

NB Pages 13A-C are an optional addition

A PINCH OF SALT

by

Jon Wynne-Tyson

Fontwell
Sussex
BN13 0TA

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This play was read at the Cheltenham Festival of Literature in the Town Hall on 15 October 1989 by Michael Denison, Dulcie Gray, Angela Thorne, and Christopher Timothy. It was written for the Festival to mark the continuing influence of The Extended Circle: a Dictionary of Humane Thought, edited by Jon Wynne-Tyson, which a critic claimed 'should become the bible of all concerned with humane education and the concept of animal [as well as human] rights'.

Before the break in these readings, I mentioned Henry Salt. That most of you have probably never heard of him is a reflection on our times, and proof of Salt's misfortune in being born in a country with small respect for the blending of clear expression with original and inspirational thinking.

Yet in the days following his death in 1939, over fifty obituary notices were published, extolling the scholarship, wit, prolific literary output, kindness and integrity of a man against whose compassionate ideals the media maintained an almost unbroken silence throughout his life.

The Times gave him 13½ inches, the Telegraph eight. His background as the son of a colonel in the Royal Bengal Artillery was of course mentioned, as was his education at Eton and Cambridge, where he won Sir William Brown's medal for a Greek epigram and was bracketed with Gerald Balfour as fifth classic in the 1875 Tripos. His friendships with Shaw, Hardy, Edward Carpenter, W H Hudson, Ruskin, Swinburne, Gandhi and Havelock Ellis were respectfully noted. But except for the barely acknowledged reissue of his book Animals' Rights in 1980, and a recently published anthology of his writings entitled The Savour of Salt, **there is nothing** readily available to commend his remarkably contemporary thinking to a public increasingly tuned into the concerns he so passionately felt. He was truly a Deep Green born far ahead of his time.

The dramatization that follows starts with Henry as an Eton scholar. He went there in 1866 after prep school and tutors, and an itinerant childhood spent mostly with his mother and grandparents in Shrewsbury.

Eton's headmaster at that time was the slack and uninspir-

ing J J Hornby, who in 1884 was replaced by the much stronger character Edmond Warre. Henry's mother was not entirely convinced of Dr Hornby's suitability as a guardian of her chick. She came from a proper, upper-middle class family which had not shown itself short of eccentrics to enliven young Henry's life. One uncle, with a fear of being buried prematurely, offered to make Henry his heir, provided his nephew personally saw to it that his uncle's head was severed before burial. Henry wrote later that "This proposal I unwisely declined, from an over-conscientious doubt whether I should be able to carry such instructions into effect; and the property accordingly passed into the hands of some cousins who presumably undertook to complete the desired severance, and I trust did so."

Mrs Salt, a woman with predictable viewpoints, was not without her problems. Her relationship with her husband appears to have been as distant emotionally as it was geographically, for Colonel Salt stayed firmly in India. But her concern for Harry - as she called her son - was such that she took rooms in Eton for long enough to see him into the school and to acquaint Dr Hornby of her expectations from an institution that had also been entrusted with the care of Henry's father. Of her concern for Henry's physical and mental well-being, there can be no doubt. Her ability to mould him to the expectations of conventional Victorian West England gentlefolk was another matter.

A NOTE ON HENRY SALT (1851 - 1939)

Henry Stephens Shakespear Salt, described by his biographer George Hendrick as "a child of privilege in Victorian England," was born in India, the son of a colonel in the Royal Bengal Artillery. A King's scholar at Eton, he went on to Cambridge in 1871, returning to Eton as a master in 1875.

In 1884 he relinquished that comfortable post to devote the rest of his long life to "causes" - penal reform, conservation, animals' rights, and other humanitarian and Socialist concerns that now attract increasing understanding and sympathy.

Salt was also a respected man of letters, writing on Shelley, Thoreau, De Quincey, James Thomson ('B.V.'), and several others. He knew and influenced Mahatma Gandhi and George Bernard Shaw, and his other friends included Thomas Hardy, W H Hudson, the Webbs, Havelock Ellis, Ruskin, and in particular Edward Carpenter.

On his death, over fifty obituary notices appeared, extolling the scholarship, humanity, wit, integrity and prolific output of a man against whose passionate ideals the media had maintained an almost unbroken silence throughout his life.

After his death, that silence was resumed, broken only by Stephen Winsten's Salt and His Circle (1951), Hendrick's Henry Salt (1977), the 1980 reissue of Salt's classic Animals' Rights, and in 1989 the Hendricks' anthology The Savour of Salt, which has received wide and favourable press attention.

Apart from the last two volumes, nothing has been readily available to commend Salt's remarkably contemporary thinking to a public now happily more attuned to the concerns he so passionately felt.

Henry Salt was truly what we today term a "Deep Green", born far ahead of his time.

... ..

A PINCH OF SALT

MRS SALT "My dear Harry, I hope you are well and happy with your studies. The journey from Eton to Shrewsbury was accomplished safely and I was at once questioned by your grandfather as to 'how the King's Scholar is settling down.' I replied 'very well indeed,' and I trust that this will prove to be nothing less than the truth.

"Dr Darwin has asked after you and tells me to remind you always to bathe and towel vigorously after exercise, particularly in cold weather, and not to neglect to apply cold water to the skin after a hot bath. This will stimulate both mind and body.

"Of the need to eat, sleep and generally conduct yourself in a sensible manner, I said enough to you before departing. But do be sure not to leave off your warm under-vest during this inclement weather, as the danger of catching a chill is a threat to all ages.

"I shall write no more now, nor expect an early reply, for you are bound to be busy with your studies and with making new friends.

"Your Aunt Emily asks me to add her love to that which your grandparents and I now send.

"Your ever most devoted mother."

HENRY "Dearest Mama, Thank you for your letter. Yes, I have chummed up with several boys and am enjoying life here. We have had some really jolly larks - as well as working hard, of course. The games are stunning. I have started to fag at Fives and have played a few balls myself.

"I make great use of the library, and what I cannot find there can be had elsewhere. A few of the boys read a lot outside their study texts, and one is already a close chum. His name is James Joynes - 'Jim', of course; he has no side - and his father is Lower Master. We have splendid walks and talks.

"Most of the boys are nice enough chaps. Some of the people one fags for can pitch into you, of course, and there is a boy who tells terrific whackers, and another fellow who is always blabbing. But although we chaff each other a lot, and some boys take a lot of bullying, I haven't met a real 'Flashman' yet."

MRS S. "I was pleased, as always, to get your letter, my dear boy, and to know you have a particular friend and have suffered no serious bullying. I am sure that a 'Flashman' could only be found at an inferior school.

"I miss our long walks and conversations, but

have been much pleased by the increasing fluency you have shown of late. Try only to remember, my dear son, that a little Irishness in your blood is not sufficient reason to overlook the necessity for sober living. (You mentioned in a recent letter that gambling was not uncommon). Try to dip regularly into the volume of Scripture History I gave you, for we must all benefit from constant reminder of how we should conduct ourselves. Were your father not stationed in India, I am sure he would say the same.

"When you have time, inclination, and news to formulate a further letter, I shall be eager to receive it."

HENRY

"Dearest Mama, The full title of your book is Scripture History, Designed for the Improvement of Youth, so you may see my obedience in not replying to your letter until I had something of interest to write about; as proof that I have imbibed at least some of its message!.

"It is a great shame you had to put off your last visit. This is a stunning river to walk by. Rowing and swimming are on the doorstep, so to speak, and I have been told I could become a jolly useful Fives player.

"Jim is not all that athletic, but his father has been a great Fives man and tutored Swinburne. The Joynes family are very nice people. They are very close and affectionate and have made me most welcome. Jim has a sister, Catherine - though she likes to be called Kate - and she is very intelligent and just like us. She funks nothing, stands up to a chap, and takes no nonsense. She walks and runs as well as any boy, but is also very clever on the piano. She has dark hair and large eyes, and people say she is rather beautiful. She is certainly a real trump, and has been in some scrapes. She can also write awfully well, but don't seem to bother much. She reads a lot of poetry and is very sensitive. One day on the playing fields a bird was hit by a cricket ball. Jim and I picked it up, of course, but Kate was quite distraught and cared for it lovingly. She and Jim have ideas about life that I very much share."

(pause)

MRS S. Now that you have risen to the Sixth Form, Harry, I feel that you must try to curb some of those rather immature notions that have come through to me of late. One must be careful, my dear boy, not to mix with too wide a social circle. You write yet again

about your friend Catherine. I do not doubt for a moment that the Joynes are a pleasant and respectable family, but your friend's father is but a school-master, and it is never wise to overlook those unavoidable barriers erected by birth and circumstance."

HENRY "After your last letter, mama, I am sure, you will be glad to learn that the Provost has told me to go to Lichfield during the Easter vacation to tutor the Bishop's nephew. I shall live in the Palace."

(pause)

JIM You'll miss the Fives in Lichfield, Henry.

HENRY Never mind, Jim, I can walk, and it's not for long. In any case, I shall be too busy reading Kate's daily letters to have time on my hands.

KATE What conceit! You will be lucky to receive a single postcard.

HENRY Then I shan't go.

KATE You clearly need the humbling experience of having to toady to a bishop for a time.

JIM That's probably why father arranged it.

HENRY Your father? Is that true?

JIM Certainly! He wanted me to go. Not my style, hob-nobbing with bishops. What a waste of time! But ideal for you, Henry!

HENRY Do I waste my time, then - because I like games?

KATE You all waste your time. That is what you are at Eton to learn to do. Preparation for life as you will find it, not for how it is for most.

JIM That puts you in your place, Henry!

HENRY No, Kate's right. I love Eton, but there is a lot to be fought against.

KATE You may find you say the same of Cambridge.

(pause)

HENRY "Dear Kate, I so look forward to your visiting us at King's. Here the old order changes slowly, but much of the ancient pettiness remains. The countryside is dull and flat, but Jim and I make what we can of it. However, I shall stick it out, and like a good Kingsman go on cramming for the Tripos, trying to quell thoughts of Eton, our river, and walking its banks with you, talking and talking. But here:

Midst barren fens we learn the manly part -
To feed the intellect and starve the heart."

KATE "Henry, just stop being a silly old misery! You are right to despise privilege, but it does have certain advantages, and at least you are equipped to turn them to better use or stand them on their heads. If you lose your sense of humour I shall think far less well of you than if you fail that boring old Tripos.

"Now just go for a walk with Jim along those beautiful Backs, sit below a willow, and count your blessings. You've all the time in

the world to read your Darwin and Marx and Herbert Spencer, and if they don't strengthen your sense of social purpose and give you a raison d'etre, then I shall despair of you. I wish I was at Cambridge, I can tell you, but keeping house at home is the female role, and that is that.

(pause)

HENRY Another letter from your sister, Jim. I think I'd go potty without them.

JIM Perhaps that is why I am deemed crazier than you. She hardly ever writes to me.

HENRY You've had a lifetime together. There can't be a lot left to say.

JIM In a way, I wish you two would tie the knot.

HENRY Why "in a way"?

JIM (hesitantly) Well...she's not like other girls.

HENRY Isn't that the classic reason for a fluttering in the male heart?

JIM You must weigh it all up, Henry. Kate has... what one might call masculine interests.

HENRY (wonderingly) Music? Reading? A love of living things?

JIM Oh, surely, but I am not certain she would be a family woman in the usual way. Small children and all that might not be her style.

HENRY I am not sure they are mine.

JIM I have an idea that Kate may find it easier to love the whole world than to put it all into a single chap.

HENRY Isn't that just a sign of being young?

JIM Probably. It's not all that easy to tell, when you're young yourself.

HENRY All I know is that after these years at Cambridge I can think of nothing that would bring me more joy than to return to Eton and Kate and the bosom of your family.

JIM Dear old Henry! But careful how you go. Don't they say "never go back"?

(pause)

HENRY "Dearest Mama, I am glad you are not displeased that Jim and I have accepted Dr Hornby's invitation to return to Eton as masters. After these barren years of cramming, it is a delightful prospect, and without talent or inclination to follow my grandparents into banking or law, I have little choice. I would certainly make as poor a cleric as I would a Bengal Artilleryman!

However, I have not idled. My reading has been wide, and I think my writing has progressed. Perhaps it may all add up to something one fine day."

(pause)

MRS S. "My dear Harry, I am disturbed to know that after your years of being a master at Eton, your position there is uncertain. As you yourself have said facetiously, a boarding-house at a great school is a very profitable form of hotel-keeping, and I feel that your statement that to be an Eton master is a less pleasant undertaking than to be an Eton boy is only to voice a reluctance many feel at having to relinquish carefree childhood for the responsibilities of man's estate.

"Such of your friends and published writings that I know about, persuade me that much of your uncertainty comes from too close association with unconventional, even revolutionary, viewpoints. While I accept that your vegetarianism springs more from a tender heart than from political truculence, I fear that many around you may have convinced themselves of a link between the two.

Now that you are a married man, I do not need to remind you to do what is right not only for yourself but for your wife. If you leave Eton, she will be removed from her family, for which you share an affection."

HENRY "My dear Mama, I hasten to assure you my decision will not be impulsive. Kate's brother is a major factor. I have already mentioned Jim's disgracefully engineered departure due, in part, to his article in The Times about that ridiculous blunder by the Irish Constabulary when he and Henry George visited the country and were locked up briefly on suspicion of being dangerous conspirators! He was made to choose between publishing his book on their Irish adventures, and his mastership. I feel that an institution that has advanced so little as to take such a position, cannot be my 'spiritual home' forever. As for the vegetarianism, it is indeed a thorn in the ample flesh of the old stagers here. It is out of keeping with the 'manliness' of a great public school, and our doctor

has quite seriously given me 'two years'. I replied that if the great majority of the human population gets by on a far sparser vegetarian diet than I enjoy, it is a risk worth taking. Our Science master asked me, his face as straight as a poker, 'Don't you think the animals were sent us as food?' At which so many opportunities for serious reply entered my mind that I rejected them all and murmured that if that were the case, I for one had not yet received an invoice, thus adding irreverence to my sins. This little rhyme then came to me:

The Animals, you say, were 'sent'
 For man's free use and nutriment.
 Pray, then, inform me, and be candid,
 Why came they aeons before Man did,
 To spend long centuries on earth
 Awaiting their Devourer's birth?
 These ill-timed chattels, sent from Heaven,
 Were, sure, the maddest gift e'er given -
 'Sent' for man's use (can man believe it?)
 When there was no man to receive it!

"Do not fret, mama. Everything will turn out for the best, I am sure, if only because the inevitable must inevitably be the best!"

(pause)

HENRY It is no good, Kate, the time has come.

KATE For what, Henry? You have not spoken for ten minutes. I supposed you were being mesmerized by the flow of the river.

HENRY Time to face things squarely. Our life here. This sham.

KATE (laughing) I am not shamming.

HENRY Kate! Kate! We have talked of this so often lately. You know my thoughts. I am in the gravest peril.

KATE Henry, you do exaggerate so! What possible peril can you be in?

HENRY The peril of becoming a Respectable!

KATE (amused) And are you not...respectable?

HENRY You're teasing me, Kate. Be serious. Yes, outwardly I am respectable, in that I have tried to do my work conscientiously. I have towed the line. But there is a limit. I am near to middle age and my life is a lie.

KATE Yet you have loved Eton.

HENRY I still do. A part of me. A part of it. (with feeling) But as we grow, we learn - or should do. I'm not the same chap who was here as a schoolboy. This river, this bank, these trees and hedges, they are the same, but my feelings have changed - about the world I see, the people I know...and about you, Kate. Look around you. How peaceful and lovely it is - on the surface - for us. But how crass, how terrible, is the view we take of everything and everyone beyond the small circle of family and friends. Such a thin skin covers the barbarous values we allow to govern us. What small concern we have for any species other than our own - and precious little for the bulk of that. We know the love of one person for another. We experience the joy of life - in the beauty of this river, its banks, the flowers, the birds, the wide sky and the warm sun; but do we grant to other creatures the right to that freedom and happiness we expect for ourselves? Oh, Kate, when we love someone, surely that is when we should start to love the whole world. It is the moment of understanding, of sympathy, kinship, with all life. A sense of the unity of being, of our interdependence. But not here. Here the growth

of kinder feeling is discouraged. I am expected to mould characters lacking tenderness and sympathy.

KATE (gently) Oh, Henry, I know I have been far more cowardly than you could ever be, and have expected too much of your love for me, but is it the answer to run away from it all?

HENRY (fiercely) Yes, perhaps it is. There are some things that cannot be changed from the inside - certainly not if one has contracted to conform to a system. I am indentured to a regimen designed to turn small boys into callous, unthinking, arrogant despots and idlers; tomorrow's men of power and privilege, attuned to a society controlled by poverty, ignorance and violence. We instil indifference to the only qualities that give our species an excuse for existing; and we start the process by encouraging the bullying and destruction of everything weaker than ourselves - teaching through brutal sports, the diet of savages, and by distorting the facts of history and our true natures, that children must perpetuate a society in which self-advantage and even wholesale massacre of each other is the only realistic and manly course. I must cease to be part of such a system, Kate if I am to contribute to reversing it.

KATE So we shall leave Eton.

HENRY We have discussed it, Kate. You seemed to understand.

KATE I do, Henry. I only want you to be sure.

HENRY Now that Dr Warre has taken over from Hornby, the matter might be forced upon us in any case

KATE Then you must go and see him.

(pause)

WARRE This is sad news, Salt.

HENRY I am saddened myself, sir. For nearly twenty years Eton has been the centre of my life.

WARRE As long as that?

HENRY I do not count my time at Cambridge. My thoughts were mostly here.

WARRE Well, I shall not pretend that your decision comes entirely as a surprise.

HENRY I did not suppose it would, Dr Warre. The school has long been conscious of my turn of mind.

- WARRE Your choice of words suggests a shift of conviction - that you have not always felt as you now do.
- HENRY I am not sure, headmaster. It may be that my mind has but caught up with my feelings - feelings to which, when young, I could give no rational form.
- WARRE And yet you were schooled at Eton, and chose to return.
- HENRY I was coached for my scholarship by the Rev. Kegan Paul. He prepared me for Confirmation, and I recall him asking me if it is wrong to doubt. I answered "No". Had I replied in the affirmative, perhaps you would not now be troubled by this interview.
- WARRE Then Eton has failed you, Salt.
- HENRY Not at all, sir. I owe to Eton all that now compels me reluctantly to leave it.
- WARRE To Eton! These advanced views of yours? The doubts you have cast upon the educational system of the College? Your scarcely disguised contempt for religious instruction? Your criticism of the fine patriotism in the poetry of Lord Tennyson? Your addiction to the work of such regrettable men as Shelley, an out-and-out atheist? The friendships you have formed with men hell-bent on systematic destruction of our very society? This disturbing passion for change? This... this (with evident distaste) vegetarianism?
- HENRY Through Eton, headmaster, I have been privileged to meet some fine and original minds. In Mr William Morris, Mr Belfort Bax, Mr Edward Carpenter, Mr Bernard Shaw...
- WARRE (thunderingly) Not through Eton, Mr Salt! But through your friend the young Mr Joynes who had to leave us two years ago.
- HENRY An episode, sir, that contributed not a little to my feeling that I should have to follow him.
- WARRE (sadly) I am distressed, Salt, that despite being an Eton man, both as scholar and master, you have been seemingly untouched by the spiritual preparation the College has offered you.
- HENRY I assure you, Dr Warre, that it has profoundly influenced me.
- WARRE Well, then...
- HENRY The entire Eton experience has prompted me to think and to reason.
- WARRE But on such lines, Salt, on such lines!

HENRY Are these matters not out of our hands, sir? The process once begun, the progress must be unpredictable.

WARRE That is not what we hope at Eton, Salt, not what we hope at all. The road ahead may have many turnings, but they should all lead back to the same main thoroughfare.

HENRY Then I must accept I am a misfit, which is why I sought this interview.

WARRE It is a harsh label, Salt.

HENRY But one I accept. I remember my wife coming to Cambridge and our discussing the matter. She thought that all who think for themselves are misfits in this world.

WARRE I have much respect for Mr Joynes's daughter. A young woman of robust and lively mind.

HENRY I thought her so, headmaster, and I confess to being flattered that Mr Hyndman shares our view of her.

WARRE Hyndman! Henry Mayers Hyndman? The man who has founded the London Democratic Federation?

HENRY Now the Social Democratic Federation.

WARRE But he wrote that...that unfortunate book... what was it called?

HENRY England for All.

WARRE Just so. Pure Marxism, if to say "pure" is not to sully a wholesome British word.

HENRY If it is any comfort, Dr Warre, both ~~Marx~~ and Engels have taken exception to the book.

WARRE One must be grateful for small mercies. But you yourself, Salt, surely your mind has not been worked upon to accept so extreme a viewpoint

HENRY I hope I have not lost my ability to discriminate, headmaster.

WARRE But you would call yourself a Socialist?

HENRY Of the most mild and reasonable kind, I trust, Dr Warre. Labels seldom summarize satisfactorily.

WARRE (sighing) It has come to this, Salt, it has come to this. (sadly) It's the Vegetarianism, of course.

HENRY I suspect my mind has been not so much weakened by my diet, as strengthened by political conviction, headmaster.

WARRE (despairingly) Socialism! Then blow us up, blow us up! There's nothing left for it but that!

(pause)

HENRY "Dear Jim, Well, the break has been made and here we are in our cottage at Tilford, expecting you to be our first visitor.

"Much to be done, of course, from grate blacking and water drawing to wood hewing and washing up, but we find real pleasure in all of it and hope that when Edward comes he will approve of our simplicities.

"Come soon. We shall arrange for the sun to shine, the flowers to bloom in unison, and for the birds to be in full throat to welcome you with their dawn chorus - as you chop the wood!"

(pause)

Did you hear that nightingale, Kate?

KATE Yes. The grocer says Tilford is famous for them.

HENRY The man's a salesman. He said the same of hollyhocks. (pauses) Who is that woman who keeps on looking over our fence?

KATE She lives in the village and has a daughter down this lane.

HENRY She seems hypnotised by our vegetable-marrow patch.

KATE She has probably never before seen a top hat sheltering a marrow.

HENRY That hat is at last serving a useful purpose.

KATE She nearly dislocated her jaw when she peered over the first time.

HENRY A small marrow needs protection on a cold night.

KATE No doubt. But I suspect it has confirmed the villagers' belief that they are harbouring lunatics.

HENRY Surely, by now, they have more to go on than that?

KATE What time should your mother arrive?

HENRY Any moment. The train reached Farnham at eleven-thirty.

KATE Then I must get on with the vegetables.
Don't you think we should light a fire?

HENRY It isn't that cold.

KATE But a fire is welcoming, and it might
allay any fear in your mother that the
cottage is damp.

HENRY It is damp - by her standards. I have
moved the oak bookcase to hide the worst
patch.

KATE It's the musty smell she'll probably
detect.

HENRY Of course. You're very sensible. Well,
I did in fact chop some more wood before
breakfast. And do you know? There were
three frogs in the bucket I drew from
the well.

KATE Which you promptly put back, no doubt.

HENRY Of course! The well is their habitat.

KATE (amused) If your mother expects me to
be keeping you in Shrewsbury style, I
fear she is going to be disappointed.

HENRY Mothers learn to bear disappointment.
It is part of the job.

SECTION 13A/E/C CAN BE INCLUDED AT THIS
POINT, OTHERWISE GO ON TO PAGE 14A

KATE I hope it doesn't rain. She would not be amused if she had Bernard Shaw's experience.

HENRY Unlike mother, Shaw couldn't afford a cab. Anyway, his Pall Mall Gazette article was far too amusing to be wholly accurate.

KATE Shaw may go a long way. He has a lot of talent.
(pause)

SHAW Last week I allowed myself to be persuaded by my friend Henry Salt and his wife to "come down and stay until Monday" among the Surrey hills. Salt, a man of exceptional intelligence on most subjects, is country mad, and keeps a house at a hole called Tilford, down Farnham way.

He entertained no doubt that a day at Tilford would convert me from rurophobia to rurolatry; and as he is a sensible companion for a walk and a talk - if only he would, like a sensible man, confine himself to the Thames embankment - I at last consented to the experiment, and even agreed to be marched to the summit of a scenic imposture called Hindhead, and there shewn the downs of the South Coast, the Portsmouth Road (the Knightsbridge end of which I prefer), and, above all, the place where three men were hanged for murdering someone who had induced them to take a country walk with him.

London was clean, fresh and dry as I made my way to Waterloo after rising at the unnatural hour of seven on Sunday morning. Opening a book, I took care not to look out of the window between the stations until, after traversing a huge cemetery and a huge camp, we reached Farnham. As usual in the country, it was raining heavily. I asked my way to Tilford, and was told to go straight on for four miles or so. As I had brought nothing that could hurt Salt's feelings by betraying my mistrust of his rustic paradise, I was without an umbrella; and the paradise, of course, took the fullest advantage of the omission.

Between Farnham and Tilford there are nearly half a dozen hills and not one viaduct. Over these I trudged uphill on my toes and pounded downhill on my heels, making at each step an oozy quagmire of liquid gamboge. Some waterproof variety of bird, screaming with laughter at me from a plantation, made me understand better than before why birds are habitually shot.

My sleeves by this time struck cold to my wrists. Hanging my arms disconsolately so as to minimize the unpleasant repercussion, I looked down at my clinging knees, and instantly dis-

charged a pint of rain water and black dye over them from my hat brim. At this I laughed, much as criminals broken on the wheel used to laugh at the second stroke. A mile or two more of treadmill and gamboge churning and I came to the 'outposts of a village, with a river hurrying over a bed of weeds of wonderful colours, spanned by a bridge constructed on the principle of the Gothic arch, so as to extort from horses the maximum of effort both when drawing carts up one side, and preventing the carts from over-running them when slithering precipitously down the other.

Salt is mistaken in supposing that he lives at Tilford: as a matter of fact he lives considerably beyond it; and I was on the point of turning whilst I had yet strength enough left to get back to London, when he hailed me from his door with a delighted shout of "Here he is!" and beamed at me as if my condition left nothing to be desired, and Tilford had done itself the highest credit. In no time my clothes were filling the kitchen with steam; and I, invested in some garments belonging to Salt's brother-in-law, a promising poet whose figure is somewhat dissimilar to mine, was distending myself with my host's latest discoveries in local fungus.

My clothes dried fast. Quite early in the afternoon I put them on again, and found them some two inches shorter and tighter, but warm and dessicated.

Next morning I got up at eight to see the sun and hear the birds. I found, however, that I was up before them; and I neither heard nor saw them until I got back to the metropolis. Salt was jubilant because the wind was north-east, which made rain impossible. So after breakfast we started across the hills to Hindhead, through a mist that made the cows look like mammoths and the ridges like Alpine chains. When we were well out of reach of shelter, the rain began. Salt declared that it would be nothing; that it could never hold out against the north-east wind. Nevertheless it did. When, after staggering and slipping up and down places which Salt described as lanes, but which were, in fact, rapidly filling beds of mountain mud torrents, we at last got upon Hindhead, we could hardly see one another, much less the south coast, through the mist.

When we started homeward, Salt was in the highest spirits. The discovery of a wet day in a north-east wind elated him as the discovery of a comet elates an astronomer. The rain gave Mrs Salt no more concern than if she had been a duck;

and I could not help wondering whether her walking costume was not in reality a skilfully contrived bathing dress. She seemed perfectly happy, though the very sheep were bawling plaintively at the sky, and a cow to which I gave a friendly slap in passing was so saturated that the water squirted up my sleeve to the very armpit. Before we got home, my clothes contained three times as much water as they had gathered the day before. When I again resumed them they seemed to have been borrowed in an emergency from a very young brother.

I need not describe my walk back to Farnham after dinner. It rained all the way; but at least I was getting nearer to London. I have had change of air and a holiday; and I have no doubt I shall be able to throw off their effect in a fortnight or so.

(pause)

KATE I can hear a horse's hoofs.

HENRY Mother's always on time.

KATE Then open the door to her, silly. And try to remember.

HENRY Remember what?

KATE To avoid argument.

HENRY But of course! We shall let our style of living speak for itself.

KATE That's what may provoke argument.

HENRY Mother! So punctual! You must be tired.

MRS S. Not as tired as the cab horse, I suspect. Those hills!

KATE Then come in and sit by the fire while I pour you some tea, Mrs Salt.

MRS S. (without much warmth) How nice to see you again - Catherine.

HENRY Do call her Kate, mother. Everyone does.

MRS S. When one has an adequate first name, it seems such a pity to use diminutives.

KATE The fire could do with another log, Henry.

MRS S. (puzzled) Are you here alone - just the two of you?

HENRY Of course, mother. Who ~~else~~ would there be?

MRS S. But you opened the door to me yourself. Surely there is someone to...well, look after you?

HENRY Kate looks after me - wonderfully.

MRS S. But the cooking, the cleaning, the fires?

HENRY There is only one fire, and we share the rest of the work.

KATE Henry was chopping the wood before you came, Mrs Salt. He is splendidly handy about the house and garden.

HENRY I love it here, mother. We both do. It is... well, it is freedom.

MRS S. It sounds to me more like voluntary enslavement. (sniffing) It is also damp. (pause) Where are your curtains?

KATE We don't really have any.

MRS S. (astounded) No curtains! But everyone has curtains. It is necessary for privacy. For decency.

HENRY (mildly) We behave fairly decently, I think, ~~mama~~, without hiding behind curtains. Anyone may look in if they wish.

MRS S. But your neighbours! The vicar! What must they think?

KATE We have no close neighbours, and the vicar seems content with an occasional "Good morning".

MRS S. I am not surprised. He must have a strange impression of a house without curtains.

HENRY Curtains are not necessarily next to godliness, mother.

KATE (warningly) Henry!

HENRY Edward Carpenter has made clear that it is possible to dispense with the greater part of the trappings with which we are encumbered, and to live far more simply and cheaply than is dreamed of in polite society.

MRS S. (finally) You cannot dispense with curtains. I shall take the train to London and purchase some. You may regard them as a late home-warming present.

KATE That is very kind of you, Mrs Salt.

MRS S. I have brought you nothing else. Oh, except this.

HENRY Thank you, mama. It feels like a book.

MRS S. It is my copy of the New Testament, given to me in 1827. Despite your present views, I hope you may make time to dip into it now and then.

KATE I know Henry will value it, even if only because it belonged to you.

HENRY Of course I shall, mama.

KATE Look, Henry, it records your birth on the fly leaf.

HENRY I shall keep it most safely, mama - well out of sight of anyone peering through the windows.

MRS S. Now you are teasing me, Harry. However, it is only the New Testament. I felt this might be less...well, inflammatory to you. When I die I shall leave you the family Bible in the hope that by then you will be ready for the whole work.

HENRY You are determined to make me a Respectable, mama!

MRS S. Of course! I would be failing in my duty as a mother to do otherwise. A loving parent wants her child to make his peace with God as well as man.

HENRY Most understandable, mama, and please don't imagine that I do not appreciate your concern. But I shall never make my peace with a religion that is indifferent to the rights of creatures other than ourselves.

MRS S. After our duty to God, Harry, our main responsibility must be towards each other.

HENRY But not only, mama, not only! It is no less

important to observe the rights of non-human beings. This is one world. Our treatment of weaker, less intelligent creatures, influences and reflects our behaviour to each other. Can we instil cruelty and moral blindness into children and then expect from them a true and reliable love of their own kind?

MRS S. Surely there is enough suffering in the human world to engage your concern?

HENRY Of course there is, mother! Poverty, injustice, corporal punishment, the death penalty, destruction of the countryside, ~~the~~ monstrous folly of war and its preparation. Have you read nothing I have written? My concern is with both human and animal rights. They are inseparable. We must attend to both, by educating children to feel kinship with all life.

MRS S. I know you feel strongly about these matters, Harry, but what a rod you are making for your back. You are cutting yourself off from normal human intercourse.

KATE (firmly but pleasantly) Really, Mrs Salt, you have no reason to worry on that score. Even our Eton friends pay us frequent visits.

MRS S. But if education is so important, why give up after years of dedicated teaching?

HENRY It was circumscribed teaching, mama. One was expected to observe a curriculum that produced a standardised way of thinking - or not thinking, rather. I experienced a gradual kind of awakening, prompted by a series of incidents that made me question the assumption that we live in a civilised society.

MRS S. Then what are we, if not civilised? We do not inhabit a jungle. We clothe ourselves, have a culture, and worship God.

HENRY But are still savages?

MRS S. How can you say that! A young man who has been to Eton and Cambridge! A scholar.

HENRY The preparation of young minds to accept force and coercion as superior to compassion and commonsense breeds savages! Boys are taught to bully their way through life, from bullying animals to bullying each other, then to bullying other nations with the excuse of that ugly national pride we call patriotism.

MRS S. The unpatriotic is preferable?

HENRY No. Real patriotism is preferable, but is not tried. Wanting your country to be truly

great, in its ideals and practices, and seeking ways to encourage other countries to strive for the same - that would be a civilised patriotism. But we teach only that might is right, and having planted that savage ethic in young minds, we excuse the inevitable consequences by calling the urge to dominate and kill an "instinct"!

MRS S. I am surprised you managed to stay at Eton for so long. Your views cannot have been popular.

KATE He didn't personalise them.

HENRY I am grateful to Eton. For the opportunity to study. For its countryside. The Fives, the cricket, the rowing, the balance between the mental and the physical. And the companionship. To have made differences of opinion an excuse for enmity - and so lack of communication - would have been pointless, stupid.

MRS S. But you have called your colleagues "savages"!

HENRY (cheerfully) Oh, indeed! And so they were! Cannibals in cap and gown. But I use the term "savages" in its natural meaning, indicating a lack of the higher civilisation, not personal cruelty or blood-thirstiness - though that was not lacking.

KATE Most of Henry's fellow masters were - and are - his friends.

MRS S. They probably liked him because he was good at games.

HENRY I don't think they resented my hope of changing their thinking.

MRS S. They cannot have enjoyed being called "cannibals"!

HENRY Oh, I don't know. Perhaps it is a rather dashing image for a dull and sedentary pedagogue!

MRS S. They must have been very restrained cannibals not to have eaten you.

HENRY Touché, mama!

MRS S. But you do look a little thin, my dear boy.

HENRY (not rising) Yes, I am feeling extremely fit.

KATE The Eton food was stodgy and unbalanced.

HENRY Here we grow vegetables and fruit, and will store through the winter. We are not quite

self-sufficient, but we learn more about the art of Simplification daily.

- MRS S. I find it simpler for cook to place a regular order with the butcher and grocer.
- HENRY Ah, but mother, you miss so much. There is an indescribable joy in eating a potato you have grown yourself.
- MRS S. (lost) I am sure there must be.
- KATE Edward sees great merit in potatoes.
- HENRY And in their digging.
- MRS S. Edward?
- KATE Edward Carpenter. A wonderful person.
- MRS S. I cannot say that Harry's last letter commended him to me.
- HENRY He is an inspiration to a whole generation, mama.
- MRS S. I trust not. If it is the man I think you mean, he has written that most unfortunate and subversive...
- HENRY (quickly) Towards Democracy. Yes, mother, I think I know which aspect of the book you disapprove of, but it is Edward's promotion of a simpler and more responsible style of living to which we and many others have responded.
- MRS S. But it is so lonely to cut yourself off from normal life.
- HENRY (laughing) Lonely! Mama, I sometimes despair of finding enough hours in the day to do all that has to be done.
- MRS S. That is hardly surprising if you choose to do the work of a domestic servant.
- HENRY We have met so many people - real, thinking people - and often they stay with us for days.
- MRS S. Then how do you find time to do your writing and so forth?
- HENRY Communication with others is the stimulus for my work. Jim, Edward, Shaw, William Morris, the Webbs, Prince Kropotkin...
- MRS S. (hopefully) Prince Kropotkin?
- KATE The Russian...geographer and explorer.

- HENRY Nihilist and revolutionary, Kate. We must not diminish the man.
- MRS S. Oh!
- HENRY But it is all different to what you think, mama. We misuse so many words.
- MRS S. A revolutionary with a smoking bomb in his hand is a revolutionary with a smoking bomb in his hand. Just that and nothing more.
- HENRY (with amused desperation) Oh, mother...!
- KATE They are very gentle people at heart, Mrs Salt. Edward is a sensitive, understanding man who has suffered greatly...
- HENRY (awkwardly) We are fond of Edward. Very fond.
- MRS S. (after a pause) And you? This life in the backwoods is suiting you both?
- KATE Farnham is only a walk away.
- MRS S. But you are happy?
- HENRY We are fulfilled. And what is happiness but fulfilment?
- MRS S. Most of us find fulfilment in the family. You would not, I imagine, consider bringing up children in these primitive conditions?
- HENRY (after a pause) Many children have been happily reared in far worse, mother, but we are not at present considering a family.
- MRS S. Well, don't leave things too late, Harry. A woman's child-bearing years are limited.
- KATE (with tinge of irritation) But not all women have that ambition.
- MRS S. (after a pause) I have never met a normal woman who lacks it, Catherine.
- HENRY (quickly) While Kate sees to the luncheon, mama, you must come into the garden and meet our vegetable marrows. They are quite sensational.
- (pause)

KATE "My dear Edward, I cannot see you because - well, I don't know why exactly, but I felt I must try and make it better. Please, dear Only One, don't think it very bad of me to bother you. I find there's only YOU in all the world - so you see it is rather important to me! Edward! Don't leave me altogether if you can help it. I have really tried hard - but it is so hard - and sometimes I feel as if I shall go down. You know, you know I don't want to torment you - but when you feel I am absolutely nothing to you, it seems impossible to go on.

(pause)

"Oh, Edward, the sorrow I have brought to Henry rewards me in the same coin. But how futile is any attempt to struggle against our nature. This much at least I know, that my instinctive repulsion for any physical intimacy with the other sex is unalterable. I remember telling Shaw once that the shuddering horror felt by him (or any normal man) at the thought of being fondled by one of his own sex, is no stronger than my own feeling at the touch of a man. (Whereupon doubting Thomas went and wrote a play called You Never Can Tell!)"

(pause)

It's raining again.

HENRY (abstractedly) This is a poor set of proofs. If we weren't a Humanitarian League we could afford a better printer.

KATE I wish you only had The Humanitarian to edit. Try to cut down on something. Your meetings, for instance. You and Edward were nearly assaulted at the last two.

HENRY Someone must speak against the appalling jingoism that the South African war has produced. We are entering the twentieth century with an orgy of barbarism.

KATE But you have made your stand - and resigned from the Fabian Society.

HENRY It's not enough to make negative gestures. Without a positive ethical basis, Socialism must founder. I saw that when they treated the plea for humanity to the lower animals as a mere fad. There is no point in prating about gentleness, mercy, equality, and the blood-sucking of those who live off others' labour, if we daily fill our stomachs with all the other creatures who are entitled to life, liberty, and such happiness as they may find.

KATE Are you telling me or them?

HENRY Sorry! This first issue of The Humane Review is filling my mind, ...

KATE It is too much for you to be running two journals... (pause) Dirty, London rain...

HENRY Poor Kate! My work has robbed you of so much. Flowers, birds, the open sky...

KATE It's all still there.

HENRY But we seldom find time to enjoy it.

KATE It is better to be stretched.

HENRY I am stretched, but what about you? Except for letters, you hardly use your writing talent, and since Shaw's marriage even your piano duets have ceased.

KATE Charlotte saw to that! Oh, well, I am probably lazy at heart.

HENRY Shaw should take a stand. I know the South African war has put a rift between us, but it will mend. I'm too busy to fret about it.

KATE But I fret about you, Henry.

HENRY No need. We have so much to be grateful for. My work; a roof over our heads; just enough to get by on.

KATE Because I am fond of you, I wish I could have been everything you must have longed for.

HENRY Now this is because we were discussing that letter from my mother.

KATE Partly. Certainly, had I known your sister died when a baby, I might have been more patient with your mother's hope that we would have a daughter.

HENRY You have given out so much love to others, Kate. To Shaw. To Edward. To our friends. To the creatures.

KATE But not...

HENRY (quickly) Now what do you think of the cover design for The Humane Review? Do you like the leafy border? And the colour? It is probably better that the design does not over-stress that the contents seek to change people's hearts, don't you think?

KATE (fondly) You are a forgiving and gentle man, Henry. I wish, I wish...

HENRY (gently) I have never for a moment doubted your good intent, Kate.

KATE I don't deserve you, Henry. I don't deserve any man's patience.

HENRY Nonsense! I neglect you, I'm afraid.

KATE Your work is everything to you. It has to be. I am content.

HENRY Are you, Kate? On days like this, when memories awake...? Oh, Kate, Kate, you love the whole world, and I love you for that, but I am human enough to wish I was just a little more special to you.

KATE (near to tears) Please don't talk like that, Henry.

HENRY But that's it, Kate. We never do talk on these lines. You spend more time writing to Edward than speaking to me about ourselves.

KATE (after pause) We are two of a kind - in a way we accept - at least, our minds accept - people's natures for what they are. And you, much more than I, give your love to all creatures in a practical way.

HENRY Suppressing a more personal feeling hasn't always been easy, Kate.

KATE (softly) I am sure it hasn't, Henry, and... (tearfully) oh, my dear, I am sorry, I really am!

HENRY I never realised how the heart could ache for something more.

KATE Had there been someone else, I would not have blamed you, Henry.

HENRY (hurt) I have wanted no-one else. I would not have thought of it. Whereas you...

KATE Edward is a friend, Henry. Our friend.

HENRY He has certainly influenced both of us. Too much, perhaps.

KATE Would you have left Eton, or changed your way of life, without him?

HENRY Possibly not. I acknowledge the debt. But it has not only been Edward...

KATE (firmly but kindly) This will lead nowhere, Henry, and the printer needs those proofs.

(pause)

"I wish that I could speak rather than write to you of it, Edward, but oh, the pity of it! We two poor things dwelling here together like friendly strangers - no touch possible, and no understanding.

"But twenty years bring deep deep chains that could never be cut through, and I'm really thankful and content, and I want you to know that this is true. It is something not to have added a deeper wrong to the first deep wrong that I did Henry. But it is dreadful to feel that one has never brought Peace to anyone.

"I might have brought it to her - to Mary - if God had not planted us on either side of a great ocean, granting only one little look into each other's eyes.

"Edward, Ted, do you know that after that week with her in Yorkshire, when we met Henry and Bess at Windermere, and Mary went across the road to sleep as there was not room for all, I had the most awful moment of awakening that I've ever known in my life. I had never before realised what I had done in letting myself get married.

"At the same time, such profound Pity took hold of me, seeing as for the first time what I had done to him by marrying him, that I believe he was safe from that moment - I mean I could never have thought again of deserting him - poor lonely thing.

"O, Edward! Why do I talk to you for ever about myself, and you never talk to me? And will it always be so?"

(pause)

HENRY "My dear Shaw, Yes, it has all come together. What a mark of the Ego that the end of the war, and the collapse of the Humanitarian League, should mean less to me than Kate's death! I feel a dreadful emptiness, but at least her terrible suffering is over.

"I shall move to the South Coast. Hove, probably. Kate's younger brother lives there. I shan't vegetate. Nature study; Shelley; a little more versifying, maybe; some autobiographical stuff; but no more literary studies, I think.

"Edward and I have finished a strange and melancholy collaboration - destroying most of Kate's letters to him. Letters of such personal passion, of whose like I have never received nor dreamed. She insisted they be destroyed.

"Those seven years as Edward's neighbours were a mistake. You will understand my sadness that she had to be disillusioned yet again. But I fear it was inevitable. Some are doomed to be let down by those in whom they entrust their emotions. Few of us understand women as Kate needed to be understood. I certainly don't."

(pause)

"Dear Edward, Your move to Guildford was a surprise, but I have a greater one. Seer and prophet you may be, but when you asked me eight years ago what I would do with myself in Hove, one possibility did not enter our heads. Marriage! But I have found a most affectionate and devoted companion who is feathering my terminal nest almost to suffocation. She is another Catherine, but not a Kate, and I rely upon her

"L
 for everything with total confidence. Fed, flattered and doted upon, I purr more loudly than our cats. Kind new friends, John and Agnes Davies, are helpful and stimulating. With several books on the stocks, I expect to make a thorough pest of myself for at least a further decade."

(pause)

"Dear Agnes, It was good to hear from you again. Most old friends are gone, and were it not for Catherine, the incentive to battle on would be small. But I don't complain. I have filled this happy second marriage with books and study, watching a little cricket, enjoying concerts on the West Pier, even practising a dance step on better days! And with being pampered. What is it that makes one person care so amazingly for another?

"Now, however, it seems that I am at feud with the Creator, and that if I show any signs of improvement, He is down on me at once with a back kick or some calamity from that wallet under His arm. I think he did not like the Humanitarian League. No one respected in High Quarters would be pursued with such savage ferocity.

"Although He may prove me to be premature, I shall make my farewell in this letter. Catherine, after not leaving my side for more than half an hour through this painful time, has to enter hospital for a dangerous and disfiguring operation. She feels, I am sure rightly, that I shall be better in a similar institution - though, unhappily, it cannot be the same one. However, I have made my peace with who or whatever may be receptive to it, and to avoid being more misinterpreted after death than needs be, I have written a short address to be read at my Cremation service. I hope it will not have to be used as soon as I fear. Catherine has worked so hard and struggled and fought to keep me in my own home, and is full of fear and sadness at the thought that I may die among strangers. But what is to be...

"With much love to you and John and remembrance of the great talks on the Downs. Yours affectionately, Henry S. Salt."

(pause)

MALE VOICE

"Assembled friends, Henry asked that the following words be read out on this sad occasion:

'It is not usual, I think, for a funeral address to have been written in anticipation, and by the person who has died; but I ask you in this case to excuse the arrangement, as one that is likely to save trouble to somebody, and give the deceased the assurance that the words said at his Cremation will be

what he himself would have desired. He promises, in return, to be brief.

"Names are very liable to be misunderstood; and when I say that I shall die, as I have lived, rationalist, socialist, pacifist, and humanitarian, I must make my meaning clear. I wholly disbelieve in the present established religion; but I have a very firm religious faith of my own - a Creed of Kinship, I call it - a belief that in years yet to come there will be a recognition of the brotherhood between man and man, nation and nation, human and sub-human, which will transform a state of semi-savagery, as we have it, into one of civilisation, when there will be no such barbarity as warfare, or the robbery of the poor by the rich, or the ill-usage of the lower animals by mankind.

"Such is my faith; and it is because I hold all supernatural doctrines, taught under the name of religion, to be actually harmful, in diverting attention from the real Truths, that I believe them to have a tendency, as Ingersoll expressed it, to "petrify the human heart."

"But love and friendship are fortunately quite independent of creeds; and in this farewell I would say a word of deep gratitude for the wonderful kindness that I have met with throughout life, whether from the comparatively few who have been in close agreement with my thoughts, or some of the many who have dissented from them. Of the personal Love that has been my portion, I will not attempt to speak."

...