



Fig. 44
L.A. Ring (1854–1933)
The Drunkard, 1890
Oil on canvas
3 WH

L.A. Ring not only found his subjects in the countryside; he also came from the countryside and took his name from the village of Ring, south of Næstved in Zealand, where he was born. His depictions of the small villages and life in them are always penetrating, never sentimental. He took the conditions of the rural population upon himself, remaining committed throughout his life to the struggle of the workers and farmers for social improvement, and became a pioneer of social realism in Danish art. As an artist he himself experienced harsh conditions at first, only achieving the beginning of recognition with the art critic Karl Madsen's articles in 1887 and 1889. It was during the time after this that he painted the picture of the drunken man being 'bullied' by the children of the village. The picture remains a symbol of a society with no place for the disadvantaged and of his own pessimistic view of humanity.