

Marx Hardy Machiavelli Joyce Austen
Defoe Abbot Melville Montaigne Cooper Emerson Hugo
Stoker Wilde Christie Maupassant Haggard Chesterton Molière Eliot Grimm
Garnett Engels Schiller Byron Maupassant Schiller
Goethe Hawthorne Smith Kafka
Cotton Dostoyevsky Dostoyevsky Smith Willis
Baum Henry Kipling Doyle Henry Willis
Leslie Dumas Flaubert Nietzsche Turgenev Balzac
Stockton Vatsyayana Crane
Burroughs Verne
Curtis Tocqueville Gogol Busch
Homer Tolstoy Gogol Busch
Darwin Thoreau Twain Plato Scott
Potter Zola Lawrence Dickens Plato Scott
Kant Freud Jowett Stevenson Dickens Plato Scott
Andersen Andersen Cervantes Burton Hesse Harte
London Descartes Wells Voltaire Cooke
Poe Aristotle Wells Voltaire Cooke
Hale James Hastings Shakespeare Chamberlain Irving
Bunner Shakespeare Chamberlain Irving
Richter Chekhov da Shakespeare Chamberlain Irving
Doré Dante Shaw Wodehouse
Swift Pushkin Alcott
Newton



tredition®

tredition was established in 2006 by Sandra Latusseck and Soenke Schulz. Based in Hamburg, Germany, tredition offers publishing solutions to authors and publishing houses, combined with worldwide distribution of printed and digital book content. tredition is uniquely positioned to enable authors and publishing houses to create books on their own terms and without conventional manufacturing risks.

For more information please visit: www.tredition.com

TREDITION CLASSICS

This book is part of the TREDITION CLASSICS series. The creators of this series are united by passion for literature and driven by the intention of making all public domain books available in printed format again - worldwide. Most TREDITION CLASSICS titles have been out of print and off the bookstore shelves for decades. At tredition we believe that a great book never goes out of style and that its value is eternal. Several mostly non-profit literature projects provide content to tredition. To support their good work, tredition donates a portion of the proceeds from each sold copy. As a reader of a TREDITION CLASSICS book, you support our mission to save many of the amazing works of world literature from oblivion. See all available books at www.tredition.com.



Project Gutenberg

The content for this book has been graciously provided by Project Gutenberg. Project Gutenberg is a non-profit organization founded by Michael Hart in 1971 at the University of Illinois. The mission of Project Gutenberg is simple: To encourage the creation and distribution of eBooks. Project Gutenberg is the first and largest collection of public domain eBooks.

Skipper Worse

Alexander Lange Kielland

Imprint

This book is part of TREDITION CLASSICS

Author: Alexander Lange Kielland

Cover design: Buchgut, Berlin - Germany

Publisher: tredition GmbH, Hamburg - Germany

ISBN: 978-3-8472-1844-9

www.tredition.com

www.tredition.de

Copyright:

The content of this book is sourced from the public domain.

The intention of the TREDITION CLASSICS series is to make world literature in the public domain available in printed format. Literary enthusiasts and organizations, such as Project Gutenberg, worldwide have scanned and digitally edited the original texts. tredition has subsequently formatted and redesigned the content into a modern reading layout. Therefore, we cannot guarantee the exact reproduction of the original format of a particular historic edition. Please also note that no modifications have been made to the spelling, therefore it may differ from the orthography used today.

THE HARVARD CLASSICS
SHELF OF FICTION
[From Vol. 20]
SELECTED BY CHARLES W ELIOT LL D

SKIPPER WORSE

BY
ALEXANDER L. KIELLAND

EDITED WITH NOTES AND INTRODUCTIONS
BY WILLIAM ALLAN NEILSON PH D

P F COLLIER & SON
NEW YORK

Published under special arrangement with
The Macmillan Company

Copyright, 1886
By D. APPLETON AND COMPANY

Copyright, 1917
By P. F. COLLIER & SON

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Alexander Kielland was born in Stavanger, Norway, on February 18, 1849, of a wealthy family of shipowners. After studying law at the University of Christiania he bought a brick and tile factory at Malk, near his native town, and for some years it appeared as if he were to follow the family tradition and become merely a substantial citizen of provincial importance. But about 1878 he began to publish some short stories in the Christiania "Dagblad," and in 1879 and 1880 there appeared two volumes of "Novelettes." These were marked by a light satirical touch and a sympathy with liberal ideas, and were written in a style which may well have owed some of its clarity to the study of French models, made during the author's visits to Paris. His first regular novel was "Garman and Worse," a picture of the same small-town society which we find in the novel here printed. "Laboring People" followed in 1881, when Kielland sold out his business and became purely a man of letters. "Skipper Worse" was his third novel, and among the more important of his other works are "Poison," "Fortuna," "Snow," "St. John's Eve," "Jacob," and a number of dramas and comedies. He died at Bergen, on April 6, 1906.

Kielland's method is realistic, and a number of his works are written with a fairly distinct "purpose." As this purpose often involves sharp criticism of conventions and beliefs dear to the comfortable classes, Kielland roused no small amount of opposition and disapproval. But as it grows more possible to see his work in perspective, it becomes more evident that his clear-sightedness and honesty of purpose as well as his mastery of style will give him an honored place among Norwegian writers.

"Skipper Worse" is not only thoroughly typical of Kielland's work, but, so far as there can be said to be general agreement, it is regarded as his masterpiece. Like so many of his books, it gives a picture of the well-to-do merchants, shippers, and fisher-folk of the west coast of Norway, the special subject being the workings of the Haugian pietistic movement. Although this particular movement was specifically Norwegian, it is sufficiently typical of a kind of

revival familiar in many countries to make this study of it interesting to foreign readers. Kielland's handling of the Haugians is remarkable for its fairness and restraint. The sincerity of the best representatives of the sect is abundantly exhibited, as well as the limitations of the weaker brethren; but this balanced treatment does not prevent the author from showing with great force and poignancy the deplorable crushing of the innocent human affections by unintelligent fanaticism.

The portraiture of individuals is as successful as that of the society in which they move. Worse himself is rendered with a rare mingling of humor and pathos; Hans Nilsen is a striking example of the religious enthusiast, drawn with feeling and subtlety; and Madame Torvestad, though belonging to a familiar type, is well individualized.

It requires a high degree of art to take a provincial group, in special local circumstances, and to present these in such a way as not only to interest the outsider, but to convince him of the truth of the presentation by showing the characters as acting from motives valid for human nature in general. This is what Kielland does, displaying in the doing of it, an uncommon delicacy of perception and accuracy of perspective. He is one of the writers who have done most to make Scandinavia count in the modern world.

W. A. N.

CRITICISMS AND INTERPRETATIONS

I

BY H. H. BOYESEN

Kielland's third novel, "Skipper Worse," marked a distinct step in his development. It was less of a social satire and more of a social study. It was not merely a series of brilliant, exquisitely finished scenes, loosely strung together on a slender thread of narrative, but was a concise and well-constructed story, full of admirable portraits. The theme is akin to that of Daudet's "L'Évangéliste"; but Kielland, as it appears to me, has in this instance outdone his French confrère, as regards insight into the peculiar character and poetry of the pietistic movement. He has dealt with it as a psychological and not primarily as a pathological phenomenon. A comparison with Daudet suggests itself constantly in reading Kielland. Their methods of workmanship and their attitude toward life have many points in common. The charm of style, the delicacy of touch, and felicity of phrase, are in both cases preeminent. Daudet has, however, the advantage (or, as he himself asserts, the disadvantage) of working in a flexible and highly finished language, which bears the impress of the labors of a hundred masters; while Kielland has to produce his effects of style in a poorer and less pliable language, which often pants and groans in its efforts to render a subtle thought. To have polished this tongue and sharpened its capacity for refined and incisive utterance, is one—and not the least—of his merits.

Though he has by nature no more sympathy with the pietistic movement than Daudet, Kielland yet manages to get psychologically closer to his problem. His pietists are more humanly interesting than those of Daudet, and the little drama which they set in motion is more genuinely pathetic. Two superb figures—the lay preacher Hans Nilsen and Skipper Worse—surpass all that the author had hitherto produced in depth of conception and brilliancy of execution. The marriage of that delightful, profane old sea-dog, Jacob

Worse, with the pious Sara Torvestad, and the attempts of his mother-in-law to convert him, are described not with the merely superficial drollery to which the subject invites, but with a sweet and delicate humor which trembles on the verge of pathos.—From "Essays on Scandinavian Literature" (1895).

II

BY WILLIAM H. CARPENTER

Alexander Kielland is the least Norwegian of all the Norwegian writers, not only among his contemporaries, like Björnson and Jonas Lie, but among the newer men of the subsequent generation, like Gabriel Finne, Knut Hamsun, and Vilhelm Krag, whose names we Americans have hardly yet learned to know. I mean this, however, less in regard to his matter than to his manner. Although several of his short stories are French in their setting and others are Danish, the greater part of his work and all of the important novels and plays act and have their being in Norway. Kielland's attitude towards his material, on the other hand, is new to Norwegian literature. For the first time in his pages, among both his forbears and his contemporaries, we meet with the point of view of a man of the world. Björnson and Jonas Lie have always a sort of homely provincialism, inherent and characteristic, that is part and parcel of their literary personality, whose absence would be felt under the circumstances as a lack of necessary vigour. Kielland, on the contrary, as inherently, has throughout unmistakably an air of *savoir vivre*, in the long run much surer in its appeal to us outside of Norway because of its more general intelligibility. Björnson and Jonas Lie in this way have secured places in literature in no small part because of their characteristic Norwegianism; Kielland to some little extent has secured his place because of the want of it. Ibsen is here left out of the discussion. He is quite *sui generis*, and apart from the mere choice of environment, for his work could belong anywhere....

Kielland's novels are one and all novels of tendency. With his first short stories as a criterion, and a knowledge of his own personal antecedents and the almost necessary predilections that he might be

supposed to possess, his career as a novelist could not have been foreseen. His early stories betray no great seriousness of purpose, and his personal environment removed him as far as possible from liberalism in ethics and religion, from socialistic proclivities even remotely democratic, and a ready susceptibility to the whole spirit of the age. Yet these are just the characteristics of his later books. They are strong, liberal, and modern; so much so that many of them have evoked a loud spirit of protest in Norway, where leaven of this sort is still striven against in many quarters.—From "Alexander Kielland," in "The Bookman" (1896).

SKIPPER WORSE

CHAPTER I

"Here, Lauritz, you young scamp, go aloft and clear the dogvane."

Skipper Worse was standing on his quarter-deck, a fresh north wind was blowing in the fjord, and the old brig was gliding along quietly under easy sail.

A chopping sea, caused by the ebbing tide, was breaking outside the cape which marked the entrance to Sandsgaard Bay.

As the *Hope of the Family* rounded the point, she seemed to feel that she was safe at home. Captain Worse winked at the helmsman, and declared that the old thing knew well enough where she was now that they were round.

The *Hope of the Family* was not quite like other ships. It might be that some looked smarter and lighter; indeed, it was not entirely beyond the range of possibility – though, as for Jacob Worse, he had never yet seen such a one – that, amongst the new-fangled English craft, one or two might be found that could sail just the least trifle better.

No further admission, however, would he make. Anything stronger, more seaworthy, or more complete than the *Hope* did not, and never would, float upon the sea. The sun shone brightly upon the buildings at Sandsgaard, on the garden and the wharf, and over all the pleasant bay, where the summer ripples chased each other to the land, hurrying on with the news that Jacob Worse had entered the fjord.

Zacharias, the man at the wharf, had, however, already announced the fact.

"Are you so sure about it?" asked Consul Garman sharply.

"We've made her out with the telescope, Herr Consul, and I'm as sure it's the *Hope* as that I am a living sinner. She is steering right in for Sandsgaard Bay."

Morten W. Garman rose up from his armchair. He was a tall, ponderous man, with crisp white hair and a heavy underlip.

As he took his hat and stick, his hand trembled a little, for the *Hope* had been away a very long time at sea. In the outer office the book-keeper was standing by the little outlook window; taking the telescope from his hand, the Consul spied out over the fjord, and then closing the glass, said: "All right; Jacob Worse is a man one can depend upon."

It was the first time that a ship from those parts had sailed to Rio de Janeiro, and the perilous voyage had been due entirely to Jacob Worse's enterprise.

He had, however, been away so long that the Consul had given up the *Hope*, as he had given up so many other ships of late years.

Although he was now relieved of all anxiety on account of the ship and his trusty Captain Worse, his footstep was heavy, and resounded sadly as he left the office and strode through the entrance hall, whence a broad staircase led up to the next story.

Much more, indeed, than merely a profitable voyage would be required in order to console the embarrassed merchant, for his home at Sandsgaard was empty and desolate. Youth and social pleasures had fled, and little remained but bygone memories of gay friends and brilliant ladies; a faint odour of the past lingering in out-of-the-way corners, and causing his heart to beat again.

Ever since the death of his wife in the past summer, all the reception-rooms had been closed. Both his sons were abroad, Christian Frederik in London, and Richard in Stockholm; and Consul Garman, who had always been accustomed to gay company, found that living alone with the sisters of his deceased wife—two elderly spinsters who quarrelled over the management of his domestic affairs—was not very exhilarating.

As Jacob Worse, standing on the deck of his good ship, gazed at the stir along the wharves and round about the bay, his heart swelled with pride.

All the boats in the place came rowing out towards the brig. The relatives of his men, the mothers and the sweethearts, waved handkerchiefs and wept for joy. Many of them had, indeed, long since given up the *Hope* as lost.

No relations came out to welcome Skipper Worse. He was a widower, and his only son was away at a commercial school in Lübeck. What he looked forward to was talking about Rio with the other captains at his club, but the chief pleasure in store for him was the yarns he would spin with Skipper Randulf.

What would Randulf's much-boasted voyage to Taganrog be, compared with Rio? Would not he—Worse—just lay it on thickly?

In his younger days Jacob Worse had been a little wild, and was now a jovial middle-aged man, about fifty years of age.

His body was thickset and short, his face that of a seaman—square, ruddy, frank, and pleasant. If any one could have counted the hairs upon his head, the result would have been surprising, for they were as close as on an otter's skin, and growing in a peculiar manner. They looked as if a whirlwind had first attacked the crown of his head from behind, twisting up a spiral tuft in the centre, and laying the remainder flat, pointing forwards, along the sides. It seemed as if his hair had remained fixed and unmoved ever since. About his ears there were rows of small curls, like the ripple-marks on sand after a breeze of wind.

When Jacob Worse saw the "ladies' boat" waiting, ready manned, alongside the quay, he rubbed his hands with delight, for this preparation betokened a singular distinction; and when he saw the Consul step into this boat, he skipped round the deck in boyish glee. It was, in fact, unusual for the Consul to come on board to welcome the arrival of a ship. Generally some one was sent from the office, if neither of the sons was at home: for both Christian Frederik, and especially Richard, liked to board the ships far out of the fjord, that they might have a sail homewards and drink marsala in the cabin.

* In the larger mercantile houses of Norway, at the seaports, a "Fruens Baad," or ladies' boat, is kept for the especial use of the lady of the house.

When the brig came to anchor, the ladies' boat was still a little way off; Skipper Worse, however, could no longer restrain himself. Laying hold of a shroud, he swung himself on the top rail and waving his hat, cried out, in a voice that rang out all over Sandsgaard, "We come late, Herr Consul, but we come safely."

Consul Garman smiled as he returned the salute, at the same time quietly removing the rings from the fingers of his right hand; for he dreaded the grip of Jacob Worse on his return from a voyage.

The delighted captain stood on deck, hat in hand, in a respectful attitude, whilst the Consul, with stiff and cautious steps, ascended the accommodation ladder.

"Welcome, Jacob Worse."

"Many thanks, Herr Consul."

The Consul surrendered his hand to be duly squeezed.

The crew stood round in a respectful circle to receive the friendly salute of the owner; they were already cleaned up and in their shore-going clothes, for so many friends and relations had boarded the brig as she was standing in, that there was no necessity for them to lend a hand in mooring the brig.

The manly, sunburnt faces bore a somewhat strange aspect here in the cool early summer time, and one or two wore a red shirt, or a blue Scotch bonnet brought from that wonderful Rio.

Their beaming faces showed what heroes they considered themselves, and they longed to get on shore to recount their adventures.

"Here's a young scamp," said Captain Worse, "who went out a cabin boy, but now we have given him the rating of an apprentice. The Consul must know that we had two deaths at Rio—the devil's own climate.—Come, Lauritz, step forward and show yourself."

A lad of about seventeen was at last shoved forward, awkward and blushing; much soaping had made his chubby red face shine like an apple.

"What is his name?" said the Consul.

"Lauritz Seehus," answered the lad.

"Lauritz Boldemand Seehus," added the captain, giving the name in full.

The men tittered at this, for they were in the habit of calling him "Bollemand," or "The Baker."

"We always give special attention to Captain Worse's recommendations, and if the young man will but follow the example of such a worthy officer"—here the Consul made a low bow to the captain—"the firm will advance him according to his merits. Moreover, when we come to pay off, the crew will receive a bonus, in consideration of the long and perilous voyage. The firm offers its best thanks to all for good and faithful service."

The Consul bowed to them all, and went below with the captain.

The men were much pleased, both on account of the bonus, and because it was unusual for shipowners thus to come on board and speak to common folk. It was not the habit of Consul Garman to trouble himself much about the persons in his employ. Not that he was a hard master—on the contrary, he always returned a salute with courtesy, and had a word or two for everybody; but his manner was so extremely distant and lofty, that the least demonstration of friendliness on his part was a condescension accepted with gratitude and wonder.

Half an hour later, when he entered his boat again to go on shore, the men cheered him. Standing up, he raised his hat to them; he was, in fact, much moved, and was anxious to get home, and to be alone in his office.

The Consul took the ship's papers and a bag of gold on shore with him, for the venture had been a prosperous one. The firm "C. F. Garman" had not done so good a business for a long time. So far it was satisfactory, but it was not enough; for in spite of all Morten Garman's efforts during the years that had elapsed since his father's death, he had never succeeded in bringing life and vigour to the large and widely extended business.

The firm had suffered so much during the period of war, and from a reduction in the currency, that it was paralyzed for many years, and at one time indeed seemed past recovery.

The fact was that from the first its means were locked up in landed property to an extent which was out of all proportion to its diminished available capital. Besides this, there were debts which pressed heavily upon it.

Time brought no improvement; Morten W. Garman, who was an exceptionally able man of business, was compelled to put forth all his energy and diligence to maintain the ancient reputation of his firm.

So long as he remained young, the concern struggled on; but now that he was advanced in years, his wife dead, and his home desolate, it pained him to think that he might leave the business which had been his joy and pride, and which he had hoped to make so great and so enduring, bereft of its vitality and in a feeble and disorganized condition.

The household expenditure at Sandsgaard had always been considerable, for his attractive and vivacious wife had been fond of parties, masquerades, and entertainments, and her tastes had been fully shared by her husband.

The freer mode of life which came in with the century, as well as his position as the eldest son of a large mercantile family, had encouraged somewhat extravagant views of life, and in the town his ostentation had given rise to not a little derision and offence. Of this, however, nothing reached his ears.

Owing to his foreign education, and to his frequent journeys abroad, he brought back a peculiar atmosphere which pervaded his whole life, his views, and his opinions—which latter were, indeed, very different from those prevailing in the frugal little town, which at this period found itself in a state of fermentation, owing on the one hand to commercial progress, and on the other to a strong religious movement.

As yet, however, the old-fashioned mode of entertainment prevailed at Sandsgaard, where the civil and military personages of the grander sort kept up their ancient traditions at festivals where they

ate well and drank deeply. Freedom and courtesy were so well balanced in this society, that little restraint was put upon conversation. A *risqué* word, the stray touch of a too daring hand or foot, or a whisper behind a fan, which was in truth a furtive kiss, with a hundred other trifling liberties, were permitted. Frivolity enveloped the company as with a silken veil, and yet everything moved as politely and as sedately as a minuet.

In this sort of life Consul Garman carried himself as easily and as adroitly as a fish in its native element.

When he sat in his office on the mornings of his great dinner parties, his pen flew over the paper, and on such occasions he indited his ablest letters.

His thoughts were so clear, and his mind so prompt and unembarrassed, that everything was arranged and ordered with the utmost precision.

In the same despatch in which he bespoke a cargo of coffee, he would not forget twelve packets of sealing-wax and two hampers of Dutch tobacco pipes for his store. He would descend without difficulty from instructions to a captain who had lost his ship, to the most minute details respecting certain stove pipes which he had seen in London, and which he wished to introduce into the town hospital.

But when the post had been despatched, and the hour of three—the usual hour for dinner parties—approached, and when the Consul had shaved himself carefully, and had applied himself to sundry pots and flasks of pomades and essences, he stepped up the broad staircase, dressed in a long-skirted blue coat with bright buttons, a closely fitting waistcoat, and a frilled shirt with a diamond breast-pin, his comely iron-grey hair slightly powdered and curled. Perhaps, too, he would be humming some French ditty of questionable propriety, thinking of the gallantries of his youth; and as he stepped daintily forward with his shapely legs, he would sometimes indulge in a hope that knee breeches would again come into fashion.

In spite of his gallantries, however, Consul Garman had been an exemplary husband, according to the standard of the times; and when his wife died he really grieved for her, placing sundry tablets

with affectionate inscriptions in those parts of the garden which were her special favourites.

After her death he gave up society, so that this item of expenditure diminished perceptibly. Two other items, however, showed a tendency to increase—the expenses connected with his sons, especially Richard.

His affections were now bestowed upon these sons. Richard was at once his pride and his weakness; a handsome exterior and easy temperament were a reflection of his own youth; and when Richard took his best horse and saddle, as well as his riding whip, which no one else was allowed to touch, he stole from window to window, as long as his son was in sight, pleased to observe his bearing and his seat on horseback.

With his eldest son, Christian Frederik, the Consul was, however, more strict.

He would write to Richard somewhat after the following fashion, when his extravagance became serious:

"I can well understand that the *carrière* which you, with the sanction of your parents, have adopted, involves you in sundry expenses, which, although apparently unnecessary, may on a closer scrutiny be found, to a certain extent, warranted by circumstances. On the other hand, however, I would have you to consider whether you could not, at a perceptibly less cost, attain the same results as regards your future in the diplomatic profession.

"Especially would I exhort you to keep regular accounts. Not so much that I desire to limit your expenditure, as that, according to my own experience, such accounts are an aid to self-control."

But accounts, and especially regular ones, were not to Richard's liking. Sometimes, indeed, he pretended to render them; but the letter soon drifted into jests and amusing stories, which diverted his father, and made him forget all about the money.