the peasants lived; his work was tedious and monotonous; a young man of active habits, and observant eye, he was never dull, but his character was setting into the solitary mould. His manners were a little stern, and he kept
his feelings under iron control... He was well inured to the Indian climate, master of several tongues, and a capital head for ideas, a mathematical mind, and his heart was in his work- his profession was his idol. Work with him, amounted to a passion...(Emphasis added)

Here is another passage full of description of Mr. Donald Gordan, Commissioner of the district, on tour and the duties that he discharged on such occasion. Angel, who was recently married to Philip Gascoigne, and the latter being pressed into duty in Gharwal, where there was a landslip. So she was left with the Gordans. Mrs. Eleanor Gordon was a friendly with Angel and therefore accepted to keep the eponymous heroine with her while her husband was dispatched to Gharwal. Angel joined the couple on their tour of district, because the girl was very young and innocent and recently married to be left alone.

As the commissioner was obliged to consult with him (collector of the district) for the purpose of inquiries into the loss of crops, in those parts, owing to great floods, and hailstones, and the consequent required reduction of the demand for revenue. (Emphasis added). It was a serious business; the district had suffered heavily, the tax gatherer must withhold his hand...

The Cat's-Paw (1902) delineates Mr. Thorold, an officer with enough duty consciousness and concern about the predicaments of the plague camp, where he was posted. Speaking of his duty he said:

So I am; but we must all put our shoulders to the wheel (Emphasis added) its not entirely beer and skittles. This district has been decimated- in fact, nearly wiped out- and my department has what is termed lent me for the occasion.

"Have you many cases?" I faltered.

Don't ask me; but we are better than we were. Still, we are terribly short- handed. One of our apothecaries is down now, and our lady nurse died on Monday...

Shortly after this conversation Pamela Ferrars, volunteered to the camp much against the dissuasive words of Mr. Thorold and relieved innumerable diseased from the pain and fear of death and ultimately fell a prey to suffering herself. In this case we witness not only the white man...
acting as a deliverer but also the white women, who take such opportunities to make their lives worth lived here as deliverers and protectors.

Even much more powerful role as the protector and benefactor of this country and its people is played by the regents appointed by the Government in several Samsthanic states that were held by the British Empire. A. J. Greenberger's words, written considering the phenomenon of the use of limited locale, merely north India, by most Anglo-Indian Writers in their fiction “The limited view that the British had of India is shown by the fact that virtually all the novels of this period are set in north-Western Indian... There are a few cases where the locale is Maharashtra or Burma, but Bengal, Central and South India are almost completely absent” fall short, when applied to the case of Mrs. B.M. Croker. Sometimes partially and sometimes fully she has set her novels in the South India as well as Central India. Almost as if in exception she has even dedicated of one of her novels, Babes in the Wood (1910) “To Happy Memories of the C.P.” (Emphasis added) where the novel is set. Not only this she practically takes the readers to different parts of the South India, for her novels deal with the stories wherein she makes the characters generally travel by train, and thereby enables the readers to view the plains and people, their dress and deportment, rivers and rituals, temples and traditions, crops and forests etc., along their journey. In, The Cat’s-Paw (1902), Mr. Thorold was commissioned by the Empire, as the protector of the Princely State of Royapetta in South India. As the protector of the state he had the responsibility and burden. He speaks of his responsibility in more than one place in the novel:

This post is not much to my taste, but the government have given this boy to my care; I am bound to do my best for him. We civil servants of the state have our battles to fight as well as the soldiers of the empire, and I think we have always shown a stout front to corruption and bribery, be it never so tempting. I stand by my charge, this child; I shall guard him to my utmost – his well being, his state, and his miserable over-burdened people. It is my duty to relax the tax collector’s grip, to restore justice and prosperity, and nurse this wrecked country into something like solvency, until the
time the Rajah takes reigns into his own hands; at the present moment I am ruler and I am king (emphasis added)

The image of the whiteman as a protector in India is restricted not merely to the administrative set up. He acts as a savior of lives of the natives risking his own. In, *Quicksands* (1915) Captain Ronald Lingard was found guilty of misappropriation of regimental funds. He was enquired and punished with two years imprisonment. The officials decided to remove him from, Secunderbad, where the enquiry was held, to Bangalore, where he was to be kept in the jail. Once, in the jail, there was a bad out break among the convicts. Several criminals fell upon others and fought with stones spades and mallets. At such a moment Ronald took reigns and fought like ten heroes – so much for an English gentleman! Finally he over powered the ringleader, but a cowardly blow on the back of his head struck him to the ground at the very moment when the riot was quelled... (this was how) he and two or three convicts and one warden held the whole gang at bay, and how by desperate gallantry he had saved the lives of two venerable Brahmans from Conjeveram, forfeiting his own in the effort (emphasis added)

This fact of Ronnie’s fight proves that the whiteman is the protector and has been here in India to rule and dispense justice even in the face of his own death.

Cultural hegemony was an important political agenda of the colonizers. Exercise of this agenda over the colonized population was plausibly possible only when the native history and sense of history was caused to contaminate and erase and held up to criticism. Preparing the ground as such the colonizers could push forward successfully their project of civilizing mission which contained “double mission in India: one destructive, the other regenerating”. The British colonizers loquaciously tongued out and trickily tucked into their texts their benevolent mission of civilizing and educating the ignorant masses of India and thereby hoped to Eurocentricise the Indian mind. Writing of this phenomenon Aijaz Ahmad holds, “Inculcating a belief in Christianity or in the grandeur of British civilization was obviously an important goal for a
colonizing power that itself was carrying a civilizing mission among the heathen and zealots doubtless made much of it. Belonging to the class of rulers many Anglo-Indian novelists of the period recurrently employ this theme of civilizing, educating and reforming mission of the whiteman, although considered burdensome on their shoulder as the rulers in their novels and thereby asserted the need for Englishman's presence and his rule for India. Mrs. B. M. Croker's novels also breathe this air of contemporary theme abundantly. In, *Mr. Jervis* (1897) Miss Honor Gordon came to India, as she was invited by Mrs. Sarabella Brande and Mr. Pelham Brande her aunt and uncle, she stayed with them at Rookwood in Shirani. She received a letter from Mrs. Kerry, wife of rector at Hoyle, in England. In the letter Mrs. Kerry desired to know "the prospect of Christianity in this dark heathen land". (Emphasis added) As the girl did not know any thing about the matter asked her uncle Pelham to spell out his opinion, he replied:

*India is many years behind the age – it is populous and isolated.* (Emphasis added). The old creeds however, are gradually being sapped. I dare say in hundred years India will be Christian... Well you can inform her that the Hindoos are naturally a devout people, and must have religion. *Some are now the theists, atheists, agnostics; some mere coarse idolaters, who even in these days have devil-worship and witch-burning- yes, within a hundred miles of college whose students devour Max Muller, and Mathew Arnold, and the most advanced literature of the day... Mohamedans never change, and never will change, until having read history and science they see themselves from another point of view.* (Emphasis added)

From the quotation two things become clear to the reader one: deliverance for the colonized from their meaningless practices was possible only through their conversion to Christianity which was the rulers' religion and therefore trustworthy and honourable; second: the winds of change might be made to blow even among the 'incorrigible Mahomedans' through the creation of proper consciousness of history and scientific point of view, disseminated through the institutionalized branches of study of Education. This educating zeal of the white men motivated them many times to donate freely and act as patrons. In, *Some One Else* (1902) we witness a character
(Uncle George) making his bequeathal that his amount, forty thousand pounds should go to Mr. Miles Brabazan and Haidee, Brabazon (hero and heroine of the novel) provided they married within six months after his death failing which the money must go “to found a college in Calcutta, for natives, who wish for an English education”. Thus the matrimonial affair between the unwilling parties ultimately assumes a crucial role in the theme of the novel.

In, *The Cat's Paw* (1902) the white man’s burden of zealous civilizing mission is seen operative at two levels namely lowly tribals and royal rulers. The first instance of the whitewoman to improve the natives is, of Mrs. Evans. Mrs. Evans, wife of an official in the Department of Forests, in Central India was known among the native lowly people (Gonds) as the ‘Forest Lady’. She helped them in many ways. As she spoke their language fluently she was a dear lady to them, she commanded great respect from them. During the period of her encampments in the forests ‘under majestic peepal tree’, the people from the surrounding areas “flocked to welcome (her) bringing their children and grand children and offerings of flowers and fruit” she listened to their grievances and ailments. She administered advice and anodyne. Wherever she went she carried a kit containing medicines and set up the small dispensary whenever she halted there. Not only did she dispense medicine to the ailing ones, but also distributed toys to the children of the Gonds. Thus she could exercise her influence on the Gonds and try to civilize them.

Another instance of civilizing mission is that of Miss Pamela Ferrar’s attempt to teach the Prince and Princesses of Royapetta. When Mr. Maxwell Thorold was appointed *Political agent* he asked Pamela to help him in the job. It was his duty to see that the young Rajah was educated on British lines. As she knew Telagu and Hindi and that enabled her to be conversant enough. Therefore he asked her to accept the post. She accepted the post willingly. She joined the palace of Royapetta as tutor to the young Rajah Kodappa and his sisters Lucksmi and Varuna. Herein we witness the view of Mrs. B.M. Croker on education, which is

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put in the mouth of Miss Ferrars as tutor. Miss Ferrars believed in offering instruction and amusement combined. When one of the students said that Rani Sundaram, the grandmother of young king spoke bad things about Miss Ferrars "Your Royal Highness, must learn never to repeat to one person what another has said of them" was the advice given by the teacher to her students. Thus teaching things beginning with rudimentary behaviour and finally civilizing the Indians, even belonging to the Royal families was the motto of the white rulers. But the teaching and civilizing process was not easy for these people. It contained the risk of segregation, loneliness etc., from the white community in the present case as else where also. Here are the words of Mr. Thorold, as a kind of warning to Miss Ferrars.

*You will have a life of confinement, you will be in a strange atmosphere*, (Emphasis added) a Hindoo Zenana, among a number of idle, crafty, gossiping, pesterling women. These children are certain to be spoiled- a handful. *You will rarely see another white face but mine. You will have to bind yourself down for at least two years. You will have to put up with some disagreeables; no it is not all jam.* (Emphasis added)

The white man’s zealous civilizing mission was not simply restricted and reserved to the area of educating the masses and advising and motivating Indians towards Christianity, it also embraced the idea of making fine provision for modern civic amenities such as roads and railways, mines and motors etc., in this land which was a backward country lacking any sense of civilization. In, *Babes in the Wood* (1910) we meet a character, Mr. Julian Tristram, a colonel and also a sporting man, who visited India intermittently with an intention of indulging in delightful hunting. In the present visit he met Mr. Philip Trafford a newly recruited Forest Officer in the Central Provinces. On this occasion he said that he saw ‘amazing changes every time’ he came out. Trafford’s reaction that since there was ample availability of manganese in that region enough manganese mines cropped up there and caused marvelous changes by laying necessary infrastructure, yet "our roads are too bad, bar the Trunk Road, and the country too jungly.” But Tristram’s vehemently announces:
The country, after lying asleep for ages, seems to be stirring at last (emphasis added) motors all over the place. Why they even have a motor service up to Pachmari, and railways, narrow and broad gauge, in every direction! ... A fellow was telling me that these motors here have put on the pace in more ways than one; for instance, a police officer, instead of riding; now gets round his district unannounced in no time, and does his one hundred and fifty a day- same with railways and engineering work- the boss turns up most unexpectedly, and things have got to hum! Another more disagreeable change is the immense rise in prices, treble what it used to be in ten years ago.  

This view of Mr. Tristram emphasizes the fact that as a result of introduction of such facilities by British Raj in the country the standard of life automatically went up considerably, bringing new changes in spite of the people’s sticking to ancient life style. Almost in the same tenor is the observation of Mr. Eliot Scruby on the life style of the Gonds at Kukdikhapa (village of Fowls) in the same novel. Scruby accompanied Miss Mildred Trafford (sister of Philip Trafford) to a village of the Gonds. Miss Mildred falls in appreciation of the serene life of the Gonds in the silent sylvan spots of the Central Provinces. She also said that those people lived still in the antiquarian manners of their fore fathers centuries ago. But Scruby who opposed this view said:

Thanks to the Raj. The villagers have their vernacular schools, dispensaries, post offices and telegraph. (Emphasis added). Think of that! Possibly in some remote parts, the happy aborigines still slumber and live in what you call peace... (Emphasis added)

For a white person arrival to India and staying here was an ordeal. The whites that came over to this country with different intentions such as seeking marriage bond, joining their department as a newly recruited officer encountered a chain of difficulties. In the initial stage usually such people suffered a lot from nostalgia, loneliness, confrontation with the uncongenial atmosphere etc., in this alien land. At such moments the families and persons, especially the matrons who had arrived here prior to such new people and lived in this far off country many years were a haven for new persons and supported them by standing at their back as guardians providing them shelter, hospitality, emotional as well as psychological support. When the new arrivals suffered diffidence and loathed the life
here the experienced ones often cheered them up. The discussion of such motif often figures in most of the novels of Anglo-Indian writers. This is particularly true of women novelists forming a school as it were who delineate the predicament of such characters in the alien soil. Mrs. B. M. Croker also employs this element in many of her novels. In, *Babes in the Wood* (1910), we witness Captain Philip Trafford a new recruit to the Forest Department meeting Mr. Kennedy, Traffic Superintendent on the railways. He was “a broad-minded Anglo-Indian of wide experience”.67 Observing Mr. Trafford to be a new person in the area, his heart overwhelmed with affection. As Trafford traveled with less luggage and as he did not bring anything in the shape of refreshments Mr. Kennedy shared with him his luncheon of cold-water fowl and some sandwiches. Then during the conversation he gave enough hints to the new entrant into this distant country regarding the life he would be required to lead here. Then he also said something about the way of assistance to the new comers extended by the early-arrived Anglo-Indians. “The old hands help them. In this country we all help one another- it’s our unwritten law. (Emphasis added) But I dare say, didn’t your mother give you spoons, and sheets and things?” 68 Trafford’s reply that he brought nothing surprised the senior man and immediately he proposed “you would better put up with us for the night- indeed for several nights. My wife will help you and teach you how to run a house, get you servants, and lend you bedding... We are strangers in a strange land. (Emphasis added) I am an old hand; my wife has mothered half the boys within fifty miles, one more or less is nothing”.69 Such was the gesture not only of hospitality but also of psychological and emotional security displayed by the old Anglo-Indians towards the newly arrived officers and young girls.

The belief that the conditions of the society and the land, where an individual inhabits, influence and dominate his thoughts and behavioral pattern is shown exceptional in the case of the British people in India as rulers. The white masters instead of subscribing to the conditions of this country all the while tried to improve and convert them to suit their interests and aspirations. This desire to keep Indian ambience and Indian
masses perfectly in tune with their interests became especially conspicuous when they were endowed with the positions of authority.

In, *The cat's Paw* (1902), Mr. Maxwell Thorold was appointed as a political agent to the royal family of Royapetta palace. The antiquity of the family dated back to the fifth century. Instead of merely restricting his area of operation to ruling and administration he wished the royal family to live in accordance with his interests and decisions. He began to interfere with the familial affairs such as donations that were made by the family to the temples and purchase of pearls that were necessary for the wedding as jewellery etc. He spoke of this before Pamela Ferrars, almost in complaining tone:

Royapetta is the capital of a once ancient, powerful wealthy, now played out and decrepit state... The area of the state has also dwindled; another reign similar to the last, and it will disappear in total bankruptcy. I am doing my best to pull things together, to remit taxes, to restrain expenditure, but where I economize the Rani Sundaram, (the deposed queen) spend with both hands. When I put down twenty horses and sold five state elephants, she immediately ordered a gold bed and three coats of jewels for the temple gods. It was heart breaking; but I have stopped that forever.  

And when Mr. Thorold refused to consent to the purchase of Jasra pearls, Rani Sundaram commanded Miss Pamela Ferrars to her presence and asked her to persuade Thorold to allow and make allowance for the purchase of pearls and save her family honour. If she failed in doing this the Rani warned the white girl that she would be compelled to deal in foul manners with Mr. Thorold. Accordingly Miss Ferrars met Mr. Thorold privately and tried to convince him to make for the allowance of the purchase of much desired pearls. His reaction to her is:

How came you to be mixed up in the palace politics? The Rani Sundaram is crazy to have them for the wedding; *I have absolutely and formally refused to sanction their purchase*, (emphasis added) and as far as the outlay of the revenues are concerned, I am thankful to say *my word is law*  

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One of the ramifications of the white man's burden in this land as a ruler is estrangement and problem of distance that descends dangerously on the families of Anglo-Indians. Estrangement from the homeland, members of the family, children etc., is often alluded to in Anglo-Indian fiction. Those who came to India to serve this land as a part of government machinery had to leave their parents, friends and other ties with their homeland. This led to nostalgia for some period. And on getting established here with their families, before they drew a long breath of settlement and satisfaction, their children grew up and attained the age of entry into school. Every Anglo-Indian family was greatly worried about the education of their offspring's, for in India there was the possibility of their children getting spoiled by the servants who showed excessive attachment with them. Therefore the characteristic practice of Anglo-Indians was to pack off their children to England to make them well educated. This process usually started when the children attained the age of five. This many times led not only to physical distance between the parents and children but also to the emotional estrangement which left them many times strangers in spite of continued correspondence. Anyhow correspondence is not concreteness. This situation of alienation and the resultant strangeness gets mirrored in many novels of Mrs. B.M. Croker. In, *A Bird of Passage* (1893), Colonel Tom Denis suffered separation from his daughter for thirteen years. It is after this long and staggering gap he is to meet his daughter Miss Helen. Here is the picture of the anxious father waiting for the steamer expected to usher in his daughter into the port of Port Blair.

...it was neither news nor promotion that he was so restlessly awaiting now- his thoughts were altogether concentrated on a passenger, *his only daughter, whom he had not seen for thirteen years,* (emphasis added) not since she was a little mite in socks and sashes, and now she was a grown up, a finished young lady, coming out from England by this mail to be the mistress of his house! He was glad that this long anticipated day had dawned at last, and yet he scarcely dared to analyze his own feelings- he was ashamed to own, even in his inmost heart that mingled with all his felicity, there is a secret dread- a kind of stifled misgiving. *This girl who is to share his home within the next few hours, is in reality, as far as personal acquaintance goes, as much a stranger to him as if he had
never seen her before, although she is his own little Nell,... (emphasis added) Of course he and his little daughter had corresponded by every mail, but what are nice affectionate letters, what are presents, yea photographs, when the individuality of the giver has long been blurred and indistinct; when the memory of a face and the sound of a voice, have faded and faded, till nothing tangible remains but a name! Children of five years old have but short memories. 72 (Emphasis added)

Following is the picture of Miss Helen's predicament;

...who sat alone at the end of a narrow table with a bag on her lap... and her gaze fixed anxiously on the door leading from the companion ladder... her very lips were white, but this was due to her agitation, to her awe and wonder and fear, to her anxiety to know which of the many strange faces (emphasis added) that came crowding into the cabin was the one that would welcome her and be familiar to her and dear to her as long as she lived? 73

In, Mr. Jervis (1897), Mark Jervis who was born and brought up in India was sent to England when he was a boy of five by reason of his mother's death and schooling. He was therefore educated there and then stayed there only with his maternal uncle, Daniel Pollitt, a great industrialist and enormously rich man. To add up to the cause of his stay in England his father married Miss Mercedes Cardozo an heiress to enormous wealth earned in Indigo by her father when he announced this before his son, whom he visited after five years. She did not want to go to England therefore Mr. Pollitt suggested that the boy must be left with him. At this moment Pollitt said:

"You are making a fresh start, you and the boy are almost strangers (emphasis added)... Give him to me... I will ensure him a first class education, bring him up as my son, and make him my heir, and leave him all I am worth". 74

As the agreement was settled the father took the boy to the famous shops in England and heaped many things upon him. As the day of separation arrived he tried to suppress his sorrow of separation only till his father's cab disappeared "but after the cab had driven off, he rushed away and shut himself up in his own little bedroom, and flung himself upon the floor, and abandoned himself to the bitterness of grief, he had
ever experienced", (emphasis added) and he was ten years old. 75 After many years he came to India and met his father who was in the convulsive capture of paralysis. His father’s doctor Mr. Burgers met him on his arrival and announced the improvement that took place in the patient. Here are the bits of conversation between them:

your father is wonderfully better. I am his medical adviser... He has a wonderful constitution. He has had one stroke of paralysis, he may be taken suddenly, and he may live for next thirty years. Is it long since you met him?

I have not seen him till lately- since I was a child. That is strange, though of course India does break families. 76

If the case of transference of Mark Jervis to England was the consequent partly due to his mother’s death and partly due to educate him and thereby protect him from being spoiled in India as an orphan, or at the hands of his stepmother. In, The Chaperon (1907), a principal novel by Mrs. B. M. Croker, we come across the case of the Brakespeares. In, the novel we see the separation caused purely due to educational purpose. We witness Major Gordon Brakespeare, a through bred English gentleman behaves in almost what may be described as an irresponsible and ignorant way with his wife Mrs. Armine Doyle, a daughter of Rev. Dominic Doyle, a stern pitiless Puritan Parson at Knockcullen, Ireland. Soon after their marriage he had brought her to India and settled. But his mad desire for hunting kept him away from the family and young wife. Soon scandal spreaders seized the opportunity and hatched out unbelievable but convincing stories about the innocent woman. Gordan Brakespeare spoke harsh words with his wife in spite of his constant pushing her in to the pool of loneliness, separation and frustration, which lead to emotional estrangement and ultimately conjugal rupture. Here is the description of the well-bred Gordons and their sending their children to home to be educated which estranged them from parents and ultimately made of them apathetic.

The Brakespeares were what is called “Qui Hyes”, or “an old Indian family” Generation after generation had served in the Army, or the Civil Service; arriving as young men, they
usually married, settled down, and dispatched their children to be educated at home; the sons as they grew up, stepping, so to speak, into their fathers' shoes, the Brakespeare daughters who enjoyed a reputation for good looks, being duly imported, and married off, more or less satisfactorily... His father (Major Brakespeare's) had been a general in the Indian Army, and when Gordon was seven years old he was sent home... (Emphasis added) subsequently he passed through the usual regime- Preparatory School, Public School, Sand Hurst. During all these years his father had never set foot in England, but his mother returned on many occasions, and with the most transparent excuse.

Young Brakespeare and his father were therefore unknown to one another, and this is one of the tragedies of Indian life. 77 (Emphasis added)

This sense of alienation from the loving ones was really an unbearable burden on the part of the whites as rulers here. Sometimes, especially, when the tyranny of tropics wrung the familial atmosphere, the officials were compelled to transport their families to distant hill stations. Of this phenomenon M. K. Naik writes, “This experience of acute alienation resulted in many cases in complete apathy to all things Indian”. 78 The colonizers, caught in historical and political contexts are susceptible to the sense of exile and what Homi Bhabha calls, “the unhomeliness - that is the condition of extra-territorial and cross cultural imitation”, 79 which develops the sense of getting marginalized physically from home as well as socially and culturally from the colonies, which consequently makes the colonizer minds fissured by the diasporic ideas. This sense of being cut off from the stem and source soil and not finding firmness of roots in alien soil is the state of seedling of Diaspora. It is in this light one feels that, the study of the works of these writers in terms of Diasporic experience would throw more light on the problem of alienation and as such would be beneficial and interesting in the contemporary context.

In spite of their vehement arguments, vociferously raised cry for the British Empire and assertive stance for its continuation on this sub-continent, the British, it seems, were fully and consciously aware of the ephememerality of their existence and curtailment of their prolonged rule
or domination over this land. Probably when the belief in the permanence of the Raj ran high among the rulers and the thinkers on Imperialism like J.T. Sunderland who says:

"British rule in India was comparable to a banyan tree. Under a banyan tree little or nothing can grow. The tree overshadows and kills essentially every thing beneath it. The only growths that can live and thrive are the stems or slender branches sent down to the ground from the tree itself; these take root and develop; nothing else can". The resurgence of the Indian masses against the British rule which culminated in the First War of Independence, which in the form of indomitable tornado might have made "the banyan tree" shake violently and groan at the roots under its own weight. This might have made the rulers conscious of the imminence of their withdrawal from this land. This kind of shadow of ephemerality of their rule is mirrored in the novels of many writers. This motif figures in, of Mrs. B. M. Croker also, for instance in, the novel The Company's Servant (1907), here is the description of Tani-Kul railway station after the suicide and burial of Charlie Booth, who was proved guilty of his involvement in the scandal of specie and breathed his last by committing to the wheels rushing train.

And then by gradual degrees, the dejected junction resumed its poise, and its normal condition. Nowhere else, as in India, does society so speedily recover from the shattering shocks of scandals and tragedies; yet it is not that these, are not felt most poignantly at the moment, nor that help and sympathy are ever withheld. Indeed, in what country are both so bountiful? But here, there is no time to stand still, and contemplate disasters; events march rapidly. India is the land of change of moving on. Are we not here today and gone tomorrow? (Emphasis added)

Here is a bit of conversation clipped from the novel In Old Madras (1913) wherein Captain Mallender comes to India in search of his uncle senior Mallender who disappeared mysteriously in India. During the journey undertaken by him in search of his uncle to different places, far off and most unfrequented he met many Englishmen. One such place is Wellunga. After reaching the travelers' bungalow at Wellunga, he finds it unbelievably well kept. On asking the butler he comes to know that all
this type of urgent and up to date arrangement was owing to the a powerful person called General Beamish who lived in the locality. Later Mallender meets him, introduces himself. During one of the conversations the old man asks as to the interest of the young man in this country and its history. Mallender says he had very little knowledge of the subject. But the old man beaming with pride pronounces:

I was the same myself, till I was tied here by the leg, and had to take to books. I have read a lot—especially of those dealing with this country- its history begins with the invasion of Alexander, nearly three hundred years before Christ, then came the Mughal Empire, and the Cholas, they all made their way into these parts.82

To this narration of the old man, Mallender’s reaction that not much sign of them was left, The old man says:

No, and I dare say there won’t be much sign of us after a couple of thousand years. We shall leave no great monuments, temples, and fortresses, such as still recall ancient Hindustan.83 (Emphasis added)

A discreet reading of the above citations one authorial comment and the other an observation of a character who spent many years here in the service of the British government in India and finding it impossible to return home even after retirement, and settled here and also became a part of this soil, mirrors the emphemerality or the doubtful stance of the novelist regarding the predicament of continuation of the British rule in India. Although the idea is not directly stated it is connotatively conveyed. Is it the trauma of the Mutiny that becomes responsible in rousing such waves of insecurity? It is a fact yet to be studied in the writers of this period, “a period of Confidence”. (Greenberger)

Thus the task of ruling India was a tale of tribulations and trials for a whiteman. In a review of Kipling’s Departmental Ditties Sir William Wilson Hunter says:

It will then be seen by what a hard discipline of endurance our countrymen and countrywomen in India are trained to do England’s greatest work on earth. Heat, solitude, anxieties, ill-health, the
never ending pain of separation from wife and child- these are the stern teachers who have schooled one generation of Anglo-Indian administrators after another to go on resolutely, if not hopefully, with their appointed task. 54

These words written with regard to the white man’s burden hold verity and deserve mention in the case of any Anglo-Indian fictionist, who is likely to deal with the theme.

2.5 COLONIAL ENCOUNTER

That the British gained firm footing as a colonial power on this subcontinent pushing forward their altruistic ideal is a historically documented fact. Turning into callous colonizers they went on enriching their arsenal from time to time with colonial weapons like civilizing mission, educating zeal and providing order to this chaotic country. When these proved weak weapons, in the course of time they stretched their hands to forge the new and yet incisive ones like divide and rule policy, the Doctrine of Lapse, the subsidiary Alliance system etc., and used them as important agenda of imperial aggrandizement. Mastering once the territory the colonizers introduced these measures unhesitatingly and hastened to dismantle the existing system-political, educational, social, intellectual and religious- and through domestication of the natives tried to Eurocentricise every aspect of Indian life, by a processes, of dismembering distancing and debunking the colonized, blocking and banning all that belongs to the ‘other’, the ruled, the native. “Colonialism, then, to put it simply, marks the historical process whereby the ‘West’ attempts systematically to cancel or negate the cultural difference and value of the ‘non-West’.” 85 In order to achieve this end and establish their political, economic, social and cultural supremacy over India the British, as colonizers, indulged in unfair and unjustifiable strategy and in the days of their beginning they became successful too. Encouraged by their euphoric augmentation of the empiric exercise of their ideas, and the achievements acquired by their militant might, and exalted position of political power, many times the British dealt with the natives in violent methods. When the process of subjugation holding the natives at bay,
becomes intolerable, encounter from the natives becomes inevitable. The history of British rule in India is a high story of innumerable encounters with the native rulers as well as ordinary rural people.

The history of Indians' encounter with the alien force dates as far back as to the days of Alexander's invasion on this land. This story of Indians' encountering the alien force assumed an altogether a new form and fervour during the days of British rule in India. The white masters, as they were a ruling race remained stuck to the periphery of Indian life. Due to the biased opinions held by them towards Indians and Mohammedans as ignorant and inferior; and towards themselves, as enlightened and superior; it was impossible for both the races to live in amity though interloped in colonial limbo. Encounters with the colonial masters for the Indians, in spite of their areas of weakness, were the common phenomena as long as the latter held power in their hands. This theme of colonial encounter gets interfused into the literature produced by both, the rulers and the ruled. A conscious and creative writer essentially displays his interest in and records his responses to the significant happenings, political and socio-economic problems and other fundamental trends operative during the time when he is engaged in producing his work of art. Being as such Anglo-Indian literature, particularly fiction, reflects this image quite clearly. Many writers have dealt with this theme in their works. Mrs. B. M. Crocker too, has, to her credit as a powerful novelist, some novels dealing with this theme.

In, novel *A Bird of Passage* (1893), Aboo Sait, a Mohamedan convict, at Hadow, in the Andaman's, attacked the jail warder and killed him. After killing the white warder of the jail he ran away and hid in "a large three masted ship stranded on the muddy shallow, cast away there by some terrible cyclone". Around the stranded ship there was heavy growth of seaweed. This provided him a fine protective place. The Company Sarkar had taken all measures to search him. In the meantime the white ladies of the settlement organized a "shelling picnic". However Mrs. Creery and Miss Helen Denis desired to be left at the wreck much
against the warning of other companions. As soon as they reached the ship, Helen desired to sketch and capture the surrounding scenic beauty on her canvas and soon became busy. In the meantime Mr. Gilbert Lisle came over there. He too, being a master artist, got interested and involved in the process. In the meantime Mrs. Creery’s dog Nip disappeared from the place. So Mrs. Creery went in his search and ultimately after searching a lot requested Mr. Gilbert Lisle to search him in the saloon of the stranded ship. However reluctantly Mr. Lisle entered the saloon followed by Miss Helen who was curious to investigate the cabins. After entering the saloon they searched thoroughly and there was no trace of Nip. Therefore they began to search the cabins. In the last cabin, as she pushed open the door, she was startled to see:

... a tall, powerful man in convict’s dress, in short, no less a person than Aboo Sait! In a twinkling his grasp was on her throat, crushing her savagely against the wall. (Emphasis added) Vain indeed were her struggles, he was strangling her with iron hands; (emphasis added) his fierce turbaned face was within an inch of hers, she felt his hot breath upon her cheek! She could not scream or move... hearing seemed to be the only sense that had not deserted her!...87

Very soon, as Gilbert, who observed the humming song, that Helen sang till now got silenced, he got worried and entered the open cabin where the silent struggle between a convict and the white girl continued merely in rustling sound. No sooner did the missing convict see a white man entering the cabin than he left the girl and pounced on the man of muscular strength, with a shining knife in his hand. Gilbert, being a strong man immediately repaid the victim and ultimately with a minor wound, became successful in vanquishing the culprit. Here is the description of the encounter.

Aboo was six foot two, as wiry as a panther, as lithe as a serpent, (emphasis added) and all his efforts were edged by the fatal fact that he had everything to gain and everything to lose.

The issue of this conflict meant to him, liberty and his very existence,... win he must, since the stake was his LIFE!
They wrestle silently to and fro, finally out of the cabin, locked in deadly embrace. The English man, though stabbed in the arm, had succeeded in clutching the convict’s wrist, so that for the moment that sharp gleaming weapon is powerless! Aboo, on his side, holds his antagonist in a wolfish grip by the throat... if he gets a chance he will strangle his Feringhee devil, (emphasis added) and cut the throat of that white faced girl, who is still leaning against the cabin wall, faint and breathless. 88.

Thus the struggle between the native and the white man assumed the deadly situation. In the meantime Mrs. Creery climbed up the ship and cried “Murder, Murder” in vain to a boat across the atmosphere. Just at this Helen regained her consciousness and rushed to the spot of fight. On observing the convict trying to clutch back the knife which had slipped from his in the heat of the fight “Like lightning she sprang forward, pounced on it, snatched it, secured it- and running down the cabin flung it far into the sea.” 89 And soon many people come and once again Aboo was a prisoner.

Thus, in the cited instance of encounter, we witness the fight between a condemned convict and an adventurous white man. The description of the encounter, being wisely segregated by insertion of five asterisks (of credit of the victory of the white man in the encounter?) from the remaining part of the narrative in the chapter deserves attention and mention, though the use of asterisks is made in the narrative throughout the book as and when there is occasional demand for it.

Dismantling the native system and institutions, the colonizers, introduced in their place their own system declaring confidently that theirs alone is the sturdy and durable system. They built up their own structures of religion declaring that their religion alone was supreme and well grounded in rationality. This mortified the colonized naturally and they developed hatred towards the colonizers. This led to repeated encounters. In, Mr. Jervis (1897), we witness the native fighters attacking the colonizers. Here is the description given before Miss Honor, the heroine of the novel, by a woman, actual participant and the victim of the encounter.

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"...One Sunday. We were all at church- I remember well, we were in the middle of the Litany, praying to be delivered from ‘battle, murder, and from sudden death,’ when a great noise of shouting and firing began outside, and people rushed, too late, to close the doors, and some were cut down-- and many others and myself escaped into the belfry, whilst our husbands held the stairs. They kept the wretches at bay so long that they were out of patience, and after setting fire to the church, rushed off to the cantonments and treasury. ... (emphasis added) we... drove away at a gallop to a neighbouring rajah to ask for his protection; but many of the men, including my husband, remained behind to try and collect some troops, and to save the arsenal and treasury. The rajah lived fifteen miles from our station- we knew him well - he came to all our sports and races. (Emphasis added). Fifty of us sought his protection, but he pretended he was afraid to shelter us, and turned us all out the following day. (Emphasis added)

... ere we had gone five miles we met two native regiments... we were ordered out in turn, just as we drove up; and as each man or woman or child alighted, unarmed, and quite defenseless they were shot or cut down. (Emphasis added) Oh, the road – I shall never forget it – that red, red road between two crops of sugar cane! Miss Miller- how brave she looked! Just like what one pictures a martyr- she quietly stepped out... never uttered a word or cry as she faced her horrible death.

...Mrs. Earl and her two little children ...wounded in the church... I had fainted, and they thought I was dead, I believe, and threw me into a ditch. Presently I crawled out and crept into the sugarcane. 90

Soon after this encounter the white lady was caught while hiding in the sugarcane field, by the owner and brought to Lucknow city. She dodged him and fell a prey to a native Persian. He forced her into marriage with his son ‘a half-witted, feeble creature. Who died and left (her) a widow’. Thus while she was reduced into a native widow her relations including her husband deemed her to be dead. Even an obituary note was issued in the paper and her husband married another woman and his first daughter was named after his first wife. Thus the encounter entailed permanent estrangement from her husband when she was just in her twenties, and compelled her to obscurity for the rest of life.

Very often the oppression and usury employed by the British people and their biased approach to Indians as a ruling race gave way to hatred
among the Indian natives against them. In, *The Cat's-Paw* (1902), we witness Mr. Maxwell Thorold appointed as the Political Agent to look after the *Swadeshi Samsthan* of Royapetta. As soon as he took over the charge of political agent he believed that his duty was not merely to safeguard the interest of the state till the young rajah grew up but he regarded himself the rajah. It is quite conspicuous in his words "I am regent, ruler and rajah. (Emphasis added) being called by the less high sounding title of political agent and further he calls the grand mother (Rani Sundaram) of Kodappa, the young rajah, *ambitious as Napoleon, as cruel as the sea, as clever as the devil...*" (Emphasis added) spoken before Miss Pamela Ferrars. Thus overrun by confidence he became authoritative, oppressive, intrusive and obstinate not to yield even to the ordinary demands of the Royal family. This kind of intrusion of alien element became too much for the royal lady to tolerate. Therefore she engendered antagonism against him and soon commanded Miss. Pamela Ferrars, whom he had employed as tutor to teach the Royal children. When Pamela appeared before her she looked like “a fierce eagle brooding on her nest” when Pamela refused to sit on the floor she became angry and cried loudly. “Strange that a woman of thy class should *come to our country and eat our bread*”. (Emphasis added). This hurt the young girl of self-respect. On protestation from the girl the old queen said, “But of a truth, these English dogs have no shame” (Emphasis added) When the state was suffering from paucity of funds and groaning under poverty, these royal dynasties indulged in extravagance of charity and purchase of pearls and new jewels. The regents resented this and refused to sanction the money. In the novel under discussion Thorold “a hard, stern man, unswerving as a spear” refused to permit the queen to go in for the purchase of pearls. Therefore she ordered Miss Ferrars to persuade Thorold. Further she also warned her of awaiting danger in the case of his refusal. When the frightened girl spoke of it before the agent this is what he spoke:

*She hates me like poison, I am aware; but I don't care.* (Emphasis added). I am making headway, paying off mortgages, lending money for public improvements, administering justice, and carrying out
reforms... Rani Sundaram does not care how many die of starvation. Her cry is 'Spend', and her ambition and extravagance are boundless as the sky. (Emphasis added).

When Miss Ferrars failed to persuade Maxwell Thorold and reported the same to Rani Sundaram she became as angry as a hungry tigress. She lost her equanimity of mind and was overwhelmed by hatred towards the white rulers in general, and Miss Ferrars and Mr. Maxwell Thorold in particular. Here is her reaction to the sad news brought by the white girl.

Suddenly the Rani Sundaram half rose- her face seemed to have withered up and contracted into two flaming eyes- and flung with all her force a jeweled dagger; it whizzed by my ear, almost grazing my neck and the curved bright blade buried itself deep in the woodwork beside me...

Rani Sundaram’s anger was not abated by her attempt to murder the white girl. If the encounter of Rani Sundaram in the case of Miss. Ferrars was outward and open, her display of hatred towards Maxwell Thorold assumed the fouler and more lethal means. She took recourse to assassinate Thorold by poisoning him. She sent an obedient accomplice in the form of a cook to Thorold. Thorold’s cook was made to stay back from serving his master. To get this done Rani Sundaram gave money to both the cooks and hatched out her plan of poisoning the political agent. Miss. Ferrars was informed of this unrighteous deed by her attendant Moonasawmy. On enquiry he also spoke of some native apothecary, well versed in cleansing the poison introduced into human body. As per the hint given by Moonasawmy she proposed to go and meet the mountebank disguising herself as an Indian woman. The description almost resounds Rosalind’s proposal to Celia of wandering in the forest at the announcement of punishment of exile by the Duke Frederick in As you Like It. But on reaching the residence of the apothecary she recognized the mountebank who was none but the odious Ibrahim of Teherhan with whom she had had a row at Mrs. Rosario’s, and had pushed off his proposal of marrying her. He too recognized her at the first sight itself. When Pamela spoke of the illness of Mr. Thorold and said “Mr. Thorold has been poisoned; I believe his very hours are numbered, unless you can save him.
The English doctor does not know how to deal with native drugs." For this immediately he said that he was ready to administer the medicine on one condition that she must marry him. When she fell to deep thinking he observed:

Mr. Thorold has unfortunately taken a deadly poison... the effect is enervating, intense lassitude, loss of sleep, of memory, of appetite—a wasting fever; and worst of all he is dying of starvation. Someone who has a spite against him has done this... *These natives are too fond of tempering with poisons*... (Emphasis added) I can administer one little seed— the priceless herb seed, known only to adepts in herbs. *Herbs*

I can compound a draught that will save him and snatch him out of the arms of death.99

All this is possible only if she agreed to marry him, and surrendered the ring, which Mr. Thorold had given her as token of his love and marriage in future. Along with this she must write and sign the note of agreement of her marriage with him. After haggling for a long time with her conscience she wrote and signed the paper. Immediately after this was done he stood up from his seat and said:

In a month from today we will be married. We will ask Mr. Thorold to the wedding. Come I must start at once... there is no time to lose and before I could prevent him, *he snatched at my hand and, in spite of my struggles, covered it with impassioned kisses*... 100 (Emphasis added)

Once again this is a colonial encounter between a Mohomedan and a white lady, much with the resonance of Aboo Sait and Helen Denis case in *A Bird of Passage* (1893). But alas! Here is only the white girl struggling with conscience on the one hand and the colonized Mohomedan on the other.

One of the ramifications of the colonial encounter is the physical violence directed upon both the sides, viz: the colonizer and the colonized, by both. Though Maxwell Thorold in *The Cat’s-Paw* was put to physical suffering by the Rani of Royapetta it is a vengeance wreaked in a sneaky and snaky way. But the revengeful attitude displayed by Begum
Sona-bee, in the story "The Missing Link" towards a British lady officer is of different type but with much humiliation. The story deals with the Post-Mutiny day’s- dealing of the company Sirkar with the families that were sanctioned pension. After the siege of Delhi when the Emperor was arrested and sent away to Burma, the Government provided pension for his large family. There was enough cheating as to the reception of the payment of pension. The case of men was however different as they appeared and applied for it personally. But the case of Zenana, which consisted of queens and their daughters and also granddaughters was a peculiar one as no man-officer was supposed to enter the zenana. Therefore the Company Sirkar appointed the lady officers in such cases. These lady officers visited the zenanas and ascertained that the person, to whom the pension was sanctioned, was alive and thus it went to the rightful person. However Begum Sona-bee, in addition to her own large pension, went on claiming half of it in the name of her granddaughter Moti Mahal. It was suspected by the department of Pensions. And Mrs. Mills was sent to Lucknow, where Begum Sona-bee stayed, to enquire and ascertain the fact of existence of a grand daughter to the Begum. When she went there she was cornered by the palace people who tried to cajole her into bribery first and when she did not yield they threatened her to death. However she emerged successful in unraveling the mystery about Moti Mahal and meeting her. Here is her experience recounted by herself before Miss Roseneath, a young girl in the story, who resembled her deceased daughter.

...I was hustled away into a damp, low room, looking into a courtyard on the ground floor, and left there alone. No one came near me for hours—but they peeped and whispered outside together. I remained there all night, lying on an old charpoy, and I ate some bread and got water at the fountain in the court; but I couldn’t sleep for the rats, and for the fear that someone would come and strangle me you see. I was alone- one woman combating a hundred. The next morning I was still a prisoner; but in the afternoon, the Begum’s cousin came to coax and bribe me. I continued immoveable, though I was sick and faint with hunger... I remained for three days almost starving...
If pedigree and precedence were of utmost importance to the British people in matters of social intercourse, family honour and self-honour were of utmost importance among the Indians in general and royal dynasties in particular. When it came to that they acted very consciously and smartly and struggled hard for the protection of the same. They viewed it as the do or die case. The theme of struggle for family honour or self-honour is a recurrent one that is treated by various writers of the colonial period. One of the strategies that the colonizers employed to extend their dominion of domination was the system of employing the regents in the *swadeshi Samsthans*, where the young princes were minors and unable to be in the saddle of rulership. The regents or the political agents who were expected to look after the administration alone were not satisfied simply by this power. On the contrary they often interfered with the luxurious life of the royal dynasties, which were usually headed, by the widowed queen and her relations often dropping in. The political agents often asked to mitigate the mercenary luxury of these families. As the power of sanctioning money for the expenditure of these families was vested with the political agents, when they refused the payment of bills of heavy expenditure tendered by the royal families it lead to difference of opinion and ultimately hatred between the regent and the royal family. When both the parties became as tenacious as leather, revenge alone, was the way to be followed, which forms an important ramification of colonial encounter. There are innumerable novels wherein we see this revenge motif getting aggravated when it came to terms with family honour or self-honour. Mrs. B. M. Croker also deals with the theme in some of her novels.

In, *The Cat's-Paw* (1902), we see this element constituting an important theme. Mr. Maxwell Thorold was appointed as the political agent in the *Swadeshi Samsthans* of Royapetta in South India. The Prince Kodappa was an urchin of six years. Before Mr. Thorold’s taking over the charge as the agent, Rani Sundaram, the grandmother of the prince looked after the administration. The Company Sirkar felt that she was cruel and mercilessly careless towards the subjects. She simply collected the
revenue and lived happily, spending the money for her own and her family's sake without a qualm for the suffering subjects. Therefore the Company Sirkar came forward with the appointment of Mr. Thorold as an administrator of the state. Mr. Thorold arranged for the education of the prince and went over to introduce improvements in the state. Meanwhile Rani Sundaram decided to arrange the marriage of her granddaughter Lucksmi, a girl of nine years. Further for the occasion of wedding she decided to purchase the Jasra pearls, which were very costly. Though they were very costly she was bent upon purchasing them. But Mr. Thorold refused to make payment and in the meanwhile he also asked her to minimize her expenditure in the form of donations to the temples. This enraged the old Rani Sundaram, she asked Miss Pamela Ferrars, who was working in the palace as tutor to the royal children there, to intrude and persuade Mr. Thorold to sanction the money for the pearls. Further she also threatened her that in case he refused again she would not hesitate to use the foul means to realize her end of maintaining the family honour. Because to possess the pearls, was not the matter of pelf but the question of prestige of her family. The old Rani also said that if Miss Ferrars could win over Mr. Thorold and became successful in persuading him to sanction the money needed for the pearls she would give one lakh rupees to Miss Ferrars and allow her to enjoy life. Here are the words of Rani Sundaram spoken before Pamela:

Our family, thanks to thy people, have become insignificant and impoverished. The wars of the Carnatic went against us. Now we are holding our heads up again. We have eleven guns, thanks to me. We have a guard of honour. We have married into good stock, our sons and daughters are sought for in marriage. All that remains to make us of importance is the possession of the Jasra pearls. —(325)...

Other states spend far more than we do. One Rajah hath guns of solid gold and a carpet of jewels, and I ask but these pearls. If Thorold will consent, I am ready to die. But he is angry at the mere whisper, and talks foolishly of debts. What is debt to our dignity? ... I desire not to hear of rain or crops— I only have ears for the pearls. (Emphasis added)

In spite of the appeal of Miss Ferrars to Mr. Thorold he remained stiff and refused the proposal for sanction of the bill. He held the view
that these Indian royal families were rich enough to live in luxury and already possessed the wealth that was necessary to keep them happy. But the royal families, according to such political agents, went on vying with other families of neighbouring states senselessly. Their mere intention was possession of wealth, more wealth and still more wealth which ultimately affected the royal treasury and rendered it poor and unable to sanction the allowance for public welfare works. That this kind of draining away of wealth for useless purposes must be checked carefully was the intention of these political agents. But this kind of attitude of these alien men was viewed as danger alive to their family honour by the native Samsthanic families and finally they opposed the political agents through and through. Therefore the political agents always criticized the view of royal families. Here are the words of Mr. Maxwell Thorold:

There are enormous treasures in the Tosha Khana; it is crammed with gold and silver, and trappings and jewels, but it is a point of honour to add to these, and to live and die in debt... One Court vies with another in the race of extravagance. (Emphasis added) Horses and carriages from England, jewels, entertainments, bribes, follies. One rajah spent million rupees on the marriage feasts of a favourite pigeon.  

Such attitude of the political agents automatically prevented them from sanction of money for the private purposes of these families. As a result there was provocation given to the families of the royal dynasties. It was quite natural for these families to be offended and angered- because the political agents were merely expected to act as guardians of the minor princes, and look after the administration. When they refused to make the payment of bills of their expenditure though the money was their own the native dynasties felt humiliated severely. They regarded it as an atrocity hurled upon them by the alien ruling community. Therefore naturally they engendered hatred towards them. In the novel under discussion too we witness the same predicament. When Maxwell Thorold refused to make the payment of the bill for Jasra pearls. Rani Sundaram was mortified beyond words. She tried to assassinate him by poisoning him. She bribed the cook of Thorold and got him poisoned, which consumed his health silently dragging him towards death. When Miss Ferrars came to know this she
met Ibrahim on the suggestion by Moonasawmy that he cleaned poison. Ibrahim confirmed the fact that Thorold was poisoned. Here is the description:

Mr. Thorold has unfortunately taken a deadly poison... The effect is enervating, intense lassitude, loss of sleep, of memory, of appetite-a wasting fever; and worst of all, he is dying of starvation. Some one who has a spite against him has done this, no doubt, for he is stern employer...\footnote{104}

In this way the royal dynasties, when encountered the white man, who posed a threat to the family honour, did not hesitate to quell him down through any means, however foul it was. Before the family honour everything was insignificant to them. For the protection and maintenance of family honour they always struggled hard.

Self-honour was one of the important aspects of Indian native rulers or rajahs. This too much attachment of importance to self-honour of the native rulers as viewed by the colonial masters, who were quartered either near or within the provinces of such native kings, was unpalatable to them. For the officials were expected to meet and discuss many things regarding the administration and other things. But what was wearisome to these officials was the kind of indifference that the native rulers displayed towards the officials of British government. The native rulers often despised the white officers by calling them 'little men' or 'little people'. In, Babes in the Wood (1910), we witness Captain Trafford who was recently appointed as an official in the Forest Dept. of the British Raj. He was posted to the range of forest to which was attached the supposed to be Jambore preserve, a forest governed by the native ruler, but actually it belonged to the British Raj. From this area many things disappeared, poaching and hunting of wild-animals was common in that area of forest, and as a result it affected the forest area that was governed by the colonial government. Therefore Trafford began to worry and finally one day he decided to meet the king of Jambore to settle the affair. The king of Jambore was conceited and called the White men little men and hated them always. He never allowed them to meet him. Even if they pressed he
eluded them wisely. Here is the description of Trafford who persisted that he must meet the king.

Trafford delivered his card to a pompous functionary in tawdry green and gold, who had strutted towards him; and after waiting for an hour, with a patience based on a determination not to be annoyed, received a message announcing that "His highness Sota hai"—in short, was sleeping. So there remained nothing for the forest officer but to turn about and ride away, carrying his grievance with him.\(^{105}\)

Thus the white ruler, in spite of his air of importance and being all-powerful master was refused to be received by the native potentates, and put to humiliation in the course of exercising his authority. In spite of their boundless ambition to exercise their control coupled with prestige, they, as colonizers, it seems, were fully aware of their fleeting presence on this oriental peninsula. This is evidentially apparent when we hear General Beamish, an old man who had offered his youth, age and energy in fortifying the Empire, speaking before Mallender in, *In old Madras* (1913).

... I dare say there won't be much sign of us, after a couple of thousand years. We shall leave no great monuments, temples and fortresses, such as still recall ancient Hindustan.\(^{106}\)

**CONCLUSION:**

Mrs. B. M. Croker's writing about the political image of India of her times is scanty and skinny. In spite of it, it goes a long way in unveiling the conditions of her time. She presents the trauma of mutiny in such a catchy way that, the incident becomes vivid once again before the readers. Such incidents sundered the loving ones and shattered the families in spite of their being all-powerful rulers. The white men's life in India was not altogether a happy one and she also underscores the fact that ruling was not always simply a delightful state but on the contrary it was loaded with innumerable risks and responsibilities. She also holds the mirror to the white man's attitude towards, Indians as inferior and possessed of dependence complex, needed the white man's administering
and exercise of law over them all the while trying to improve, civilize and bring them on the right lines through western mode of education, in which project or process considerable amount of tyranny and humiliation were hurled upon the natives. In depicting the whitemen as supreme masters and administrators she also shows their involvement in corruption but very sneakily she stoops to suggests that it was a snarlingly tempting trap laid down by either natives or half-castes- the Eurasians. In painting the white mans' political life in this alien-atmosphere she seems to be paying an extra portion of attention to the burden of white man that he was compelled to undergo in spite of his lingo. She appears to praise her countrymen's unswerving loyalty to the imperialist policy making machinery at home. When Pary Benita writes:

The Anglo-Indians held it an achievement to survive in India and certainly they did put up with discomforts, which they could have avoided in England. However, in producing a literature of bombastic self-advertisement and cloying self-pity in which they featured as excellent supermen, as marvels of efficiency and endurance, probity and moral excellence, they were not simply reporting their own legend and demanding adulation from the British at home. How true she sounds!

Thus from the study of depiction of colonial India as is rendered by Mrs. B. M. Croker we see her taking sides slightly and silently with her own racial counterparts. She seems to show the British occupation of India during the days of intellectual, and political gloom in the nation, a providential gleam and a beneficial boon. Since she makes no reference to the campaigns and hartals of Indian nationalists, her characters are, broadly speaking, free from the problem of hybridity, mimicry etc., as it gets alluded to by many writers of Anglo-Indian fiction of her period.

Whatever may be her defensive stance as regards colonialism and its impact as fully beneficial, in terms of material developments, cultural and educational improvements ushered in by it "cannot out weigh the wrong of a relationship that lamed a people's will, insulated in self-respect and doomed it to passivity and political slavery".
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