PRELUDE

RUDYARD KIPLING (1866-1936), the spokesman and Champion of Imperialism, was born in Bombay, India and has passed his early life for six years here. He was very much influenced and impressed by the people of this land along with, sights and smells of the orient ‘light and colour and golden and purple fruits’. He was educated in England and led a hard life with his relatives, He was influenced by the personalities of the time-Carlyle, Ruskin, M. Twain, etc. He was a voracious reader and had lived with the Sahibs in India. He was trained by Corneil to become a journalist and writer, Living with the sahibs and the people of India he learnt many things from them and these things find their places in his poetry, stories and novels.

There are diverse views of the critics regarding Kipling as a writer. An anonymous writer says:-

“Rudyard Kipling was a national institution... and regarded as such by all the world. His fame had been long established and his literary activity slight for many years. It was also the case that many had lost interest in him and many others had been repelled. Seldom had a national institution been the object of more hostile criticism. Some of it, indeed, unfair and marred by lack of understanding Yet some of it damaging enough. He was a Victim of prejudices- both literary and Political. T.S. Eliot says that he is “a laureate without laurels. He is a neglected celebrity. The arrival of a new book of his verse is not likely to stir the slightest ripple on the surface of our conversational intelligentsia. He has not been crowned by the elder generation. Malevolent fate has not even allowed him to be one of the four of five or six greatest living Poets". These remarks made by Eliot and the anonymous critics are true about the fame and popularity and the denigration of Kipling. He has been branded a “hooligan” “a
reporter of vulgarity" and "an authority on the second-rate" "a good bad poet" and an imperialist in every sense and way of life. Contrary to this, several critics have found the positive and permanent virtues of Kipling's poetry. Andrew Maurouis, French critic calls him "not only the greatest English writer of his own generation, but the only modern writer who has created enduring myths". He further praises Kipling as the poet of heroic conception of life". He has also made a "a prediction that in a thousand Years, or in two thousand years, men will still be reading Kipling and will find him still young". Andrew Lang found Kipling's Work "like all good work ... ... with real and romantic. In spite of his attack on Kipling's "love of low life". Henry James praises him for his "recentness of inspiration" and "being at home, domesticated and initiated in this wicked and Weary World". C.S. Lewis finds in him Wordsworthian capacity to have "rediscovered the poetry of Common things" and for keeping alive "the human interest in his mass of material and technical detail". Gilbert Frankau appreciates him and tells that he is the "Supreme Present-day Craftsman".

These diverse views about Kipling are in themselves juxtaposed; and hence, they require a proper understanding of a jury to come to a judicious evaluation of his poetry, because as an artist, a novelist or a story-writer or a poet ..., he was fully aware of the manifold problems and situations of his time and people. And, those things have been there in his poems which are more than eight hundred in number. Bonamy Dobree has rightly suggested that Kipling ought to be seen objectively, because he was no longer a part of the political feature. He is an interesting poet to he explored and studied because of the fact of being himself elusive and this elusiveness attracts our attention to his works of Poetry for literary enquiry objectively, as he is a great genius and will inspire many even to-day in the days of many kinds of isms.