Before Mark Rutherford:

The Translations, Journalism and Essays of William Hale White

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by

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This thesis looks at the unknown writings of William Hale White, the author of the 'Mark Rutherford' novels. Hale White was nearly fifty when his first novel was published in 1881. This thesis aims to show, however, that Hale White had always been a prolific and highly significant intellectual figure long before the appearance of The Autobiography. Taken together, his earlier writings not only show the development of Hale White's distinctive voice and intellectual concerns but give a unique and hitherto unglimpsed picture of late-Victorian life and letters.

The Introduction discusses the literary personality of Hale White and argues that, to the end of his days, he remained the contradictory and un-orthodox figure he always was, despite various biographical attempts to portray him otherwise.

Chapter One places Hale White's discovery of Spinoza in the context of the rise of secular thought in late-Victorian intellectual circles. This chapter also highlights those aspects of Spinoza's Ethic which particularly appealed to Hale White and which most influenced his own writing, most notably, Spinoza's ideas concerning 'the passions.' This section also sheds more light on Hale White's relationship to George Eliot, who was reading Spinoza at roughly the same time.

Chapter Two introduces the main body of this thesis, the subject of the next three sections, and describes Hale White's contributions to the provincial press. For over twenty years he was to balance his moral humanism with a combative style of radical journalism. He covered many important social issues, such as poverty, crime and social class, and was keenly interested in the Reform debates taking place in the House of Commons. He also reported on the key religious controversies of the day, many of which relate to his own experience as an expelled heretic. Above all, this section confirms that Hale White cared deeply about all forms of radically engaged social commentary, despite that fact that he dismissed the importance of his own work in later life. His column actually enabled a greater of scope for the expression of his own ideas than the novel Deliverance suggests.

Chapter Five takes a closer look at two aspects of Hale White's literary writings. Hale White was involved in a great deal of research into Wordsworth's life and work, as well as being interested in the philosophical effects of his poetry. Most discussions of Hale White and Wordsworth begin and end with Rutherford's thoughts from The Autobiography, while this study considers the significance of Hale White's Wordsworthian reviews, as well as the book in which he defends the poet from the charge of Apostasy. This chapter also considers the influence of John Bunyan upon Hale White's thinking, a writer he hoped might continue to inform the way that clear-sighted, morally committed and questioning literature might take in the future.

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Abbreviations Used in The Text.

AD	The Autobiography of Mark Rutherford & Mark Rutherford's Deliverance
AH	The Aberdeen Herald
Apostasy	An Examination of the Charge of Apostasy Against Wordsworth
Argument	An Argument for an Extension of the Franchise
Ath	The Athenæum
BJ	The Birmingham Journal
Bunyan	John Bunyan
CF	Catharine Furze
CH	Clara Hopgood
D	Mark Rutherford's Deliverance
EL	The Early Life of Mark Rutherford
Ethic I	Spinoza, Ethic 1st edition
Ethic II	Spinoza, Ethic 2nd edition
Ethic III	Spinoza, Ethic 3rd edition
Ethic IV	Spinoza, Ethic 4th edition
GD	The Groombridge Diary
LP	Last Pages from a Journal

LTF	Letters to Three Friends
MP	More Pages from a Journal
MS	Miriam's Schooling
NN	The Norfolk News
Non	The Nonconformist
PJ	Pages from a Journal
RO	The Rochdale Observer
RTL	The Revolution in Tanner's Lane

Preface

William Hale White is literature's best kept secret. To discover his books is to wonder why we have not come across him before, why he is so little known. His novels take us to the very heart of the late-Victorian era, they are both personal and compelling to read, yet very little of Hale White remains in print. He is a rarity even in second-hand bookshops so that to read him today is to become engaged in a long search for a lost, forgotten writer. One bookseller I know who deals exclusively in Victorian fiction told me she never stocked him - he belonged 'with the moderns'; perhaps she felt his novels were too short to be kept beside Dickens or George Eliot, or that he really belonged in the century in which he died, just before the outbreak of the first world war. He is a writer who bridges the two centuries and as such is difficult to place.

Yet his very absence from the canon made me doubly curious to find out more about him. Hale White's very secretiveness - his pseudonym, his use of a fictional editor, his total withdrawal from the literary scene - all this has the effect (which I am beginning to think was intentional) of drawing his readers much closer to his works than they might otherwise have been. Mark Rutherford's unusual novels were, supposedly, all discovered in a drawer after his death, a fictional devise which sealed his reputation as both a distant and yet doubly intriguing figure. I begin this thesis, therefore, with a consideration of the literary personality of Hale White, a man who himself became the subject of a kind of fiction, The Groombridge Diary, an account of his last years written by his second wife.

Yet, behind the six, brief Rutherford novels lies an even greater body of writings and journalism. Although Hale White did not begin writing the novels until his fifties he had been a prolific intellectual figure for twenty years before that; the Rutherford books represent a mere fraction of the complete works. In this study I have purposefully concentrated on the unknown writings, his essays, translations and journalism. Taken together, these writings give a unique and hitherto unglimpsed picture of late-Victorian life and letters and they affect, in no small degree, the way the Rutherford novels are read. Many of the debates and personalities which appear throughout his pages - all find some precedent in the articles Hale White was writing in his earlier years and which have remained unpublished since.

The range of his subjects is so varied that I have therefore selected a specific political issue - the debates surrounding the Second Reform Act - for more detailed consideration in this thesis. The difficult, uncertain progress of Franchise Reform forged Hale White's political and cultural opinions more than any other single issue of this time, it was also the subject of his first overtly radical pamphlet. The other, quite separate chapters on religion and

London poverty are also closely connected to Hale White's search for the moral imperatives of political life. All of the journalism - as well as his translation of Spinoza - is a part of an emerging humanist project; an attempt to find the unifying link between culture, democracy and the growth of the self.

I have written a separate chapter on Hale White's discussion of 'Art and Culture' in the journalism. For the sake of length I have not included it in this thesis; however, this chapter is still available to be read if requested.

Introduction

Lasting Contradictions: The Groombridge Years.

> I suppose that the reason why in novels the story ends with a marriage is partly that the excitement of the tale ceases then, and partly also because of a theory that marriage is an epoch, determining the career of life after it. The epoch once announced, nothing more need be explained; everything else follows as a matter of course. These notes of mine are autobiographical, and not a romance. I have never known much about epochs.[1]

William Hale White and Dorothy Vernon Smith met on the 3rd October 1907 at his house in Groombridge, Kent. Hale White was seventy-five years old, his first wife dead sixteen years before and the Rutherford novels well behind him. Dorothy was thirty, her first work of fiction, Miss Mona, just completed, her life still very much ahead of her.[2] Although her family had definite literary leanings, in temperament, background and ages the two writers could not have been more different.

Hale White was the son of a Bedford bookseller and printer, William White. His mother, Mary Ann Chignell, was someone whom he mentions only very briefly and somewhat derisively in Early Life:

> Besides, I can honestly declare that to her an Evangelical ministry was a sacred calling, and the thought that I might be the means of saving souls made her happy. (EL, p. 56)

His upbringing was steeped both in the Puritanism of the Bunyan Meeting and the free thinking of his father's books. These two influences, Dissent and literature, pulled Hale White in two very different directions resulting in his expulsion from theological college on grounds of heresy. While working as a civil servant in London he became a radical journalist, writing weekly letters about London life and politics for the provincial press. He took part in all the religious debates of the Victorian era but avoided settling into any new orthodoxy. At home, after hours and in secret, he wrote the six novels for which he is remembered. Or forgotten.

Dorothy Smith was the daughter of Westminster magistrate, and minor poet, Horace Smith.[3] An Anglican, High Church woman, she worked for a mission in Beckenham, running Bible classes and teaching cricket to working class boys.[4] Defying convention, Hale White and Dorothy Smith were married four years later on 8th April 1911. After Hale White's death in 1913 Dorothy continued with her missionary work. She was to write no more novels and never remarried; her emotional and artistic life was sealed up into the years spent with her favourite writer.

In 1924 Dorothy White edited two important books which, for a while, represented the last word on his life and thought. The first was a collection of Hale White's personal correspondence, Letters to Three Friends. This book spans the last thirty years of Hale White's life, and includes some of the letters written to Philip Webb, the architect. The second was an edited version of her own diary describing the years leading up to their marriage. The Groombridge Diary also serves as an extended description of Hale White himself. It contains his thoughts on books, his letters, as well as several thoughtful photographs of the old man, reading at home in his chair, swaddled in blankets, frowning.

Their first meeting was by no means an accident. Dorothy had read Mark Rutherford in 1904 on the recommendation of her sister and, as an entry in the original handwritten diary relates, she immediately identified with his books and sought out any connections she could find with Hale White:

> After reading the autobiography I made enquiries from time to time about the author. Beryl told me most I think.[5] She told me where he lived, and in the autumn of 1906 when bicycling from Tunbridge Wells to Oxted with the Allfreys I talked to them a good deal about Groombridge and the writer who I knew lived there. I had now read several of the books.[6]

She sent Hale White the manuscript of her first novel, Miss Mona, and eagerly waited to hear if he liked it.

Miss Mona, like Dorothy Smith, ran a Bible group for working class boys in the poorest part of her parish. Through teaching cricket as well as the Bible she tried to educate and civilise the boys who came to her. Although very much a product of her own class Miss Mona 'had need to stretch herself, to range beyond the limits of her home'.[7] A determined but solitary activist, she discovers patience as well as humility in pursuit of her missionary vocation. Hale White in his review called this her 'mature *overlooking* philosophy'.[8]

There are close parallels here with Mark Rutherford's own attempts to inject Christianity into the lives of the London poor, especially as described in The Deliverance. For Rutherford the conditions of the working classes, the 'cess pool' of London, went against all his efforts at saving the people. The physical conditions *undercut* the spiritual:

> The preaching of Jesus would have been powerless here; in fact,

> no known stimulus, nothing ever held up before men to stir the soul to activity, can do anything in the back streets of great cities so long as they are the cess pool which they are now.
> (AD, p. 148)

Like Miss Mona, Rutherford consoles himself with the hope of having saved only 'two or three' people.[9] Unlike her, however, Rutherford was more concerned with the *extremes* of inequality. 'Cess pools', 'hovels', 'dens', 'grovelling slavery', 'sewers' do not exist in the world, or the language, of Miss Mona. Their visions of education, although both informed with the evangelical spirit of Christianity, were distinct and existed in separate universes.

A mutual friend, Sophie Partridge,[10] persuaded Hale White to read the book and he eventually wrote back to Sophie on August 2nd, 1907, a little puzzled by it:

> I have read *Miss Mona* for the most part twice; once carefully all through and then about nine-tenths of it again in order to find out the drift. But I cannot. *Miss Mona* does not, I suppose, pretend to be a story, but whatever it is intended to be it ought to have movement . . . *Miss Mona* so far does not interest me. She may be well worth knowing, but she may not.
> (LTF, pp. 253-254)

Despite himself, Hale White was curious about Miss Mona. Like much of his own fiction, the author withheld herself from making obvious conclusions. He also praised the directness of Dorothy Smith's writing, a plain style of prose she had absorbed from his own works. Hale White seemed to detect that the book was meant for him:

> Miss Mona, as I have said, might or might not turn out to be interesting, but I am sure of Miss Horace Smith and should like to meet her. There is something not altogether revealed in her work, something secretly attractive which makes me think that a Sunday morning's walk with her through our lanes would be pleasant and instructive. I ought, by the way to have noticed her style, which deserves all praise for its simplicity and purity. I have

> not observed a single clever sentence, nor one turned upside down, not a bit of smart cant (the worst of all cant).
> (LTF, p. 255)

In July of that year he published a review of Miss Mona in the Nation, once again admiring its qualities of understatement and clarity of expression:

> Her meaning is to be classed with those meanings which are almost no meanings and are, nevertheless, precious and delightful. We never feel that we have got all that can be got, and we return again and again.[11]

By the time Hale White's review of Miss Mona was published the two were already close friends and throughout the following months Dorothy was to return to Groombridge 'again and again', each visit carefully detailed in her journal. These meetings were always marked with an exchange of books and in the November of their first year Hale White gave Dorothy a copy of his study of John Bunyan:

> He said I should see in it some sort of explanation of our strange affinity. (GD, p. 2)

The two embarked upon an intense and yet 'strange' friendship, their intellectual and religious disputes animating their days. Dorothy mistrusted any hint of settled opinions in Hale White; she would question his ideas and moods constantly, a trait that became a source of attraction as well as a frustration to him.

Dorothy's out-going breezy confidence was in total contrast to Hale White's critical reserve, and his briefest mumblings were held up to close theological scrutiny. In a letter to his friend Sophie Partridge, Hale White wrote:

> Although I know her well I never see her, if she talks seriously, without feeling that I know little of her. She continually, almost

> every time I meet her, breaks down some limit and totally upsets some classification which I had assigned to her. It is of no use for me to calculate on any judgement she will pronounce or to try to pre-adapt myself to what I conjecture she will be. I must just be myself and take the consequences. (LTF, pp. 272-273)

Far from falling into intellectual complacency in old age, Hale White had chosen a companion who was unpredictable, possessed a strong sense of fun and would continually pull him up about his ideas. Dorothy would frequently try to dispel his more serious moods; habits of reflection which could, at times, so easily drag him down into depression.

Hale White had always taken astronomy very seriously. He had bought a telescope during his first wife's illness, and in the 1890s had built an observatory in his back garden at Hastings. Astronomy was a scientific discipline which connected man with the infinity of the stars, rendering the heavens comprehensible and in this respect his telescope became a symbol of the humanist project. Armstrong, the astronomical parson, understands it in that way in Miriam's Schooling:

> If you can once from your own observation *realise* the way the stars revolve . . . you will have done yourself more real good than if you were to dream for years of immeasurable distances, and what is beyond and beyond and beyond, and all that nonsense. The great beauty of astronomy is not what is incomprehensible in it, but its comprehensibility - its geometrical exactitude.
> (MS, pp. 139-140)

Armstrong says that astronomy was 'the food and medicine which his mind needed', both a source of intellectual nutrition as well as a curative to the smallness of everyday concerns. But Hale White's views regarding astronomy, and many other things, would frequently change. It was typical of him to completely rethink his central passions and he once remarked to Dorothy

Smith that astronomy had not, in fact, done him much 'real good', as if it had been a form of 'incomprehensible' dreaming after all, an imaginative indulgence rather than a science. He questioned his earlier, more scientific, justifications for his interest in the stars:

> He complained of the uselessness of his study of astronomy; he had not pursued that study scientifically but imaginatively; he looked at the stars to increase his awe, not to increase his knowledge. Listening to him as he spoke of the stars, I thought he had studied them to some purpose. I told him that it was foolish to quarrel with one's mental aspect, to be vexed because one looks at everything, nature, art, science, religion in the *same kind of way*. Besides, how did he know that he did not want *every scrap of that awe?* In fact I contradicted him in the main, and he seemed a good deal consoled. (GD, pp. 87-88)

It was Hale White's endless capacity for *self*-debate which made Dorothy want to 'console' and contradict him. Dorothy's personality was more external than Hale White's, she thrived on *resolution* and was less hindered by prolonged self doubt; ' . . . foolish to quarrel with one's mental aspect, to be vexed'. In several discussions Dorothy tries to smooth out Hale White's spontaneous, unorthodox worries and on another occasion his musings on the stars brought them into further, if not rather confusing, gentle dispute:

> Hale said there was something very human about the study of the Heavens - man, as it were, controlling the stars through his telescope, marshalling them before him, naming them, dictating their courses for years to come. He said it produced the strangest effect upon him . . . On the other hand, as Goethe had said, there was something 'dreadfully *in*human'. He was much moved as he said these words, gasped as if on the brink of some horror. I knew what he meant for the same thought had sometimes bared itself to me, the blank despair of millions of suns with planets wandering round them, 'system' upon 'system' as we say, and our one little Earth lost amongst them. I said, yes, there certainly were both points of view, the human and the inhuman, but that we must remember that both points of view, the human and the inhuman were contained by one and the same mind. You may think the stars inhuman, but *you* think it.

(GD, pp. 246-247)

Here, again, Hale White was questioning the mathematical interest in astronomy. His metaphors become increasingly militaristic and cold, as he feared an unnatural order was being imposed upon the universe; 'controlling', 'marshalling', 'naming', 'dictating'. For Hale White the stars evoked *feeling* as well as Armstrong's 'geometrical exactitude'.[12] The stars would 'increase his awe', which is why 'he was much moved as he said these words'. But Dorothy misses his point here, as if she had been only been partly listening to him: 'You may think the stars inhuman but *you* think it'. It was not the stars, however, that Hale White found inhuman, but the mathematical *supervision* of the stars. Dorothy misunderstood Hale White because she was too eager to quote *back* to him the very same arguments with which Mark Rutherford had tried to defend himself against Mardon, the atheist in The Autobiography:

> I do not think that even you ever empty the universe of intellect. I believe that mind never worships anything but mind, and that you worship it when you admire the level bars of cloud over the setting sun. You think you eject mind, but you do not.
> (AD, p. 79)

This incident highlights one strange but important element of The Groombridge Diary. Like many readers encountering their favourite authors, Dorothy Smith enjoys the delusion she is in some way participating in one of his novels when they are together. It is not just that fiction and reality are blurred here but that they are actually talking at cross-purposes; Hale White is being silenced by his *own* arguments brought up in the wrong context. Despite admiring so many of her assertive qualities Hale White admitted to Sophie Partridge that he was not in for an easy time with Dorothy Smith; 'I must just be myself and take the consequences'. (LTF, p. 273)

This relationship would be hard for Hale White personally, as well as intellectually. At the time of Dorothy's arrival, Hale White's daughter, Mary Theodora (known as Molly), was still living with her father. In The Groombridge Diary the two women appear to be the best of friends. Beneath the surface, however, there were many tensions and disagreements, most of which Dorothy edited out of the manuscript she preprared for publication. An overall feeling of unspoken awkwardness still lingers on almost every page precisely because of what Dorothy attempts to suppress. These difficult family tensions would re-surface on the appearance of Dorothy White's book in 1924, some ten years after Hale White's death. The publication of The Groombridge Diary prompted Molly White to speak her own mind about the part that Dorothy had played in both her, and her father's, life.

Molly had known her father from a very different life, and was twenty-two when her mother, Harriet White, had died from disseminated sclerosis in 1867, an illness which had left her virtually paralysed. Molly's youth was sacrificed in caring for both her mother and then her father. She never married nor, from the evidence of Hale White's letters or The Groombrigde Diary, fell in love. The devotion of a younger daughter towards a widowed intellectual father also occurs in both The Autobiography and The Revolution in Tanner's Lane. Hale White observes such relationships with a mixture of deep affection as well as guilt.

Mardon, the atheist in The Autobiography, is continually ill and depends upon the devotion of his daughter, also called Mary. When this book was written, Mary White would have been only ten years old and Harriet White still alive. Nevertheless, the passage accurately anticipates Molly's fate:

> During his sickness I was much impressed by Mary's manner of nursing him. She was always entirely wrapped up in her father, so much so, that I often doubted if she could survive him; but she never revealed any trace of agitation. Under the pressure of the calamity which had befallen her, she showed rather increased steadiness, and even a cheerfulness which surprised me. Nothing went wrong in the house. Everything was perfectly ordered, perfectly quiet, and she rose to a height of which I had never suspected her capable, while her father's stronger nature was allowed to predominate. She was absolutely dependent on him. (AD, p. 70)

Not only is Mardon dependent upon Mary, but Mary is emotionally dependent upon the presence of her father and her role as his carer and assistant. Mary sits very quietly and dutifully while Mark Rutherford and Mardon enjoy a fiery debate in her presence. Believing at first that the daughter is intellectually inferior, Rutherford is shocked to discover that she is suffering from a rare form of facial neuralgia and has been sitting there, listening to them very closely, while suppressing her own discomfort:

> But, looking at Mary, and thinking about her as I walked home, I perceived that her ability to be quiet, to subdue herself, to resist the temptation for a whole evening of drawing attention to herself by telling us what she was enduring, was heroism, and that my contrary tendency was pitiful vanity. (AD, pp. 50-51)

At Groombridge Molly was also frequently ill, mainly due to their drafty, damp house. This meant that she would often take short trips away from home in order to recover. Hale White was aware of the pressures within Molly's life and yet he was reluctant to do much about them, as if his own life might suffer too much from her absence:

> Molly is a long way from being well, and everybody tells me she must get away from Groombridge. The doctor is always

> preaching that she must not live here in this shut-in cottage with me . . . I shall have to do something, although just at the moment doing anything is so difficult. (GD, p. 79)

Molly was also a very religious woman and Dorothy, lightheartedly, describes her as a solemn figure, dutiful yet constrained by an innate puritanism :

> After breakfast we sat on the lawn. Molly went to see the old woman in the cottage beneath the house, to whom they give dinner once a week. She says that she likes Molly because she does not wear a transparent blouses! (GD, p. 56)

With Dorothy in the house Molly was no longer the sole object of her father's affections, nor his only confidante. Neither was her life as private as it had been before. Her role less assured, the cultural differences between Molly and Dorothy emerged more starkly. The two women were opposites. Molly clung to the dissenting roots of her father, the history and identity from which Dorothy was excluded:

> In the evening Molly and I had a long talk about her father's religion. She said that one, at least, of her friends was surprised that he should have 'taken up with a High Church woman'; that, I think, was the kind of expression. I told Molly that I knew a great many people would and will be surprised . . . Explanation is really impossible . . . If only we could realise that it matters much more what the Truth *is* than what is *thought* about the Truth! (GD, p. 106)

Dorothy stubbornly continued with her mission in the face of these family tensions, often portraying herself as an innocent, the bearer of an emphatic 'Truth' and making light of the most startling contingencies:

> I have been writing my Diary in Molly's 'hour for silent prayer', and she has been 'ragging' me. Marvelling at my urbanity she has just declared: 'If I were you I'd kill me!' (GD, p. 257)

It was tactless that Dorothy wrote her diary, her book about Hale White, while his daughter was still trying to live, unobserved, at home, as if Molly's inner life was now public property. Dorothy very quickly made herself at home in Groombridge, as if it *was* her home, her family. Throughout The Groombridge Diary we are aware of Dorothy Smith as a continual observer, closely scrutinising every aspect of Hale White's domestic life and noting it all down for posterity. Her book was written on site, between the unfolding lives of her subjects. Dorothy Smith had an obsessive need to include herself within the history of Hale White. She began by reading his books and then made that extraordinary step from reader to wife, ignoring most obstacles in her way.

Groombridge had always been a dull place for Hale White, a few houses, mostly very small, perched on one of the main roads which leads to Tunbridge Wells.[13] Because of Hale White, however, Groombridge became a *literary* landscape for Dorothy Smith, the setting for the last years of a noted writer, not just a nondescript Kent backwater, or even a family home. Dorothy wanted to find in Groombridge what Mrs Gaskell found in Haworth Parsonage.[14] And, like Mrs Gaskell, she was privileged to find a literary location where the lives, previous to their becoming literary history, were still being played out. This is one reason why The Groombridge Diary is such a compelling read. Dorothy Smith assumes the role of the reader's representative; through her own persistence she establishes an intimate friendship with Hale White and so gains many unique, first hand insights into the life of the aging writer. In this respect the very awkwardness which she creates is itself part of the book's appeal. The Groombridge Diary tells the story, not only of old Hale White, but of Dorothy Smith's embarrassing preoccupation with literary celebrity.

In a passage towards the end of the diary, Dorothy, perhaps unconsciously, alludes to the Brontë parallels with the book she is writing. The two have just decided to marry and Dorothy returns to Groombridge to begin arrangements for their wedding. On arrival, however, she finds that the mood of the house is far from celebratory. Hale White is ill, again, and ill, it seems, from the prospect of marrying Dorothy Smith:

> I found that a reaction had set in. Molly greeted me at the station, very tearful as I could see; and when I arrived Hale was lying on his bed, said that he felt very poorly, and attributed it to a chill . . . Presently he picked up a bit, and he told me that he had always collapsed like this in the face of great responsibility; this was tantamount to asking me to act for him. (GD, p. 416)

Determined not to be discouraged, Dorothy is forced to act on her own and walks out in the snow in pursuit of a marriage licence and a vicar. Despite everything, Dorothy realises that her life has suddenly become interesting, and rather dramatic, the kind of life that other people may well like to read about:

> After breakfast I put on my snow-boots (Lady Robert's gift), and I plunged through the snow to Langton. I felt very strange, very sensitive, but very proud. I kept my spirits up by imagining that I was Charlotte or Emily Brontë . . . (GD, p. 417)[15]

The responsibility for the marriage rests upon her shoulders alone and yet she finds the strength to carry on 'by imagining I was Charlotte or Emily Brontë.' The strangeness of what she is doing, at this crucial moment, becomes real only by *imagining* her role is a literary one. 'Strange' is followed by 'sensitive', which then becomes 'very proud'. It is her Brontë fantasy, in other words, which gives meaning to her marriage and imbues life with purpose.

Yet Hale White was also colluding in this same fantasy, playing the role allotted to him by Dorothy Smith; that of the aging, solitary genius in the photographs. He must have been aware, at some level, that much of his wife's writing would end up in print. In The Groombridge Diary both Dorothy and Hale White try to interpret a relationship which must have seemed like an ongoing fiction. Both kept highly self-conscious journals commenting on their relationship as it progressed. Both were writing and thinking about each other constantly, turning their literary, and religious, sensibilities in upon themselves.

Dorothy was infatuated with an *idea* she had of Hale White. While visiting a friend of Beryl de Zoete's in 1909, she wept, instantly, at the mention of Hale White's eventual death. While it is natural to weep at the death of loved ones, Dorothy, resuming her composure, finds her feelings tainted with a strange hysteria:

> I sat so for perhaps a whole minute, and then recollected myself, and, looking up, saw Mrs. [Beer]'s eyes fixed upon me with strange penetration. My act had surprised me, even frightened me a little, and I left the house very shortly in an uncomfortable frame of mind. I can remember thinking as I went home that I must be on my guard against eccentricity. It seemed to me that I was becoming odd. I could assign no grounds for this, and put it down to some mental phase through which I must pass with circumspection. (GD, p. 241)

In this moment Dorothy is like the young Mark Rutherford, weeping in front of Theresa, and later regretting his lack of emotional control.[16] This degree of absorption in another suggested a serious loss of self, an inner vacuum pulling others into its needy, myth-making, centre. The following day Hale White told Dorothy that such incidents 'opened up all the realm of the unconscious; I cannot recall his exact words'.[17]

When The Groombridge Diary and Letters to Three Friends were published in 1924 Molly wrote a letter to a reviewer in a local paper,[18] disclaiming both books as ridiculous and intrusive as well as writing a more angry personal letter to her niece, Cecily:

> One must remember in all one's criticisms of D. that she is distinctly abnormal and so one's hatred should be mitigated with sorrow for such an awful condition of mind.[19]

In this letter Molly disassociated herself from everything Dorothy White stood for. She writes that Hale White was forced into marrying Dorothy against his deepest wishes by Dorothy's father:

> Yes - old Horace Smith told father he must either marry Dorothy or her visits must cease. This of course she did not wish and neither did father, though I think he would have not minded as much as he thought, after a time. This letter father showed me and said 'What am I to do? It is a pistol at my head'. He just hated the marriage and was quite happy as he was . . . Had he lived I don't think they could have gone on living together. He would have openly rebelled had he had the strength or gone under altogether. She made him *miserable* - not happy . . . As to my place in the *Diary* she quite misrepresents it. She tells of none of our storms and disagreements . . . She made my father miserable and exploited her love (so called) for him for her own aggrandisement.

'His love for Dorothy' writes Catherine Harland in The Mind and Art of William Hale White, 'was the happiest and most complete of all his conversions. The "spiritual regeneration" he had ceased to hope for was finally achieved through her love.'[20] Basil Willey ended his own essay on Rutherford on exactly the same note: 'The love of Dorothy was the nearest he had known to the love of God, and as he went down the river it was given to him to hear the trumpets sounding firm the other side.'[21]

Because of Dorothy White's very one-sided account, a sentimental consensus has emerged about this relationship. This would not matter if it did not involve confident assumptions about the nature of Hale White's faith and beliefs, assumptions which affect the interpretation of his life retrospectively.

'His new friendship', wrote Catherine MacDonald Maclean, Hale White's biographer, 'satisfied the religion in him, and was in complete harmony with all those things of which he made religion'.[22] To make such *complete* assumptions seems at odds with the dissenting, largely unsatisfied writer that Hale White always was. It also suggests that his inherent doubt was a passing phase rather than a form of intellectual perseverance.

Mark Rutherford's characters continually make sudden unpredictable moves, new beginnings for themselves. The *completion* of our judgement upon a life is something Rutherford's books continually resist and yet many of the readers and reviewers of The Groombridge Diary cite this relationship, coming as it does at the close of his life, as the happy ending, the almost mystical conversion after a life time of dwelling on loneliness, doubt and spiritual isolation; the concluding chapter of his life.

Hale White was many things to many people, and too many critics have set store by his words, 'My love of God, I speak it with reverence, is the love of Dorothy' (GD, pp. 147). While Hale White was courting Dorothy Smith he was also cultivating close friendships with other young artistic women, as if he was looking for just such a prospective partner. He wrote several letters to the aspiring poet, Erica Storr, spelling out his loneliness *one year* into married life:

> When am I to see you? It is an argument in favour of immortality, as good as any other, that the best of friends are unable in this world to do more than impart the merest fraction of themselves to one another. One lives at Oxford and the other at Groombridge; they meet for an hour or so once a year; they can do no more than look in each other's faces, they go down to the station together, but the sadness of abrupt departure makes them dumb. Oxford gets into the carriage the door is slammed. Groombridge watches the train till it gets round the curve and then goes home saying to himself *Is this all?*[23]

In 1907 Hale White thought 'a Sunday morning's walk with [Dorothy] through our lanes would be pleasant and instructive'. (LTF, p. 255) He made exactly the same suggestion to Erica a year later:

> I do wish you were here for a stroll through the woods, a long morning stroll, long enough to saunter and rest and tell one another all that was in our heads.[24]

Most revealing, in vampire mode, he also wrote to her: 'Wasn't there a superstition once that life might be prolonged by the infusion of young blood?'[25]

To read The Groombridge Diary and then to read Molly's letter to Cecily afterwards is to see many of the troubles latent within the relationship illuminated. It also makes it very hard to imagine a completely *unified* Hale White at all. We see him torn between two very different women, two families, two versions of himself. The Groombridge Diary can easily be read as Dorothy's struggle for possession of, and inclusion in, the life of a writer she admired. Yet, at the same time, to read it solely like this, to read it through the eyes of Molly, is to see Hale White as an old man still stuck in the past without any control over his own life.

Hale White was a writer in a play which he had partly created for himself, a role he *chose* for himself. In one strange section of the book there is a third party invited to witness the unfolding drama. Dorothy Smith once asked one of 'her boys', Arthur, to Groombridge to meet (and observe) Hale White. After having lent him the novels of Mark Rutherford to read she also encouraged the boy to keep his own notes about his visit, extracts of which she includes in her own book. During one visit, Arthur records Hale White speaking about his life in the third person, fully aware of the ironies of this play and revelling in the sense of friction and drama unfolding around him. This is Hale White talking about himself, seeing himself as if through the eyes of an imaginary Froude, the biographer whom he felt had so misinterpreted Carlyle's relationship with his wife. Hale White is aware that his own life at this point is so complicated as to be virtually beyond any single biographical interpretation, and he registers this fact as an *achievement*:

> 'Whatever would Froude have made of you and me, my dear,' he said to Miss Horace Smith. 'Probably he would have begun something like this: . . . "The great differences in age and opinions of these two people proves absolutely that they could not possibly have agreed. Her religion was High Church. He, the man, had no religion. Well, and what about the man? He had worked in a Government office. Retired at sixty. Sixty-five is the age limit. Why did he retire? Most probably incapacity. He wrote books, strange books. He was irritable, &c." Whatever would this sound like to any body who knew us a little?' (GD, p. 227)

Necessarily absent from this biographical satire was any mention of his first wife Harriet. Hale White had spent thirty-six years of his previous marriage watching his wife slowly 'wasting away' from the effects of her incurable paralysis. Dorothy Smith at least presented him with a second chance, even though there was to be a considerable price for this second attempt. If the Groombridge Diary were ever dramatised it would resemble a play by Chekov, not only as a theatre of strained relationships but of ideas finding a voice from and above these relationships, of intensely private lives placed upon a public stage. As a novelist, Dorothy is very good at recording moments in their life together, their encounters and routines, as well as Hale White's thoughts and reflections.

Much of their relationship centred around books. Reading, buying and talking about them. In Dorothy's photographs of Hale White he is sitting in a chair swaddled in blankets, hunched up with a book, his back to the camera. In one of the photographs, just visible, there is a sheet of notes propped against a page and covered with his pencil markings. Hale White could never read a book without taking notes and acquiring detailed references for his own future use. We are made vitally aware, throughout The Groombridge Diary, of reading as a daily prop of life; books were as central to Hale White's household as food. Thanks to Dorothy Smith we also know exactly what Hale White was reading in his final years. Dickens, George Eliot, Tennyson, Mrs Gaskell, as well as the Bible are frequently being re-read and re-discussed. The Groombridge Diary is a storehouse of Hale White's quotations upon his favourite writers. Yet there are also several surprises.

While staying in Uckfield at 'Gale', Lady Robert Cecil's house in March 1912, Hale White discovered the works of J. M. Synge, a writer not usually associated with his own work:

> Lady Robert introduced him to Synge's *Playboy*, and *Islands of Aran*, when we were at 'Gale' last spring. He was very enthusiastic over the books, and I think - in fact I may I am sure - he read all he bought, and I suppose they were the complete works. He tried to learn something 'about' Synge too.
> (GD, p. 457)

Hale White read very few new writers (which explains why he never had anything to say about Hardy). Yet Synge was a rare exception to this rule and few authors were to receive such unqualified praise or attention from him:

> I have been reading Synge's *Aran* (not Arran) *Islands*. The Aran Islands are in the Bay of Galway. I have read the book twice and I must read it again. It holds me, clutches me, I may say. It will not let me go. I am no critic, but for me it has rare qualities such as I have not found for many a day. Sorrow, sorrow that the man

> died so young. Perhaps, however, it was as well. He was saved from becoming literary. (LTF, p. 393)

Had they met, Hale White and Synge could have been kindred spirits. Both were earnest Wordsworthians and agnostics. Synge, like Hale White, had also attempted a translation of Spinoza's Ethic in his youth. His language, its honed clarity, has affinity with Hale White's. Both men were influenced by the Bible yet their beliefs existed firmly within the realm of the physical world. 'Wonder' was Synge's word, something he would use to evoke feelings of wordless awe before big, usually natural, events, yet it was Hale White's word too: 'He asked me if I had ever seen a photograph of the rings made by a stone thrown in a pool; it was a sight not to be forgotten . . . He said that it is a great thing, perhaps the only great thing, to get people to *wonder*' (GD, p. 152). Hale White wrote to Erica Storr on 28th April 1912:

> Amongst the books here are two or three by a man named Synge - one of which is a record of visits to Aran, the others are plays. I had never heard of them before. They seem to me remarkable and genuinely original. They are written with singular sympathy and introduce me to a new world. Do you know anything of Synge?[26]

Many of Hale White comments upon the books he valued mention the pleasure at being introduced to 'a new world' and this claim is an important one as it includes the Bible. Hale White often wrote that he was drawn to the Bible for similar reasons that he enjoyed Synge. It took him to a different, more elemental, landscape. The world itself seemed newly created, with less historical fog obscuring human morality:

> The Bible to me is so precious because, although it is supposed to have passed into our very blood, its thoughts, its life, like its scenery, are really completely outside us who live in this nineteenth century in England. I do not encounter in it a re-hash

> of modern, Western thought, but something quite strange, foreign, Eastern, and yet so true . . . The moment I open a Bible, I feel I am in a new world. (LTF, p. 86)

Hale White's moral perspective was refreshed by a change of scenery. Synge, like the Bible, not only helped to remove Hale White from his century but from 'this nineteenth century *in England*'.[27]

The Groombridge Diary remains a highly detailed portrait of the old Hale White and his thoughts upon books and reading which we would not have had without Dorothy's single-minded *obsession* with him. Throughout the book we also notice Hale White writing, always working on something in his study. Dorothy Smith watched him at the time when he would have been putting his Early Life together, the posthumous piece of autobiography intended mainly for his family. This is the only instance in which Hale White's method of composing has been described, the only time anyone would have been allowed to sit in the same room while he wrote:

> Hale *can* work, he *can* concentrate; the sight of it makes me silent, savage and ashamed. This morning he sat, as he always sits to work, square to the table on an ordinary chair, *away* from the fire, from before 11 till past 12.30, with hardly one momentary interruption . . . He writes very slowly and carefully, usually on small scraps which he afterwards thrusts between the sheets of his blotting-paper. This morning twice whilst he was writing he gave a sob, and was evidently feeling some emotion keenly as he wrote. (GD, p. 325)

Hale White appears to be writing in fragments which, squirrel-like, he stores away and then later takes out and reworks into a whole. Without the original manuscripts of the Rutherford novels we can only speculate as to exactly how they were composed, yet Dorothy's observations certainly agree with some advice that Hale White gave to his friend, Sophie Partridge, two years earlier:

> The great thing is to begin without any intention of composing something connected or big . . . Don't bother yourself with corrections; don't write with anybody before your eyes; don't use an important looking manuscript book, but rather odd envelopes or at best odd half sheets; shove them in a drawer and send six months of them to me. (LTF, p. 261)

The 'important looking manuscript book' would instantly have forced Sophie to set out on a 'connected or big' work, too much oversight restricting her natural flow and making too much unnecessary work ('don't bother yourself') in the process. Hale White suggests that it is better to write on 'odd envelopes or at best odd half sheets', like the 'small scraps' which Dorothy noticed him using. In both pieces there is also that same act of instant concealment, the pieces of paper shoved in a drawer or 'thrust' under the blotting paper, gradually accumulating themselves into that larger connected work which could only be realised through fragments.

Dorothy Smith also described Hale White's unassuming way of reading out from a poem or novel. He obviously saw recitation as a subtle art and would always begin with his own normal talking voice as if the distinction between literature and everyday life did not exist:

> To me his reading seems the perfection of art, so exquisitely simple. The way he begins is characteristic; there are no preliminaries, no explanations, apologies, coughs, adjustments of person, chair, book or lamp; he starts imperceptibly; you find that he has begun. (GD, p. 314)

The emphasis and timing of Hale White's speech are recorded so clearly that to transfer this character to the stage would not be a difficult thing to do. He becomes, in effect, a character upon the stage of posterity, always with her there in a reciprocal role; many of their conversations read like a kind of literary performance. Some of their best talks centre around the difference in their ages and the meaning this difference brings to their life:

> I said to him how strange it was that he never seemed old to me, but always my own age. I asked him whether this was because I love him or because he *is* different to others in this respect. He said 'I can tell you', and then he paused for a long long time as he stood with his arm round me; he could not command himself; then he said:
> 'It is because *time is a delusion'.* (GD, p. 288)

Catherine Maclean characterises him during these years as a 'seer', the very role created for him by Dorothy.[28] We see him building himself up for this grand statement about time, partly to please his young wife whom he embraces during that impressive long pause. '*Time is a delusion*' is really a more dramatic, Hale Whitian-way of saying 'I am still young inside' or, rather, 'no-one, really, is as old as they seem'. Hale White would often make impromptu biblical pronouncements and Dorothy was keen at writing them down, even if, at times, the exact quotation seems obscure:

> We also had some very serious, intimate talk, and with strange emotion he quoted a favourite verse:
> 'Yea, from the horns of the wild oxen thou hast answered me.'
> He gave me his little Greek Testament in the cover which he made for it as a boy. In so many ways he is now what he must have been then. (GD, p. 58)

In another passage, they walk to the post office together (typical of the pitch of adventure in The Groombridge Diary):

> It was a lovely calm evening, the air very mellow; I could not help feeling happy. I told him so. I wish he could feel the same sort of spring. (GD, p. 91)

Despite the richness of his insights Hale White had a winter temperament throughout their relationship, while Dorothy kept up a perpetual spring, which could infuriate him at times. He is always entreating her to stop working at the boys' club ('They are mostly rough, barbarian hobbledehoys and their freedoms try my temper' LTF, p. 284), mainly out of jealousy. Yet to be nearly eighty and spending all this time with someone as young, earnest and as attractive as Dorothy would have been life-restoring, to say the least. Hale White loved women, preferred their company to that of men, wrote openly about their attractiveness in his novels. The best moments in The Groombridge Diary occur when age is transcended and Hale White is able to enjoy her company without any sense of regret for the physical vitality their relationship obviously lacks. In October 1909 Hale White had a vivid dream about his early, youthful prowess on the cricket field; Dorothy faithfully writes the dream down, trying to picture how he might have been:

> He dreamt that he was playing in a cricket match and I was watching and he had made over a hundred runs. 'It was so vivid', he said, 'so vivid'; he saw me standing by the tent, '*just* like you, in your short skirt'; and he remembered even certain points about his own appearance, for instance, the way his flannel trousers were turned up. Then he came to the tent and I came to the door to meet him and I was so proud of his hundred runs; and it was just like me and just like him. (GD, p. 262)

In the dream Hale White becomes a physical man again, providing a glimpse of how their relationship could have been had their ages been equal and it was quite typical of him to re-imagine his youth in this way, especially in his writing. All of the Mark Rutherford novels were set in a time when Hale White would have been a much younger man; they are all books about young people, mostly in their early twenties. In novels like Clara Hopgood, questions of desire and sexual freedom were cast *back* into the past, suggesting that in any age there are always certain people, especially women, ahead of their society's moral or emotional laws. Dorothy Smith, in her short cricket skirt, completely un-Victorian, becomes a sexual, not just a spiritual companion; a figure of desire and modernity. Hale White's cricket score, his perfect century, is like a symbol of preserved youth as well as time passing; the century he has left behind and the hundred years he is not far off himself:

> And then he woke up. It was so pretty and yet so sad I could have laughed and cried at once. He woke like a thwarted child. Never mind! (GD, p. 262)

Dorothy's physical energy was often the cause as well as the destroyer of Hale White's moods. Her enjoyment of life threw his old-man's despondency into greater relief. At one point she sent him a vivid letter about a cricket match she had played on a bright, perfect summer's afternoon. The whole picture made Hale White feel even more craggy, envious and excluded from her world and he wrote back to her in a foul mood:

> The account of the Woodmansterne cricket-match I read with what are called 'mixed feelings'. I am so heartily glad you so thoroughly enjoyed yourself; eight wickets, umpire's compliments, maraschino, fruit salad - it is all quite natural and healthy, but is it totally unnatural that I - ah well . . . when I lived there, I could have kept wicket against even your bowling and could walk thirty miles a day and bicycle to Portsmouth. Forgive! I couldn't help brooding over this . . . I AM A PIG. (GD, p. 64)

Hale White frequently stirred up bad feelings when Dorothy enjoyed her life outside Groombridge. ('If her happiness does not make me happy' he once wrote, remonstrating with himself, 'I do not love her'. MP, p. 247). He was also irritated and begrudging about Dorothy's *style* of happiness; 'I am so heartily glad you so thoroughly enjoyed yourself'. Her class background and breezy pleasures, 'maraschino, fruit salad,' her use of cricket as a civilising tool, all mark her out as a proto-Bloomsburyite seeking the good life.[29] Such attitudes would have *grated* upon Hale White, the old dissenting stoic:

> Happiness is said to be more powerful than any religion in

> making men good. I confess to an uneasy impatience at the sight of that beaming goodness which obviously proceeds from happiness. (LP, pp. 278-279)

He could easily have been thinking of Dorothy in this note from Last Pages. Throughout the diary we can *feel* Hale White trying his best to suppress his 'uneasy impatience', his innate grumpiness. The critics who render the last days so golden forget the intense often dark gravity of Hale White's writing, the very quality which exists in such an uneasy relation with happiness, or romantic love itself. Hale White knew that in order to live with Dorothy Smith he would have to try to become quite a different sort of person; in his private 'Notes' he writes down little rules of personal behaviour not only for the benefit of his readers but in an attempt to make himself more tolerant of those immediately around him:

> It is a great mistake to criticise or even notice the small failings of one you love. Pay no attention to them: let love drown them far out of sight. (LP, p. 317)

Drowning, however, was also one of Hale White's greatest fears.

Perhaps in retaliation against her husband's - at times - overbearing self-consciousness, Dorothy delights in stripping the mystique away from the intellectual and the seer. She writes, like a novelist, about his idiosyncrasies, habits and mannerisms, giving an insight, often with considerable humour, as to how the great intellectual manages at home in his more banal domestic context. Most of the time he is at home Hale White, of course, hides away in his study, away, that is, from everyone else. But thankfully, we still have much trivial but humanly interesting information about him; how he spoke, what he was like in the morning ('On the whole his mornings were his best times'. GD, p. 472), what he talked about before breakfast, his reading habits, his shaving rituals ('standing before the looking-glass, with a fascinating little machine like a miniature mower'. GD, p. 474), what he liked for his supper ('a scrap of fish or a boiled egg'. GD, p. 474) and what he kept on the little table by his bed:

> He had all manner of things by his bedside, bottles, glasses, liniments, medicines, night-light, electric-light, watch on stand, thermos, milk, bread and butter; and these were always arranged in an accustomed order (accustomed that is, till superseded by a new custom), and not a single one but had some special meaning and history attached to it and proved an object on which he could exercise all the ingenuity of a wonderfully ingenious brain. He rejoiced in a new experiment, a new method of making his bed, or arranging his pillows, a new kind of night-light, a new way of placing the fire irons, a new time for drinking his cocoa, and so on and so on. (GD, pp. 474-475)

Hale White was a very bad sleeper, prone apparently to obscene nightmares. One morning he woke up clasping his head and saying 'How can I *think* such things', shocked by whatever had been coursing through his subconscious mind during the night. He often claimed he couldn't stop thinking at night because of the constant flux of ideas and half thoughts turning over in his head.

It is what we read between the lines of The Groombridge Diary which casts such a vivid light on the writer he had been. The extensive list of bottles and medicines and food betrays a vast fastidiousness, a need for 'special meaning and history' even when he is supposed to be at rest. Hale White is on the verge of intensity throughout Dorothy's journal, irrespective of whether there is anyone near him to offer dialogue. Yet the word 'new' here matters still more: 'a *new* experiment, a *new* method of making his bed'. Custom is broken in the name of exercising 'ingenuity' and making progress, though it actually seems more like restless experiment, an inability to lie still.

Throughout his life Hale White was indeed a very restless person, constantly on the verge of moving, another aspect of his 'uneasy impatience'. Despite forming the title of Dorothy's diary, Groombridge was *exactly* the place Hale White did not want to be in, having only moved there to get out of Crowborough, and then regretting it. He wrote one very long letter of complaint about the whole Crowborough scene, yet Hale White's tone is all the more significant for him being a radical. It was easy to be a radical in Bedford, or London, but Hale White set himself the task of withstanding an *entire* social force, an entire class of wealthy, non-thinking Kent 'm. c. r.' s:

> I have never seen any town or village so completely *average*, the average of middle-class respectability. Every inhabitant, male and female, does the m. c. r. average, thinks the m. c. r. average (if the operation can be called thinking), and has the average m. c. r. manners and clothes . . . There isn't a democrat, socialist, doubter, or disciple of any ism from the railway station to the Beacon Road, and at times I feel as if I could welcome a theosophist or anti-vaccinationist or even the American Lady who has just discovered Bacon was the son of Elizabeth by Leicester. (LTF, p. 213)

Hale White is not usually thought of as a humorous writer, yet his moods, especially when provoked by petty provincialism, give his voice a savage and cutting wit. Hale White would frequently rail against everyone in Tunbridge Wells, the very place he too had chosen to live in. Disliking snobs, like most writers and socialists, Hale White was an inverted *cultural* snob himself, desperate for any company who could match his own intellect and sense of aesthetics and hence his disapproval of Dorothy's work with the 'rough, barbarian hobbledehoys'. All of Hale White's friends were drawn from the *educated* middle classes.[30]

In Letters to Three Friends there are a number of changes of address all prompted by these feelings of being cut off, crowded in or politically isolated. At the core of Hale White's sensibility is a continual restlessness, an unending longing for change, for a true home that is never found. It is as if his constant moving from house to house is re-enacted only to effect the familiar reaction of contempt and self-contradiction, the comfort of his boiling dissenter's blood. Hale White especially loathed motor cars, and in this respect he couldn't have picked a worse place to live than Groombridge: 'We are on the main road much frequented by these stinking, hateful machines'. (LTF, p. 119) At exactly this time the wealthy Tunbridge Wells classes began investing in new cars and would tear up and down the hill outside Hale White's house. Cars became the focus of Hale White's contempt for the unthinking wealthy classes and they threw into relief the intense intellectual solitude he felt in Groombridge:

> As to the reasons why men strike, they are not difficult to discover by anybody who lives on Groombridge Hill and sees the motor-cars on a Sunday; scores and scores of them, each costing more than five or six years wages for hard work; every car occupied with creatures, stockjobbers' wives mostly, from Tunbridge Wells, a flaunting, shameless display and an insult to everybody who must walk. What does my friend the blacksmith just below me think as he sees the clouds of dust before the forge. (LTF, p. 374)

Fifty years earlier, as a journalist, Hale White had reported extensively on any developments in railway engineering and modes of travel, eager for any form of transport that would get him more quickly and comfortably to London. At Groombridge he is at odds with the new century in which he finds himself, the cars virtually driving all over his sacred books:

> The east wind sets motor-car stench and dust right on our house. I suppose it is the dust which makes me cough. The dust is worse than the stench. My dear Shakespeare, the Malone I bought when I was young, with its pleasant large print, stands befouled

> with road filth. (LTF, p. 353)

Hale White is marooned in time, as well as place, the nineteenth century in which he was rooted and lived most of his life has disappeared in a cloud of motor-car dust.

Where and how to live were such important questions for Hale White that they prompted him into a published correspondence with John Ruskin[31] and in turn with Philip Webb[32] the Pre-Raphaelite architect, who built for Hale White the house he eventually abandoned in 1889. Neither do the characters in the Rutherford novels ever stay in one place for very long. Chapters usually begin with a resolve to leave or set out for somewhere different. The definitive Hale White chapter opener can be found at the start of chapter nine in The Autobiography:

> Until I had actually left, I hardly knew where I was going, but at last I made up my mind . . . (AD, p. 102)

Hale White actually picks up his pen, resumes a story, when his characters become dissatisfied with a place or house, as if his writing is bound up with the need for constant escape and change:

> It was a fact, and everybody noticed it, that since the removal to the Terrace, and the alteration in their way of living, Mr. Furze was no longer the man he used to be . . . (CF, p. 194)

As well as the places he actually did move to, the Letters and the Diary refer to addresses he *almost* moved to and deliberated over, endlessly. Hale White, as the title of one his short stories confirms, was a *self tormentor.*[33]

> I am not quite sure we will go to Eastbourne, but it shall be some level place . . . I do not like Eastbourne . . . every shop brand new, not an old book in the whole town. (LTF, p. 229)

He once 'had some thoughts of going to live near Brigham' but felt that the situation would be too isolated and too far from London, the city he had been trying to get away from all of his life:

> So I gave it up, but you know I am so silly that I never can, like a well-regulated person, give up finally what I know to be wrong. I hanker after things which my reason has condemned a thousand times, and sometimes curse it for being so dictatorial. (LTF, p. 79)

This was a trait which Hale White was to transfer to most of his novels' protagonists; the inability to let discarded conclusions alone. Hale White's characters torment themselves with regret which in turn hampers their ability to be satisfied with new places *or* new resolutions. He may have forced his reason to be 'dictatorial' but this never prevents his curiosity from worrying about what *might* have been. These sorts of personal knots and doubts once resulted in Hale White hastily moving from his house in Hastings ('an old-fashioned, corrupt, jobbing, rotten borough'. LTF, p. 72) to another house in the same street, four doors down.

> We think of moving in a few weeks to a house a little lower down, but still in High Wickham. We are so pinched for room here . . . (LTF, p.71)

For Dorothy White, Groombridge was an *ideal* place, because Hale White lived there, like a surviving Brontë. For Hale White it was an empty place, the *worst* place, with nobody in it but himself and the cars:

> My Dear Webb,
>
> . . . I wish you would tell me how you are, whether you are still able to respond to this marvellous outburst of spring. I can get out a little and drop on a stile or a on a tree newly 'thrown' and barked, but I cannot escape the fiendish howl of the motor-cars, like the screams of the demons in hell. There are more then ever this year.

Always your friend,

W. Hale White. (LTF, pp. 369-370)

In one letter we do catch Hale White considering the burden, not just of *place* but of his own *self*. And how the burden of the self, the sheer weight of the self, is felt in the act of moving house. This is the point when Hale White has just moved to Crowborough in 1900, a place he was to stay in for just over two years. It is as if he is, literally, wearing himself out:

> There is a pause of a day. The furniture is on the road and we are in lodgings . . . I cannot say, with Landor, that the realities of life are the things which are not real to me. They have been very real to me during the chaos of removal, but last Sunday morning, having got my books (which preceded the rest of my goods) into order, I spent some hours alone in perfect silence in the empty house. Did you ever try that experiment? It is not particularly wholesome. I began reflecting on the other houses in which I have lived, from the one in the High Street, Bedford, in which I was born and then on all the many 'might have beens' which look as if they ought to have been, things just missed, which if obtained, would have made such a difference! It is odd that such sentimentality should overtake us at times. I believe men are more liable to it than women. At last I was obliged to shake myself and move out of doors. (LTF, pp. 200-201)

Hale White is alone in an empty house, surrounded with his books, putting them into order, probably the only bit of house-work he ever does. The books in effect *are* his home, are actually him, the fullest expression of who he is and where he has been. He is anticipating perhaps further moves and regretting past false moves, 'the ought to have beens', as if there should have been some perfect final home, somewhere, which he has missed. Even at this point of arrival he knows that this new place will not be the home he always hoped for: 'I have been reflecting on the other houses in which I have lived'.

For Hale White such moments constituted a return to 'the realities of life'.

Adjacent to all of his intellectual interests and literary pursuits, Hale White's writing is concerned, above all, with the difficulty, strangeness and precariousness, of life itself, of the sheer *effort* of living and the constant need to renew that effort. Hence he felt the need to fall in love, again, to move, again, and to marry, again, even when he was nearly eighty. The narratives in all his novels are wayward, unexpected in their moves and outcomes, like the life itself. There is always a note of ironic determination behind Hale White's efforts at self-renewal. In the letter to Webb, for example, he writes:

> I wish you would tell me how you are, whether you are still able to respond to this marvellous outburst of spring. I can get out a little and drop on a stile or a on a tree newly 'thrown' and barked. (LTF, pp. 369)

There is a moted and regretted gap between the occasion, 'marvellous', and the response, 'a little' and it is the fallen tree, stripped of its skin to which Hale White is drawn in his spring walks. Yet he asks Webb if he is 'still able to respond'.

Despite not liking Groombridge, and refusing to feel at home there, Hale White resolved to live in it as best he could. Despite his commitment to dissatisfaction he also had to force himself to cultivate a counter-commitment to life how it *is*. Restless as he had always been he had lived in or near London all of his life. When another young admirer, Gladys Ellen Easedale, went to Canada she sent Hale White several letters rather cruelly describing her excitement at being there, thus increasing his frustrations with Groombridge, as all such letters invariably did.[34] He wrote back to her on 7th February, 1907:

> Canada is part of the earth of which Groombridge is also a part

> but we get dulled by familiarity and Canada would make me feel what the earth is.[35]

But in his second letter to Gladys, written a month later on 6th March, Hale White stuck to the centre of where his own life happened to be, his own bit of earth, refusing to be beaten back by Gladys's dream of Canada. He would have spent considerable time on this response, the final line by Richter a good example of his incisive use of quotations:

> I notice you have a hankering after Canada. The wild country would attract me, but not so much I think the people. I should certainly have to build my own house and I should not travel in the heated trains if I could help it. Canadian houses and railways would kill me. I shall never now see another land but must be content. Sun, moon and stars are overhead in Groombridge as on the other side of the Atlantic. Jean Paul Richter lived in a little inland town in Germany. 'I shall never see the ocean,' said he, 'but the ocean of eternity I shall not fail to see'.[36]

As well as chronicling Hale White's discontent, his letters show that will to acceptance, which was an equally characteristic force behind the fiction. Hale White could be receptive to the places he knew well, as long as he could see the stars; the 'ocean of eternity':

> I got up at 4 o'clock last Friday morning to look for the comet, but the trees just hid it. I should have been obliged to walk a quarter of a mile up the road, and as it was very cold this was not quite safe. But the sky was good enough, no mist, not a cloud, Orion and all the other constellations blazing, Orion just beginning to turn towards his grave in the west. Such silence! no distant noise of trains, not even a cat or dog, nothing but an owl. What strange things came into my head!
> (LTF, p. 387)

As he got older, nearer death, passages like this became more common while in the novels immediate, personal revelation is always a unique experience. He once quoted back some lines that Webb himself had written in a frame of mind that came closer to poetry than letter writing:

> And yet, on my field paths of walking, I can sing myself into a peace of mind which makes amends. (LTF, p. 383)

'It is difficult to disentangle the cause of restlessness, such as mine' he wrote, once to Webb. 'Partly it is induced by hope'. (LTF, p. 308) In his letters Hale White talks not just to his friends but to himself. He mutters away, bangs his fist and then soothes himself in the same sentence, almost in the same breath. We become aware of a radical *self*-satirist at work. ('He, the man, had no religion. Well, and what about the man? . . .'). The novels and short stories, ('Confessions of a Self Tormentor', 'Time Settles Controversies', 'Mr Whittaker's Retirement') all come from a writer who treasured his own difficult and contradictory reactions to life in order to illuminate something original about personality and intellect and the relationship between the two. The voice of the novels and the voice of 'the man' are vitally *the same*, as it is always the same with the best writers. His characters may have experienced different events from Hale White, but the intellectual and emotional content of their lives is identical. There is the same rhythm of feeling.

It was in these last years that Hale White was working on his 'Notes', little fragments of description and thought which taken together read like the essence of a novel, an interior monologue of the self unhampered by plot or explanation. In both form and feeling, Hale White's beautiful, succinct 'Notes' resemble the Pensées of Joubert.[37] He is catching his passing thoughts, trying to fit the largest of ideas into the smallest of spaces before time runs out:

> I have a strange fancy - that there is one word which I was sent into the world to say. At times I can dimly make it out but I cannot speak it. Nevertheless it serves to make all other speech seem beside the mark and futile. (LP, p. 289)

The endless cross currents of the mind are self-contradictory yet at least self-*aware*:

> Every faculty and virtue I possess can be used as an instrument wherewith to worry myself. (LP, p. 292)
>
> If we are relieved from serious care we are not necessarily relieved from cares. A crowd of small, impertinent worries torment me which I should not notice if I were in real trouble. (LP, p. 308)

As a novelist Hale White was interested in describing certain habits and patterns of thought, as a moralist he was also a stern critic of those mental habits. He moves uneasily between self-justification and resigned acceptance:

> Obstinacy may be a mere stupidity, but there is an intelligent obstinacy which is a virtue (LP, p. 298)
>
> It is not so much because my desires are inordinate that I am troubled: it is because they are contradictory. (LP, p. 285)

In an increasingly secular age when doubt itself was becoming much more of an accepted factor of daily life, Hale White's confessional, self-directed 'Notes' *read* the reader and incite a more personal, more *immediate* form of thinking and writing.

Sophie Partridge wanted to be a writer and occasionally sent Hale White her own stories and essays to read, eager for some honest advice. Hale White found, however, that Sophie's writing did not always come from the *true* Sophie at all, that she often strained after an unnecessary, false sophistication. In June 1900 she became ill and it is obvious from Hale White's reply that he believed that she had used her letters to mask the 'realities of life', rather than communicate them, clearly and openly. Hale White didn't have much time for letters that discussed disembodied ideas. He wanted news, facts, before anything else, anything that would tell him about the actual life and inner well-being of the writer rather than partisan polemic. Hale White informs Sophie of the sort of letter writing he would like to receive from her, especially as he has heard she is not very well:

> My Dear Sophie,
> If you are able to write half a dozen words please let me know exactly what is the position now. You need not trouble yourself over a letter which you might imagine would be interesting to me. The interesting questions to me are whether your strength is increasing, whether you can get out of doors, whether you can eat or sleep, whether time hangs heavily, whether your spirits are upheld, and whether you can see friends. Can you listen to music? This is the last thing I myself can do if I am knocked over. (LTF, p. 296)

Despite the translation of Spinoza and the political journalism, it is the details of a particular life that also interest Hale White, not 'what you might *imagine* would be interesting to me'. He tells her that she has lost sight of herself in trying to impress her very intellectual friend. The same thought occurs in one of Hale White's 'Notes' from Last Pages.

> For what do my friends stand? Not for the clever things they say: I do not remember them half an hour after they are spoken. (LP p. 308)

Everything in the letter to Sophie is connected to a sense of *strength*, strength being one of Hale White's most frequently used words. The physical and the spiritual, again, are combined; 'whether you can get out of doors . . . whether your spirits are upheld'. All of Hale White's fictions were concerned with these same 'interesting questions' of survival, as is The Groombridge Diary itself.

The Groombridge Diary has two endings. The daily diary breaks off immediately after their marriage then Dorothy adds some closing passages looking back after Hale White's death. Having married Hale White, her main task accomplished, Dorothy had nothing much left to write about:

> 23rd October 1912. More than a year since I made an entry in this Diary. There seemed no need for one, and yet it is perhaps a pity that I keep no record, as I used to do, of some of his wonderful sayings. (GD, p. 435)

Eventually, Dorothy becomes an extra nurse for her ailing husband and so the marriage is perceived solely in terms of its medical benefits, the improved state of his nerves and the carefully controlled quantities of his medication:

> 29th July 1911. I can only enter up one or two notes between the 1st entry of May 13th and this. It is now nearly four months since we were married, and I think I can safely pronounce some sort of a judgement as to the result of the venture. Hale has certainly kept in better health and spirits; we were never separated now by day or night, and there is no doubt this sense of security and peace (no coming and going, no trains to catch) has quieted his nerves. Nurse left soon after our return from 'Gale'; the doctor pays a monthly visit and is perfectly satisfied. For two months or more there have been no 'drowsy' attacks, and the 'pick-me-up' medicine has hardly been touched. I have been able to reduce the morphia, until now I have exactly halved the dose. (GD, p. 429)

Having moved into Hale White's house their lives suddenly retreat behind closed doors. Dorothy writes that they were never separated 'by day or night' yet this could hardly have been the most romantic setting for a new marriage. All of Hale White's night time routines seem to exclude Dorothy and beckon her medical supervision rather than physical tenderness. The mixture of tenses here make such entries an amalgam of recollection and present concern.

In her letter to Cecily, Molly says that these married years were the worst:

> He just hated the marriage and was quite happy as he was. Unmarried she was a help to me as she was bright and cheerful and helped to make his days happier. She knew this at the back

> of her mind and a week after the marriage she confessed I was right and that as a wife she was not so helpful . . . The holiday taken just before Father's death was forced upon by the doctor - a shrewd man who saw how things were going and that it was not good for her or my father to be so constantly together and so often getting across one another. Had he lived I don't think they could have gone on living together. He would have openly rebelled had he had the strength or gone under altogether.[38]

Molly's jealousy does not make her the most reliable witness, yet her remarks about them being 'so constantly together' are confirmed by Dorothy's diary. Dorothy's closure of her diary could have been a way of forgetting what had become a claustrophobic, purely functional 'venture', devoid of their earlier conversations.

It could equally reflect the opposite. A sign of contentment[39] and ease, their talks so frequent it hardly seemed to matter whether they were written down or not. What Molly perceives as their 'constantly getting across one another' could have been a mere continuation of the intellectual disagreements and petty struggles they had always enjoyed. Molly's bitterness over Dorothy's constant company may be a sign of her exclusion from her father's life. The mere fact of being married to Hale White also meant that Dorothy loses all her original curiosity about the Rutherford novels. In the presence of the man himself his books fade into the background:

> I don't want to talk much of them, I have *him*, which is better. (GD, p. 36)

The famous author becomes a familiar husband, drained of celebrity. In one of his essays about biography, Richard Holmes, has also noticed how a literary marriage often has the effect of fading out the writing of a literary diary:

> The very closeness of husbands and wives precludes letters between them, and often the keeping of journals (unless one

> party is secretly unhappy). The private domestic world closes in on itself, and the biographer is shut out. It is only when arguments occur, separations, confrontations, crises . . . that the biographer's trail warms up again.[40]

Hale White died on March 14th, 1913 at the age of eighty-one. Constantly suffering from chills and bad colds, he developed gastric influenza, then pneumonia and died at about 10.30 one Friday morning. He became very confused towards the end but his final impulses to move on again were characteristic:

> He talked again and again of his journey, complained that he could go no farther, asked for his stick, his socks, shoes, clothes; said, should he go tomorrow? thought he would go now; would quite suddenly rouse himself and say in a strong and ordinary voice: 'Now I think I'll be off,' 'Now I must start,' and so forth, and try to get out of bed. (GD, p. 446)

Despite the research of a few critics and devotees, Hale White's existence was still unknown to most of his readers at the time of his death. Dorothy White lived until 1965 and it was to be some time until a more complete picture of the young, politically engaged and more intellectually active Hale White could emerge. Yet, despite being none of these things, The Groombridge Diary and Letters to Three Friends still stand as the most detailed and intimate portraits of the last years of a writer that we have. They are all the better for being unsensational and unbogged-down in political discourse (which usually serves as a shallow *retreat* from what really matters in life). Despite not having anything specific to say about politics Hale White, in excitable mood, once went as far as to describe Dorothy's as revolutionary, (a term he had always enjoyed using loosely but emphatically in its most personal sense):

> You are essentially revolutionary or, properly, anarchical . . . Your body is anarchical, completely free and unrestrained as if you had not a pin about you. Movement does not disguise or conceal, but at every point reveals. This is the distinguishing note. Always expression which will not be baffled or thwarted, impatience of hindrance, *rejection* of it. You refuse even to submit to your own past. I can write no more. Your dear letter is at this moment put on my table (7a.m.), so tender, so *assuring*. Forgive mistakes. I am confused, and it is with much difficulty I hold a pencil. (GD, pp. 285-286)

Dorothy Smith's lack of interest in party politics could be considered an irritating evasion. It is also, to no small extent, a *relief*. She purposefully, and teasingly defuses the intellectual intensity of many moments, bringing a sense of confident, creative ease into Groombridge life:

> After tea I sat with him. We had more *Count Cagliostro* (we had had some in the morning), and a long talk about democracy. It was a most interesting talk, but I am too lazy to write down a word about it, for Nurse is playing patience (as usual), and Molly is laughing and chattering and interrupting me every few minutes, and I want to enjoy myself! (GD, p. 270)

There is a lot of discussion in the Groombridge Diary, as well as a lot of impromptu literary criticism, writing and reading aloud (a reminder of a lost, pre-TV, age when people *did* still read aloud and talk to one another). There is also a great deal of creative *idleness* and everyday interest. Richard Holmes writes again:

> I have since come to believe that the re-creation of the daily, ordinary texture of an individual life - full of the mundane, trivial, funny and humdrum goings-on of a single loving relationship - in a word, the recreation of intimacy - is almost the hardest thing in biography; and, when achieved, the most triumphant.[41]

Dorothy White concealed, edited out and suppressed many awkward incidents and facts about her days in Groombridge in the interests of producing a seamless, intimate book about what it was like to enter the self-enclosed world of a Victorian intellectual. Her book is essentially a about a writer outliving his period. If she was deceptive, presenting her interpretation above Hale White's, this was because she was, at heart, a novelist, a constructor of fiction, not just a biographer. It was also, of course, *her* diary. The more complex, less compromised, Hale White still emerges through, and precisely *because* of, this sunny account of their relationship. Hale White's, very particular, sensibility becomes all the more distinct from being contrasted, at such length, with that of his second wife.

Hale White himself was not unlike Dorothy in her desire to get close to her favourite writers, to know them and be with them. If The Groombridge Diary had been a first-hand account of Wordsworth's marriage, written by Mary Hutchinson, Hale White would have known it practically by heart. While Dorothy liked to imagine she was one of the Brontës, Hale White was reading his way through the latest edition of the Brontës' letters and once found himself handling an original letter by Charlotte:

> This was the first time I had ever handled anything she had touched, and the paper seemed to shoot something electrical through my fingers to my brain. (LTF, p. 87)

Hale White frequently expressed a desire to have met Dorothy Wordsworth, ('the woman (who is dead) that I worship,' GD, p. 28) whose letters he once edited for The Athenæum:

> He said he should like to go to Heaven to meet her. He spoke of the Coleridges and Wordsworths as of personal friends, with all the intimacy, love, and reverence. (GD, p. 28)

Throughout his letters Hale White seems to insist that he really belongs in the company of his literary heroes. As both a critic and novelist he would also continually evoke a community of like-minded reader-friends which is the single-most reason why Dorothy was, in turn, so keen to live with him. The electric love of books and the mysterious, undying fascination with those writers who seem so close as to be almost personal friends, even family, is the animating theme of The Groombridge Diary.

Dorothy, however, gives hardly any mention to one important thinker who had a profound effect upon Hale White throughout his life; an omission which despite their constant togetherness, best describes their intellectual distance from one another. Among the photographs printed in The Groombridge Diary is one of Hale White's study. As well as the hundreds of books covering the walls there are several pictures hanging above the fireplace. Most of these are too indistinct to make out but to the right of the fireplace is a portrait of Hale White's father, the silhouette printed in Early Life. To the left of the fireplace, in the opposite position, just visible, is a portrait of Benedict de Spinoza, the philosopher. In 1910 the fourth edition of Hale White's translation of Spinoza's Ethic was published. Dorothy gave only one brief mention of a work he had lived with for most of his life, she was excluded from the wider meaning that Spinoza held for her husband:

> Tuesday, 20th September. 1910 . . .
> Hale's Spinoza is out. (GD, p. 368)

It was Spinoza, however, who had been at the root of Hale White's intellectual awakening as a young man. Spinoza's ideas had not only determined the course of his career but the thinking behind much of his best fiction. To understand why Hale White still kept a picture of Spinoza in his study, even in his final Groombridge days, we need to go back to the 1850s.

Notes.

1. William Hale White, The Autobiography of Mark Rutherford and Mark Rutherford's Deliverance 1888 (London: Libris, 1988), p. 207; hereafter cited as AD.

2. Dorothy Vernon Smith, Miss Mona (London: The Hogarth Press, 1907); hereafter cited as Miss Mona.

3. Simon Nowell Smith published three obituaries of notable Smiths in a small pamphlet. About Horace Smith (1836-1922) Dorothy's father, he writes:

> His career as a barrister on provincial circuits culminated in thirty years as one of the first of Westminster's stipendiary magistrates, with a reputation for wit and sympathy on and off the bench . . . Besides eleven slim volumes of conventional verse, *Who's Who* credits Horace Smith with six children, the number surviving the time of his death.

Simon Nowell Smith Three Obituaries (Cirencester: Headington Quarry, 1989), p. 2. It is curious to note that at the time of his marriage to Dorothy Smith, Hale White, then aged eighty, was five years older than his seventy-five year old father-in-law.

4. [Dorothy Vernon Smith], Twelve Years With My Boys (London: The Hogarth Press, 1912).

5. Beryl de Zoete (1879-1962), another young admirer of Hale White, was an interesting mix. She was a Greek Somerville student and pupil of Ernest de Selincourt, the Wordsworth scholar. She was also an authority on Eastern Dance and Oriental languages. She became a member of Edith Sitwell's circle (who called her 'Beryl the Peril') and fell in love with the translator of Chinese verse, Arthur Waley. See : Edith Sitwell, Selected Letters ed. Richard Greene (London: Virago, 1997), p. 465.

6. Dorothy Vernon White, 'Hale's Book,' Vol. 1, p. 4. The Colbeck Collection British Columbia University, Vancouver. This was the manuscript subsequently edited and published as The Groombridge Diary. I consulted Charles Swann's copy of this manuscript.

7. Miss Mona, p. 2

8. William Hale White, 'A Study in Overlooking,' The Nation III (July 11, 1908), p. 519.

9. AD, p. 178.

10. Sophie Partridge was a friend of Hale White's from Ashstead and one of the three friends in Letters To Three Friends.

11. William Hale White, 'A Study in Overlooking,' The Nation (July 11, 1908), pp. 519-520.

12. In his recent novel Paris Trance, Geoff Dyer makes a parallel assertion, calling into question the need to control and order the chaos of space:

    > Neither of them was able to recognise the constellations. To attempt to arrange the swathe of stars into patterns, shapes or outlines was to diminish them, to scale down the immensity of what was seen and render it manageable. Even to look at them through your own eyes, to seek to hold the view in your head seemed compromising, belittling.

    Geoff Dyer, Paris Trance (London: Little Brown, 1998), pp. 265-266.

13. Hale White had found his house during a visit to Groombridge Place, the local manor. John Groombridge had been a local steward to Percy Shelley's father and had an interesting gravestone in Horsham. The writing on the stone breaks off, mysteriously, mid-description, only stating 'He was . . .' Hale White was taken with this stone and wrote about it in one of his essays: 'He *was* - that is the only certain fact which Sir Bysshe could assert about him'. Groombridge then was a name Hale White had originally associated with uncertain, suspended identities, an irony Dorothy seems unaware of in choosing the title for her book. See, W. Hale White, 'Notes on Shelley's Birthplace,' LP, pp. 232.

14. See especially Elizabeth Gaskell, The Letters of Mrs Gaskell ed. J. A. V. Chapple and Arthur Pollard (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997), p. 123, for Mrs Gaskell's on-the-spot account of being in Haworth with Charlotte Brontë.

15. Lady Robert Cecil (nee. Eleanor Lambton, known affectionately as 'Nelly',) was the wife of the then Tory MP for East Marylebone. Despite their political differences Hale White wrote of Robert Cecil as an independent thinking man. Robert Cecil was to become one of the architects of the League of Nations and was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1937. See: Kenneth Rose, The Later Cecils (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1975), pp. 127-185.

16. AD, p. 114.

17. Dorothy Vernon White, 'Hale's Book,' Vol. III, p. 24. The Colbeck Collection British Columbia University, Vancouver.

18. Letter from Molly White to F.W Challis, July 18, 1924, 7 Letters from Molly White to F. W. Challis Bodleian Library, Oxford. Ref. no. MS. Eng. Lett. e. 123. fols. 173-184.

19. Letter from Molly White to Cecily White, October 3, 1924, Bedford Public Library.

20. Catherine R. Harland, The Mind and Art of William Hale White (Columbus: Ohio University Press, 1988), p. 268.

21. Basil Willey, Nineteenth Century Studies (London: Chatto and Windus, 1956), p. 247.

22. Catherine Macdonald Maclean, Mark Rutherford. A Biography of William Hale White (London: Macdonald, 1955), p. 384; hereafter cited as Maclean.

23. Letter to Erica Storr, April 28, 1912, 43 Letters from William Hale White to E. and F. Storr University of Sussex. Sx Ms. 6. no. 37.

24. Letter to Erica Storr, June 24, 1908, 43 Letters from William Hale White to E. and F. Storr University of Sussex. Sx Ms. 6. no. 21.

25. Letter to Erica Storr, Feb. 23, 1906, 43 Letters from William Hale White to E. and F. Storr University of Sussex. Sx Ms. 6. no. 10.

26. Letter to Erica Storr, April 28, 1912, 43 Letters from William Hale White to E. and F. Storr University of Sussex. Sx Ms. 6. no. 37.

27. Hale White's interest in Synge was important enough to warrant a mention in the first serious study of Synge's life and work, Maurice Bourgeois, John Millington Synge and the Irish Theatre (London: Constable, 1913), p. 245:

> There is at present a keen appreciation of Synge in the English literary world. It is significant to learn, on the testimony of Miss Betham Edwards, that "one of the last literary subjects" which engaged the late William Hale White's attention was "Synge, whose plays he had been reading and re-reading" . . . [Synge's] influence is clearly beginning to bear fruit.

It is also interesting here to see Hale White cited as an important representative of the 'English literary world' at the time of his death. Maurice Bourgeois was obviously interested in Rutherford as well as Synge.

28. Maclean, p. 393. Chapter heading, 'At Groombridge: The Seer'.

29. It is quite possible to read the whole of The Groombridge Diary as the attempted appropriation of Hale White by the Bloomsbury circle. Nearly all the people mentioned within it were to become associated with the Woolfs. Dorothy's first novel was published by the Hogarth Press; Beryl de Zoete became a close friend of Edith Sitwell; Gladys Easedale also writes of her visits to see Virginia Woolf who went on to publish a selection of poetry by Gladys's sister, Joan (See: Joan Adeney Easedale, A Collection of Poems (London: The Hogarth Press, 1931). Hale White's local doctor (Dr. Adeney of Tunbridge Wells, an important figure in the Diary) was the Easedale's uncle. Virginia Woolf wasn't impressed with Gladys herself, however, and called her 'silly, egoistic sloppy and conventional'. Virginia Woolf, The Diary of Virginia Woolf Vol. III, ed. Anne Olivier Bell (London: Hogarth, 1980), p. 345. Virginia Woolf also became closely acquainted with Lady ('Nelly') Robert Cecil while, apparently, knowing very little about Nelly's hero; 'a man called Rutherford':

> Nelly harbours a profound reverence not so much for me as for the class to which I belong - the intellectual cream, that is, of Europe. A man called Mark Rutherford, my father, and old Lord Salisbury are her three heroes.

Virginia Woolf, The Letters of Virginia Woolf Vol. II, ed. Nigel Nicolson (London: The Hogarth Press, 1976), p. 445.
In marrying Dorothy, Hale White unwittingly found himself at the edge of the kind of aesthetic circle with which he might otherwise have had little in common.

30. One passage from Hale White's journalism, however, contains a criticism of an MP who had complained about the intermingling of classes on public transport. This is a rare moment of anti-snobbish sentiment for Hale White:

> Snobden forgets, moreover that it is carried to the Lakes or to Scotland by the same very train which carries the mob, and if it were not for that train it would have to stay in Grub Street and thence indict its leaders and sensational paragraphs. Besides if the snob dislikes the mob why does he go with it?
> (AH, Aug. 21, 1869)

31. W. Hale. White, 'Housebuilding,' The Spectator L (January 27, 1877), p. 113.

32. Philip Webb was the architect associated with the Pre-Raphaelites, William Morris and the arts and crafts movement. He built Hale White's house in Carshalton, completed in 1868. The two remained friends.

33. W. Hale White, 'Confessions of a Self Tormentor,' More Pages From a Journal With Other Papers (Oxford: OUP, 1910), p. 108.

34. Gladys Ellen Easedale was another, young, close friend. Her uncle was Hale White's doctor, Dr. Ardeney.

35. [Gladys Ellen Easedale], Middle Age. An Autobiography (London: Constable, 1935), p. 169; hereafter cited as Middle Age. This book was published anonymously and contains an account of Gladys's relationship to Hale White. It has a familiar ring to it:

> Those dark, penetrating eyes meeting mine became one of the greatest experiences of my life. Although he was nearly eighty and I about twenty, instantaneously there was that bond between us, age, parting and death can never sever. (Middle Age, p. 142)

I am grateful to Lorraine Davies for lending me her copy of this book.

36. Middle Age, p. 169. Letter dated March 6, 1907.

37. Hale White would have known about Joubert from Matthew Arnold's Essay 'Joubert; or a French Coleridge'. He would also have found he had much in common with the concise, self-reflective spirit of Joubert's Pensées:

> If ever a man was tormented by the accursed ambition of putting a whole book into a page, a whole page into a phrase, and that phrase into a word, I am that man.

Joseph Joubert, Pensées trans. Henry Attwell (London: Allen, 1896), p. 7. Arnold also describes the origins of Joubert's book in a way which seems to anticipate the discovery of Mark Rutherford's posthumous 'papers':

> Joubert's papers were accumulated in boxes and drawers. He had not meant them for publication; it was very difficult to sort them and to prepare them for it. Madame Joubert, his widow, had a scruple about giving them a publicity which her husband, she felt, would never have permitted.

Matthew Arnold, 'Joubert; or a French Coleridge,' Essays Literary and Critical (London: Dent, 1906), p. 151.

38. Letter from Molly White to Cecily White, Oct. 3, 1924. Bedford Public Library.

39. 'Contentment - the form despair takes in order to render itself bearable.' Geoff Dyer, 'Passage Thiéré,' from the anthology of football writing: Nicholas Royle, A Book of Two Halves (London: Gollancz, 1996) p. 197.

40. Richard Holmes, Footsteps (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1985), p. 120; hereafter cited as Footsteps.

41. Footsteps, p. 120.

Chapter One.

From Heresy to Spinoza.

> I happened to be hungering for some knowledge of this theological pariah, partly, no doubt, because he was an outcast, for as I was then suffering the social persecution which embitters all departure from accepted creeds, I had a rebellious sympathy with all outcasts.
>
> George Henry Lewes [1]

Like many readers of Spinoza, and like Spinoza himself, Hale White was a religious outcast, someone who had departed from 'accepted creeds'. His personal discovery of Spinoza occurred during a time of intense religious confusion in Europe. As orthodox theology caved in under the relentless logic of science many other writers and outcasts also 'happened to be hungering' for this philosopher's ideas. Spinoza was the ideal philosopher for those intellectuals who were suspicious of church orthodoxy and yet were still rooted, nevertheless, in religious moral teaching. Spinoza wove a complex language, combining a recognition of God with a firm adherence to natural laws. He provided his readers with a sturdy, intellectual bridge between the rational and the eternal.

Hale White left no record of exactly when he first encountered Spinoza's

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ideas. In the autumn of 1852 he started working, and living, at number 142, The Strand, the premises of John Chapman's radical quarterly The Westminster Review. It was here that Hale White began moving within the unorthodox intellectual circles in which Spinoza's ideas had taken strong root. The main currents of thought were so closely knit together at this time that it is impossible to unravel the exact route by which Hale White came to Spinoza. George Henry Lewes had already published his first essay on Spinoza for the Westminster Review in 1843,[2] the same year in which George Eliot, (then known as Mary Ann Evans), began her translation of the Tractatus Theologico-Politicus, a translation which she never completed.[3] It was Strauss who brought the Tractatus to the attention of Dr. Brabant, the then mentor of George Eliot, and she began translating Spinoza's Tractatus almost immediately. By this time Spinoza was becoming common currency among most progressive intellectuals of the day. Lewes and Eliot may have inspired Hale White to study Spinoza more deeply, but it is likely that his interest in the philosopher began prior to his arrival at number 142.

It is probable that Hale White first encountered Spinoza through the writings of Goethe, whose work he read, as well as translated, on the recommendation of his cousin, William Chignell.[4] Goethe had written with great feeling and enthusiasm for Spinoza in his autobiography, Dichtung und Wahreit (Poetry and Truth Out of My Life):

> I gave myself up to this reading, and thought, while I looked into myself, that I had never before so clearly seen through the world.[5]

It is Goethe's admiration for Spinoza that Hale White frequently draws from in his prefaces and essays:

> Goethe never cared for set philosophical systems. Very early in life he thought he had found out that they were useless pieces of construction, but to the end of his days he clung to Spinoza. (PJ, pp. 32-33)

Yet Spinoza's influence had also been spreading via another important German intellectual source; the German Higher Critics of the Bible. This group of writers and thinkers were among the first to use rational thought in order to explain the mysteries and events of the Bible. In one of his scrap books Hale White kept an essay by his friend, and Hegel scholar, James Hutchinson Stirling in which this influence is acknowledged:

> Spinoza is a power in his works and in himself. His politico theological Tractate is the quarry of the Aufklärung, and suggests all that followed - perhaps the *Life of Jesus* itself.[6]

In what way did Spinoza suggest 'all that followed'? And what exactly *did* follow, more particularly, for young Hale White?

Spinoza believed that God and nature were one. This led him to express several controversial opinions regarding the existence of miracles, opinions which also led to his expulsion from the synagogue. For Spinoza, the idea of God demonstrating his power through supernatural events was a complete contradiction in terms:

> If anything be found which it can be conclusively demonstrated is in opposition to the laws of Nature, or cannot follow from them, we must consider it as settled that it has been added to the sacred books by sacrilegious men. For whatever is contrary to Nature is contrary to reason, and what is contrary to reason is absurd, and therefore to be rejected. (Ethic IV, pp. lii-liii.)[7]

It is this idea of the moral force of reason, and the rejection of anything which falls outside of Nature, that made Spinoza such an inspiration for the German critic, David Friedrich Strauss. Strauss's book, The Life of Jesus Critically Examined took Spinoza's premise regarding miracles and applied it, scrupulously, to each miraculous event in the Bible, seeking a natural explanation of the supernatural. His work was really an updating of Spinoza's Tractatus. Das Leiben Jesu had a massive impact on the theological thinking of the nineteenth century and upon the course of Hale White's own life.

In 1851 Hale White entered New College in order to train to be a Dissenting Minister. In March 1852 he was officially expelled, on the charge of heresy, for holding rationalist views regarding the authenticity of the Bible canon. If Hale White had only a limited knowledge of Spinoza by the time he came to Chapman's he would certainly have been aware of many of the ideas through the work of Strauss.

Heresy.

To understand why Hale White translated Spinoza's Ethic we need to get some feel of the ideas which caused his break from orthodox Dissent. For Hale White, Spinoza replaced the dead creeds of the church and yet, at the same time, his writings could never be described as coldly secular or purely rationalist. Hale White began translating Spinoza when his life needed something more than religious scepticism. He himself later described what was involved in the exclusion from New College:

> More than forty years ago the whole course of my life was changed by my refusal to slur over a difference between myself and my teacher on the subject of the inspiration of the Bible. I might easily have told him 'You and I mean really the same thing', or used some other current phrase contrived in order to stifle conscience. I might have succeeded in being content with a

> *mush* of lies and truth, a compound more poisonous than lies unmixed, but I was enabled to resist. I have never regretted the decision then taken. I can see now that if I had yielded I should have been lost forever. (LTF, p. 164)

When Hale White entered New College to train to be a Dissenting minister there was a steady stream of controversial theological studies going to press, all paving the way to his expulsion. The chain of influence proceeded mainly out of Germany from what has become known as Higher Criticism. The authors included Schleiermacher and Feuerbach, yet the book which had the most impact was David Friedrich Strauss's Das Leben Jesu, kritisch bearbeitet (The Life of Jesus, Critically Examined) first published in 1835 and translated into English in 1846 by Mary Ann Evans.

Strauss submitted each episode in the Bible to close scrutiny. His central claim was that the supernatural elements of the Bible, the miracles, were really a product of human myth-making, metaphors for divine power rather than actual events. Even the title of Strauss's book was an incitement to controversy, reducing the Son of God, a figure of faith, into just another subject fit for the critics' dissecting table. In his preface Strauss explained, in rather convoluted terms, the purpose of his book:

> The exegesis of the ancient church set out from the double presupposition: first, that the gospels contained a history, and secondly, that this history was a supernatural one. Rationalism rejected the latter of the presuppositions, but only to cling the more tenaciously to the former, maintaining that these books present unadulterated, though only natural history. Science cannot rest satisfied with this half measure . . . This is the natural course of things, and thus far the appearance of a work like the present is not only justifiable, but even necessary.[8]

In the name of scientific necessity the Bible was being stripped of the wonder of its miracles. Much of Strauss's language betrays a cold indifference towards religion; 'Science cannot rest satisfied . . .', 'this is the natural course of things . . .' Strauss justified his work on the grounds that it was inevitable and *reasonable* and untainted by bigotry or fanaticism. He was also keen to point out that his study was itself a form of disinterested research and meant no direct harm to the Christian faith:

> The author is aware that the essence of the Christian faith is perfectly independent of his criticism. The supernatural birth of Christ, his miracles, his resurrection and ascension, remain eternal truths, whatever doubts may be cast on their reality as historical facts.[9]

Despite these reassurances the real threat towards the essence of Christianity crouches in that slightly condescending word - 'perfectly'. The gap between eternal truth and earthly reality was now closing in, as Strauss was well aware.

In 1838 Charles Hennell, independently of Strauss, had published his much slighter work, Inquiry Concerning the Origin of Christianity. Like Spinoza and Strauss, Hennell tried to offer a rational explanation of miracles:

> The true account of the life of Jesus Christ, and of the spread of his religion, would be found to contain no deviation from the known laws of nature.[10]

The repetitious nature of these assertions, and the simultaneous publication of these books, suggest the arrival of a new orthodoxy. With Hennell the logical spirit of German philosophy found clear expression in the English language for the first time.

This scientific approach to the Bible was to have European implications, clearing the way for the materialist conception of history. The science which could not 'rest satisfied' with half measures pursued a relentless logic which would revolutionise human motives. Perhaps the most emphatic reader of

Straussian science was Karl Marx himself:

> The decomposition of the Hegelian Philosophy which began with Strauss had developed into a universal ferment into which all the 'powers of the past' are swept . . . Principles ousted one another, heroes of the mind overthrew each other with unheard of rapidity, and in the three years 1842-45 more of the past was swept away in Germany than at other times in three centuries.[11]

Strauss arranged for Hennell's Inquiry to be translated into German and it was Hennell, in turn, who persuaded a 'heroine' of the mind, Mary Ann Evans, to translate Strauss into English. John Chapman, who thrived on the unorthodox almost for the sheer thrill of being controversial, eventually published this book in 1846. It was against the work of these critics that the New College Senate were reacting when they expelled three of their unorthodox students; Hale White, Robert Theobold and Frederick White (no relation). Like many other orthodox theologians, Dr. Harris, the new principal of New College, now found himself having to define the role of inspiration in the Bible in ways that had never before been required.

Spinoza had already tried to establish that the Bible had been written and compiled by human beings and could be proven to be an incomplete book, not a perfect whole. He believed that the authors of the Bible were not actually transcribing God's words but expressing their own thoughts *inspired* by a moral or Divine Law. Spinoza also knew that these were dangerous ideas for anyone to hold yet his own expulsion from the synagogue only served to make him more determined to keep writing and defending his arguments:

> Those who look upon the Bible as a message sent down by God from Heaven to men, will doubtless cry out that I have committed the sin against the Holy Ghost because I have asserted that the word of God is faulty, mutilated, tampered with, and inconsistent; that we possess it only in fragments . . .

> However I have no doubt that a little reflection will cause them to desist from their uproar: for not only reason but the expressed opinions of prophets and apostles openly proclaim that God's eternal word and covenant, no less than true religion, is Divinely inscribed in human hearts, that is, in the human mind, and that this is the true original of God's covenant, stamped with his own seal.[12]

In October 1851 Dr. Harris presented his inaugural lecture on 'The Inspiration of Scripture'. He insisted, contrary to Spinoza, that the Bible, and all events in it, had to be accepted as the literal word of God, its thoughts and ideas, injected miraculously into the minds of the Bible's authors. If Harris had admitted otherwise he would have given Christianity a humanist basis and so robbed God of his ultimate power. One did not have to know anything about Marx or radical politics to worry about the future of the traditional church, or society, while the very authenticity of the Bible was being eroded by scholars. The issue seemed to open a theological Pandora's box. Harris wrote:

> Reason, not satisfied with interpreting the book, assumes to be its judge; and, with the appearance of rationalism, revelation disappears. Emotion, inward experience, under various names, assuming to be, not the mere light in which truth is to be studied, but as truth itself, gives birth to a pious mysticism, which modifies revelation at pleasure. In other words the claims of the Bible itself are now brought in question, and consequently the Divine authority of all texts and doctrines alike.[13]

In a place as small as New College unorthodox groups could not have gone easily unnoticed and it appears that Hale White and his friends were singled out for a special kind of theological interrogation. The following February, in 1852, the three students were 'examined' on Harris's lecture. Having had nearly five months to prepare for this examination the students put some pertinent questions to Dr. Harris about the authenticity of the Bible's separate books. They forced him to respond to the claims of Spinoza and German critics regarding the authenticity of the canon, hitting the very nerve centre of traditional Calvinism. Rather than admitting such a debate into the college, Dr. Harris shut the lid on it and expelled them all. Hale White recalls the Principal's words to the students in his Early Life:

> 'I must inform you that this is not an open question within these walls. There is a great body of truth received as orthodoxy by the great majority of Christians, the explanation of which is one thing, but to doubt it is another, and the foundation must not be questioned'. (EL, p. 64)

The terms of Dr. Harris's response - 'I must inform you' - and the fact that it was so carefully recorded by Hale White suggests that he was hearing a prepared statement of college policy, not a spontaneous condemnation. The students were being made an example of.

It is impossible to describe the impact of rationalism upon Christianity at this time without recourse to the same metaphor of a building under threat which Dr. Harris used here. Harris describes the church as a building under siege, the believers inside it, 'within these walls', like a sacred confederacy keeping the 'foundation' securely in place. In The Communist Manifesto Karl Marx published his well known secularist mantra on this same process of disintegration:

> All that is solid melts into air, all that is holy is profaned and men at last are forced to face with sober faces the real conditions of their lives and their relations with their fellow men.[14]

To the principal of New College, and to many others, the bricks of the church were being dissolved away by heretical ideas. Their censorship of the students was a defensive act, a last ditch attempt to secure an old way of life against what must have seemed like a Godless future.

It is important to bear in mind that the students acted, and were expelled, together. Without any precise record of what happened at the examination or how it was conducted, it is difficult to determine Hale White's exact role in what was really a collective act of heresy. Yet we do have a record of the defence argued by his father, William White. A bookseller, printer and lay-preacher at Bedford, William White wrote an extraordinary pamphlet about the expulsions, To Think Or Not To Think.[15] As well as discussing the immediate case of the three students, William White's pamphlet was born of a personal growing antipathy towards organised Dissent. He was a considerable polemicist and in this pamphlet he not only defends freedom of thought but washes his hands of all religious orthodoxy, citing the expulsion as necessitating a break from a dead, unthinking church. Beginning as a defence of free thought, To Think Or Not To Think becomes a manifesto for a wider standard of Christian belief:

> If all the pulpits of Dissenters were closed. What then! The world is wider than dissent; as much wider as the family of man is than a sect. There is ample room and verge enough outside of the extremist sectarian line for more teachers than there are within. Never was there a time, in my opinion, when there was a greater need, or a grander opportunity for a new movement. A movement apart from all sects - formed upon a wider basis - having nothing to do with dead orthodoxy, spiritless creeds, and cumbrous theologies. We want, the world wants, a renovation of the teachings of Christ and his apostles.[16]

To Think Or Not To Think is the product of a strong, forward-looking man who displayed none of the uncertainty or fear for the future that seems to have affected Hale White after this expulsion. William White, refuses to see the students as victims. He sees their expulsions as spiritually liberating and a triumph of Christian integrity over dead dogma. Addressing himself to the

College authorities he writes:

> I hope to see others expelled yet, unless indeed the Colleges see their error and repent. But if not, then let expulsions come every week till the last links are broken between ever young truth and old moribund orthodoxy - between the living and the dead. I believe that God has a vocation for these young spirits. As it was in Jesus's day so it is now . . . We must not, however, expect an even pleasant course for these young men. Whoever, in the world's history, spake the truth without meeting with persecution?[17]

While not blind to the consequences of the students' expulsion William White nevertheless underplays their predicament for the sake of making a bold heroic stand. For Hale White, the uncertainty and drudgery of the rest of his working life amounted to much more than a 'trifling inconvenience'.

Hale White was not a writer at the time of his expulsion and it was left to his father to express this critique of New College orthodoxy, William White doing most of the actual *thinking* for his son. It is significant that in The Autobiography, Hale White chose not to have Mark Rutherford expelled for heresy but instead allows him to become a minister and then leave the church of his own accord, as much a result of his boredom and isolation than his intellectual battles with orthodoxy. When Mark Rutherford gives up preaching the event is not marked by an heroic vision of a new spiritual era but with a sense of personal anticlimax:

> I determined to leave, but what I could do I could not tell. I was fit for nothing. (AD, p. 97)

In March 31st, 1852, The Nonconformist published a joint letter from the three expelled students, detailing the facts of their expulsion, an article which intended to draw public attention to their case. The students included a letter which they had already sent to the College Council in which they had put three urgent requests:

> 1st That our moral character should be placed above suspicion.
> 2nd That the opinions for which we are condemned should be explicitly stated.
> 3rd That we should be furnished with a copy of the creed by which we are judged.[18]

Again, these listed demands show evidence of William White's moral strategy and were really a rhetorical trap. William White was familiar with all the back issues of the Biblical Review, a theological journal edited by Dr. Harris. The review contained many essays supportive of the Higher Criticism and was known for its broad theological sweep. If the New College Senate could produce such a document containing their defined creed (a document which didn't actually exist) then Dr. Harris, and others, could easily be proven to have departed from it. The College was being invited to engage in a debate which could easily initiate its own self-destruction. If William White couldn't get the College authorities to recant, he could at least enjoy causing them as much public embarrassment as possible. New College ignored the demands, and William White duly complained in his pamphlet:

> I think that we had a right to expect that they would be promptly complied with; indeed, common decency and justice ought to have forced a compliance with the first. But if this be so, the Council have violated both justice and decency, for not only we got no compliance, *but no answer*. No, not a line.[19]

He not only set before his readers all the arguments against New College but his prose stings with his own impatience with unthinking institutions, with the inhuman. To Think Or Not to Think has a rhythm and life of its own; it is really the product of an autodidact, a proud, intellectual enthusiast. There is a similar concern with education and individual growth later found in Hale

White's own work, as well the same dynamic, anti-theoretical way of expressing ideas:

> Indeed, whether you know it or not, my friend, you cannot bind the thinker with a formula, he bursts it as Samson did the green withs.[20]

Compare this to Hale White's definitive response to those critics who he believed misrepresented Wordsworth's politics:

> It is so much more *brilliant* to shut up a man like Wordsworth in a formula than to confess we can but put down a point here and there which cannot be connected by any circumscribing outline. (Apostasy, p. 62)

The son's mind seems at once more delicate and more tentative than the father's robust rhetoric. Frequently, William White muses beyond the bounds of his immediate subject and expands more widely upon education:

> For be it remembered that a healthful soul is always growing; ever is his range of horizon widening - and unless the tutors be mere stereotyped pedants, they are always growing. And if they see that their pupils are sceptical on some subjects on which they themselves are settled, they ought to look back to their own history, and remembering the time when they passed through these clouds of doubt, they ought to be charitable to their pupils, and not turn harshly round upon them and say "come you must tramp, for you do not believe as we do". How is it possible that they should? How is it possible that the traveller, first commencing his journey, should be as far advanced as he who has been travelling for years. Oh it is miserable to see these constant attempts to interrupt the progress of the soul's growth . . . There must always be a now and a then in a growing soul's history.[21]

Throughout his essay William White, like his son, writes about the progress of the soul, much like Bunyan, as if all such free-thinking students were engaged on an endless journey which could never be stopped for the sake of orthodoxy; 'all honest thinkers are struggling thitherward'.

F. D. Maurice and Charles Kingsley both wrote letters condemning the expulsion, although Kingsley was shocked by the forthrightness of William White's claims, and advised caution:

> Your son ought to thank God for having a father who will stand by him in trouble so manfully and wisely: and as you say, this may be of the very greatest benefit to him: but it may also do him much harm, if it makes him fancy that such men as have expelled him are the real supporters of the Canon and inspiration of Scripture, and of Orthodoxy in general . . . But if your son would like to write to me about these matters, I do believe before God, who sees me write, that as one who has been through what he has, and more, I may have something to tell him, or at least to set him thinking over. (EL, pp. 74-77)

But Charles Kingsley was too late, the harm had already been done; Hale White was very much his father's son. All of Hale White's subsequent jabs at orthodoxy stem from his experience at New College in the spring of 1852 and this memory, a memory partially constructed by his father, surfaces in every area of his writing.

In his pamphlet William White had written that to some pastors the expulsion from New College would come as 'a recommendation, and a testimonial to integrity.'[22] It was John Chapman, Strauss's English publisher, who acted on the strength of these credentials and gave Hale White his first job as an assistant on The Westminster Review. In the Autumn of 1852, at the age of twenty and on the strength of his heresy, Hale White suddenly found himself admitted into the new liberal orthodoxies, and the enticing intellectual circles, of the radical, free-thinking press. Chapman seemed to have expected to find in Hale White someone whose religious scepticism would entirely match his own.

Hale White and The Westminster Review.

Before he employed Hale White, Chapman needed to know the extent to which this heretical student agreed with the kind of books he published. Although The Autobiography is semi-fictional and Early Life is *actual* memory, both books contain very similar descriptions of Hale White's interview for his new job:

> Chapman tested my heresy and found that I was fit for the propagandist work in No. 142 and for its society. He asked me if I believed in miracles. I said "Yes and no". I did not believe that an actual Curtius leaped into the gulf in the Forum and saved Rome, but I did believe in the spiritual truth set forth in the legend. (EL, pp. 82-83)

Hale White's 'Yes and No' answer completely agrees with Strauss's position on miracles in his preface, and indeed Spinoza's insistence that reason was a form of Divine Law. Hale White passed the test and moved into the London premises of the Review in a room on the first floor of number 142, The Strand. Chapman and his wife also lived at these premises and immediately below Hale White, at the end of a dark corridor, lodged Mary Ann Evans, the translator of Leben Jesu who would become the novelist, George Eliot. While Miss Evans edited the journal Hale White ran errands and helped with subscriptions. It is possible to trace the progress of this young assistant through some of the letters George Eliot wrote from Chapman's premises. This connection has not been made before, however, partly because Eliot never refers to Hale White by name but only as 'the assistant.'[23] The identification of this nameless figure slightly affects George Eliot's biography and more directly, Hale White's, making it possible to glimpse the kind of events which were recast in Rutherford's Autobiography.

There is no doubt that Hale White was uncomfortable at Chapman's. He made a small, yet consequential, mistake during the printing of the January number of the The Westminster Review ensuring that Miss Evans, whom he admired, had very little confidence in him. This progressive periodical totally depended upon the diligence and care of George Eliot. During a period of absence due to the death of her brother-in-law, the proof reading and printing of The Westminster Review was greatly rushed, having been left, reluctantly, in the hands of Chapman and his young assistant. On taking some proofs to the printer Hale White omitted an important advertisement, an advertisement already paid for by one of Chapman's main benefactors, the philosopher George Combe.[24] This small omission placed Chapman on even shakier financial ground. Combe complained to George Eliot, via Charles Bray, and she wrote back to Bray immediately:

> I am utterly dejected, and, on my own part, can only thank you for your kind words. Mr. Chapman, who is going to Brighton and has not time to write himself, begs me to tell you that he had taken every preliminary step towards the insertion of Geo. Combe's advertisement. He had seen it inserted in the assistant's book, and had given special instructions with regard to it . . . He thinks that the assistant's mistake was probably owing to the fact that there was an advertisement of Dr. *Andrew* Combe's works inserted - which advertisement was confounded with that of George Combe's works. I do not wonder at Mr. Combe's anger - still I am sorry for Mr. C. Many a worse man incurs less blame.[25]

This mistake was a very significant one in Hale White's life. It is this matter of Combe's advertisement which seems to be behind an important incident in Hale White's first novel The Autobiography of Mark Rutherford. After making a series of mistakes while working for Wollaston, the progressive publisher, Rutherford gives the printer false instructions concerning some proofs. It is

Theresa (the fictional counterpart to George Eliot) who discovers his mistake yet her sympathies remain with Rutherford:

> 'O Mr Rutherford,' she said, 'what have you done? I heard my Uncle distinctly tell you to mark on the manuscript, when it went to the printer, that it was to be printed in demy octavo, and you have marked it twelvemo.'
>
> I had had little sleep that night, I was exhausted with my early walk, and suddenly the room seemed to fade from me and I fainted. When I came to myself, I found that Theresa had not sought for any help; she had done all that ought to be done. She had unfastened my collar and had sponged my face with cold water. The first thing I saw as I gradually recovered myself, was her eyes looking steadily at me as she stood over me, and I felt her hand upon my head. (AD, pp. 113-114)

Rutherford completely loses his self-control and finds himself 'sobbing convulsively' on Theresa's lap while she comforts him:

> She gently lifted me up, and as I rose I saw her eyes too were wet. 'My poor friend,' she said, 'I cannot talk to you now'. (AD, p. 114)

It may be that George Eliot displayed much sympathy for the outcast and incompetent Hale White. He was twenty-one years old, ten years her junior and this was his first job after being expelled from college, yet there is a marked difference between Hale White's fictional account of their relationship and George Eliot's brief mention of him in her letters. A month after the Combe-blunder, George Eliot wrote to Bray:

> I am out of spirits about the *W*[*estminster*] *R*[*eview*]. The editorship is not satisfactory and I should be glad to run away from it altogether. But one thing is clear - that the *Review* would be a great deal worse if I were not here.[26]

The Autobiography is a fictionalised and retrospective account of a relationship which, in reality, must have been much more distant and awkward. Theresa's comforting of Mark Rutherford reads like a form of wishful thinking. Hale

White's essay 'George Eliot As I Knew Her' should really have been entitled 'George Eliot *Observed*'.

Yet there is another, more fundamental, reason why Hale White was not at home at number 142. He found that the intellectual climate generated by Chapman was negative and that rationalism in no way replaced the moral strengths, or the biblical language, of Christianity. Perhaps this also explains why Hale White's mind was never fully focused on his work as publisher's assistant. He wrote to his father on May 3rd, 1853:

> With all that you say I most cordially agree, most especially with what you say about *cold negativism*. Mr. Chapman is nothing so much of a negation merely as many of his books are, but I see, and must see infinitely more of his heartliness [*sic*] emptiness both in books and men than I ever saw before, and this drives me back again to my old eternal friends who appear more than ever perfect, and Jesus above them all. Granted that all that the Strausses, Foxtons, and Newmans have made out is correct - that there is no miracle, that Palestine's laws of nature were really England's, and so on, yet I turn round on them and say "You cannot deceive my eyes". Here are words in these gospels in black and white, and such words I maintain were never spoken before. No literary world here full of attempts at book and sentence making, no writing for the sake of writing, no thought of publishing here, no vain empty cleverness, attempted merely for the purpose of glorifying the writer in the reader's eyes, but simple solemn words, spoken as by one conscious of eternity round him . . . In the Bible I feel now at length do I see the real soul. Here I am heart to heart, hand to hand with a real human being.[27]

Nearly twenty years later, by which time Hale White was a journalist for the provincial press, The Westminster Review came under serious financial difficulties and a relief fund was set up to support it. Even in 1870 Hale White was not an enthusiastic defender of The Westminster Review:

> It never was a paying affair. Its non-success was entirely owing to bad management. The articles written by the gentleman just named were worth reading, but the general characteristic of the

> papers was a certain opaqueness and ponderosity which were anything but cheerful. Consequently the hat was passed round very frequently and the *Westminster Review* became little less than a literary mendicant. On the present occasion the Whip is for £1500 to pay off old debts. Mr. J. S. Mill has sent £100. I do not believe though that the *Westminster* will live. It has no life in it. (AH, Jan. 1, 1870)

It is important to realise that Hale White's translation of the Ethic[28] was not only a reaction against organised religion. He was taking a stand against a new way of thinking about life, a blasé rationalism personified by men like Chapman. For him it served (as Feuerbach did for George Eliot) to sustain a religious view of life in non-religious terms. Throughout his time at number 142 Hale White continued working as a lay-preacher at Ditchling, work which perhaps neither Chapman or George Eliot were fully aware of. In The Bible he felt he was 'heart to heart' with a real human being. Hale White had also kept up his links with those Christian friends who mattered the most to him and whose lives, in many ways, already seemed a part of the new religion his father hoped for.

One of the most important influences during the early 1850s was the Independent minister Caleb Morris. From 1849 Hale White constantly attended his services and in time Morris became a personal teacher. 'He *made* me' Hale White once told his second wife. (GD, p. 27). Hale White writes about Morris in a similar way in which he describes the impact of Spinoza upon his thinking:

> Caleb Morris, in many ways, was like Socrates. There was in both the disposition to lay hold of reputed realities, and to ask, looking them in the face, whether or not they were actually real. 'Wherein can it help me?' was the question Caleb Morris put. He distrusted institutions. (LP, p. 248)

Spinoza: A Lifetime's Work.

Hale White's translation of Spinoza's Ethic was his first intellectual labour as well as one of the first English translations of this book to be published. It was a work he was to revise throughout his life. There were, in all, four editions of Hale White's Ethic published during his lifetime, as well as his translation of Tractatus de Intellectus Emandatione published in 1894. The 1883 edition of the Ethic contained a thirty-four page preface by Hale White which, in subsequent editions, was extended to a further ninety-six pages, including a short life of Spinoza. As well as these translations there were six shorter essays and reviews published in various periodicals, the most important being the essay 'Spinoza' published in Pages From A Journal.[29]

Although not appearing until 1883, between the publication of The Autobiography and Deliverance, Hale White completed this translation over twenty years before he started the novels:

> The present translation of Spinoza's *Ethic* was completed more than twenty years ago, but at that time the interest in Spinoza was too slight to justify its publication. Latterly, however, a number of books and articles have been written about him, and it is hoped therefore that a rendering into English of his central work may stand a chance of being read. (Ethic. I, p. v)

This means that he must have worked on his translation sometime between 1854 and the early 1860s, in the period between leaving Chapman's and starting work as a political journalist in 1861. Curiously, this coincides with the exact same time that George Eliot also began her own translation of the Ethic in November 1854.[30] It is important, however, to sort out a few biographical dates lest we misinterpret the nature of George Eliot's influence.

George Eliot left number 142 in October 1853, four months before Hale

White. She stopped editing The Westminster Review in December 1853, prompting Hale White's departure in January 1854. George Eliot had already worked on a translation (now lost) of the Tractatus Theologico Politicus but this was abandoned in 1849, three years before she met Hale White.[31] Their respective translations of the Ethic were conducted independently, commencing from the time they were no longer in contact. Yet the spirit in which the two potential novelists read the Ethic was, essentially, the same. In her letters George Eliot would frequently quote an expression of Goethe's regarding Spinoza:

> Do you remember Goethe's wise words about reading Spinoza? 'I always preferred knowing what an author himself said, to knowing what others thought he ought to have said'.[32]

Hale White makes this same point in all of his prefaces:

> It is easy to obtain what is called a 'general view' of it; it is easy to follow a handbook; the difficulties begin when we study it patiently for ourselves. (Ethic IV, p. lxi)

Spinoza must have been widely discussed at number 142. Inspired by Goethe, both writers sought to read Spinoza for themselves and struggled to make sense of him from within their own minds and from their own intellectual and religious backgrounds, even though this approach posed several 'difficulties' for Hale White. Both George Eliot and Hale White had grown weary of the modern biblical critics laboriously picking the Bible apart in the name of science. Hale White insisted that while Spinoza, as author of the Tractatus, was a rationalist critic he was not a negative philosopher bent only on debunking ancient myths:

> It may be worth while also to remove one prevalent misconception as to Spinoza. He is usually supposed to be

> destructive. In reality he belongs in a remarkable degree to the constructive class. It is quite true that he is the founder of modern Biblical criticism, but he criticises merely in order to remove obstacles. Were he simply negative, his influence would have disappeared long ago. It is the builder and believer whom we worship . . . A closer acquaintance will prove that we have before us a temple. (Ethic I, pp. viii-ix)

In all of his prefaces Hale White insisted that Spinoza was more than a sophisticated metaphysician. Behind the complex web of definitions, axioms and philosophical terms Spinoza was unfolding a new *moral* diagram of life, 'a temple'.

Hale White missed the assurances of his early Christianity and feared that without any form of moral or religious framework life could become trivial and meaningless. He was increasingly concerned that art was being defined by the dilettantes, the cultural dabblers, and in his first preface he describes the effects of this ethical vacuum, a vacuum that seems to be expanding, like a disease:

> The germinating spot in all the dangers ahead of us is the divorce of the intellect from its chief use, so that it spends itself upon curiosities, trifles, the fine arts, or in science, and never in ethical service. The peril is, of course, the more tremendous, because the religions, which with all their defects did at least teach duty and invested it with divine authority, are effete.
> (Ethic I, p. xxiv)

The 'chief use' of the intellect for Hale White was in 'ethical service', in cultivating an awareness of our 'duty'. In translating the Ethic, Hale White was introducing other readers, like himself, to a new and reliable system of moral judgement. Hale White applied himself to Spinoza with the moral purpose of John Bunyan:

> The question which we have a right to ask of any person who professes to have anything to say to us is, *Wherein can you help*

> *me?* And this is the question we put to Spinoza. (Ethic I, p. ix)

I want to take a closer look at how Spinoza helped, or in some cases, confused Hale White. To read Spinoza through the eyes of Bunyan was to transcend the merely academic study of his metaphysics, yet such a reading, as Hale White discovered, was to prove a contradictory exercise. There were vital elements in Spinoza's ethical system which John Bunyan could never have lived with. Before we understand why this is we need to have some basic understanding of Spinoza's philosophical method.

The System

Spinoza had a mathematical and deductive way of understanding the actions and passions of the human race. His aim was to perceive human motives and emotions as clearly as he might be able to fix upon a certain star or a rock. The more clear, or the more adequate, our ideas become then the freer we are to think and live as our nature dictates. Hale White translates Spinoza's definition of freedom in the following way:

> That thing is called free which exists from the necessity of its own nature alone, and is determined to action by itself alone.
> (Ethic IV, p. 2)

The freedom to act from the 'necessity of our own nature' is basic to all living things and yet Spinoza is not only talking about the instinct for survival; the self-motivating word *determined* also exists in his equation. For Spinoza we become more ourselves through the operation of the intellect within our determined situation. It is impossible to act freely and *necessarily* unless we fully understand the motives and the consequences of our actions. For Spinoza freedom is synonymous with intellectual clarity; in the Ethic we have a kind of zen, a pathway to self-perfection:

> By *joy*, therefore, in what follows, I shall understand the passion by which the mind passes to a greater perfection: by *sorrow*, on the other hand, the passion by which it passes to a lesser perfection. (Ethic IV, p. 117)

That word 'passes' is important here. The idea of the mind gradually traversing across an infinite scale of perfection, from the lesser to the greater, is central to the pattern, and construction, of the Ethic. It was not written in a burst of inspiration but is the result of years of sustained, gradual unfolding, of carefully passing from one conclusion to the next.[33] At the beginning of the section translated by Hale White as 'On the Origin and Nature of the Affects' (that is the passions) Spinoza pauses to explain his method. In using his logic to understand such 'monstrosities' as 'hatred, anger, envy' Spinoza finds himself at the beginning of modern psychology, the science of the mind:

> It will doubtless seem a marvellous thing for me to treat by geometrical method the vices and follies of men, and to desire by a sure method to demonstrate those things which people cry out against as being opposed to reason, or as being vanities, absurdities, and monstrosities. The following is my reason for so doing. Nothing happens in nature which can be attributed to any vice of nature, for she is always the same and everywhere one . . . The affects, therefore, of hatred, anger, envy, considered in themselves, follow from the very same necessity and virtue of nature as other individual things; they have therefore certain causes through which they are to be understood, and certain properties which are just as worthy of being known as the properties of any other thing in the contemplation alone of which we delight . . . I shall consider human actions and appetites just as if I were considering lines, planes or bodies. (Ethic IV, p. 105)

Spinoza was aware that his logical approach to ethics was at odds with the superstitious age in which he was writing, yet he says 'it will doubtless seem a marvellous thing', as if controversy could be dismissed with a polite shrug. He demonstrates complete confidence in his method and, throughout the Ethic, bids his readers to slow down and not to turn the page until everything he says has been fully comprehended. In this passage he is explaining the deductive method by which he intends to unravel the knot of human passions. The exactitude inherent in his' certain causes' depends not only upon 'understood' but '*through*'. Time and understanding go hand in hand.

Good and evil do not exist in Spinoza's universe, at least not in the way that Bunyan understood them to exist. Spinoza employs his geometrical analogy precisely because he sees the universe as founded securely upon scientific principles. The idea of there being an autonomous force of evil at large in the world represents a departure from the true nature of reality. For Spinoza, the universe has no moral identity in itself, it is just a collection of 'things':

> Nothing happens in nature which can be attributed to any vice of nature for she is always the same and everywhere one.
> (Ethic IV, p. 105)

This is one of the 'difficulties' Hale White had with Spinoza and I shall return to this problem later in this chapter.

Spinoza always commands our absolute attention. He writes of human feelings and actions that they possess 'certain causes through which they *are* to be understood', as if such an understanding is inevitable and could be reached by anybody who applies himself as he has done. The very act of concentration is built into Spinoza's steady syntax. Unlike Mark Rutherford, Spinoza was in no rush to get anywhere:

> At this point many of my readers will no doubt stick fast, and will think of many things which will cause delay; and I therefore beg

> of them to advance slowly, step by step, with me, and not to pronounce judgement until they shall have read everything which I have to say. (Ethic IV, p. 58)

This 'step by step' approach to the complexities of life is one of the things Hale White most liked about Spinoza. Hale White was a writer of fragments, discontinuities. His books do not so much depend upon the logic of a good conclusion but on his flashes of insight, his bookish enthusiasm. Spinoza's systematic unity was welcomed by the novelist who frequently expressed the need for a coherent belief system. The enormous task of translating the Ethic begins to look like a self-willed attempt at absorbing Spinoza's 'mental thoroughness'. In his preface Hale White seems aware that his devotion to Spinoza contrasts very strongly with his own boundless capacity for doubt:

> Systems and creeds are much decried now, and deservedly; but everybody must have some sort of theory of life if he is to live as an intelligent human being, and he is bound, moreover, to see that so far as possible it hangs together and makes a whole. Spinoza is a singular, an almost unique example of mental thoroughness. His conclusions, too, have not been imposed on him from without, but have been reached step by step by himself and are so firmly held that he lives by them. (Ethic IV, p. lxii)[34]

Hale White admired Spinoza not only for the truths within his writing but for the virtue within his commitment, his self-imposed sanity. But there is an ongoing, inner struggle at the heart of Hale White's response here:

> Systems and creeds are much decried now, and deservedly; but everybody must have some sort of theory of life if he is to live as an intelligent human being . . .

There is great deal of back-tracking in this sentence. At first he appears to be defending religious systems from the modern age of doubt; systems are 'much decried *now*', then, in a spilt second, he adds 'and deservedly'. Then there follows Hale White's characteristic 'but' in which he flies again to Spinoza's defence; ' . . . *but* everybody must have some sort of theory'. Even though systems and creeds belong to the past Hale White insists that they are human and necessary; 'everybody *must* have some sort of theory of life'. Yet this does not sound like a very solid or reliable '*sort of*' belief. Hale White hopes that 'so far as possible it hangs together and makes a whole' - like a makeshift piece of philosophical DIY. The system-making that Hale White defends here is loosely fitting yet it is difficult for him to imagine an 'intelligent human being' existing without any form of belief.

In passages like this we can see Hale White arguing and struggling with himself, trying his best to get out of this worrying sentence, with its truths and counter truths, in one piece. Hale White never trusted any language which betrayed his own past, and yet, ever since his expulsion from New College, he knew that the past was something he could never go back to. Spinoza enabled Hale White to have things both ways. He could be both rational and secular without completely letting go of the faithful language of his past.

The Passions.

There were several key aspects of Spinoza's Ethic which Hale White constantly referred to and which need a little explanation if we are to understand something of the nature of Spinoza's influence. In Last Pages From A Journal is an essay called 'Revolution', this was one of the very last essays Hale White wrote before he died. He uses a few short pages to comment upon the revolutionary ideas which changed his life; one of these ideas is a direct quotation from the Ethic:

> The actions of the mind arise from adequate ideas alone, but the passions depend upon those alone which are inadequate. (Ethic IV, p. 112)

For Spinoza 'adequate ideas' are those thoughts which enable us to act from our true nature, the ideas we conceive most clearly and distinctly. Whilst *in*adequate ideas submit to passions, energies and motives which derive from a confusion of ideas and from imaginings. The word 'passion' in the Ethic is related to a temper or an uncontrollable desire, an acting out of pure emotion without taking account of the larger view. Because our passions are only partially understood Spinoza insisted, therefore, that we do not truly *act* from them. Instead, we become the slaves of our passions, we suffer from them. And so follows an axiom which Hale White says derives 'by direct deduction' from the first:

> The more perfection a thing possesses, the more it acts and the less it suffers, and conversely the more it acts the more perfect it is. (Ethic IV, p. 280)

The primary purpose of the Ethic is to untwine the passions and confusions of the affects, to think about how we can act more reasonably towards one another. 'The distinction between action and passion is one which is vital throughout the whole of the Ethic' (Ethic I, p. xiv) wrote Hale White:

> It is possible to think of any passion as we think of a crystal or a triangle, and when we do so it is no longer injurious. A man, for example, suffers an insult, and is hurried by passion to avenge it. He is a *victim* for the time being (*patitur*). A stream of images passes before him, over which he exercises no authority. But it is possible to break that series of images, - to reflect, to put the insult from him, to consider it as if it were an effect of gravitation or electricity, to place himself outside it, to look at it as God looks at it. This is to refer it to God's idea, or to have an adequate idea of it. (Ethic I, pp. xvii-xviii)

There are two voices here - the man 'hurried by passion', and the man who is tired of being his own victim; 'but it is *possible* to break that series of images'. The main problem for Hale White is not just to understand this abstract truth at his writing desk, but to be *use* it, somehow, within the impassioned moments of his actual life. How good it would be if, within the impulsiveness of life, one could obtain the objectivity of the scientist.

Throughout his life Mark Rutherford finds himself in exactly this sort of conflict with his passions. In many ways we can see the entire progress of his fiction as a gradual movement from confused self-absorption, from being a victim, towards this wider view, looking at life 'as God looks at it'. Hale White described his first book as a depiction of a '*victim* of the century.'[35] The whole task of the writer, therefore, is synonymous with the drive towards adequate ideas, towards finding the correct vantage point from which to see life.

In one episode from The Autobiography Mr. Snale, a chapel deacon, wrote an anonymous letter to a newspaper to complain about the unorthodox sermons that Mark Rutherford, the new minister, had been giving from the pulpit. On reading this letter Rutherford's passion gets the better of him and he immediately goes to visit Snale in order to sort the matter out. Very quickly Rutherford resorts to a stream of stiff, nineteenth-century insults:

> 'Mr. Snale, you are a contemptible scoundrel and a liar.'
> The effect on him was comical. He cried: 'What, sir! - what do you mean , sir? - a minister of the gospel - if you were not, I would - a liar' and he swung round hastily on the stool on which he was sitting, to get off and grasp a yard-measure which stood against the fireplace. But the stool slipped, and he came down ignominiously. (AD, p. 74)

All of Rutherford's later reflections on this incident resemble his thoughts on Spinoza's adequate ideas:

> When I got home I bitterly regretted what had happened. I never regret anything more than the loss of self-mastery. I had been betrayed, and yet I could not for the life of me see how the betrayal could have been prevented. It was upon me so suddenly, that before a moment had been given me for reflection, the words were out of my mouth. I was distinctly conscious that the *I* had not said these words. They had been spoken by some other power working in me which was beyond my reach. Nor could I foresee how to prevent such a fall for the future. The only advice, even now, which I can give to those who comprehend the bitter pangs of self-degradation as passion brings, is to watch the first rising of the storm, and say 'Beware; be watchful,' at the least indication of a tempest. Yet, after every precaution, we are at the envy of the elements . . . (AD, p. 74)

Published just two years after The Autobiography Hale White's first edition of the Ethic occupies much the same territory as this. Rutherford *is* that same man from the preface who suffers an insult and is hurried by passion to avenge it. Rutherford is 'distinctly conscious' that the words he had spoken had not come from himself; 'They had been spoken by some other power working in me which was beyond my reach'. Yet even in regretting this scene he still remains the victim of his own passions and refuses to face the fact that he may have been as unjust as Mr. Snale. This is a passage of stubborn 'and yets', of subtle evasions:

> I had been betrayed, *and yet* I could not for the life of me see how . . .

This appears to be to be the main difficulty Hale White had with the Ethic; he is continually thrown back by his own impulsive nature. He writes 'I had been '*betrayed*', as if he knows, secretly, that he is not as good a person as he hoped he might be; as he *pretends* to be. He can comprehend the Ethic, intellectually, even morally, from the comfort of his own study and yet he is still a moody, difficult man, capable of all the worst vices that Spinoza analyses.

Directly after the insult, Mr. Snale, nearly falling off his stool, tried to 'grasp a yard-measure which stood against the fireplace'. This yard-measure is Spinoza's geometry, a ruler as well as a walking-stick, with which the impassioned man needs to steady himself. Mr. Snale becomes Rutherford's victim, not his persecutor and when he got home it was too late to recognise this Spinozan truth.

In writing about Spinoza we feel Hale White cringing while he recalls his own weaknesses and failings. George Eliot also wrote against this same Spinozan backdrop of regret and self betrayal, although, unlike Hale White, she never implicates herself in what she writes. George Eliot's fiction is not confessional yet when Adam Bede fights the manipulative Arthur, Spinoza is watching from the wings, *feeling* with them, in the same way that he used to observe spiders fighting in the dust:

> The blow had been given now, towards which he had been straining all the force of nerve and muscle - and what was the good of it? What had he done by fighting? Only satisfied his own passion, only wreaked his own vengeance. He had not rescued Hetty, nor changed the past - there it was just as it had been, and he sickened at the vanity of his own rage.[36]

For Spinoza a passionate act of vengeance carried out, impulsively, against an unethical act does not constitute justice. Not only are the wrongs of the past still in place but revenge only succeeds in creating new wrongs. Adam was lucky that Arthur survived his 'iron bar' blow. Rutherford was lucky Mr. Snale did not break his leg. For both writers, passions, inadequate ideas, find dangerous physical expression in a world which has abandoned ethical reasoning.

In his first preface Hale White outlines Spinoza's five point plan by which the passions are to be understood and controlled, five answers to that pressing question 'Wherein can you help me?'. In the second edition he calls the plan 'Spinoza's scheme of salvation' (Ethic IV, p. lxxxii). The solution to passion lies . . . :

> 1. In the knowledge itself of the affects. (See Schol. 'Prop. 4, pt. 5)
>
> 2. In the separation by the mind of the affects from the thought of an external cause, which we imagine confusedly. (See Prop. 2, pt. 5, and Schol. Prop. 4, pt. 5)
>
> 3. In duration, in which the affections which are related to objects we understand surpass those related to objects conceived in a mutilated or confused manner. (Prop. 7, pt. 5)
>
> 4. In the multitude of causes by which the affections which are related to the common properties of things or to God are nourished. (Props. 9 and 11, pt. 5)
>
> 5. In the order in which the mind can arrange its affects and connect one with another. (Schol. Prop. 10, pt. 5, and see also Props. 12, 13, and 14, pt. 5). (Ethic I, p. xiv)

At first, Spinoza's solutions, and the complex language in which they are cloaked, do come as a rather confusing anti-climax to an urgent problem. Nevertheless, in his successive prefaces, and in his novels, Hale White attempts to *translate* his translation for the general reader.

Hale White associates point 1 with forming clear and distinct ideas of each affect and feeling, in the defining of individual feelings and emotions. Passion is born of a confusion which in turn leads to lack of personal control. Today we might associate this first remedy with the subconscious self and the need to unravel the hidden causes of behaviour. Hale White illustrates this idea with further corollaries from Spinoza:

> In proportion, then, as we know an affect better is it more within

> our control, and the less does the mind suffer from it. (Ethic I, p. xv)
>
> Prop. IV. There is no affection of the body of which we cannot form some clear and distinct conception. (Ethic I, p. xv)

It is after this definition that Hale White refers to the victim of passion, unable to 'put the insult from him'.

The 2nd point ('In the separation by the mind of the affects from the thought of an external cause, which we imagine confusedly') is a little more complicated and Hale White struggles hard to make it visible, tangible:

> We hate, not because of any injury done to us, but because it has been done to us by a person like ourselves. The misery consequent on it is out of proportion to the actual loss or pain. Spinoza impresses on us that really the only thing which need concern us is the actual loss or pain . . . It is the imagination, in fact, which wanders beyond the immediate *here* that is the cause of the mischief. (Ethic I, pp. xviii-xix)

We can begin to see the dispute with Mr. Snale glimpsed 'adequately'. With the help of Spinoza, Rutherford's revenge upon Snale can be seen as a form of self-infliction, an act made against a person 'like ourselves'. (How similar, in fact, is the name Snale to Hale.) On reading the letter from Snale, Rutherford at once fastens on its 'external cause', its author. The issue is personalised, his resentment is not for the injury done but because it is Snale doing it and in the process his own personal injuries are lost in the desire for revenge. Rutherford acts 'at once' without any degree of meditation or thought.

> There was no doubt that the author of this precious production was Mr. Snale, and I at once determined to tax him with it. (AD, pp. 71-72)

George Eliot also refers to Spinoza' 2nd solution in Adam Bede (the novel she wrote immediately after translating the Ethic). Mr Irwine tries to reason with

Adam over his deepening hatred of Arthur:

> Think of this: if you were to obey your passion - for it *is* passion, and you deceive yourself in calling it justice - it might be with you precisely as it has been with Arthur; nay, worse; your passion might lead you yourself into a horrible crime.[37]

Arthur and Adam mirror each other. In their passionate natures they are both distinct versions of what the other *could* have become and this is something they *both* have to understand if they want to live more freely. In writing about the transcending of injury Hale White and George Eliot are in Spinozan territory. Although the rhythm, the pace of their language is quite different the ethical pattern of their thoughts are very similar.

Hale White has the following to say about Spinoza's 3rd point, the solution which considered the *duration* of reason:

> The meaning, therefore, is that the ever present which occupies the reason will in time vanquish the affect due to that which is not present. Hatred of a person not actually before me will yield to the affects of the reason, because the objects of reason are always before me. (Ethic I, p. xx)

Hale White interprets Spinoza's 3rd remedy as a form of objectification. Rutherford was angry with Snale 'before a moment had been given me for reflection' but the permanent truth, the long-term view would avoided have this spontaneous outburst. If Rutherford had allowed himself to pause before blindly dashing off to see Snale ('I *at once determined* to tax him with it') the whole incident might have been avoided, his mind would have been too busy with other matters, with the 'ever present' and the hatred would, eventually, have dissipated.

Spinoza's 4th remedy against passion, an awareness of the *multitude* of causes, is again, carefully outlined by Hale White. This remedy is particularly significant for him:

> To exhibit the distinct moments of this remedy we note -
>
> Passion holds the mind to a single thought.
> It therefore hinders the mind from thinking . . .
> An affect, therefore, by which we contemplate a number of objects at the same time with the affect, is less injurious than an affect which holds the mind to the contemplation of one object . . .
> We look therefore to affects which are due to the commonest properties of things, *or to God*, as the remedy against the injurious absorption of the mind by passion. (Ethic I, pp. xxi-xxii)

Passion operates as an obsession limiting the mind to a single cause and is in the vulgar sense a 'passion' rather than a feeling. Mark Rutherford especially needed to nurture the sensibility which enabled him to 'contemplate a number of objects at the same time'. Many of Rutherford's problems derive from his intense dependence upon certain friends, or certain enemies. In many ways Rutherford's hatred (for example) of Mr. Snale finds its antithesis in Clara Hopgood's final act of heroism on behalf of the entire people of Italy. Clara Hopgood's giving of her self to Mazzini's cause of Italian Unity is strongly related to Spinoza's 4th remedy. Hale White, however, was always struggling with the *singleness* of his passions, especially where other people were concerned. His 'Notes' are full of attempts to struggle against his own possessiveness, his own emotional dependence upon individuals. In one 'Note' from Last Pages he suggests that a space in relationships had to be preserved for mystery and solitude:

> No matter how intimate you may be with your beloved there is or ought to be in her a mystery, a something unpenetrated and impenetrable. It is as necessary as that which is known.
> (LP, p. 317)

There is that deductive, Spinozan term, 'necessary'. Passionate love held 'the mind to a single thought'. Spinoza could really only approve of sexual relations, or as he coolly called them 'connection', if they were functional and 'contemplated a number of objects at the same time':

> With regard to marriage, it is plain that it is in accordance with reason, if the desire of connection is engendered, not merely by external form, but by a love of begetting children and wisely educating them; and if, in addition, the love both of the husband and wife, has for its cause not external form merely, but chiefly liberty of mind. (Ethic IV, p. 245)

The cause of human love should not merely be the desired other, (the object of passion) but something which is related to a multitude of causes; begetting children, education, liberty of mind.

Sexual intensity is not an emotion we readily associate with Spinoza. He was a solitary, monk-like figure who viewed passionate love as a necessary means to an end. Hale White seems to be regarding many of Spinoza's correctives to passion from a sexual point of view, the view which really concerned him the most. Another of the 'Notes' is quite open about this and yet the possibility of regarding desire from a wholly philosophical, *controlled* point of view is considered with quite a strong pinch of irony:

> A man may train himself to love, usually considered a spontaneous act, or at any rate he may train himself not to love. This he can do by inattention, by refusal to *dwell* on the object, by encouraging the growth of those thorns which choke the word. (LP, p. 265)

Throughout his fiction Rutherford is astounded by his own desires, by his own fixations upon other women:

> Mardon having gone to London, I was more alone than ever, but my love for Mary increased in intensity, and had a good deal to do with my restoration to health. It was a hopeless love, but to

> be in love hopelessly is more akin to sanity than careless, melancholy indifference to the world. I was relieved from myself by the anchorage of all my thoughts elsewhere. (AD, p. 87)

In this section from the Autobiography Rutherford contemplates his engagement to Mary. His intense love is seen as both healthy, 'akin to sanity', and yet later he is 'relieved' from it, as if it had been a burden, a self-deception. He is relieved by the 'anchorage of all my thoughts elsewhere', (Spinoza's 3rd remedy to the passions - duration). There is both that total belief in hopeless passions, as opposed to 'melancholy indifference', yet there is relief when he can put these passions to one side. Many other passages show Rutherford battling with his own sexual puritanism and expressing this battle in Spinozan terms. Spinoza's 4th remedy never distilled Hale White's worries about desire. Spinoza himself is ambiguous in his attitudes towards the physical, as we shall we see later from what he deduces about the relation between the body and the mind. It is difficult, in any case, to conceive of a remedy for a desire that was considered, instinctively, as a 'restoration to health'. George Eliot also needed to qualify Spinoza in his detached handling of love and desire. She explains how she can admire Adam's hopeless love for Hetty, however irrational it may have been. For George Eliot, mistaken love, inevitably tragic, is still a vital part of the soul's growth, to be avoided at the risk of avoiding life altogether:

> For the beauty of a lovely woman is like music: what can one say more? . . . Whence, I fear, the tragedy of human life is likely to continue for a long time to come, in spite of mental philosophers who are ready with the best receipts for avoiding all mistakes of the kind.[38]

Spinoza's 5th remedy was found 'in the order in which the mind can arrange its affects and connect them one with the other'. As we move in geometry from deduction to deduction so we should also link and connect the affects. Hale White clarifies this in his first preface:

> The mind has the power to form clear and distinct ideas and of deducing others from them. Consequently it has the power of arranging and connecting the affections of the body according to the order of the intellect. The mind, in other words, has the power of joining one idea to another. If I conceive a triangle, I conceive that its three angles are equal to two right angles. So I may chain (*concatenare*) hatred to love, that is to say, I may establish it as a rule that hatred is to be overcome by love, and the affections of the body will follow the rule. These chained demonstrations in morals are called by Spinoza *dogmata*, and these he counsels, as we have before noticed, we should always have ready for every emergency. (Ethic. I, pp. xxiii)

Even in this passage from the preface we can detect how difficult this process would have been for Hale White. The world of geometry, of triangles, is bland; once we have learn the formulas it is also predictable, it is a terrain of absolute truths, of graspable concepts. But if the human world could be seen with the same clarity and distinctness with which we perceive geometrical figures we would no longer be 'victims'. Spinoza wants us to establish axioms for our life which would have for us the irresistible authority of mathematics so that habit would act against impulse, like Clara in the last of the novels.

Spinoza used the mental image of a triangle as a basic blueprint of logic and order. In all of his prefaces and Spinoza essays Hale White directs the reader's attention to Spinoza's important mental triangle:

> A man conceives and understands the idea of a triangle. If he distinctly understands it, the affirmation that its three angles are equal to two right angles follows as a necessary consequence. This affirmation is really a type of all volition. He uses the same illustration in a letter to Blyenbergh, and he adds that a man is never more free than when he asserts this property of the triangle. (Ethic IV, p. lxvii)

For Hale White, and Spinoza, free will begins with our capacity to hold clear, deducible ideas:

> Volition is an affirmation which an idea involves.
> (Ethic IV, p. lxvii)

Behind every word of the Ethic lies a concentrated anxiety not only about theological ignorance but about human barbarism. The geometrical method of understanding the passions is really a superior kind of patience and tolerance when so much in the world seemed to be pitted against 'blessedness'. Spinoza was publicly and severely condemned by his own people for heresy, he was excommunicated from his synagogue and at one point there was even an attempt made upon his life, so it is not be so surprising that he spent so much of his time analysing hatred. He looks at it from every conceivable angle, quietly unpicking all the confused tangles of hatred as if he were diffusing a bomb:

> Hatred is increased through return of hatred, but may be destroyed by love. (Ethic IV, p. 143)

There is an astounding hope, yet realism, in Spinoza's axioms about hatred. Hatred '*may be*' destroyed by love. Yet love, for him, is an absolute, a real force for greatness however cool and dispassionate the form in which it is expressed:

> Hatred which is altogether overcome by love passes into love, and the love is therefore greater than if hatred had not preceded it. (Ethic IV, p. 143)

Hale White was inspired by the consecutiveness of Spinoza's moral vision, how he proceeds step by step, from axiom to axiom when dealing with the most emotional concepts. Again, in his preface, Hale White expands upon the moral vacuum which, for him, Spinoza fills after the 'decay of religion':

> These chained demonstrations in morals are called by Spinoza *dogmata* and these he counsels, as we have before noticed, we should always have ready for an emergency. So much for the remedies for the passions. We have now heard enough to convince us that to the question *Wherein can you help me?* Spinoza can give a solid answer. The truth is, that this book is really an *ethic*. It is not primarily a metaphysic. All there is in it which is metaphysical is intended as a sure basis for the ethical. The science of ethic is not much in fashion now . . . The decay of religion, however, amongst other innumerable evils, has also brought upon us this evil, that the purely intellectual with no reference whatever to the ethical is the sole subject of research, and a man devotes all his life to the anatomy of lepidoptra and never gives an hour to a solution of the problem how he may best bring insurgent and tyrannous desires under subjection or face misfortune. (Ethic I, p. xxiii - xxiv)

The need for adequate ideas, for steady 'chained demonstration' as opposed to a hurried 'stream of images' was a necessary balance to Hale White's impulsive instincts. The writings of Spinoza took on the role of a new, inner conscience.

Immortality

If Spinoza helped broaden Hale White's view of ethical conduct, so Hale White also demanded a larger, more conventional spiritual hope from his work. When it came to the question of the immortality of the soul, however, Spinoza proved even more complex and subtly elusive than ever. Hale White mentions the attraction of Spinoza's ideas on immortality in his autobiographical essay 'Revolution', he quotes a single sentence from the Ethic which he was to read and re-read more than any other:

> *The human mind cannot be absolutely destroyed with the body, but something of it remains which is eternal.*
>
> This proposition with its demonstration and those connected with it contain everything which I have found to be a reality touching

> the so-called immortality of the soul. The ground does not shake. (LP, pp. 90-91)

In his own study of the Rutherford novels, Wilfred Stone has written that 'Hale White keenly missed the assurance of immortality - missed it, perhaps, more keenly than any other item in his childhood faith.'[39] What did Hale White make of Spinoza's doctrine of immortality? How does this doctrine relate to Spinoza's unifying system of thought?

Now that the Christian miracles lacked scientific credence, proving or disproving human immortality became a preoccupation of many late-Victorian intellectuals. When The Westminster Review announced the arrival of Hale White's translation of Ethic in 1883, the same issue carried another weighty article casting doubt on 'The Belief in the Immortality of the Soul'. Although Chapman was no longer editor, nevertheless, the confident assault on religion (and the English language) continued in his sceptical old magazine. The 'soul' itself was now being put under the microscope and seemed to vanish, quite painlessly, beneath the weight of serious scientific scrutiny:

> The word 'soul' has a legitimate application in denoting a complex group of intellectual, emotional, volitional activities, but the fact that such activities are currently, conveniently comprised under one name, affords no sort of evidence that the unity thus created has any objective existence.[40]

Hale White would have read this article with great interest. It displays exactly the same rational scepticism about immortality that Mardon expressed in The Autobiography. The article is also a prime example of intellectual condescension; although seen as a 'legitimate' term the author concludes that the human soul, the very word used to express the very centre of human feeling and warmth, has no 'objective existence'. The article, with its detached semi-scientific terminology, lacked exactly what Hale White needed; an imaginative, compassionate engagement with life. It was not just the 'objective existence of the soul' that concerned Hale White but the fact it was an instinctive reaction, in so many people, to hope for more of life, to *not* want to die. The article continued:

> Either the human soul must be classed with chemical elements, and in that case its indestructibility will imply no continuance of its individuality, or it must be classed with living organisms, and in that case it cannot claim immunity from death.[41]

Spinoza's language, however, seemed to bridge the rational and the spiritual. His logic was not immune to the hope for some sort of continued life despite the scientific evidence to the contrary. In his preface to the first edition Hale White wrote:

> The majority of mankind, the vast majority, including even the best and wisest, cannot reconcile themselves to the thought of a blank hereafter, and derive from their hope the strongest stimulus to work and to patience. It is not so much happiness in the ordinary sense of the word which is coveted, but continued life, continued thought, and continued progress through that great and gradual revelation which unfolds itself to us from birth to death, and is gradually unfolding itself to the world. We cannot help feeling that it makes *some* difference if in a few more years we are no longer to be witnesses to the evolution of all that is now stirring amongst mankind . . . It makes *some* difference if we believe that the experience, the self-mastery, the slowly-acquired knowledge, the slowly-reached reduction to harmony of what was chaotic are to be stopped, and not only stopped, but brought to nothing . . . I trust I may be pardoned if, departing from the general plan of this preface . . . I attempt a somewhat more detailed examined of the propositions in which his teaching as to immortality is contained.
> (Ethic I, pp. xxx - xxxi)

For Hale White the soul was not just a 'legitimate term' but a necessary one, especially when so many people, at some stage, feared the pending nothingness of death. No matter how completely the soul might be explained away, human feelings, disappointments and hopes always remained; such rational scepticism left people - especially those who had led the most difficult, unfulfilled lives - with nothing to live for. Hale White writes 'we cannot help feeling that it makes *some* difference . . .', an echo of Spinoza's; 'nevertheless *we feel and know* by experience that we are eternal'. It is this insistent gut feeling that we are more than the sum total of our blood and bones which made Spinoza hesitate before renouncing the soul's immortality, an instinctive reaction to death which Hale White also shared. Yet Hale White was not looking for some mythical paradise of an after-life; his prefaces suggest he would be happy to settle for *more* of what he already has; 'not so much happiness . . .. but continued life, continued thought'.

Hale White, like many others, did not want to die if only because he would miss out on all that was about to happen *next*; it was his natural curiosity which made him want to keep going. It would be good to know that after dying one might be granted some immortal vantage point from which to observe the unfolding future, like some recording angel; 'to be witnesses to the evolution of all that is now stirring amongst mankind'. In an effort to unpick Spinoza's concept of immortality Hale White begins by summarising proposition 21 of book 5, a hard proposition to swallow given the need for that 'continued' witnessing of the unfolding of mankind. For Spinoza, alas, memory is resolutely secured to the life of the body. Spinoza's immortality, therefore, is not related to consciousness at all:

> The mind can imagine nothing, nor can it recollect anything that is past, except while the body exists. (Ethic IV, p. 268)

In a Spinozan heaven we wouldn't actually experience life in the fully conscious way we do now. However, brushing this disappointing thought aside for a moment, we return to unravelling the logic of Spinoza's philosophical system. 'Then' writes Hale White, anticipating the impact of the thought to follow, 'comes proposition 22-', what he called Spinoza's 'secret.'[42]:

> In God, nevertheless, there necessarily exists an idea which expresses the essence of this or that human body under the form of eternity. (Ethic IV, p. 268)

For Spinoza we are all fragments of the mind of God, fragments of the eternity of the universe. This essence of our minds, that which is considered 'under the form of eternity' and which has no relation to time, *survives*. In his second preface Hale White tried, very hard, to describe that part of us which is not related to time:

> The eternal part, therefore, is plainly that which is conversant with demonstrations, or that which is not affected by the duration of the body. (Ethic IV, p. xci)

'Conversant with demonstrations' means the part which is secure in its own logic or able to *think* with geometrical exactitude. This agrees with Spinoza's idea:

> For the part of the mind which is eternal (Props. 23 and 29, pt. 5) is the intellect, through which alone we are said to act (Prop. 3 pt. 3), but that part which, as we have shown, perishes, is the imagination itself (Prop. 21, pt. 5), through which alone we are said to suffer . . . Therefore (Prop. 40, pt. 5) that part which abides, whether great or small, is more perfect than the latter. - QED. (Ethic IV, pp. 280-281)

Although obscure and dotted with all those numbers and propositions (which give only the *appearance* of a kind of proof) Spinoza's immortality sounds more like the eternity of the specific ideas which the mind has held, an *intellectual* immortality. Hale White rattles these stubborn clauses for some solid sense he can grasp:

> We have got thus far, therefore, that the idea of this or that human body, that is to say, the mind of this or that human body exists in God under the form of eternity, inasmuch as each mind (Corol. Prop. 10, pt. 2) is a modification of some attribute of God, and expresses the nature of God in a certain and determinate manner.
> We now advance to the 23rd proposition - :
> 'The human mind cannot be absolutely destroyed with the body, but something of it remains which is eternal'. (Ethic I, p. xxxiii)

Spinoza's explanation seems at once definite and elusive; ' . . . *something* of it'. At the end of an exasperating attempt to pin down Spinoza's intimations of immortality, Hale White comments:

> Such is Spinoza's teaching. Although it becomes more intelligible like many other difficulties when it is fairly exhibited, it is still abstruse and many questions arise. (Ethic I, p. xxxvii)

It is strange that Hale White, such a plain-spoken writer, discovered so much of value in Spinoza's endless tangles of logic and religion. Partly as a result of his frustration, and partly as a result of the welling up of his own feelings, there emerges his own voice from all of the formulas and propositions:

> To sum up . . . What then, more exactly, is that idea, that part which is eternal or which is not expressed by duration? . . . It is the intellect as distinguished from the imagination which perishes. Spinoza affirms an immortality of degrees; the soul which is most of a soul being least under the dominion of death. Every adequate idea gained, every victory achieved by the intellectual part of us, is the addition of something permanent to us. Surely no nobler incentive to the highest aims and the most strenuous exertion has ever been offered to the world. Every deed of self-denial done in secret, every conviction wrought in secret, laboriously strengthened and sharpened into distinct definition by diligent practice, is recorded in a Book for ever with no possibility of mistake or erasure. (Ethic I, pp. xxxvii-xxxviii)

Significantly it is a '*Book*' that provides the most ideal image of Spinoza's immortality, as if the imperishable intellect is analogous to the voice of the writer caught in print, ‘recorded in a Book for ever with no possibility of mistake or erasure’. Hale White used Spinoza as a casting out towards his own voice and this is a strikingly emotional end to what up till now had been a very intellectual preface. The language of ‘strenuous denial’, ‘conviction’, ‘victory’, is derived more from the Pilgrim’s Progress than the Ethic. ‘Every deed of self denial done in secret . . .’ is reminiscent of the last page of Middlemarch, the unknown people ‘who lived faithfully a hidden life’.[43] This idea of an infinite intellect, somehow at one with the minds of individual men, would also have had strong Wordsworthian associations for Hale White:

> Wisdom and spirit of the universe,
> Thou soul that art the *eternity of thought*.[44]

Yet in Spinoza the word *soul* is not there. It is a big, emotional, deep word, even though The Westminster Review (a Richard Dawkins prototype) said it lacked ‘objective existence’. It is more reassuring to imagine the universe possessing a soul than a ‘mind’, or mere ‘form’. And ‘wisdom’ is more human, more caring, than ‘intellect’. Hale White scans the Ethic for these missing feelings, desperately hoping to find traces of the human soul in those passages of Spinoza which are just beyond his complete comprehension. Nevertheless it was reassuring for Hale White to know that Spinoza, a true rationalist, wanted to believe in *some* form of afterlife, even if this afterlife relates more to mental triangles than actual living people.

The hope for intellectual immortality can be found throughout Hale White’s works. His first fiction, Autobiography, opens with a poem about the death of a nameless man. Hale White seems to be picturing his own death although casting himself in the role of a solitary, a complete unknown. The poem also uses two voices, that of the dying man and of the other nameless writer who seems to be remembering this person's final moments, as if he had been there, watching him pass away, helplessly. The poem begins with the dying man trying to think of the continued existence of the world without the fact of his being there to see it:

> This is the night when I must die,
> And great Orion walketh high
> In silent glory overhead:
> He'll set just after I am dead.
> (AD, p. 7)

This person can predict, quite logically, the course of Orion and yet he also knows he will no longer be there to follow its entire path across the night sky. This is the poem in which Rutherford tried to anticipate the moment of death and at the same time ponder its relationship to the wider universe, the infinite. If there is one cosmic pattern for the stars, a pattern which we can faithfully predict then what, intellectually, can we say about the 'immortal grace' of the soul?

> For I was ever commonplace;
> Of genius never had a trace;
> My thoughts the world have never fed,
> Mere echoes of the books last read.
>
> Those whom I knew I cannot blame:
> If they are cold, I am the same:
> How could they ever show to me
> More than a common courtesy?
>
> There is no deed which I have done;
> There is no love which I have won,
> To make them for a moment grieve
> That I this night their earth must leave.
>
> *Thus, moaning at the break of day,*
> *A man upon his death bed lay;*
> *A moment more and all was still;*

The Morning Star came o'er the hill.

But when the dawn lay on his face,
It kindled an immortal grace;
As if in death that Life were shown
Which lives not in the great alone. (AD, pp. 7-8)

Beyond this small deathbed scene, the universe is still working, spinning, at once beautiful and utterly indifferent to the fate of this single man. And yet here the dawn light 'kindled an immortal grace', illuminated something of life on the face of the dying man. The poem ends with the strange verse:

Orion sank down in the west
Just as he sank into his rest;
I closed in solitude his eyes,
And watched him till the sun's uprise. (AD, p. 8)

It is as if *something* of the man is still there, perhaps even the slightest remnant of a smile, of relief, kindling in the light of the rising sun. There is a sense of expectancy, the watcher is utterly absorbed in the fact of what has happened before him, of the man who has just left him. There is the presence of thought, weighty ('sank down') and sustained ('watched him *till*'). Spinoza's scholia on immortality, although expressed in his own obscure, testing, philosophical terminology, occupies this exact same area of concentrated thought. That of a solitary intellectual trying not to despair, suspending judgement, waiting for something *else* to happen.

Final Causes

> There will now be no need of many words to show that nature has set no end before herself, and that all final causes are nothing but human fictions. (Ethic IV, p. 41)

The Bunyan Meeting, the Independent chapel which Hale White had attended with his parents, had always been strictly Calvinistic. The Calvinists believed in predestination, in the doctrine that God had already chosen them, the Elect, for salvation. Don Cupitt describes the Calvinist mind-set as 'entirely monarchical and juridical. It is a theology, not of reason and the understanding, but of power, authority and the will. The doctrine of God's sovereign predestinating decrees was pressed to its furthest limit'. (AD, pp. xiii-xiv). In Early Life Hale White remembers how, as a young boy:

> I had to feel assured that I, personally, was in God's mind, and was included in the atonement. (EL, p. 58)

We can see how much of Hale White's assertiveness as a writer stems from this dogmatic root. The Independents were, after all, standing outside of the established Church, isolated and yet proud. Intellectually, Hale White was always a Dissenter, a fighter, and yet Spinoza enabled him to combine all the best instincts of Dissent with a less narrow, liberal humanism. For Spinoza nothing in the life of man is predestined by a personal God.

Spinoza concludes the first part of the Ethic with a thorough, and at times out-spoken, denial of the doctrine of final causes. He wanted to prove to his readers that God has no ultimate aims for the universe as a whole. We are, he thought, living in an indifferent universe, a universe without rewards or punishments or even recognition. In God's eyes, we are as significant as the merest speck of dust, as natural as stones. The duty of the philosopher, therefore, is to help people to live not in an imaginary world of false consolations and false fears, but in the real world, an intellectual feat which is not only possible but, in the long run, better for us as well. Spinoza's logic on this point is uncompromising:

> God directs nature according to the requirements of universal laws, not according to the requirements of the particular laws of human nature, and that therefore, God's scheme comprehends, not only the human race, but the whole of nature.[45]

Spinoza grows impatient with the doctrine of final causes and mockingly describes the 'new species of argument' employed to make such a theory work. (Ethic IV, p. 42) He calls this way of thinking '*reductio ad ignorantiam*' and he illustrates his point with an occurrence from everyday life:

> For, by way of example, if a stone has fallen from some roof on somebody's head and killed him, they will demonstrate in this manner that the stone has fallen in order to kill the man. For if it did not fall for that purpose by the will of God, how could so many circumstances concur through chance (and a number often simultaneously do occur)? You will answer, perhaps, that the event happened because the wind blew and the man was passing that way. But, they will urge, why did the wind blow at that time, and why did the man pass that way precisely at the same moment? If you again reply that the wind rose then because the sea on the preceding day began to be stormy, the weather hitherto having been calm, and that the man had been invited by a friend, they will urge again - because there is no end of questioning - But why was the sea agitated? why was the man invited at that time? And so they will not cease from asking the causes of causes, until a last you fly to the will of God, the refuge for ignorance. (Ethic IV, p. 42)

'There is no end of questioning'. It is as if Spinoza is transcribing an actual debate from his life. After every such unfortunate or tragic event there emerges that pained and indignant, 'why', demanding an explanation for what has happened. Yet Spinoza refuses to be sentimental about human misfortune; the stone fell because it had worked its way loose, the man was unlucky to be there at that moment. Spinoza is scornful of anyone who would have the world framed in any other way, as if the falling stone represented some mysterious form of God-given punishment. This debate about final causes also harks back to Spinoza's arguments regarding miracles in the Tractatus, the very arguments which caused his expulsion from the synagogue:

> Who desires as a wise man to understand nature, and not to gape at it like a fool, is generally considered and proclaimed to be a heretic. (Ethic IV, p. 43)

Spinoza's denial of final causes has much wider implications than this facing-up to chance events. Spinoza is inciting his readers to embrace a new, tougher, moral realism. The man was killed for no reason, the stone was neither a punishment nor a blessing, it just happened to fall. Neither was Adam, the first man, tempted by evil to bite the forbidden fruit. God, Spinoza argues, *created* Adam; if Adam sinned against God, then God; 'would have understood something contrary to His will' (Ethic, IV, p. lxxvi). How then to explain the central Christian notion of 'sin' without the figure of a disapproving, punishing God?

Matthew Arnold wrote at length on Spinoza's denial of final causes in 1863 and understood the implications immediately. His arguments echo Hale White's own contradictory responses to Spinoza:

> His denial of final causes is essentially alien to the spirit of the Old Testament, and his cheerful and self-sufficing stoicism is essentially alien to the spirit of the New. The doctrine that 'God directs nature, not according as the particular laws of human nature, but according as the universal laws of nature require,' is at utter variance with that Hebrew mode of representing God's dealings, which makes the locusts visit Egypt to punish Pharaoh's hardness of heart, and the falling dew avert itself from the fleece of Gideon.[46]

Arnold was still drawn to Spinoza because, despite his apparent atheism, he used 'the name of God', yet this thought would have been of little consolation to the relatives of the man killed by the falling stone. Hale White, also, at first seems reticent on this point. His anxiety about Spinoza's denial of final causes reveals itself in a single sentence in the preface to the fourth edition about the significance of pain. It was instinctive for Hale White to take pain, however small, *personally* - as if it was intended either as a punishment or as a warning from God. As such, pain is a source of meaning for him and not something to be dismissed with a confident intellectual shrug:

> It is strange that Spinoza makes no reference, or scarcely any, to pain, and it can hardly be admitted that pain is nothing positive or mere privation. (Ethic IV, p. lxxvi)

Charles Swann's scrutiny of the second edition of this preface has revealed that an entire page has been cut after this sentence. Although obviously torn by many of Spinoza's theological ideas about pain and punishment Hale White, nevertheless, found they expressed a more enlightened, progressive attitude to life, a new basis for the 'whole treatment of man'. If pain is a purely natural inevitable phenomena then so is sin. Again Hale White uses Spinoza as a launching point for his own liberalism:

> Is pain also nothing positive, mere privation? Is the mystery of agony solved by the theory that to God material was not wanting to create those who suffer? Notwithstanding its inefficiency as an all-embracing explanation, Spinoza evidently believes that the truths he has enunciated towards the close of the second and the beginning of the fourth book of the *Ethic* are a message to the world, and they are the basis of his whole treatment of man. We may also say at least as much as this - that once we have made Spinoza real to us, our attitude towards human beings and our conception of what punishment should be will be entirely altered. All that portion of man which was considered by theologians as the domain of the devil becomes as truly the man as his virtues. We may even affirm that we are saved as much by our sins as our virtues. 'In the stringed instrument of man,' says Jean Paul, 'there is no string to be cut out; it needs but to be tuned,'. All vindictiveness also at once disappears: we shall never punish in order to gratify revenge, or because we imagine any penalty to be divinely attached to crime, except for the purpose of reformation. Nature knows nothing of penalties. She corrects in order to obtain a result. The practical effect of the teaching, duly laid to

> heart, will in fact be immense. Not for an hour to those who have children will it cease to be operative, for the mother and father will see limitation where they would otherwise have seen sin, and will chastise merely in order to amend. They will recognise that the creature thus limited and the very limitation itself are the work of God. Hell, to put it briefly, is forthwith abolished, understanding by hell all retribution and nothing more; for many of us who have ceased to believe in hell as a dogma of the Church, continue to believe in it essentially by inflicting pain simply because wrong is supposed to deserve it. The desert of the wrong doer is henceforth discovered to be nothing more than the desert to be put right.
> (Ethic II, pp. lxxviii-ix)

Hale White's opinions would always fluctuate upon this point - perhaps the reason this passage was removed from subsequent editions - yet Spinoza's view of sin challenges the way that people are traditionally educated and punished. Spinoza, he claims, saw sin as a vital aspect of human nature rather than an infiltration of evil, outside forces; something within us which needs to be understood, refined, controlled rather than merely punished for its own sake. 'Nature knows nothing of penalties. She corrects in order to obtain a result'. Hale White has found in Spinoza, a psychological replacement of traditional religious values; 'the mother and father will see limitation where they would otherwise have seen sin.' Yet we can also detect Hale White flinching while he abolishes 'hell' and 'sin' from his vocabulary. However much Spinoza theorised human motives and actions, his central concern - of how best to modify 'the desert of the wrongdoer' - was one that was also shared by the Puritans. Hale White still reads Spinoza like a Puritan, and he still values the old myths and metaphors of the Bible.

Hale White felt that he had to add a 'Supplementary Note on the Devil' to his essay 'Spinoza' (in Pages From A Journal) if only to assert his strong sense of good and evil, of moral opposites:

> The Devil is not an invention of priests for priestly purposes, nor is he merely a hypothesis to account for facts, but he has been forced upon us in order that we may be able to deal with them. Unless we act as though there were an enemy to be resisted and chained, if we fritter away differences of kind into differences of degree, we shall make poor work of life . . . Consciousness seems to testify to the presence of two mortal foes within us - one Divine and the other diabolic. (PJ, pp. 58-59)

In this passage, Hale White is both holding on to his old, Bunyan language while interpreting hell in a new Spinozan, humanist, way; 'unless we act *as though* there were an enemy'. 'Evil' becomes not an exterior, devilish presence but a crucial element in our interior, moral and psychological make-up; 'Consciousness seems to testify to the presence of two mortal foes *within us*'. And although he denied the existence of an ultimate moral aim in the universe, even Spinoza still found the word 'evil' a useful one, much like Hale White.[47] There are moments in the Ethic when we even catch Spinoza struggling with himself, unsure if he is only replacing the same old myths with a new set of dazzling intellectual metaphors:

> With regard to good and evil, these terms indicate nothing positive in things considered in themselves, nor are they anything else than modes of thought, or notions which we form from the comparison of one thing with another . . . But although things are so, we must retain these words. For since we desire to form for ourselves an idea of man upon which we may look as a model of human nature, it will be of service to us to retain these expressions in the sense I have mentioned. By *good*, therefore, I understand in the following pages everything which we are certain hinders us from reaching that model. By *evil*, on the contrary, I understand everything which we are certain hinder us from reaching that model. (Ethic IV, p. 179)

To read the Ethic, carefully, is to witness the gradual construction of humanism. Spinoza saw 'evil' as a blocked morality, as anything which hinders compassion rather than as a supernatural force; as the failure of the heart to feel or the intellect to understand.

Hale White returns to the debate about final causes in his essay 'Notes on the Book of Job' published with his novel Mark Rutherford's Deliverance. This essay reads Job through Spinozan eyes. Rather than wonder why he has been singled out for extreme suffering Job has no alternative but to broaden his vision of God:

> Job demands of his opponents that they should come out into the open universe. If they will but lift up their eyes across the horizon which hitherto has hemmed them in, what enlargement will not thereby be given to them! Herein lies the whole contention of the philosophers against the preachers. The philosophers ask nothing more than that the conception of God be wide enough to cover *what we see*; that it shall not be arbitrarily framed to serve certain ends. (D, p. 145)

Throughout his life Hale White would be tempted to return to the comforting, familiar figure of the God he had known since a child, (perhaps the largest temptation to return to this God came from his second wife) yet his vision remained resolutely secular. He was braced for a world without final consolations, final causes. Most of Hale White's characters have to suffer sudden, undeserved catastrophes, and Hale White deals with the facts of their lives as if they were just that, harsh facts to be endured. The butterfly catcher, for example, in The Autobiography:

> I found that years ago he had married a delicate girl, of whom he was devotedly fond. She died in childbirth, leaving him completely broken. Her offspring, a boy, survived, but he was a cripple, and grew up deformed. (AD, pp. 95-96)

Yet the language in which he chose to express Spinozan ideas never rested easily with those cold facts but was almost certain to embrace a form of hope, a largeness of spirit. Hale White's moral realism expressed not only the harsh facts of life but an emotional *need*:

> God reminds us of His wisdom, of the mystery of things, and that man is not the measure of His creation. The world is immense, constructed on no plan or theory which the intellect of man can grasp. It is *transcendent* everywhere. (D, p. 155)

This statement could be taken both ways; that there *is* such a thing as God's plan, something far too complex, too big for us mortals to grasp, or that, conversely, this plan is just another way of expressing the mysteries of *natural* science yet to be understood. Spinoza's influence on so many who read him was such that God became a flexible term, evoking the physical *and* the spiritual. Yet what is certain here is that Hale White preferred his own language to be *personal*, not intellectually hollow or indifferent to suffering. 'God reminds us of his wisdom' sounds more human, and went much deeper than Spinoza's clever, yet rather dead-pan, formulas:

> A final cause, as it is called, is nothing, therefore, but human desire, in so far as this is considered as the principle or primary cause of anything. (Ethic IV, p. 178)

The Unity of Mind and Body

In many instances of Hale White's fiction, the body is associated with sexual temptation and passionate desire. Although Hale White would often write as a kind of self-censor, suppressing or concealing such basic urges when they surfaced, the inner-puritan never quite got the upper hand. In his essay 'Revolution' Hale White mentions one other important idea of Spinoza's which had a marked effect upon this aspect of his life. Again, at first it is difficult to understand exactly what it was about such formal, complex thoughts which spoke so profoundly to Hale White. Spinoza, after all, was not a sensual poet but a very testing, almost mathematical philosopher:

> A saying of Spinoza's which I first read fifty years ago, has remained with me ever since:
>
> 'The mind and the body are one and the same individual, which at one time is considered under the attribute of thought, and at another under that of extension'.- (Prop. XXI, pt. 2, *Schol.*).
>
> This follows because by Prop. VII, pt. 2, *Schol*:
>
> 'substance thinking and substance extended are one and the same substance, which is now comprehended under this attribute and now under that.'
>
> It is possible to feel a truth profoundly, to be able to appropriate almost all that is in it, to be so penetrated by it that without it we should be entirely different from what we are, and nevertheless we cannot give a definite interpretation of it. These scholia loosened each difficulty which arose from considering matter as a thing by itself set over against thought as a thing by itself.
> (LP, pp. 89-90)

The Puritan in Hale White was always torn by the passions and instincts which derived from his physical body. Hale White's language is a curious mixture here. This fragment of Spinoza seems to have liberated Hale White in an instant, to have freed his thinking, 'loosened each difficulty'; his soul suddenly uncramped. Yet this discovery about the relationship between the body and the mind was also something he brooded upon at length - 'That which I first read fifty years ago has remained with me ever since' - because he has not fully resolved its intellectual, moral consequences. The idea of the unity of the mind and body has taken on the aspect of a hypothesis, offering only a glimpse of something, a *potential* freedom; the chains only 'loosened' not cast off.

Hale White's language is cryptic, especially as he has so little to say on this revolutionary idea, he merely passes on to his next paragraph, yet the resonances within his writing are psychological. The word 'difficulties', because of its tact, has intimate connotations, like an expression of sexual guilt, a psychological burden which he has carried with him. Hale White's language is discreet and yet there are close parallels with Bunyan, especially with that word 'loosened:

> So I saw in my dreams, that just as Christian came up with the cross, his burden loosed from off his shoulders, and fell from off his back; and began to tumble, and so continued to do.[48]

Thought and body, for Spinoza, were both complimentary and yet unified parts of the individual. The mind necessary for the movement, the expression of the body; the body necessary for the thoughts and impressions of the mind. The body, he said, *thinks* itself through the mind. Spinoza turns this concept round and round in his palm until it becomes a truth seen from a variety of angles. He insists on the physicality of our thoughts, on our oneness with the material world in which we live, move and breathe. Our bodies are not mere vessels for our souls but the very stuff of our deepest thoughts. We *are* our hearts and bones. Far from seeing the body as an enemy to be crushed, Spinoza saw it as a source of wonder and ingenuity:

> *Postulate 1.* - The human body is composed of a number of individuals of diverse nature, each of which is composite to a high degree.
>
> *Postulate 2.* - Of the individuals of which the human body is composed, some are fluid, some soft and some hard.
>
> *Postulate 3.* - The individuals composing the human body, and consequently the human body itself, are affected by external bodies in many ways.
>
> *Postulate 4.* - The human body needs for its preservation many other bodies by which it is, as it were, continually

> regenerated . . .
>
> PROP. XIV. - *The human mind is adapted to the perception of many things, and its aptitude increases in proportion to the number of ways in which its body can be disposed.*
> (Ethic. IV, pp. 65-66)

Truths which today we take for granted about mental well-being and freedom of thought Spinoza links, quite naturally, to our physical being:

> To make use of things, therefore, and to delight in them as much as possible (provided we do not disgust ourselves with them which is not delighting in them), is the part of a wise man. It is the part of the wise man, I say, to refresh and invigorate himself with moderate and pleasant eating and drinking, with music, with sports, with the theatre, and with all things of this kind which one man can enjoy without hurting another. For the human body is composed of a great number of parts of diverse nature, which constantly need new and varied nourishment, in order that the whole body may be equally fit for everything which can follow from its nature, and consequently that the mind may be equally fit to understand many things at once. (Ethic IV, pp. 217-218)

The fitness of the mind here is linked with the variety of physical and intellectual enjoyment in the world. Spinoza writes about 'the whole body' as something with 'diverse' yet interrelated needs. 'Composed' is like Jean Paul's 'it needs to be tuned'. Spinoza himself, however, rarely practised what he preached, hardly ever ventured out of doors and died of near starvation. To read the Ethic is to be in the company of an obsessive recluse who passed most of his life writing away in a darkened room.[49] And this is one of the predominant contradictions of the Ethic; the prose, at times, seems disembodied and abstract while we can always feel Spinoza imagining, longing for a more enriched, complete way of life. Hale White wrote in his fourth edition preface:

> If matter and spirit are one, it follows that body and mind are one, and body becomes 'the object of the idea constituting the

> human mind', or as Lessing puts it, 'the soul is nothing but the body thinking itself, and the body is nothing but the soul as extension' . . . This is really the basis of the whole psychology of the *Ethic*, and this is Spinoza's mode of escape from the antithesis of matter and spirit. He is neither materialist nor spiritualist, for he is both. Mind is just as true as body, and is 'part of the infinite intellect of God'. (Ethic IV, p. lxv)

Rather like 'loosened difficulties' the 'antithesis of matter and spirit' is something we might 'escape' with Spinoza's help. That word, 'escape', is important. Hale White always had problems in considering the morality of the body; curiously it was Spinoza, the most cerebral man one could imagine, who helped him.

In many instances of Hale White's fiction and writings, the body is associated with sin, the theological antithesis of his intellectual origins. His feelings as to sexual relations were ambiguous and torn from different sides. How can mind and body be unified? How could Pauline Caillaud dance like that, without shame, before the puritan, Zachariah?

> Zachariah was in sore confusion. He had never seen anything of the kind before. He had been brought up in a school which would have considered such an exhibition as the work of the devil. He was distressed too to find that the old Adam was still so strong within him that he detected a secret pleasure in what he had seen. He would have liked to have denounced Jean and Pauline, but somehow he could not. His great, great grandfather would have done it, beyond a doubt, but Zachariah sat still.
> (RTL, p. 75)

In this triumphant moment in Revolution Zachariah decides to just sit there, transfixed by the beautiful sight of Pauline dancing, while his 'great great grandfather' would have got up and left in disgust. This 'secret pleasure' in Pauline's sensuality and physical freedom is precisely the sort of difficulty which Spinoza's doctrine would have loosened. Pauline's dance is seen as a perfect example of the unity of body and mind; 'designed apparently to show the capacity of a beautiful figure for poetic expression'. He tries to forget her physical presence yet, walking home, Zachariah still has the image of her body firmly planted in his mind's eye:

> From his youth upwards he had been trained with every weapon in the chapel armoury, and yet he now found himself as powerless as the merest novice to prevent the very sinful dwelling upon every attitude of Pauline, and outlining every one of her limbs. Do what he might, her image was ever before his eyes, and reconstructed itself after every attempt to abolish it, just as a reflected image in a pool slowly but inevitably gathers itself together again after each disturbance of the water. When he got home, he found, to his surprise, that his wife was still sitting up. She had been to the weekly prayer meeting, and was not in a very pleasant temper. She was not spiteful, but unusually frigid. (RTL, pp. 77-78)

The mobility and freedom of Pauline's dance is in lively contrast with the stiffness, *the sitting-stillness* of Mrs Coleman. Pauline's physical act has a wholeness, 'gathers itself together', different from the dull prayer meetings which only the 'unusually frigid' seem to enjoy. Zachariah has two distinct creeds battling for position in his head. He is aware that he is, in Spinozan terms, suffering from a passion and yet Spinoza's doctrine also seems to have authorised that very same dance. These were the exact 'difficulties' Hale White spoke about regarding Spinoza; passion is both a form of slavery from which he seeks release and yet, at the same time, a part of our wholeness and vitality. The two heretics continually circle the problem of desire in similar ways. Spinoza gave Hale White few original ideas; rather he helped him, through bold, systematic reasoning, to perceive more fully the inner workings and contradictions of his own heart.

But Spinoza's theory of the unity and body and mind did not only have sexual connotations. For Hale White intellectual freedom was closely connected to physical health and movement. In an essay about Godwin's narrowing, unimaginative influence upon Wordsworth he once wrote:

> This, then, is the moral - that certain beliefs, at any rate with men of Wordsworth's stamp, are sickness, and that with the restoration of vitality and the influx of joy they disappear.
> (MP, p. 214)

In The Early Life Hale White recollects the physical oppression (and this is more of a description of physical oppression than doctrinal hypocrisy) of Sunday Chapel:

> Sunday however was not happy. I was taken to a religious service morning and evening, and understood nothing. The evening was particularly trying. The windows of the meeting-house streamed inside with condensed breath, and the air we took into our lungs was poisonous. Almost every Sunday some woman was carried out fainting. Do what I could it was impossible to keep awake. When I was quite little I was made to stand on the seat, a spectacle, with other children in the like case, to the whole congregation, and I often nearly fell down, overcome with drowsiness . . . Bathing on Sunday, as the river was always before me, was particularly prominent as a type of wickedness, and I read in some books for children, by a certain divine named Todd, how a wicked boy, bathing on the Sabbath, was drawn under a mill-wheel, was drowned and went to hell. (EL, pp. 45-46)

The same antithesis between matter and spirit which crushed the bathing child beneath the mill wheel, placed Zachariah in 'sore confusion' before Pauline. Yet the most significant part of this fragment from The Early Life are those rebellious words; 'as the river was always before me'. It takes us back to Hale White's later thoughts on Spinoza: ' . . . has remained with me ever since'. There is real continuity between the older philosophical Hale White and the inner freedom of the young boy, unwilling to resist the refreshing river. Spinoza seems only a more sophisticated, intellectually approved version of a truth which Hale White knew, instinctively, from his boyhood.

This preoccupation with the physical conditions of life, and how these conditions determine the inner life of men and women was to become a central theme of Hale White's political journalism throughout the 1860s. The spiritual materialism of Spinoza is there in everything Hale White wrote. Although his translation of The Ethic was meticulous (and in many respects *unending*), Hale White almost seemed to have welcomed the distinct form of intellectual discipline which the study imposed upon his life. Shortly before finishing his lengthy second preface, he wrote to his son Jack:

> I have been trying for six months to revise my Spinoza for a second edition and to write a new preface. It keeps me enveloped, but whether I shall finish it I cannot say. I like the work, for I am rather peculiar in my love for what takes me a long time. Not till I have got thoroughly into a thing, do I care much for it. My interest is aroused when that of ordinary mortals begins to flag. Goodbye.[50]

Notes.

1. G. H. Lewes, 'Spinoza,' Fortnightly Review (April 4, 1866), p. 386.

2. G. H. Lewes, 'Spinoza's Life and Work,' The Westminster Review No. 39 (May, 1843), pp. 372-407.

3. George Eliot, The George Eliot Letters Vol. I, ed. Gordon S. Haight (London: OUP, 1954), p. 158; hereafter cited as G. E. Letters.

4. EL, p. 21. See also: Matthew Arnold, 'A Word More About Spinoza,' Essay Literary and Critical (London: Dent, 1906), p. 182: 'Goethe is but the eminent representative of a whole order of minds whose admiration has made Spinoza's fame'. The Colbeck Collection, in the University of British Columbia, also has a copy of Goethe's 'The Erl King' translated by Hale White in 1851 as well as his poem 'To the Moon', translated in 1857.

5. J. W. Goethe, The Autobiography of Johann Wolfgang Goethe 1848-1849, trans. John Oxenford (London: Sidgewick and Jackson, 1971), p. 307.

6. James Hutchinson Stirling, 'On Spinoza,' The Athenæum (June 28, 1873), p. 338.

7. Spinoza, Ethic trans. with a revised preface by W. Hale White (London: OUP, 1910), pp. lii-liii. The preface to this edition is longer than most of Hale White's novels.

8. David Friedrich Strauss, The Life of Jesus Critically Examined [trans. Mary Ann Evans] (London: Chapman, 1846), pp. ix-x; hereafter cited as Strauss. George Eliot took over this translation from Rebecca Brabant. It may be that part of the first volume, from which this extract is taken, was translated by her, not George Eliot. See Rosemary Ashton George Eliot. A Life (Harmondsworth: Hamish Hamilton, 1996), p. 47.

9. Strauss, p. xi.

10. Charles C. Hennell, An Inquiry Concerning the Origins of Christianity (London: T. Allman, 1841), p. v.

11. Karl Marx and Friederich Engels, The German Ideology ed. C. J. Arthur (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1974), p. 39.

12. Spinoza, Tractatus Theologico-Politicus 1670, trans. R. H. M. Elwes (London: Routledge, 1883), p. 65.

13. Dr. Harris, 'The Inspiration of Scripture,' The Introductory Lectures Delivered at the Opening of the College (London: 1851), p. 4. Cited in Wilfred Stone, The Religion and Art of William Hale White (Mark Rutherford) (California: Stanford University Press, 1954), p. 35; hereafter cited as Stone.

14. Karl Marx, The Communist Manifesto 1888, trans. Samuel Moore (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1985), p. 83. See also Marshall Berman, All That is Solid Melts Into Air (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1982), p. 95. Berman takes a long look at this paragraph and in the process discusses Goethe, Baudelaire and New York.

15. William White, To Think Or Not To Think (London: Robert Theobold, 1852); hereafter cited as Think. A copy of this pamphlet can be found in Bedford Public Library.

16. Think, pp. 26-27.

17. Think, p. 28.

18. Think, p. 30.

19. Think, p. 14.

20. Think, p. 22.

21. Think, pp. 23-24.

22. Think, p. 27.

23. G. E. Letters, Vol. II. One of the most useful discussions on the relationship between George Eliot and Hale White can be found in; Ruby Redinger, George Eliot: The Emergent Self (London: Bodley Head, 1976), pp. 216-219.

24. G. E. Letters, Vol. II, pp. 79-80 & Vol. VIII, pp. 70-71.

25. G. E. Letters, Vol. II, pp. 79-80.

26. G. E. Letters, Vol. II, p. 88.

27. Letter included in Private Notes on Mark Rutherford by his Eldest Son [Sir William Hale White] pp. 29-30. Bedford Public Library, Ref. no. MR14/1. Also cited in Stone, p. 52.

28. Hale White, quite consciously, always refers to this work in the singular Ethic, not Ethics, in recognition of the unity of Spinoza's thought: 'Spinoza knows that the chief delight of man is in unity'. (Ethic I, p. xi)

29. Hale White's Spinoza Articles and Translations.

    1. Spinoza, Ethic trans. with preface by W. Hale White, 1st edition (London: Trübner & Co, 1883).

    2. 'Letter on the use of the term "affect" in his translation of Spinoza's *Ethic,*' The Athenæum No. 2922 (Oct. 27, 1883), p. 534.

    3. Spinoza, Ethic trans. with preface by W. Hale White, 2nd edition (Oxford: OUP, 1894).

    4. Spinoza, Tractatus de Intellectus Emendatione trans. with preface by W. Hale White (London, T. Fisher Unwin, 1895).

    5. 'Spinoza's Doctrine of the Relationship Between Mind and Body,' International Journal of Ethics Vol. VI (July 4, 1896), pp. 515-518.

    6. 'Coleridge on Spinoza,' The Athenæum No. 3630 (May 22, 1897), pp. 680-681.

    7. Spinoza, Ethic trans. with preface by W. Hale White, 3rd edition (London: Duckworth, 1899).

    8. 'Review of Joachim's *Study of the Ethics of Spinoza,*' The Bookman XXI (Jan. 1902), pp. 135-137.

    9. 'Review of *Spinoza: Ethique. Traduction inédite du Comte Henri de Boulainvilliers,*' The Athenæum No. 4171 (Oct. 5, 1907), p. 398-399.

    10. Spinoza, Ethic trans. W. Hale White, 4th edition (London: OUP, 1910).

30. Spinoza, Ethics trans. George Eliot, ed. Thomas Deegan (Salzburg: Universität Salzburg, 1981).

31. Rosemary Ashton, George Eliot, A Life (Harmondsworth: Hamish Hamilton, 1996), p. 7. See also: G. E. Letters, Vol. I, p. 280 & p. 321.

32. G. E. Letters, Vol. V, p. 182.

33. Genevieve Lloyd considers the period of time it took Spinoza to write his Ethic in: Genevieve Lloyd, Spinoza and the Ethics (London: Routledge, 1996), pp. 24-25.

34. Charles Swann, 'W. H. White's Revisions to the 2nd Edition of Spinoza's Ethic', Forthcoming. Charles Swann has compared different versions of Hale White's second preface and discovered several passages which were either edited out of, or inserted into, the preface in later editions. All of these changes are interesting as they show the extent to which Hale White struggled with his own religious instincts while translating Spinoza. The above quotation has the following (printed in bold) edited out of the fourth edition: 'Everybody must have some sort of theory of life if he is to live as an intelligent human being, and he is bound moreover, to see that so far as possible it hangs together and makes a whole. **He is not to affirm that the world is a unity and yet to affirm the existence of a devil; or, denying a devil, he is not to treat human failing as as if they were the work of some Power opposed to and irreconcilable with the Power responsible for human virtues.** Spinoza is a singular, an almost unique example of mental thoroughness . . .' (Ethic II, p. lxiii; Ethic IV, p. lxii).

35. Letter to Holyoake, Jan. 20, 1882, Letters to Holyoake Bedford Public Library. MR6/1 - 17.
'So many people seemed to think I intended to draw a hero. I simply designed to depict a victim of the century'.

36. George Eliot, Adam Bede 1859, ed. Stephen Gill (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1985), pp. 302-303, hereafter cited as Adam.
Spinoza's spider-watching is something which George Henry Lewes wrote about in his History of Philosophy:

> The children all loved him and for them he would bring out one of his lenses to show them the spiders magnified. It was his amusement to watch insects. The sight of spiders fighting would make the tears roll down his cheeks with laughter; a trait which Dugald Stewart thinks 'very decidedly indicates a tendency to insanity'... Hamann sees in it only the sympathy of one web-spinner for another: 'His taste betrays itself in a mode of thought which only insects can thus entangle - Spiders and their admirer Spinoza naturally take to the geometric style of building'.

G. H. Lewes, The History of Philosophy Vol. II (London: Longmans, 1867), p. 186. The spider's web was also one of the determining metaphors which George Eliot used throughout much of her fiction.

37. Adam, p. 425.

38. Adam, pp. 353-354.

39. Stone, p. 106.

40. [Anon], 'The Belief in the Immortality of the Soul,' The Westminster Review New Series, Vol. LXIV. No. II (July, 1883), p. 410; hereafter cited as Soul.

41. Soul, p. 414.

42. W. Hale White, 'Review of *Spinoza: Ethique. Traduction Inédite du Comte Henri de Boulainvilliers,*' The Athenæum No. 4171 (Oct. 5, 1907), p. 399.

43. George Eliot, Middlemarch 1871-1872, ed. Rosemary Ashton (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1994), p. 833.

44. William Wordsworth, The Prelude 1799, 1805, 1850, ed. Jonathan Wordsworth, M. H. Abrams and Stephen Gill (London: W. W. Norton, 1979), p. 50.

45. Spinoza, Tractatus Theologico-Politicus trans. R. H. M. Elwes (London: Routledge, 1883), p. 88. From chapter VI, 'Of Miracles'.

46. Matthew Arnold, 'A Word More About Spinoza,' Essays Literary and Critical (London: Dent, 1906), p. 183.

47. In one note from Last Pages From A Journal Hale White asserts his religious instincts regarding pain and punishment: 'All religions have said that if we do wrong we must not only amend and offer reparation but that there must be expiation. Modern philosophy denies it. I cannot rid myself of what seems to me an instinct that wrong doing demands a penalty. (LP, p. 285)

48. John Bunyan, The Pilgrim's Progress 1678, ed. Roger Sharrock (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1987), p. 35.

49. From: Jean Maximilien Lucas, The Life of the Late Mr De Spinosa 1678, published 1719. Quoted in; Abraham Wolf, The Oldest Biography of Spinoza (London: George Allen, 1927), p. 73. 'Besides the fact that he was not of a very robust constitution, his strenuous application helped to enfeeble him still more; and though there is nothing that drains one's strength so much as night-vigils, his vigils had become almost constant through the ill effects of a slight, slow fever which he contracted during his arduous meditations.' See also Ethic IV, pp. xvi-xvii, for more on Spinoza's extreme frugality.

50. Letter to Jack White, Dec. 9, 1892, Letters to Jack Bedford Public Library.

Chapter Two.

The Radical Journalist.

> I am not a *Times* or a *Herald* or a *Star* your readers will observe, and that is a very important point to consider; nothing in fact but a single unit, able to see what goes on under my own nose. The Aberdeen Herald. March 14th 1863.

Throughout the 1860s and '70s Hale White wrote regular journalism for the provincial press, none of which has been reprinted since. He would have been twenty-nine when he submitted the first in a series of weekly 'Metropolitan Notes' to the Aberdeen Herald in May 1861. For the following twenty-three years he was to write, at different times, for seven different journals turning out hundreds of articles. By the time Hale White started work on his first novel most of his life's writing was already behind him.

Mark Rutherford is a largely retrospective writer. The novels published under this name are the work of a middle-aged man looking back at young people trying to find a place in the world. The journalism, on the other hand, was itself then written by a much younger Hale White looking *forward* to a future still taking shape. Many of his columns consist in reports of the House of Commons and they demonstrate the intense personal interest with which he watched the issues under debate, issues relating to Franchise Reform, social justice and religion. His style of political commentary, however, was not a conventional one.

In 1865, at the outbreak of the Reform Bill debates which so fired him in the first years of his journalism, Hale White paid a visit to Cobden's grave at Lavington, just after he had been laid to rest. There was, as yet, no stone and the flowers were still there. He was touched to find that Cobden had chosen to be buried beside his son in a small, undistinguished, country churchyard:

> I cannot help feeling, and most persons who go to see this English shrine will feel the same thing, that it is strange that Cobden, the man whose whole life was passed in political strife, whose existence, from youth almost down to the day of his death, was one incessant, hot and anxious struggle for democracy, should rest where he does, and should have prayed to rest there. Would it not have been more in keeping that he should lie in the heart of some great city? And yet no. There was in Cobden, and there is in English character, a something which prevents the contradiction from being anything but apparent. It is, perhaps, more than we know the secret of our greatness. Underneath all our surface agitation, deep down below our excitement and clamour, we retain what we may call a kind of natural religion which prompts our passionate love for the country, for home, and for quiet. It is this which makes us what we are, and will ever restrain us, whatever our form of government may be from degenerating into noisy mobocracy. (AH, April 29, 1865)

To read this journalism is to accompany Hale White through the endless compromises and defeats of party politics, 'the incessant hot and anxious struggle for democracy'. Yet his feelings for literature gave him the added insights of a morally determined, undogmatic observer of human life. For Hale White, as for Matthew Arnold, basic human emotion, 'a kind of natural religion', was always there, 'deep down' at the root of his writing. It ensured a kind of sanity, 'the secret of our greatness'. However, it is also there, with that subdued, quietest sense of Cobden's 'buried' life, that the comparison with Matthew Arnold ends.

Hale White was a political Dissenter to the core, exactly the kind of writer whom Arnold attacks as dogmatic, 'narrow and inadequate' in Culture and Anarchy.[1] Hale White's contribution as a journalist, however, forces us to qualify the ways in which Dissenters were perceived by the establishment of the day. His 'passionate love' for the basic, rather dull securities of English life, the 'country, home and . . . quiet' made him more inclined to understand and trust in the people, and in democracy, in ways that may have seemed contradictory to Matthew Arnold but would make complete sense to readers, for example, of George Orwell in post-war England.

Comparisons between William Hale White and Eric Arthur Blair are not only numerous but, I would suggest, highly significant as we consider the impact of Hale White's writing, and that sense of home he had at Cobden's grave.[2] Despite the fact that the Mark Rutherford novels are all so neglected today, Hale White's style of journalism highlights a tradition of English political Dissent which was to continue into our own times.

Towards Journalism.

There were many big, sudden changes to Hale White's life soon after he left number 142. Despite being offered a partnership in The Westminster Review by Chapman he found himself a new job as a clerk in the Registrar General's Office in Somerset House and moved into rooms in the house of a family friend, Elizabeth Street, in Lincoln's Inn Fields.[3] This move represented a definite return to his roots. Elizabeth Street was a member of Caleb Morris's congregation and a contemporary of Hale White's father. It was also at this house, in about 1853, that Hale White met his future wife, Harriet Arthur, Elizabeth Street's half-sister. The couple were married in Kentish Town on December 22nd 1856, Hale White's twenty-fifth birthday.[4] Three months later they moved into 69 Marylebone Road, Piccadily, by which time Hale White had been living in London for five years.[5] The city was becoming increasingly important to him as a centre of family life, culture, politics, and general discomfort.

It must have been a difficult decision to leave Chapman's. Despite all of the silent ways in which the two men would have disagreed, nevertheless, at number 142 he had been living at the heart of the most progressive intellectual circles of his day. Now he was a mere clerk in the Registrar General's Office, indexing, sorting, transcribing entries into copy books, one amongst hundreds. And he had a wife to keep too, making it impossible to walk out of the job at a moment's notice.[6] It was Hale White's father, once again, who ensured that thinking and writing would continue to play a vital role in his son's life.

William White had always been a politically active man and had many links with the key Liberal politicians of his day. Significantly, Hale White was born in 1831, at exactly the time when his father was investing his hopes in the first Parliamentary Reform Bill. As a leading a member of the Bedford Whig Committee he had helped Lord Charles Russell (the brother of one of the great founders of the 1832 Reform Act, Lord John Russell) to get elected into the House of Commons as MP for Bedford.[7] In his Early Life Hale White describes how a mob threatened his own, very young, existence. The event, frequently recounted, marks his political baptism:

> The first event in my own life is the attack by the mob upon our house, at the general election in 1832, to which I have referred. My cradle - as I have been told - had to be carried from the front bedroom into the back, so that my head might not be broken by the stones which smashed the windows. (EL, p. 39)

In his journalism Hale White mentions another incident during this election campaign in which the Whig Committee were 'besieged in the Swan Inn' by a mob and how his father helped Lord John, the visiting speaker, escape out of Bedford unharmed:

> Bedford had a Tory mob and the father of the writer of this note protected Lord John in his retreat across a farmyard when the drunken brutes threatened his life. (NN, June 8, 1878)

It was Lord Charles Russell who, in turn, over twenty years later, came to William White's rescue and saw to it that he was given the job of doorkeeper to the House of Commons, his livelihood in Bedford made increasingly precarious because of his unorthodox religious convictions. In many ways Zachariah Coleman, the Dissenting printer of Tanner's Lane, is a portrait of the young William White struggling to maintain his intellectual liberty in a close-knit, conservative, provincial town.

Once situated in the House, William White began supplementing his income writing vivid sketches of political life for The Illustrated Times.[8] As this column became popular he was asked to contribute similar sketches for the Caledonian Mercury and The Liverpool Daily Post. Hale White would frequently accompany his father into the House, all the while learning as much as he could about writing from his own direct observation. As a non-professional reporter William White was one of the first people actually to describe the democratic process to a wider audience, not only relating the outcome of each debate but showing the politicians behind the debates, the various processes and the rituals of political life. The televising of the House of Commons is a direct descendant of these early Parliamentary reports. It was William White's growing political connections which also enabled his son to take on the similar role of a London Correspondent for the provincial press.

By the time he began his own regular journalism Hale White was certainly a competent writer. He had contributed several entries for The Imperial Dictionary of Universal Biography[9] and in March 1858 he had published his first periodical article. Printed in Chamber's Journal, 'Births, Deaths and Marriages', is a description of the painstaking duties of a registrar by someone who had known the job from the inside for four years. In retrospect, this first article takes on the shade of social analogy as Hale White ponders on the value of such a vast accretion of personal facts, the sum total of the 'real history' of England, endlessly sifted and sorted by the indifferent clerks in Somerset House. The roots of the radical journalist can be seen even here in an otherwise informative, lighthearted essay:

> Here lies the real history of the English people for the last twenty years. My history's epochs are my birth, my marriage, and the memorable days when Tom and Jack, Susan and Jane, came into the world and gathered round me. The history of the nation may be in Macaulay or in the columns of *The Times*, but the history of the people is in the registrar-general's vaults at Somerset House.[10]

He makes the distinction here between two types of history; 'the real history of the English people', which includes '*my* history', '*my* birth, *my* marriage' and the history of 'the nation', supposedly, of heads of state. This acknowledgement of popular feeling, real history, was to become a central cause of the journalism. For the meantime, however, the people's history was kept locked away, 'finally entombed in the vaults, so as to be easily accessible to the public at large'.

Hale White's first son (another William Hale) was five months old when this article was written and Hale White's lot was now cast in with that of the average clerk with a growing family to keep. In December 1858 he was nominated for a Third Class Clerkship in the Accountant General's Department at the Admiralty, also in Somerset House. Two years later, in December 1860, Harriet became pregnant with her second child and somehow Hale White had to supplement his wages. Looking back at this period long after his retirement, he wrote to his friend Mabel Marsh:

> Soon after I was married, needing money, I tried to get work on the newspapers. I applied to nearly a hundred and at last two replied. Those two enabled me to live for some years until my position improved.[11]

Hale White's weekly 'Metropolitan Notes' for the Aberdeen Herald[12] effectively doubled his income in one go and provided the intellectual counter-note to the bureaucracy of his daily work.[13] His 'Below the Gangway' column for the Morning Star shortly followed in 1865, as did 'Sketches in Parliament' for the Birmingham Journal in 1866, 'Letter by a Radical' for the Rochdale Observer in 1867, and 'Our London Letter' for the Norfolk News in 1872. On top of this, Hale White contributed Parliamentary reports for The Nonconformist and The Scotsman. Such a massive, regular output of journalism was, itself, enormously time consuming; the columns were by no means short. Each evening while Parliament was sitting Hale White would leave the Admiralty for the reporter's gallery in the House, often not getting home until the early hours of the morning, if at all. The Aberdeen Herald was a weekly paper appearing every Saturday and so Hale White's column had to be written on the Thursday, often hurriedly completed on Friday mornings in the rest room at Victoria Station.

As well as reporting on the House of Commons, Hale White kept his readers in touch with the wider London cultural scene. He reviewed concerts, art exhibitions, engineering demonstrations, books, theological debates, plays, everything that he could possibly attend and which seemed to reflect the transformative essence of the nineteenth century. Quite a different picture soon emerges from the more provincial, culturally isolated Mark Rutherford we know from the novels. In the very first of his 'Metropolitan Notes', in May 1861, Hale White writes not only with a strong sense of anticipation but with a feeling of being right in the centre of things:

> After Easter, the season in London begins to unfold its attractions, which every week intensify, until, in June, about Ascot week, white heat may be said to be attained, and that constellation of attractions which puzzles old heads what to select, what to reject, and fairly bewilders the new generation of visitors, stands revealed in dazzling brightness - wind and weather permitting. It may with truth be said that, to contribute to this result - this season-sap - there is no part of the civilized world that does not send its quota, attracted by profit, by fame, by pleasure or curiosity, of every gradation from idle to enlightened. In many a little town, in many a distant city, in many an unthought-of nook, not only in Europe, but in remoter colonies, new inventions are cradled, old ones improved, art and science ransacked, dreams dreamed that look forward to realisation, and to exhibit their results, to establish fame, and perhaps found fortunes in the high season of the world's great capital - London. (AH, May 11, 1861)

But there is also much irony here. The 'season-sap', a calculated tourist-drive, attracts a 'quota' of visitors from the civilized world. The London scene is all dazzling and bright yet still tainted with English reserve, 'wind and weather permitting'. The 'constellation of attractions' seems to offer an inexhaustible potential for an already overworked, part-time journalist.

Not surprisingly Hale White's children had very few memories of him during this time but recall a tired, distant man, getting up early, arriving home late, writing into the night. In 1865 Hale White, obviously in a work-weary mood, tried to express to the people of Aberdeen 'what it costs me', in terms of personal sacrifice, to keep up with his weekly column:

> The public I do not believe have the least idea what they owe to newspapers, and, consequently to myself as being part of a newspaper. I do not mean, of course, to say that there are not plenty of other people who are so much wiser, so much worthier, so much more didactic than myself, that when I take up a book written by those wiser, wittier, or didactic people I hang my head for shame. But then these persons can write or not as they please. They can put down their pens and be off to Norway or Crim Tartary as their fancy leads them, and we may be assured that when their fancy leads the public is not much consulted. But newspaper people might well be excused if they have no fancies; if the whole realm of fancy were killed out of them; so unused are they to obeying its call. The inexorable evening comes and write I must. I may fancy all sorts of things, but one thing I must do - write . . . On Saturday, say I, the *Herald* appears. What would the subscribers to that precious print, and consequently what would Aberdeenshire say were I to fail? No, Sir, and, like a virtuous Saint Anthony, I go down to my desk and defy the temper . . . Few persons know what it too often costs to produce that mass of print for which they are so eager every breakfast time. Few persons can tell, too, and it is this, too, which suggested the remarks I have just taken the liberty to make, what it costs me to write today. (AH, Aug. 19, 1865)

Passages like this tell us a lot about Hale White's approach as a journalist. The writing has a spoken quality, he is putting himself directly onto the page, his own personal feelings and opinions are carefully transcribed, just as they are in his fiction. All of the columns were written, like this, in the first person. Despite this being a protracted complaint there is still a sense of overall commitment to the task of reporting and of solidarity with other newspaper men. It is with considerable irony that Hale White describes his envy for these so called 'wiser', 'worthier', 'wittier' authors who compose from a position of privilege and without any sense of public accountability; 'we may be assured that when their fancy leads the public is not much consulted'. It is that sense of personal sacrifice, of the struggle of writing and the grind of daily work, ('what it costs me to write today') which actually binds Hale White to his readership, as if he shares with them the same workaday interests. This article is not, in fact, a complaint at all but a statement of achievement, of being, despite everything, committed to the real, of feeling at home in an industrious London.

London; the weather, the cabs and trains, the constant building work, the streets and putrid smells, all are important elements in Hale White's journalism as he treks across the city to and from work, storing up what he sees for his column. In many ways Hale White shares his London with Dickens, another novelist who learnt his craft in writing for the press. He continues:

> No place matches London for misery in wet weather. The streets flow with turbid streams, incessantly ploughed by a myriad of vehicles which dash and splash the filthy compound over everybody who ventures to walk the pavement. Not a cab is to be had, and if you venture into an omnibus the unventilated reeking atmosphere is felt to be almost poisonous. The rain, too, as it comes down, instead of being the pure healthy heavenly distilled liquid which dashes in your face as you stride along the Cliff at Brighton, is stained with a nasty greasy soot which is deposited in the solid state with every drop. (AH, Aug. 19, 1865)

On May 20th 1865, three months before this article by Hale White, Dickens had also given a speech about the working conditions of London journalists. 'I have pursued the calling of reporter' said Dickens, 'under circumstances of which many of my brethren at home here in England . . . can form no adequate conception.'[14] At one point Dickens paid special tribute to provincial journalists providing 'the dullest, the largest and the least provincial town in the Empire' with the news.[15] We shall see more of his influence as we read Hale White's reports on the living conditions of the London working classes.

Something which is far more noticeable in these columns than in the novels is Hale White's sharp satirical edge, his masterful use of the cutting phrase, the dark humour employed to face the worst that London could throw at him. Hale White finished the article on his life as a London reporter:

> The news must be told. Let us see what it is. Was there ever such a coincidence! There is not a cheerful bit of intelligence in the list from beginning to end. There is nothing to demand a moment's light-heartedness. Everything, happily, looks miserable. (AH, Aug. 19, 1865)

Hale White also described his time as a journalist in his second novel Deliverance. In this book, in the few pages he allocated to the twenty years he spent working for the press, the whole task is dismissed as a lonely, worthless occupation, an empty stage in his existence:

> Never, but once or twice at the most, did my labours meet with the slightest recognition beyond payment . . . I don't think that one solitary human being ever applauded or condemned one solitary word of which I was the author. All my friends knew where my contributions were to be found, but I never heard that they looked at them. They were never worth reading and yet such complete silence was rather lonely . . . I wrote for an abstraction; and spoke to empty space. (AD, pp. 131-132)

Because his columns were published in places as far apart as Aberdeen, Birmingham, Norfolk, Hale White did, indeed, write for an 'abstraction', for a distant audience he would never meet, for places he never visited. Added to this all the columns were published anonymously in keeping with the journalistic conventions of the time. Yet, while attributing no credit to the journalist, this system nevertheless had its advantages. This very anonymity and distance from the place of publication possibly enabled him to be even more honest, more outspoken, than he might otherwise have been. Hale White's writing would always thrive on anonymity; even for his novels he invented a pseudonym, as well as a fictional editor, in order to cover his traces. Although no-one in Aberdeen would have known the true identity of this outspoken London correspondent, Hale White quickly assumed a companionable relationship with his readers. 'Like a virtuous Saint Anthony,' he writes, 'I go down to my desk and defy the temper'. The anonymity, in fact, offsets the egotism of the more personal passages.

Hale White's early journalism was not written for the sake of literary posterity but was intended as both a means of keeping the public up to date with the week's news and, more importantly, as a means of influencing public opinion. In all of these articles Hale White is responding, directly, to political events *while* they are occurring. Sometimes we find him scribbling away in the House while the key speakers are still holding forth beneath him, anxious to get the very latest news before sending off his text to Aberdeen. 'So much I can say, but no more,' he ended one such piece, 'for the post is going, and Mr. Gladstone is still on his legs' (AH, April 14, 1867). The journalism provides us with a unique on-the-spot account, written by a then unknown novelist, of a crucial period in English political history.

The Extension of the Franchise

> I remember particularly telling [Lord Russell] that the middle and lower classes were naturally envious haters of the Aristocracy - unless when they were *proud* of being attached to them - that there was no *neutral* ground in these sentiments - the Mass must either be your zealous supporters, said I, or they will do all in their power to pull you down.
> Wordsworth to Benjamin Robert Haydon. July 8th, 1831.[16]

Considering their shared background in political Dissent the Whites could not have entered the House at a more pressing moment in British history. It was during the mid-1850s, that the whole issue of the extension of the franchise was being raised across the country by campaigners for Parliamentary Reform. Hale White wrote a pamphlet in support of this movement in 1866. Echoing the ideas of J. S. Mill and John Bright, An Argument for An Extension of the Franchise was his first published work. From different parts of the House, the doorkeeper and his son watched all of the Reform debates with extreme interest.

The progress of the Reform Bill, eventually passed in 1867, was never straightforward. Opposition to the Bill cut across party lines, making it all the more difficult for any single commentator to know what the outcome would be. At every stage the Bill was impeded, talked out, and almost complicated out of existence. Each week Hale White had to untangle the tactical manoeuvres of the House for his readers, keeping one eye firmly focused on what was really at stake behind the deals and compromises of party politics.

For the radicals, any proposals for Parliamentary Reform signalled the gradual move towards the total enfranchisement of the British people. They believed that the increase of power and responsibility would educate the masses and broaden the general outlook of the public who would at last have a stake in important decision making. However, for the majority of MPs, Liberals as well as Tories, the Reform Bill signalled revolution, the success of Chartism and the opening up of the House to the uneducated, uncouth masses. There was deep concern that the best, most distinguished aspects of English culture would be compromised and that working people, unprepared for the task of government, would descend into anarchy without the guidance and experience of their betters. Although not published until just after the Reform crisis (and despite being the work of a liberal) Matthew Arnold's Culture and Anarchy is a typical example of mid-1860s cultural conservatism. Arnold's prose, as we shall see, represents the antithesis of Hale White's own thoughts on popular democracy.

In many ways the 1860s Reform movement represented a return to the debates which surrounded the first Reform Act of 1832. This first Act allocated votes according to the value of one's property and did this by introducing a set figure, then known as the *property qualification*. If you lived in a borough and possessed property valued at £10 or more then the Act entitled you to vote in a general election. The 1832 act also gave the county vote to £10 copyholders, leaseholders and to tenants not paying less than £50 annual rent. When it first came into effect the 1832 Reform Act was perceived as a major radical step, but by 1866 only one in eighteen of the urban population had been enfranchised by it. The £10 property qualification was a cautious move, it intended to put a figure to respectability, to keep out the mob while admitting the tradesman and the wealthy artisan. 'The £10 householder', writes Asa Briggs, 'was soon to acquire the status of an ideal citizen in the eyes of those who wanted to stop short at the settlement of 1832'.[17]

For the opponents of Reform, made anxious by the French Revolution, these qualifications, however tame, were the thin end of a dangerous wedge. There was, as Wordsworth put it, 'no neutral ground' in class politics and many like him, concerned about the potential for revolution in England, believed it was impossible to reconcile opposing class interests in Parliament. Wordsworth wrote several poems about the Reform Act of 1832 all of which gained a new meaning for Liberals in the 1860s. Here is Wordsworth casting a cynical eye over a Reformist slogan he found in a newspaper in 1831:

> 'People! your chains are severing link by link;
> Soon shall the Rich be levelled down - the Poor
> Meet them half way.' Vain boast! for These, the more
> They thus would rise, must low and lower sink
> Till, by repentance stung, they fear to think;
> While all lie prostrate, save the tyrant few
> Bent in quick turns each other to undo,
> And mix the poison, they themselves must drink.[18]

It was partly due to these kinds of warnings from such educated thinkers that the progress of Reform legislation was so slow. In 1858 a Tory Reform scheme (known as the 'fancy franchise' for its complicated and cautious qualifications) was introduced by Disraeli but rejected by 39 votes. Then, under Lord Palmerston's torpid administration, the question was, again, put to bed and slept soundly amidst what John Bright called a 'contemptuous silence'.[19]

John Bright was making Reform speeches as early as 1856 while touring the industrial cities. In all of his speeches, always rousing, Bright displayed an unwavering faith in the people, yet his words also express a more general, dissatisfaction with a government committed to such a slow rate of change:

> I feel almost ashamed even to argue it to such a meeting as this. I call to mind where I am and who are those whom I see before me. Am I not in the town of Birmingham - England's central capital; and do not these eyes look upon the sons of those who, not thirty years ago, shook the fabric of privilege to its base? Not a few of the strong men of that time are now white with age . . . Shall their sons be less noble than they? Shall the fire which they kindled be extinguished with you? I see your answer in every face.[20]

'There is a world of talk, as you know about Reform Bills' wrote Dickens in 1859, 'but I don't believe there is any strong feeling on the subject . . . The general mind seems wary of debates and honourable members, and to have taken *laissez-aller* for its motto'.[21] For the radical the 1850s were like a stuffy political waiting room, a time of mounting impatience with an ever indifferent administration, the time of Bleak House and J. S. Mill's On Liberty.

When Palmerston died in October 1865 Lord Russell took over as Prime Minister with Gladstone as leader of the House of Commons. Now, freed at last from the objections of Palmerston, Gladstone proposed a series of moderate Reforms. He proposed that the borough franchise be lowered from £10 to £7, while the county franchise was to be lowered from £50 to £14. The lines, however spurious, which had defined respectability for over thirty years were being subtly re-drawn.

Hale White was there on the day Gladstone introduced this Bill to Parliament on March 12 1866, a good place at which to start if we are to get some idea of the difference between Hale White's notion of Reform and the more conservative measures being introduced into the House. On the day of Gladstone's speech the House seemed almost too excited for its own good. Hale White, however, sounds a cautious note to what he knew would only be the first step in a long and arduous political journey:

> At last, on Monday night, the grand announcement so long expected with such anxiety was made. Never within my recollection has so much eager excitement been manifested either in the House or outside it. The approaches to Westminster Hall were lined with a mob of curious spectators, who seemed to think that because Mr. Gladstone was going to introduce his Reform Bill there was something very special to be seen. Probably they expected to see the Reform Bill itself come down in a lord mayor's carriage, preceded by a flourish of trumpets. Those persons who had been fortunate enough to obtain member's orders for the Strangers' Gallery seemed infected with something like madness. One gentleman I know marched down to the House at a quarter to five in the early morning for the purpose of making sure of his opportunity of listening to the fervid strains of Mr. Gladstone's oratory. Who will say that eloquence has lost its power when men can be found willing to turn out of bed an hour before sunrise on a cold March morning, and wait and wait till half-past four in the evening, merely to enjoy a couple of hours with the Chancellor of the Exchequer discoursing on the statistics of the franchise. Inside the House proper, every seat was secured before prayers, and the chaplain had such an audience as he has not had for a long time. It is more than probable though that the anxiety of members to be present at their devotions was due not altogether to their religious zeal. Precisely at half-past four, Mr. Gladstone entered the House, and was received with loud cheers. The usual questions, which seemed a trifle impertinent on this occasion, having been answered, at a quarter to five he rose to speak.
> (AH, March 17, 1866)

Hale White liked to describe the whole atmosphere of the House. In these articles we are conscious of him watching, closely, all that is happening around him. He draws his observations not only from the debates but about the corridors and lobbies, 'in the House or outside it'. Yet this journalist is also quite detached from the frenzy and 'anxiety' of the events he is witnessing.

Hale White's prose evokes a much wider, more reserved perspective on the moment, a view point which makes for some strong elements of satire, the imagined Bill arriving in a carriage to a 'flourish of trumpets', for example, or those spectators, so desperate to claim their seats who 'seemed infected with something like madness', even the chaplain who has one of his largest audiences to date, none of whom are really interested in his prayers. It is as if the anticipation, 'the religious zeal' of the House, is out of proportion to the actual speech about to be made, the Chancellor's two hours 'discoursing on the statistics of the franchise'. From his own place in the gallery Hale White watches Gladstone making history:

> At first he spoke at a considerable disadvantage. He evidently felt it his duty to pronounce a kind of solemn introduction to the Bill, and instead of being really solemn, he was a trifle pompous. His phrases were measured and slow, his action was a little stilted and unnatural, and it was a positive relief when this preliminary stage, which lasted for some half-an-hour, was over. Judging from the manner in which he began, and from the deliberation with which he applied himself to the refreshment provided for him in a tumbler at his side, everybody seemed to expect that the pith and marrow of what he had to announce would not be reached till a good hour after he commenced. It was an immense relief, therefore, and a most evident surprise to the House, when, suddenly after leading us to suppose he was going to give us a history of Reform from the earliest period of our history, he dropped down to a bare statement of the fact that the Government had adopted a £14 occupation franchise for the counties. It looked very much as if Mr. Gladstone had really intended a much more extensive oration, but that, not feeling himself at the time equal to any prolonged flight of rhetoric, he suddenly determined to curtail his efforts in this direction, and come to the point. (AH, March 17, 1866)

Coming from a background in which sermons and oratory were central to belief Hale White, like his father, would always comment upon the delivery of speeches within the House. He watched politicians as if they were actors on a stage (and Hale White would often review theatrical performances). When he first began his weekly columns Hale White could only praise Gladstone, as if it were his duty, as a Liberal journalist, to do just that. By 1866, however, when succinct argument and clear direction were most needed to pass this Bill, his irritation became more evident; the speech was 'measured and slow', 'solemn', 'pompous' and 'unnatural'. He felt Gladstone was better at communicating *facts* rather than ideas. 'It was an immense relief, therefore . . . when . . . he dropped down to a bare statement of fact'. This introduction to the new Bill was a disappointing start for Hale White. Having watched Gladstone for over half a decade he probably anticipated as much. And yet this strong sense of anti-climax was not altogether the fault of the Chancellor's delivery:

> Having once reached a solid fact, the Chancellor became thoroughly at home. He lost all his pomposity . . . So he travelled on, step by step, unfolding his plan with great lucidity, and with no superfluous verbiage whatever, till he came to the vital part of the story. When he told us that £7 gross annual value was to be the figure for the town constituencies, the House broke out into a long suppressed hum of conversation which completely drowned all Mr. Gladstone's attempts to proceed, and a good many members, feeling that they had now learned all that they wanted to know got up and left the House. After this the speech manifestly flagged. There came a few more figures, a poor attempt at peroration, a bit or two of Latin, and all was over. The cheering at the close sounded cold and lame. Cheers, of course, there were, but nothing like what might have been expected. The fact is that the House was rather taken aback, and as members poured out the great majority seemed disquieted and glum. They felt that their minds were unmade, and that they would have to make them up again; and that they did not know exactly whether it was their duty to approve or not. (AH, March 17, 1866)

The amount of collective surprise is graphic and the whole article considered in terms of the day's feelings from pre-dawn excitement to final bewilderment.

The muted cheers he interprets not only as confusion about the revised qualification figures but as a crisis of party allegiance, the MPs 'not knowing whether it was their *duty* to approve'. Many important questions remained unspoken at the close of the Bill's first reading. What did these long awaited 'statistics' (Gladstone's 'solid facts') of £14 and £7, actually *mean* in relation to the working class vote? Why does Gladstone not appear to have the total support of his party? And, more significantly, for our purposes, what did this proposed extension of the franchise mean to Hale White, the radical journalist, at this moment in time? That brief mention of 'a bit or two of Latin and all was over' provides a vital clue. Hale White is writing in the middle of what was an important debate surrounding not only franchise Reform but national *culture*. The political elite of the Liberal party were being asked not only to redistribute power but to question, perhaps for the first time, the role of the upper classes, the value and purpose of their classical education, their right to make decisions on behalf of the rest of the people.

Hale White's first published work was a twenty page pamphlet arguing for the cause of Reform. An Argument for An Extension of the Franchise was published in February 1866, priced at sixpence, in the month leading up to the announcement of the Liberal proposal for a Reform Bill. There is now only one known copy of this essay in existence and the voice of Hale White has completely disappeared from the history of the franchise. Hale White reported, very closely, on all of the Reform debates in the House and in many ways his Argument represents the summation of the opinions expressed in the Herald and The Morning Star. Although it is difficult now to appreciate what influence it had at the time, the Argument addresses the doubts and confusions which lay at the very heart of the debate. It was the work of an independent, yet thoroughly informed radical trying to persuade those floating Liberals 'with their minds . . . unmade' to embrace popular democracy. The ideas within the tract were passionately felt and, significantly, this was one of the few occasions on which Hale White would publish under his own name. He dedicated this work to George Jacob Holyoake, a key activist of the Reform League. Argument was published by F. Farrah of 282, The Strand, the same firm which also published many of Holyoake's own pamphlets. In an accompanying letter to Holyoake, Hale White wrote:

> I can assure you I am very much affected by your expressions of esteem and assent to my beliefs on this great subject. I am so constituted that if a man says to me 'what you believe is true' - he does me more service than if he says 'I love you'.[22]

The Argument is written in the form of a reply to those liberals still holding onto those Wordsworthian fears of revolution and chaos. One of the main assumptions behind the restriction of the franchise was that the mass of the populace were not educated enough to make informed, responsible political decisions. Matthew Arnold expressed these conservative anxieties in Culture and Anarchy and although this book was not published until 1869 it represents the kind of views which Hale White was consciously pitting himself against in his Argument. Hale White is highly critical of these Arnoldian claims of 'intellectual superiority' (Argument, p. 11) because it contradicts what he knows of the power and value of ordinary experience:

> But it may also be observed, I think, that the larger class is not only the honester, but that it is actually the wiser class, and that the nation as a whole is wiser than any arbitrarily selected

> portion of it . . . Had the upper classes not missed their opportunity, had they but considered - those of them, at least, who were destined by their friends to be our legislators - that it would be better to study political economy a little more and dirty Latin comedies a little less, that making nonsense verse was not precisely the best preparation for the attempt to guide a distracted kingdom, had they been prudent in their generation, why something might be said against an extension of the franchise. As it is, nothing can be said. The people are wiser than their rulers. The instinct of the people is safer than the reasonings of the scribes. With regard to the middle-class, they certainly have no overpowering claim to sit by themselves in the seat of judgement. Their education and their wisdom, such as it is, have not been given them at the boarding-school. What they learnt there was in the main forgotten, excepting the small residuum which was necessary to keep a ledger. Their real practical education has lain where everybody's lies - in the stress and struggle of life. Whatever principle for good or evil that teaches, they have learnt. But have not the working classes an equal ability to learn there too? Is not this great school open to them? Is there not many a truth which is daily forced upon them which the middle classes will never know? (Argument, pp. 8-9)

Hale White is making an appeal on behalf of the working classes, not *to* them; he writes of '*their* education' and '*their* wisdom'. To place the people's 'instinct' on a safe level with Liberal 'wisdom' is a bold move. It suggests that experience is an educator, that gut reactions can be articulate. He distinguishes between '*real* practical education' of the industrious middle classes, learnt in the 'stress and struggle of life' and the 'dirty Latin comedies' and 'nonsense verses' taught at public school. For Hale White, a useful moral education was possessed by anyone who had triumphed over a difficult, pressured life. This life-experience is also a store house of vital *memory*; all that was learnt in public school 'was in the main forgotten', while the lessons of life are more deeply ingrained as a moral code; 'Whatever principle for good or evil that teaches, they have learnt'.

From this basis, the Argument builds up to a whole psychology of achievement, a way of thinking about human motives which owes much to the theories of Spinoza. For Spinoza, no matter how many impediments there were to human progress, it was always natural for people to desire to increase their power and freedom; 'Virtue is human power itself', says Spinoza in The Ethic, (Ethic, IV, p. 196). 'The endeavour after self preservation is the essence itself of a thing . . . and the only foundation of virtue' (Ethic IV, p. 197). Similarly, Hale White argued that without the freedom to make their own political decisions people were being denied the self respect and confidence, which comes from attempting, failing, going wrong. What Spinoza calls the 'self preserving essence' of man, Hale White calls the 'self motive power'. Hale White finds some encouragement even in the idea of human failure:

> It is better that a man should go wrong sometimes, and even a good many times, provided his going wrong is his own act, than that he should always go right at somebody else's dictation. Better, we say, because no amount of virtuous actions done under pressure can counterbalance the loss of self-motive power which more than any results achieved without it makes the man; better, because the path to permanent reform lies through our own efforts, rather than through those of another, even though our own may temporarily lead to error. What is true of individuals is also true of society . . . The best way to prevent a man from being fit to be a citizen, is to prevent him from being one; and on the contrary, that people will the most steadily and surely advance, whose progress, chequered though it be with failing, is due to itself alone. A Government by a class may for a time superinduce an appearance of a more rapid advance, but it is illusory. It has not sprung from any self-generating vitality in the people itself, and when the pressure which has produced this advance is withdrawn it will cease. (Argument, p. 11)

Vitality, in Argument, has to be 'self-generating' not esteemed nor contained for its own good. It was not only an entrenched class prejudice but a self-restrictive psychology that the Reform campaigners had to overcome in order to win any extension of the franchise. Hale White continued:

> It must be remembered too that if we give a man a share in the government of the country, if we stimulate him to take an interest in politics we give him an education . . . The change to which a self-government induces, must invariably be for the good. (Argument, p. 11)

'It is better that . . .', 'Better we say . . .', 'It must be remembered . . .' The insistence which drives the Argument is one aspect of its overall confidence in the potential of man. Hale White replaces an Arnoldian reticence with a call to sheer will power; 'the path to permanent reform lies through our own *efforts*'.

This is not to say that Hale White, in his asserted optimism, did not fear anarchy. In many ways his ideas of the 'self-motive power', the 'self-preserving essence', led to a more realistic fear of social disintegration:

> If we consider what more than anything is the root of vice and the cause of political decay, we shall find it to be self-regard and regard of self extending only to the moment. The first step towards moral regeneration is made when a man can be taught to think not merely of the self today, but of the self which will be next week or next month, and to think of himself as a part of a grand society rather than as an individual . . . So long as we aim at mere repression we shall do no good . . . But give to every man a sense of his own consequence in the state, and he will naturally begin to care, and the result of his caring, and of thousands like him caring, will be that in the long run the grosser vices will lose their hold. There is a much closer connection between political freedom and private morality than some people suppose. (Argument, pp. 11-12)

The self-preserving essence, which was a natural instinct for survival, becomes purely selfish and destructive without a sense of any wider 'consequence'. Hale White believed an extended franchise would have the effect of lessening crime because it would link ordinary people to the source of national power; people would feel less helpless and less isolated. This argument is as emotional as it is intellectual; he says that people will 'naturally begin to care' once that human link is felt. Moral indifference, for Hale White, follows on from a real lack of social responsibility.

Very quickly the Argument steps well beyond the bounds of the immediate question of the Reform Bill. He is not arguing for a *reduction* in the property of the qualification but for its total *abolition*. This is why he is aloof from the 'eager excitement' of the House before Gladstone's 'grand announcement'. Hale White is looking forward to a major social revolution, the *complete* enfranchisement of the working classes. This was something which could only happen on the far side of Gladstone's 'Reform statistics':

> There is a wisdom of employing, and there is a wisdom of being employed. Of the latter there is not one single representative in the whole legislative. In the present chaotic condition of education, the education which almost alone has to deal with politics is the education of *conditions*, and the more these conditions come to be represented in the House of Commons, the better chance we shall have of getting at the truth. At present there are thousands of these conditions with no voice, and what there is in the main we do not know. (Argument, p. 9)

Hale White is writing against what he perceived as an unchristian, moral indifference, even ignorance at the heart of the anti-Reform claims. Where he mentions 'the education of conditions' he is talking about physical conditions, the material conditions of life, only ever fully understood by those who suffer the worst inequalities. 'Is there not *many a truth* which is daily forced upon [the working classes] which the middle classes will never know?' For Hale White, the physical welfare of the populace, the fair distribution of wealth, was essentially what politics was about. Like Dickens, he believed that an educated society should take serious notice of the lives, and living conditions, of working people. Franchise Reform would give these people a 'voice' for the first time.

Yet he also believed that a working class united by a bitter sense of powerlessness was more of a threat to democracy than one represented inside the House:

> It may be said that by an extension of the franchise we are placing it in the power of one class to domineer over all other classes . . . Now, if there were any real danger of such a tyranny . . . I would not extend the franchise . . . But England is singularly fitted for popular government. In England there is no homogeneous mass to be feared. The working classes, as they are called in this country, appear to be such a mass because we have so long shut them out as a mass. The social difference between the man who earns five-and-twenty shillings a week and the man who earns fifty shillings, is as great as the difference between the man who earns £500 a year and the man who earns £1000, while the varying influences of occupation and education are as powerful upon the artisan as the tradesman . . . It is one of the worst effects of the political annihilation of a class, that it invariably becomes more and more a class, that it becomes compacted into a kind of solid uniformity, and that the same opinions come to be held by every member of it. Continue to deny the suffrage to the people, and in the process of time this progress to uniformity will render it dangerous to grant the suffrage. Give the suffrage to them, and we shall see them open out a variety in their thinking, socially and politically, such as we never supposed to exist, and such as will prevent the possibility of their doing any great injury. (Argument, pp. 15-16)

This is not a revolutionary view point and yet it shares, exactly, Marx's analysis of how class consciousness works. Hale White argues that the working classes are becoming more class conscious, 'more compacted' as a result of their poverty and powerlessness. The strict Marxist would demand exactly the sort of 'solid uniformity' which Hale White so wants to avoid, but he finds something in the English character that ultimately resists this kind of single-mindedness. Hale White would often evoke this idea of a common English decency, insisting that we were, at heart, a non-aggressive, non-military minded race of people; 'In England there is no homogeneous mass to be feared' he writes; not unlike George Orwell in his essay The Lion and the Unicorn:

> The gentleness of the English civilization is perhaps its most marked characteristic. You notice it the instant you set foot on English soil. It is a land where the bus conductors are good-tempered and the policemen carry no revolvers.[23]

It was a curious facet of the Reform debates that one section of the middle class feared revolution and anarchy if the working man should be *given* the vote, while another section, including Hale White, feared the very same thing if the vote was *denied* them. Both of these fears were really two sides of the same coin. Both sides were anxious about containing the growing signs of unrest amongst the poor.

One of the biggest threats to the success of the new Reform Bill came from within the ranks of the Liberal Party itself, the reason for the 'cold and lame cheers' at the end of Gladstone's speech. An enclave of about thirty Liberals, led by Robert Lowe and Edward Horsman, threatened to severely weaken the Government majority over Reform. It was Bright who termed this group the 'Adullamite Cave'. Lowe sought to divide the Liberal party by feeding its deepest prejudices and fears of working people and it was to counter the influence of Lowe's anti-Reform campaign that Hale White's tract is written. To quote from one of Lowe's speeches at the time:

> I have the opportunity of knowing some of the constituencies of this country, and I ask if you want venality, ignorance, drunkenness, and the means of intimidating - if you want impulsive, unreflecting, violent people - where would you go to look for them? To the top or to the bottom? . . . You know what sort of persons live in these small houses. We have had long experience of them under the name of freemen, and it would be a good thing if they were disenfranchised altogether.[24]

Hale White was ever watchful of this right-wing branch of Liberalism and ever optimistic that they would not win through. In March 1866 the Adullamites tried to enlist other Liberals to support Clay's Reform Bill, which proposed the vote only be given to those with the appropriate educational qualifications. In this way they hoped to deflect the Reform arguments away from material 'conditions' and back upon questions of 'culture' and 'intelligence'. This particular attempt at political sabotage failed and yet Hale White's account demonstrates how the Adullamites worked their influence:

> Just after I despatched my last letter to you, I accidentally became acquainted with all the details of a very pretty little plot, which had been hatched by Messrs. Horsman, Gregory and Lowe, against the Government. You remember the debate on the introduction of Mr. Clay's Reform Bill, and how pathetically Mr. Horsman appealed to the newer Liberal members, such as Mr. Fawcett and Mr. Mill, to take up the question of Reform in a really statesman-like manner, and consequently to support the educational franchise which Mr. Clay proposed. It was agreed by the three gentlemen above-named that Mr. Clay's Bill offered a favourable opportunity for a blow at the Ministry and at Reform. It was consequently arranged that Mr. Horsman should assume his most irritating manner, and that he should employ his whole strength to induce a Radical member to make a speech. He was to attack Mr. Bright most vehemently and personally, and he was to appeal to the well-known inclination of some of the younger Liberals in favour of a franchise based upon intelligence. It was hoped that by these means he would be able to draw some of the Liberals into a discussion, which by skilful management was to be prolonged through the whole evening, so that every possible difference of opinion might be elicited. Having succeeded thus far, Mr. Lowe was then to step in and make a grand oration, showing the utter want of anything like harmony amongst the supporters of Reform, pouring ridicule upon them in every possible way, and appealing to the Government whether they could hope to carry a Reform Bill when not any two of their friends were in the same mind about it. Fortunately though, the machinations of these conspirators were discovered. The gentlemen themselves, jubilant at their expected triumph, having discussed them rather too loudly, were overheard by a Liberal member who was not a conspirator. (AH, March 3, 1866)

Lowe was there, waiting for his chance, on the day that Gladstone introduced his Bill into Parliament but, afterwards, Hale White was keen to play down the effect of Lowe's speech. The absence of passion on a passionate issue is what he notices. Hale White completely ignores what Lowe said and focuses instead on his mechanical, suppressed 'performance':

> Mr. Lowe is very popular in the House. There was scarcely less anxiety to hear him on Tuesday than to hear Mr. Gladstone . . . Mr. Lowe cannot nevertheless be called an orator. Were it not for the remarkable self-possession he exhibits, and impromptu stroke of wit now and then, you would say he looks like schoolboy saying his lesson. He has the most simple way of getting rid of the orator's difficulty, the hands, for he keeps them straight down, glued almost to his legs. He looks straight before him while he is speaking, never turns aside to the right or the left, and his words flow from his lips in one unbroken stream. His speech on Tuesday evening was probably the greatest attempt of his life. It was evidently carefully prepared. He sat chewing it all the time the introductory business of the evening was being transacted . . . It was a great speech no doubt, and it took with the House too immensely, not so much though for its sharp argument as for its personal retorts . . . Mr. Lowe's great defect is, that although so logical, he does not convince. Everybody said when he had finished what a fine speech, what a capital speech, but yet nobody believed. (AH, March 17, 1866)

Where his own pamphlet appealed to the educative nature of experience and feeling, Lowe is presented as an automaton with inexpressive hands and unbelievable logic. However, it was wishful thinking, and rather premature of Hale White, to say that nobody believed in Lowe's speech. In the weeks following this first reading, the influence of the Adullamite Cave steadily grew until the Government lost its majority support for the Bill and was forced to resign its administration. 'He, more than any man,' wrote William White about Lowe, 'contributed to throw the Liberals out'.[25]

Before looking at the eventual collapse of Gladstone's proposals I want to consider what Hale White says about some of the other figures involved in the debates, men upon whose energy and commitment so much depended.

John Bright

At the centre of Hale White's reporting was a concern with individuals, with the heroes not simply of the Reform struggle but of the whole Liberal cause. It was not only their ideas that mattered to Hale White but their personalities and he describes these politicians in the same way he would introduce a character into one of his novels.

John Bright was one of the few politicians, (along with J. S. Mill) who would continually insist upon the wider aims of Reform. Hale White greatly admired his political forthrightness; 'Mr. Bright's power' he wrote 'lies in his ability to launch his whole self on his adversary without any reserve . . . There is no speaker in the House of Commons who possesses this power as he does'. (AH, Feb. 17. 1866) Like Hale White, Bright saw the 1866 Bill as an introductory measure only, and said as much on the day after it was introduced into the House:

> But does any Gentleman opposite believe that he is carrying a Bill - did any Gentleman sitting in this House ever vote upon any measure of arrangement and organisation like this, and confidently assure himself that the measure should be final? He must have a very poor notion of what our children should be if he thinks them less competent to decide such questions for themselves than we are at present to decide them . . . I am not of the opinion that this Bill, if it be carried, will in all probability put an end to Bills having reference to the suffrage.[26]

It was thanks to the commitment of men like Bright that a Bill which could have been dismissed as a weak compromise actually came to symbolise the democratic hopes of many radicals in the Liberal Party. Yet it was also thanks to Bright that those on the right of the Liberal Party had solid evidence that a form of Socialism was unravelling in their midst.

During the passage of the Reform Bill, Hale White supported Bright whole-heartedly. It was Bright, after all, who found him more work for the Rochdale Observer. In 1862 however Hale White expressed one note of caution about his influence in the House:

> As an ardent Parliamentary supporter of Mr. Bright confessed this week to the writer of this article, the member for Birmingham is not popular amongst those who usually vote with him. He has never assumed to himself exactly the position of leader, although his great abilities and above all, his singular power of speaking well *off-hand* in a debate necessarily give him a sort of first place. It is this which a man must have, or must get, if he wishes to succeed in the House. It is of no use to come down there with set essays. What is wanted is pertinent and sensible observations upon anything that may happen to arise. No one can speak *extempore* better than Mr. Bright, and, therefore, it is impossible almost for the Radicals to do other than, to some extent, serve under him. Still he has great defects as a general. He will not consult his subordinates, and I know that many of them feel not a little tender at being so unceremoniously neglected. He is, moreover, guilty of not a little of that dogmatism and carelessness about the prejudices of those with whom in the main he agrees, that are almost sure to accompany such splendid gifts as he possesses. It is to be feared, therefore, that unless some understanding can be arrived at, no very compact front can be presented next year by what is by far the ablest section of the House. If some one would only whisper in Mr. Bright's ear to be a little more condescending, such complaints as are often heard by 'those who know' might be avoided. (AH, Aug. 30, 1862)

Hale White, so observant of the atmosphere of the House, knew that radicals were in a very precarious position. His support for Reform revolved around arguments for improved social conditions and better public education. Despite being a radical journalist, he never expressed a desire to change the whole structure of society. Bright at this time, however, was making loud, provocative speeches which did actually quesiotn the structure of society and at times his stridency was almost too powerful for Hale White. So subtle was the art of politics it was as if Bright would benefit from the slightest inducement to change his emphasis, one 'whisper' in his ear might set him right. It was lightness of touch which Hale White believed, ultimately, won arguments.

This worry about ruffling 'the prejudices of those with whom in the main he agrees' reveals a cautionary strain in Hale White's temperament; he wanted the Liberals to unify behind the cause of Reform, not become divided by ideological differences. He knew that any loss of political tact on the part of the radicals could prove fatal, upsetting the balance of power within the Liberal Party, many of whom 'feel not a little tender at being so unceremoniously neglected'. Even as early as 1862 Hale White could gauge, quite accurately, the political temperature of the House. Radical politicians, as ever, had to perform a difficult kind of balancing act. If they over-compromised their principles there would, effectively, be nothing left to fight for. But, should Bright become too outspoken he could easily alienate his more conservative allies. Being a radical journalist was clearly much easier than being a radical politician.

It is interesting to note that Hale White deplored the political tactics of Disraeli and yet party tactics were obviously very important to him. Like Bunyan, his language is full of army metaphors gleaned from the battlefield, there are 'leaders', 'generals', 'compact fronts', 'subordinates'. There was a battle to be won and yet the main thing the Reform crisis proved to him was that those who wanted a completely open franchise would have to compromise their demands if they were to win anything of any worth in the House. This was perhaps the hardest lesson for Hale White to learn as a journalist, if only because his political combatism was inseparable from his religious Dissent. By the mid-1860s, however, there was little chance of Bright learning to be more wily and Hale White's support for him was unwavering. Bright himself was a Dissenter, from a Quaker family, and Hale White was drawn to the strength of his 'plain Saxon' language and the art of his oratory:

> We know what power music has, or is reported to have, over its votaries, and yet, exaggerated as it may appear, no Beethoven or Mozart ever exercised the absorbing influence over a number of human beings, however enthusiastic they might be, that the plain Saxon orator exercises over a *blasé* House of Commons. Sentimental people may think this is profanity, but if they will only take the trouble to note the behaviour of the audience at any concert or opera, with any stars, vocal or instrumental, or any music they may like to select, and then watch the unfeigned eagerness depicted on the face of every member of the House of Commons when Mr. Bright is talking, they will say, that what I have asserted, whether it is profanity or not, is true.
> (RO, May 11, 1867)

Hale White's impatience with a '*blasé* House of Commons' and with most political rhetoric was clear even when he began his journalism in 1861. Many of his columns groan with boredom at the average speaker. He wrote on Mr. Ayrton in 1862:

> At times one would would even prefer the nonsense of a fool, to the constantly reiterated commonsense of a decent person which cannot altogether be ignored. (AH, March 15, 1862)

Still more cuttingly he discusses Darby Griffiths in 1865:

> Some men's talk is like a fountain, that of others like a book, that of some reminds us of rivers, others of the sea. Mr. Darby Griffiths does not remind the listeners of any flow, so to speak, whatever, but rather of a leakage. It is mere incontinence of words. (AH, March 25, 1865)

The ideal politician for Hale White would have been a writer, a person of firm humanitarian principles able to communicate plainly and economically what needed to be done. But who, in their right minds, would want to sacrifice a literary calling for the squabbles and compromises of the House? When yet another city merchant got elected in a Finsbury bye-election Hale White had the following to say on the narrow concerns of most MPs:

> Everything that he can say has already been said, every vote that he can give is already known, in fact his whole Parliamentary history has been already written in that of each of his fellow city merchants who have preceded him in the legislature. I do not wish that Dickens had consented to be put in nomination, or that he should succeed at the Poll. His better sphere is elsewhere, and he was quite right in saying that nothing would reduce him to sit for any place under the sun; but, Oh! if one could but escape from this eternal repetition of the same typal forms in the House. Why, when vacancies occur and new members come, should my eyes never behold a new face? Why should it always be a merchant, a Lordling or a squire? Merchant, squire and Lordling. Lordling, merchant and squire, how the soul pants for some other touch of the creator's skill - for a bit of heaven's own stuff. (AH, Dec. 7, 1861)

J. S. Mill

John Stuart Mill's election victory in 1865 was, therefore, a crucial event for Hale White. Mill's entrance into party politics symbolised the progress of the Reform movement up to that moment, a process which would culminate in Gladstone's announcement of the new Bill in the following year in May 1866. Not only was Mill standing specifically to fight for the cause of Reform but he was a thinker, a bit of 'heavens own stuff'. Like Hale White, he also saw Reform as a moral, educational priority.

Just five years before, Mill had published his extensive Considerations on Representative Government in which he argued the case for the extension of the franchise. Mill's voice was one of the most outspoken, and thorough, on all matters relating to Parliamentary Reform and citizenship:

> It is a personal injustice to withhold from any one, unless for the prevention of greater evils, the ordinary privilege of having his voice reckoned in the disposal of affairs in which he has the same interest as other people. If he is compelled to pay, if he may be compelled to fight, if he is required implicitly to obey, he should be legally entitled to be told what for; to have his consent asked, and his opinion counted at its worth, though not at more than its worth . . . Every one is degraded, whether aware of it or not, when other people, without consulting him, take upon themselves unlimited power to regulate his destiny.[27]

Many of Mill's opinions on the vote match those found in Hale White's Argument. Mill here writes about the degradation of being powerless, of a man being unable to 'regulate his destiny', while Hale White was writing about the same 'loss of self motive power', the erosion of the will that came from being dis-enfranchised.

This crucial Westminster seat was made even more symbolic for Hale White because the Tory candidate for Westminster was W. H. Smith, the bookseller and newsagent, Britain's first ever media magnate. Mill, like other radicals of the day, was aware how difficult it was for anyone but a 'merchant, Lordling, squire' to get into the House; 'There is now scarcely any outlet for energy in this country except business', he wrote in his central work On Liberty.[28] If J. S. Mill defeated W. H. Smith it would be a victory of the radical intellectual over the privileged values of the entrepreneur, exactly the kind of victory which Hale White believed was necessary to transform not only the make up of the House of Commons but the political and social priorities of the entire country.

By many, Mill was considered unsuitable, too abstract a thinker to be a practically minded politician. Mill himself was well aware of the general mood of anti-intellectualism which surrounded his candidacy:

> Philosophy, not any particular school of philosophy, but philosophy altogether - speculation of any comprehensive kind, and upon any deep or extensive subject - has been falling more and more into distastefulness and disrepute among the educated middle classes of England.[29]

The entrepreneurial spirit, typical of both Liberal and Tory M.Ps, engendered a kind of mental pragmatism. 'Deep thinking' wrote William Sewell in 1840 'is quite out of place in a world of railroads and steam boats, printing presses, and spinning jennies.'[30]

The outcome of this election of 1865 was by no means certain. J. S. Mill was already 59 years old, quite an unusual age at which to enter the House of Commons, and W. H. Smith was already a powerful influence in British politics. Although he was talking to Liberals in far off Aberdeen (where W. H. Smith held no power over the press) Hale White instinctively writes his column in the form of an urgent call for support:

> Westminster is one of the most Radical constituencies in England, and yet for all that I should say, Mr. W. H. Smith, the Conservative candidate, stands a very good chance of being returned at the next general election. For this W. H. Smith is no less a personage than the great newspaper agent, the man who has almost a monopoly at the great majority of the railway stations south of the Tweed of supplying the bookstalls with newspapers. *Ergo*, he is the last man the newspapers would like, and, in many case,s would dare to displease. The watch-dogs, therefore, are muzzled, and it will be a matter of considerable surprise to me if one dare open his mouth for a single bark of disapproval. You will remember that months ago when I told you the story of the battle between *The Newcastle Chronicle* and Messrs. Smith, I ventured to point out that the monopoly of these gentlemen would, one or other, prove a dangerous tyranny. My prophesy seems in fair way of being verified. Here is Mr. John Stuart Mill going to fight the chief of the metropolitan boroughs against a Tory, and not a single sentence as yet, so far as I know, has been written to wake up the Liberal electors to a sense of their duty. Articles, it is true, appeared in favour of

> Mr. Mill and against Cpt. Grosvenor, the other candidate, but only before Mr. Smith appeared on the field. Now that he has announced himself, not a whisper is heard. (AH, May 20, 1865)

Even though the people of Aberdeen can have no influence on the results, he writes as though he were addressing the nation at large. He is gripped by these events, his tone is persuasive and yet tactful; 'My prophesy *seems* in fair way of being verified' 'I *ventured* to point out', 'yet for all that I *should* say'. This is the journalist as the prodding conscience of his readers, trying to 'wake up the Liberal electors to a sense of their duty'. And the reader is being appealed to, individually; '*You* will remember when I told *you*', as if they were in danger of forgetting. Hale White knew that if Mill got his seat it would be in despite of many Liberal, as well as Tory, voters. This is why he appeals to the Liberals' sense of 'duty', knowing that intellectually, morally even, they may be against him.

Mill, the founder of the notorious Westminster Review, was one of the leading free thinkers of his day and his candidacy bid had to be defended even against fellow Liberals on many fronts, theological *as well* as political. Hale White, excommunicate from New College, ex-assistant on The Westminster Review, was well qualified to defend heresy:

> Mr. Mill's doctrine, for which he has been so roundly called infidel, atheist, and I know now what, simply amounts to the doctrine which agrees with the whole tenor of the New Testament, that if God is a good God, his goodness can have no meaning to us if it is something entirely distinct from our own. This is not exactly the place to go into theological discussion, nor should I have ventured to say what I have said, were it not connected with Mr. Mill, Mr. Mill being connected with Westminster and Westminster with myself. (AH, July 1, 1865)

Mill's nomination was on Monday 10th July 1865 and Hale White was there, in the crowd, to support his appearance on the hustings. Before writing about the event for the Aberdeen Herald, Hale White described it all in a letter to his friend George Holyoake, written on the same day of the nomination. His report confirms the images of elections in Pickwick Papers, Middlemarch and Felix Holt:

> I was at Mill's nomination today. It was a sore trial to one's democratic creed. To see a set of low bestial blackguards, howling 'shut up', 'go home' to that calm and reverend philosopher was more almost that I knew how to stand. Not a word he said could be heard. 'I won't vote for that b___r' said one man to me 'because he don't go in for the improvement of the working classes'![31]

The mob was always an affront to his 'democratic *creed*' as we have seen by his references to the Tories who threatened his father in Bedford. Crowds, especially *political* crowds, stirred up beyond all reason, infuriated him and never failed to provoke his disdain, yet this disdain for the mob is mixed with a deep rooted fear of the uneducated working classes. The people shouting down Mill are all 'low bestial blackguards' while Mill is 'that calm and reverend philosopher', 'reverend' being a clerical term Hale White usually avoided. The inference here, because of that man who claimed, ludicrously, that Mill 'didn't go in for the working classes', is that this was a paid crowd, ignorant of what Mill was actually standing for and acting *against* their own interests in shouting him down.

It is the purposeful misrepresentation of Mill that frustrates Hale White. His 'Metropolitan Notes' was written on the following Thursday and expands upon these immediate reactions:

> Election news this week swallows all other. In London the contest has been unusually interesting from the fact that

> Mr. John Stuart Mill has been one of the candidates, and after a hard fight for it has happily been successful. Mr. John Stuart Mill's struggle for Westminster has provoked thoughtful bookish men, men who have not put their armour on for years, to enter the lists with the most useful ardour, and to run about as messengers and clerks with the zeal of schoolboys. Of money we had but little, but of enthusiasm we had a great deal, not a bit more though than was absolutely necessary, considering the extraordinary profuseness with which Mr. Smith, the Tory candidate squandered a small fortune on public houses, committee rooms, printing, and all the semi-innocent, semi-legal ways which are not exactly ways of bribery and corruption, but whose effect we know so well. (AH, July 15, 1865)

The note of triumph is barely subdued and he himself, evidently, was actively involved in canvassing for Mill; 'of money *we* had but little' '*we* are victorious'. It was a personal victory for all 'thoughtful bookish men', those men becoming, for a while, young heroes preparing for the 'hard fight'. That mention of 'armour' immediately gives the prose an Arthurian, Pre-Raphaelite edge, a sense of a returning heroism. This is the language of the romantic revolt, of idealists against the capitalists. A *lot* was at stake here. Hale White's aesthetic was shared by many other radical artists, poets and thinkers at the time, identifying their hopes for the future with the revival of a lost and imagined past. It was as if 'Sir Lancelot and Mr. Gradgrind' were fighting it out on the hustings.[32]

Hale White describes W. H. Smith's election tactics, as well as giving his readers a view from the crowd. What follows is a typical picture of electioneering in the 1860s. Many of W. H. Smith's supporters were paid to be there and did not even know who he was, an indication of how irrelevant the House of Commons was to many working men, how distant its political figures were. Westminster always had been a radical constituency and a seat that Mill should easily have won and yet it was to prove an anxious struggle. The following passage is worth quoting at length as one of the few instances in which Hale White registers a sense of political achievement, or rather, of relief:

> Ten thousand pounds, it is said, will not reimburse Mr. Smith for his effort to defeat Mr. Mill, and yet, for all that we are victorious. The Reformers of Westminster are proud of their triumph, and justly so. No greater triumph will be achieved all over the kingdom. All that beer and placards could do has been tried, and they have failed. Not a gin shop that was available has not been taken up, not a square foot of wall has remained uncovered, cabs were hired by the score, but the electors of Westminster have remained true to their old traditions, and have preferred a philosopher to a man whose sole and simple claim was, that he had made money in the borough. The nomination was one of the noisiest and most disorderly ever seen in London. Not a syllable could be heard of the whole proceedings from beginning to end. I know how easy it is to misrepresent a crowd, but, in this case, there could be no mistake. A large number of the lowest roughs in London had collected together evidently bent on preventing Capt. Grosvenor or Mr. Mill from saying a word which could reach any further than the reporter's box. The blackguards were under the command of a respectable looking man who acted as their fugleman. I was unfortunately right in their midst, and was very much amused at the blind obedience they rendered to the chief. Not knowing the candidates by sight, they were of course compelled to appeal to their general for him to determine what was the proper kind of noise with which to greet each gentleman as he rose to address the meeting. Once a slight mistake was made, and Mr. Smith, instead of getting his proper cheers, was received with yells, to the great indignation of the respectable man, who cried out in great wrath - 'No, no, down, down, that's Smith don't you see,' whereupon the clients suddenly changed their tune, and instead of execrating Mr. Smith, as they had just been doing, began to bawl out lustily for him as the 'friend of the working man'. The Tories have not only opposed Mr. Mill, by the expenditure of large sums of money, but they have resorted to dirty electioneering tricks of which they ought to be ashamed . . . However, we are on the winning side, and can afford to be indifferent. Mr. Mill, if he lives till next February, will enter the House of Commons; and the readers of the *Aberdeen Herald*, if Providence permit, shall have some account of the reception he gets when he makes his first speech there. (AH, July 15, 1865)

The scorn and humour may owe something to the fictional accounts of elections here but the experience is at first-hand. 'We were on the winning side' writes Hale White on what must have felt like a noble victory. The most significant battles, however were yet to come. Nobody really knew how the forthcoming Bill, nor J. S. Mill, would fare inside the House when Parliament opened again.

The following year, in February 1866, Hale White's father noted that Mill's entrance to the House was something of an anti-climax, the controversy which surrounded his election having died down by then. It seemed, after all, that many Tory MPs were indifferent towards Mill, or pretended as much:

> Mr. Mill has not attracted much special attention. Nor was it likely that he would. To most of the crowd of members he was personally unknown; and even those who had heard of him as a writer know little about his works. Country gentlemen and men of business do not as a rule study philosophy, or logic, or even political economy, as we, who have had to listen to their speeches, have long since learned. 'That is John Stuart Mill,' said we to a Conservative friend. 'Oh,' was his reply, 'that's the man who would give women the vote. Strange notion, that'. This is all he knows of Mr. Mill.[33]

Hale White also noted the entrance of Mill, yet with greater personal enthusiasm than his father. It was also exactly at this time, in February 1866, that Hale White's Argument was published and distributed about Westminster. The ideas expressed within that pamphlet would have little chance of influencing the House if Liberals were unable to accept the presence of a man like Mill. Hale White was still concerned with the strong 'anti-intellectual' prejudice against the philosopher but he was hopeful of what Mill and the radical Reformists might achieve:

> That sharp, somewhat eager countenance, a countenance looking as if it could never abide anything so much as humbug or mystification of any kind, belongs to Mr. John Stuart Mill . . .

> The House of Commons is prejudiced against him as yet, and thinks him a mere crotchety philosopher. 'Tis a great mistake. He is one of the most practical men living, and old as he is, has a success yet to make in the House, and he will make it too.
> (AH, Feb. 10, 1866)

Hale White was waiting for Mill to start speaking, which he did a week later, upon the subject of the cattle plague. It was small beginning, Mill had only a few quiet words to say in the debate, yet what many members took as a sign of political ineffectuality, Hale White perceived as courteousness and a precise, unimposing, use of language. Mill was only warming up:

> Each word was exactly the word which was wanted. Nothing was out of place there, nothing superfluous. The only thing which Mr. Mill failed was in the management of his voice which failed to fill the House. Another time, no doubt, he will be able to calculate better. (AH, Feb. 17, 1866)

After the 'verbiage' of Gladstone and the forceful 'weight' of Bright, Mill became the model of civilised political oratory for Hale White. Whenever Hale White talks about the clear, exact use of English he is paying a personal homage to his father whose advice ('If you write anything you consider particularly fine, strike it out. EL, p. 31.) stayed with him throughout his life. A passage from William White's Inner Life of the House of Commons about Mill, written during the same time, shows exactly how much Hale White owed to his father's opinions regarding the clear, solid use of English. William White's description of Mill transcends its immediate political context and reads like a writer's (not just a speaker's), manifesto:

> Mr. Mill never thought to startle and dazzle the House by his oratory, as D'Israeli did when he first rose to speak. Mr. Mill has no oratorical gifts and he knows it . . . His object is to convey his thoughts directly to the hearer's mind, and to do this he uses the clearest medium - not coloured glass, but the best polished plate, because through that objects may be best seen . . . He did not

> excite a furore of cheering; but then he neither expected nor wished for applause . . . There are speakers in the House out of whose speeches every third word might be taken, and the speeches might be all the better for the operation; but Mr. Mill uses no superfluous words - every word is necessary to make his meaning clear, and to this special end is chosen.[34]

'Not coloured glass - but polished plate', glass which makes his ideas plainly apparent; a utilitarian tool demonstrating clear plain objectives. Mill was not a superfluous speaker and this was an important point of praise, especially at this time. Both William and Hale White were increasingly outraged by the way politicians used oratory both to draw attention to themselves or just to chew up valuable time in order to delay the passage of the Bill. If other MPs possessed the concision and consideration shown by John Stuart Mill, then the progress of the Reform Bill might have been a lot smoother and more straightforward that it actually became.

The Reform Crisis

Many Liberal MPs were confused about which of the two revised qualification figures would accurately ensure an educated, responsible electorate and so a politically stable country. Would the extended borough franchise encourage conformity or insurrection? Hale White noted how MPs 'did not know exactly whether it was their duty to approve or not' especially when the Adullamites, Lowe, Horseman and Gregory, were persuading them it would lead to disaster. Lowe at one point, said that he would oppose 'any Bill that lowers the borough franchise by one sixpence'.[35]

The distinction between the county and borough qualification is important if we are to understand how Hale White reported on the passage of the

Reform Bill. At one point, in January 1866, it was rumoured that Gladstone was going to propose a county qualification as low as £10. Hale White believed that this would radicalise the countryside:

> My belief is that it will be a Bill which Mr. Gregory could not possibly support, and that it will certainly place the qualification for the county franchise as low as ten pounds. If it does this, and if it pass into law, all chance of a Conservative Government in this country disappears at once for the next twenty years. The lowering of the borough qualification is of trifling importance compared with the reduction of that for the county.
> (AH, Jan. 20, 1866)

Yet, despite Hale White's speculations, the rural population were believed to be not only the poorest - but the most conservative, the most confined by tradition and deference to property relations. It would be a dreadful blow for radicals if, once successfully enfranchised, the county people turned out to be even more *more* conservative than the previous set of voters. Even Holyoake was questioning whether there was any direct link from poverty to informed radicalism:

> In [a] country where reverence for law . . . rank . . . and wealth is the religion of the streets and lanes . . . so many people are uninformed, prejudiced and indifferent upon politics that ignorance, animus and bigotry may be relied upon to vote for things as they are.[36]

In the endless bickering over property qualifications, both radicals and Conservatives hoped that an electorate could be engineered to follow their own specific party lines. Nobody knew for certain which figures were the safest; getting a well balanced property qualification became a speculative and potentially hazardous endeavour, and for those in favour of full enfranchisement it was an irritating political distraction. In the final reading of the Bill, Disraeli's government set the county franchise as £12 - a sum delicately poised, they hoped, to ensure the rural voters were neither too radical, nor too poor to vote them out of office. Hale White was in the House for all of these debates and his 'Metropolitan Notes' record how each successive political development struck him at the time.

Two weeks before Gladstone's Reform proposals Hale White was feeling confident about the success of the forthcoming Bill and wanted to put all worries about the Liberal rebels to rest. The Parliamentary process however was to be a drawn out affair and it is little wonder that commentators, as much then as today, resorted to political forecasting. Hale White was writing here about Gladstone's 'long promised' announcement about his forthcoming proposals:

> On Thursday evening Mr. Gladstone made his long promised announcement about the Reform Bill. Nothing followed the Ministerial statement except a most obvious confusion and excitement, every man neglecting his duty for the next ten minutes for the purpose of gossiping with his neighbour. By-the-bye, there is absolutely no truth in the report of the downfall of the Ministry. The rumour which was originated in the *Times* was set afloat by the discontented Liberal members of whom the *Times* is the organ, and of whom Mr. Lowe is the representative. (AH, March 3, 1866)

It was fortunate for Hale White that he had such useful connections inside the House. Most of the important decisions about the Bill were going on behind the scenes (those gossiping neighbours) and Hale White's main source of information would have been his father, the doorman. Yet William White's informants (men like Bright and Mill) would themselves have been determined, hopeful radicals, the result being that Hale White's predictions rarely foreshadowed doom for the Liberal Party. He was always partisan. ('We were on the winning side').

A few weeks later Hale White was not so certain about what the outcome would be, although he stuck by his earlier optimism. His forecasts were intended to strengthen collective resolve and intensify public pressure, however complicated and compromised the political situation was becoming:

> The one question of all questions now is - Will it pass? Long ere this one-half of the adult males in Great Britain and Ireland have either put this question, or had it put to them, and no inconsiderable number have probably heard it repeated some hundreds of times . . . This being so, some apology perhaps is needed in order to excuse my asking - Will it pass? But there is no reason for so doing. A week ago I hazarded an answer, and not only said it would pass, but ventured to say by how many it would pass. As the political barometer fluctuates every day with such rapidity that a forecast of what the weather will be a month hence may be deemed a dangerous operation, my friends will naturally be curious to know whether I still adhere to my previously expressed opinion. I do adhere to it. The Government whips at this moment expect just the majority I have before declared to be probable and reckon they will beat their opponents by twenty on the second reading.
> (AH, March 31, 1866)

Already Hale White is on the defensive about a Bill that engaged his personal hopes for democracy; 'I still adhere', he writes, to what 'I have before declared'. This declaration was very much an expression of faith; 'the political barometer fluctuates everyday', it was a 'dangerous operation' to try to predict what may happen, nevertheless; 'I do adhere to it'.

By mid-April Hale White was once again feeling optimistic. Even as rumours asserted that Adullamites were growing in numbers, Hale White claimed to have the true 'facts' regarding the actual support for the Bill:

> I am happy to be able to say, notwithstanding all this preternatural combination of talent and zeal, that the *Bill is safe*. I told you in my last letter what the calculations of the Tory party were, and I expressed my disbelief in them. I have now still stronger grounds for that disbelief. The books of the Government whip have been made up, and the Government are

> sure of a majority, and that a good one. This is not mere club gossip. It is an actual fact which you may take for as absolute a certainty as any problem in Euclid. It is of course possible that an epidemic, exclusively affecting Liberal members, may break out, or that they may be visited with all the plagues of Egypt, while their enemies live in Goshen; but, barring such judgements, I say it again - the *Bill is safe* - and the debate of next week will not change the minds of ten members in the House.
> (AH, April 14, 1866)

Again, we can sense the personal strain of this columnist. Despite trying to conceal his anxiety behind a cheery tone ('I am happy to be able to say') the whole of the crisis is reported in an insistent first person. Hale White is at pains to prove that a good outcome is 'not mere club gossip' and beyond contention but 'an actual fact', 'as absolute certainty as any problem in Euclid' as if it was a matter of intellectual honour to state his faith in the Bill's success. He has to convince his readers not only of these facts but of his *authority* as a journalist; '*I told you* in my last letter . . .', 'I have now *still stronger* grounds . . .' Further down the same column Hale White describes the atmosphere of the House during the second reading of the Bill, at which point he has to suddenly break off and deliver his letter to the post:

> Inside the House the scene was very striking, for nearly every member was armed with a huge bundle of petitions in favour of the Bill. Some of them it was impossible to lift. Mr. Bazley had one from Manchester which must have weighed nearly a hundredweight, and which could scarcely be carried to the usual receptacle for petitions beside the Speaker. Mr. Bazley placed it on the gangway by his side, and oddly enough it had not been there long before Mr. Lowe, who could not find a seat, came and *sat upon it*. Mr. Bright , too, had a huge petition rolled round a piece of wood which he, too, had some difficulty in managing. At about twenty minutes past five Mr. Gladstone commenced his speech. It was a far better speech than the one in which he introduced the Bill. It was delivered with far more energy, and he evidently wished to make up, as far as possible, for the lack of zeal by which his first effort was characterised. So much I can say, but no more, for the post is going, and Mr. Gladstone is still

> on his legs. (AH, April 14, 1866)

Whenever possible Hale White would pick up on the telling details which said as much about the politics of the House than the actual speeches. The debate is still described as a combat, the Reformers 'armed 'with their petitions all showing the 'weight' of concern around the country. And there is Lowe again, in full contempt of his opponents, daring to sit upon the petition from Manchester, a gesture which would have been more significant to him than any thing Lowe might have said.

The following week was important for Hale White as it was one of the first occasions J. S. Mill spoke in a Reform debate and so it was time for the philosopher to show his true strengths as a speaker in the House. Hale White appreciated the complexity of Mill. Without his notes Mill was an unconventional speaker and made no attempt to conceal the effort that went into each of his 'distinct demonstrations'. It is as if Hale White is watching him thinking, working his way through his ideas on the spot. The resulting article reveals as much about Hale White's obvious curiosity about intellectuals as it does about J. S. Mill's politics:

> Now, if this be borne in mind that Mr. Mill did not know he was going to speak that evening, but, at the same time, undoubtedly did know the substance of what he would say when he did speak, we have an explanation of those awkward pauses which attracted such notice. They certainly were very singular. He is not a rhetorician, as everybody knows, and his speeches consist of a series of distinct demonstrations. When he came to the end of one of these, not having provided himself with any notes, he had no cue to lead him to the next, and he consequently stood with his arms behind him looking on the ground, not like a nervous man, but as if he were lost in thought. After waiting in this way, greatly to the surprise of the House, for fully half-a-minute or three-quarters, he would quietly resume, and take up a fresh proposition. Barring this though, it was delicious to listen to him.

> He has just the voice for an argument - soft, clear and musical. There is no superfluous verbiage, not a step too much or too little, there are no personalities, nothing whatever to hinder the unalloyed appreciation of the truths he discusses. Yet it would be a mistake to consider him a mere hard logic chopping machine. He is in reality extremely excitable and sensitive. He knows this, and so leans as much as he can to the other side. His real nature, however, constantly peeps out, especially when he begins to warm in his talk, and you then get a combination of impulse and reason, which is very beautiful. I was surprised to see how he held the House. (AH, April 21, 1866)

This was exactly what Hale White had hoped for from Mill and which he found in no other politician. He always described Mill in gentle terms; 'soft, clear and musical', all the while knowing that there was another side to his nature; 'He is in reality extremely excitable and sensitive'. This is a picture of Mill not only thinking but carefully keeping his emotions in check behind the logic of his argument; 'His real nature, however, constantly peeps out'. Hale White would witness this real nature later in the summer.

Throughout April 1866 the Tories were gradually gaining the majority they needed to defeat the Bill, and gradually the London Correspondent for The Aberdeen Herald was having to face up to this harsh fact. 'Compared with the story of last Friday night', wrote Hale White, 'all other news of what has happened during the last week will be but of little interest'. (AH, May 5, 1866). This night was one of the many occasions on which he described Disraeli, about whose political character he was uniformly damning:

> At length, at about twenty minutes past ten, the serious business of the evening commenced, for Mr. D'Israeli rose to make his great effort . . . Before he had been up twenty minutes not a place was to had anywhere. For some time to come, however, he did not fulfil the expectations he had raised. The first three parts of his speech were decidedly dull, and unvaried by scarcely a cheer. So dull were they, that from half-past eleven to twelve the House plainly thought Mr. D'Israeli a bore and began to yawn.

> Indeed, that fatal bug and hum of conversation, the death-knell of oratorical success, actually broke out over the leader of the Tory Party . . . Some of the members went to sleep - happy men. Sir Robert Peel fairly stretched himself on the benches, and resigned himself to 'the arms of Porpus' as Mr. Dickens's chairman has it. (AH, May 5, 1866)

By 1866 Hale White, always partisan, had published a great many criticisms of Disraeli. 'In all his Letters', notes one editorial in the Rochdale Observer, 'Disraeli appears as the villain of the piece. Mr. White disliked and distrusted him, and did not conceal his feelings'.[37] This dislike of Disraeli was consistently scathing and dates right back to the first year of his column:

> I have watched him now for a good many years, and I do not believe that there is any public man who is so little believed in, and who is so strongly suspected of being a mere *humbug* - I use the word advisedly - as D'Israeli . . . No one, for instance, would think of doubting the motives or truthfulness of men so widely dissimilar as Lord John Russell, Bright, Gladstone, Cobden, and Newdigate; but at the name of D'Israeli men shrug their shoulders. (AH, Nov. 23, 1861)[38]

He perceived him as either dull or flashy and he always wrote his name with an apostrophe, 'D'Israeli', thus drawing attention to the politician's Jewish background. This early prejudice owes everything to the influence of Hale White's father, the staunch Puritan, who would frequently question Disraeli's claims to be a Christian in his column in the Illustrated London Times.[39] Hale White always described Disraeli as politically unpredictable and consequently disliked, even by his own party. He was 'that man whom I never saw smile' (AH, 23 Nov. 1861), and on another occasion; 'a ruined gamester' (AH, June 14, 1862), or; 'the merest charlatan that ever played fantastic tricks before high Heaven'. (AH, April 12, 1862). Hale White's column for April 1866 continues:

> But soon after twelve, Mr. D'Israeli roused himself from his lethargy, and let out right and left upon Mr. Bright. It is a

> curious thing, and does not speak for the quality of Mr. D'Israeli's mind that he is always tame except when he is personal. D'Israeli's arguing is most tedious; D'Israeli attacking an enemy and calling him names is an agreeable stimulant. Gladstone, on the other hand, is never so interesting as when he is reasoning . . . This particular onslaught of D'Israeli's, though, was very poor, simply because it was not honest. The object was not to damage Mr. Bright but the Ministry. D'Israeli knew very well that, seeing there were a number of Whip waverers of the aristocratic kind, it was politic in him to do things - first of all - to make out Mr. Bright to be a very dangerous person; and secondly, to show that this dangerous person was very intimately connected with the Government. At last 'the leader of the Tory party' was cheered, and cheered with emphasis and strength of lungs, that the roof reverberated again and again with shout after shout of applause. (AH, May 5, 1866)

It is interesting that Hale White is criticising Disraeli for attacking the very qualities in Bright which he had tried to warn Liberals about several years before in August 1862, namely 'that dogmatism and carelessness'. Hale White had known all along that the radical left would have to be more tactful in order not to attract the prejudices of the 'waverers of the aristocratic kind'. Now Disraeli was taking advantage of the vulnerability of the radical position, not in order 'to damage Mr. Bright, but the Ministry'. It was already too late to redress this growing gulf within the Liberal ranks. Disraeli's attack on the character of the radical supporters of Reform hit home; 'the roof reverberated again and again with shout after shout of applause'. Defeat was becoming physically palpable.

After attacking Bright, the Conservative opposition turned to Gladstone and, in the same spirit of ridicule, quoted an early tract of his discovered in the records of the Union Society of Oxford. In this early declaration Gladstone had written that the unenfranchised were our 'own flesh and blood' as though he were surprised to discover that fact. Hale White listened carefully to

Gladstone's defence which he said; 'was like listening to a recitative from one of the great masters':

> Never shall I forget the magnificent vehemence with which he rebuked his adversary for raking up that musty old resolution from the records of the Union Society at Oxford. 'At least' cried he 'that resolution of mine, which I now bitterly repent, had one merit that it said what it meant. I did not skulk' (what emphasis he threw into that word) 'under an amendment like the one now before the House . . . I did not', said he, 'intend to found upon that phrase an argument for their admission to the suffrage. But when I heard them talked about as an invading army coming to burn and destroy, I felt it right to fall back upon an elementary truth that they *are* our flesh and blood'. But the best thing of all was the peroration in which he made his appeal to 'those social forces which march on in their right and majesty, and which the debates of this House can neither obstruct nor disturb'. This sentence and those that followed were delivered with remarkable quietude and calmness, and with them he concluded. A volley of cheers greeted him as he sat down. (AH, May 5, 1866)

We can sense, from this passage, the awkward mixture of caution and outspoken pride which characterised those defending Reform, like Mill, Bright and Gladstone. Gladstone was here being confronted by words from his high Tory youth but what he picks out from them is rather, even then, his sense of kinship with the dispossessed as an '*elementary truth*'. Hale White was aware of the subtext to Gladstone's self-contradiction yet nevertheless this was a moment of oratorical triumph.

Despite local disappointments, Gladstone preserved his sense of historical process. Beneath a growing frustration with party politics there was a feeling that widespread political change was, in the long term, *inevitable*. In his speech, which so inspired Hale White, Gladstone was clearly alluding to the marches organised by the Reform League across the country which gained, by show of strength of numbers, a lot of public support for the Bill. The speech reads like Gladstone's heartfelt incitement to modernity:

> You cannot fight against the future. Time is on our side. The great social forces which move onwards in their might and majesty, and which the tumult of our debates does not for a moment impede or disturb - those great social forces are against you; they are marshalled on our side; and the banner which we now carry in this fight, though for some moment it may droop over our sinking heads, yet it soon again will float in the eye of heaven, and it will be borne by the firm hands of the united people of the three kingdoms, perhaps not to an easy, but to a certain and to a not distant victory.[40]

It is strange that both Disraeli and Gladstone generated such equal enthusiasm for such opposing views, as if the House held both sets of opinions simultaneously. In the end, what appears to mark out the Reformists from their adversaries is not so much a difference of *ideas* (for Hale White could be as disdainful of the ignorant, mob-ridden working classes as the most right-wing Tory), but a degree, only a marginal degree, of belief and what Asa Briggs calls 'optimism'; 'England in 1867 was divided not so much between Liberals and Conservatives as between optimists and pessimists. Lowe, Shaftesbury, Cranbourne and Carlyle from their very different standpoints feared the worst'.[41]

The degree of courage on this day, however, was enough to ensure only a marginal Liberal victory; they won by just five votes. Nevertheless, the very closeness of the struggle awakened something in Hale White's writing:

> The very reporters were now obliged to stop. No more writing was possible, and the reports which appeared in the papers on Saturday of the close of the proceedings were necessarily of the most imperfect kind. At last, as if by magic, raising itself above the universal hubbub, the word 'Five' ran like wildfire round the House. The whispered repetition of that one little word here, there, and everywhere, produced a most peculiar effect, something like that of the whispering chorus in an opera . . . The Clerk having taken the numbers handed the paper back to

> Mr. Brand, a sign that the Government was victorious. A tremendous cheer broke out from the Liberal benches, to be followed by another, still more tremendous from the Conservative side, some honourable gentlemen even waving hats and sticks. A word or two more from Mr. Gladstone and all was over. We poured out of the House in a dense mass and as we went by could hear the telegraph clickers with a kind of mad fury signalling the conclusion of the debate to the different newspapers all over the world almost, and, amongst others, to the *Herald*. When we got into the Palace Yard, it wanted just twenty minutes to four, the latest night I have ever seen, and the dawn was just beginning to break. There was even then a great mob outside, and the square was in the utmost confusion and uproar. One more minute, though, and the shore of the turbulent stream was reached . . .. The early workmen were going to their labours, utterly unaffected by the great events which had just taken place within a stone's throw of them. That is the peculiarity of London. Nobody knows or cares about anything that does not immediately concern him, and if there should be an insurrection in the city, Westminster would go its way in peace and indifference. So ended the most memorable debate, and the closest Parliamentary struggle within the recollection of the generation. (AH, May 5, 1866)

There is always a heat and energy in Hale White's writing when he is in the grip of a contest, as if, winning or losing apart, what he most wants from life is evidence of a real battle, of vitality. Even as an old man, his second wife noticed this Lear-like quality in him; 'He loves lightning; likes to get out in an open space with the lightning playing all round him' (GD, p. 33-34), just like Miriam Tacchi in fact. Hale White would often moan about the boredom inspired by watching the House, mainly because it was always this confrontational, unpredictable, politics that was most real to him.

What is important here is how Hale White describes *leaving* the 'wildfire' of the House and joining the outside world of London. As he leaves he is connecting together everything he encounters, and everything he sees. His own experience is now indistinguishable from the experience of history; 'as we went by could hear the telegraph clickers with a kind of mad fury signalling the conclusion of the debate to the different newspapers all over the world almost, and, amongst others, to the *Herald*'. The passage moves rapidly from the House, to the Telegraph clickers, to the world (and Aberdeen), then to the 'dawn breaking', the 'mob outside' and the 'turbulent stream' of the Thames. Then, finally, there are the 'early workmen', 'utterly unaffected by the great events'. That moment from animation to serenity is like the quietness at Cobden's grave.

Hale White increasingly sought to connect the outside, awakening London with the debates he witnessed, daily, in Westminster; and, moreover, he saw this connecting facility as one of the moral and intellectual imperatives of political journalism. He wrote in Argument:

> Every great movement subsequently acknowledged to be right has begun outside the House of Commons, and has afterwards been adopted by it. (Argument, p. 8)

As a novelist, especially in Deliverance, Hale White would be much more concerned with *non*-Parliamentary London, with the streets he encountered on foot and in which he lived - yet his way of *thinking* about the city and its people was thoroughly informed by the intellectual debates he witnessed inside the House.

By June 16th the situation in the House was getting even more desperate as Tory members, knowing they were on the verge of victory, tried to talk out the Bill. For Hale White (as for Bunyan) the 'talkative' were a serious nuisance. Hale White was losing patience with it all:

> The Reform controversy has long since ceased to be a matter of argument in the House of Commons, and has now become a

> mere obstinate trial of strength, just as much as if Tories and Liberals were represented by a couple of Irishmen, each armed with a bludgeon. There is one difference, that the only offensive weapon permitted by House of Commons usages is talk - unlimited talk . . . On Friday night last there was no legitimate reason why we should not have gone into Committee on the Reform Bill by eight o'clock at the very latest. There was almost nothing on the paper; a mere 'calling attention' to the Lord Lyon of Edinburgh, to the National Gallery and another trifle or two of the same kind . . . But it was very soon apparent that the insignificance of the subject matter would provide no obstacle whatever to the prolongation of Tory speeches to their utmost limit, and that the Tories were prepared to go on all night about anything or nothing, provided only Reform could be staved off. (AH, June 16, 1866)

Hale White was always frustrated when the rules and rituals of the House were exploited to prevent serious debate:

> It really was most sickening. There sat a large number of English gentlemen, whose pride is their directness and fair-dealing, condescending to a shallow hypocrisy, which in private life every man with a spark of heroism would have scorned. These, too, were the gentlemen who think the people are not sufficiently moral or educated to be entrusted with a vote. I do not know what the enfranchised will think when they come to study the proceedings of their heaven-appointed leaders during the last week, but it seems to me one conclusion certainly will be, that the Conservatives at least need not be alarmed lest they should be degraded by working-men, if they ever get into the House. (AH, June 16, 1866)

The use of the future tense shows how normal it is for him to think of the future sitting in judgement on the past. There again, is that frustrating sense that the politicians were only delaying what was historically inevitable; Hale White was a radical optimist, his sense of the limitedness of the present is informed by what he believed the future would bring.

On this occasion Hale White still felt the Bill was within easy grasp:

> One thing was noteworthy, that whereas before the Liberal majority has ranged from five to fourteen, on Monday it nearly reached fifty. That is because 'the better class of Conservatives

> are getting ashamed of the policy of their party.
> (AH, June 16, 1866)

The following week, however, finally, Lord Russell's government was defeated in a vote on the Bill. They were beaten by more than forty votes, a count which triggered the cabinet's resignation and the formation of a new Conservative government. This defeat was an important moment in the writing life of Hale White:

> The history of the past week is simply the story of Monday and Tuesday last at the House of Commons, which story, therefore, as an eye-witness, I propose to tell as veraciously as possible.
> (AH, June 23, 1866)

He describes the final vote in a very matter-of-fact way, his report shows signs of real intellectual and emotional exhaustion, of the strain of defeat. Who could have predicted that the very next year a Tory Reform Bill would, indeed, become law? All he can record is the drama of the moment and the sickening sense of *da capo*. How could party politics continue to be his subject if the great changes he desired had such narrow, grudging chances of becoming real?:

> One Cabinet Minister, I know, thought there was a majority of nine in [the Liberals] favour, but the whips, on the other hand, desponded. Presently, members with some difficulty having been got into their lobbies, began to pass through and return, and so eager was the curiosity to know which way the doubtful ones had gone, that a long line of members was extended from the division lobby right into the House, to watch who came in. In about twenty minutes all the members had returned, but still not a soul knew what the result was, and the intense anxiety visible on every one of those six hundred faces, all craning forward to get the first glimpse of anything like intelligence, was very remarkable. In another two minutes, a Conservative member came running into the House, and in an instant was clutched by a score of his bretheren, with cries of 'What is it,' 'How is it' but all the information he could give, was that his side had 316, incorrect as it afterwards turned out by one. That was enough, for it was impossible the Liberals could bring more than 316 into the field, and the Conservatives instantly prepared for a cheer. Still

> another minute, and the tellers had returned, Mr. Adam by his downcast looks too plainly proclaiming a defeat. Now the numbers are taken down by the clerk, and the paper handed to the Tory teller. Then came a shout, repeated again and again, accompanied with waving of hats and stamping of feet, altogether forming an uproar which rendered it impossible for the result to be declared. When at length silence was restored, and the majority so unexpectedly large was announced, there came the same scene *da capo*, and then the House slowly emptied itself, some enthusiastic members cheering, even once more as they passed into the lobby. So fell the Reform Bill of 1866.
> (AH, June 23, 1866)

Hale White wrote this piece on Thursday 21st June, the events he describes having taken place three days earlier on Monday 18th. Hale White struggles to remember every detailed moment of suspense. He seems reluctant to finish his breathless sentences, like someone recounting an heroic death scene. There is also that same relish in his savouring of the blatant triumph of those he saw as his personal opponents. Then, a kind of stunned silence at he end of this passage as we leave him to contemplate what must have been a hugely disappointing result.

On the day Gladstone announced the resignation of his ministry Hale White drew attention to the crowd outside the House:

> Precisely at half-past four all these irregular deliberations came to an end, for Mr. Gladstone rose and simply observed that Ministers had resigned . . . Thereupon the House quietly broke up without another word, and went its way. Outside there was a considerable crowd waiting to hear the result, who heartily abused all the more unpopular members as they came out, Lord Dunkellin in particular coming in for a salutation of a very horrible sound which the police could not suppress.
> (AH, June 30, 1866)

The second part of the Reform crisis is defined not only by the debates of MPs but by the Reform demonstrators in the streets outside.

July 1866 - 67 saw many demonstrations and disturbances in the city. Not only had there been a stockmarket crash in May leading to widespread unemployment, but all efforts of Liberal Reform had ended in defeat. Two important organisations had already been set up to agitate for change outside of Parliament and these groups now found themselves in a powerful position. 'The Reform Union', founded in April 1864, was largely the creation of radical politicians, businessmen and manufacturers, all worried about the dangers of class hostility. The Union fought a campaign under a banner of national unity and the defeat of the Adullamites; they did not, however, support universal 'manhood suffrage'.

'The Reform League', however, was organised by a combination of middle class radicals as well as workers and Trade Unionists. Founded also in 1864, it sought to create an independent working class movement out of an extended electorate. It was the League which Hale White supported, as did Bright, J. S. Mill and other like-minded radicals. From the start, however, the League faced an internal battle over its ultimate aims. All of its six working class activists were also members of the General Council of Karl Marx's newly formed 'International Association'. In one letter to Engels, Marx claimed that 'The great success of the International Association is this: The Reform League is our doing'.[42] Marx wanted to wrench the League away from the narrow path of Parliamentary Reform and towards the wider cause of international revolution.

There was, however, a degree of shared support for both the League and the Union. Hale White's pamphlet, for example (addressed to Liberals, seeking to avoid class conflict) appears to come from a typical Union position and yet he was also hoping for universal suffrage. The pamphlet is also dedicated to George Jacob Holyoake, who was then a leading member of the Council of the London Reform League. Holyoake had special responsibilities within the League, acting as the main intermediary with the Home Office in the new Conservative administration, a role which brought him into contact with William White and his son. As a radical journalist Hale White occupied a similar position to Holyoake, linking the outer with the inner life of the House.

During the Easter recess the League decided to step up its agitation and began arranging a peaceful rally in Hyde Park for July 23rd, 1866. The government advised that the demonstration take place in Trafalgar Square but the League were determined to have the Park. At the head of the League was Edmund Beales, a Barrister, and he stated his objective was 'not to censure the Government, but to declare the public sentiment on the franchise'.[43] In May, however, a notice was delivered by the Home Office stating that:

> The use of the Park [for the purpose of a political meeting was] not permitted [and] warned . . . all persons . . . to abstain from attending . . . or taking part in any such meeting or from entering the Park with a view to attend, aid or take part in it.[44]

The rally went ahead, however, and the army and the Police were there to meet the demonstrators at the gates of the Park to deter their entrance. A riot ensued and the Park railings were brought down, a testimony to the strength of feeling of the crowd. Both the League and the Trades Unions gained instant opprobrium in the Conservative press and yet the full truth behind what happened that day is still hard to unpick. Neither Spencer Walpole, the new home secretary, nor Beales seemed to be in full control of the situation. Beales claimed Walpole had given him full permission to hold the rally in the Park; Holyoake, however, claimed that Walpole had acted 'honourably' for a man in his position and that Beales may not have been entirely truthful in claiming Walpole's consent, a view which did not make Holyoake popular with the League.[45] One thing the Hyde Park incident did prove, however, was that it was impossible for old Etonians and Barristers to lead and control a movement that had its deepest roots in working class history.

Beales's original intention had been to have a small, orderly, uncostly demonstration without bands or marches, but instead London saw a vibrant celebratory Trade Union procession which steadily made its way to the Park, growing in confidence and numbers as it went along. A large crowd who were denied the suffrage and then were confronted with the army in a public space, and with Peterloo still in living memory, were not going to listen to either Walpole or Beales at such a symbolic moment. Although he was not present at the riot, Hale White defended the 'extremely respectable' character of the demonstrators in his column, but he remains detached in his response:

> For the first time these many years, Londoners have seen the soldiers brought out for the purpose of acting against a mob. With regard to what actually took place up at Hyde Park, I myself can say nothing, a not undue bias of keeping my skull unbroken, and my duties elsewhere keeping me at some distance from the fray. All I can testify to is seeing an extremely long procession of very respectable looking-persons march over Westminster Bridge with a band of music and colours flying. The authorities certainly expected a more considerable riot than that which actually did occur. At the House of Commons a large number of extra police were stationed inside the building in those corridors where they could not be observed, but whence they could easily be brought to bear on the enemy, and at Mr. D'Israeli's house I am credibly informed, a party of Life Guards took up their quarters to the great delight of the housemaids, who wished there might be a riot every day. As to

> the abstract right of the people to meet in the Parks there probably is but one opinion - that they have no right; neither can there be but one opinion as to the policy of prohibiting all meetings in the Parks except on very special occasions.
> (AH, July 28, 1866)

There was a very real debate at the time about the appropriate use of the London parks. Although they were intended as a peaceful oasis away from the clamour of an already overcrowded and noisy city, they were being used, increasingly, for public meetings and events. Hale White, who detested city conditions, especially valued the freedom and space of the parks and would always condemn their mis-use for political purposes. The stubbornness of the League paved the way not only for the Reform Bill but for the continuation of 'speaker's corner', for the unfettered noise of soap-box preachers all in the name of 'free speech'. In supporting the marchers Hale White was making a difficult personal concession for what he saw as a 'special occasion':

> Large numbers of well-disposed persons have no other means of getting a breath of fresh air except in Hyde Park, and in the days when everybody was allowed to talk at his own sweet will there the advantage of fresh air was considerably modified by the nuisances of all kinds Atheistic, Shakeristic, Mormonite, ultra-Methodist and heaven knows what which were allowed to flourish there. The breezes of heaven and a glimpse of the Surrey hills were all very well, but the drawback was considerable, for probably the moment you had settled yourself down to enjoy them, some itinerant preacher thinking you a desirable nucleus for a congregation would plant himself a few feet behind you, and beginning to sing through his nose would afterwards, if you persistently refused to listen, compliment you as 'his abandoned brother'. Therefore the greatest interest of the greatest number imperatively demands that the Parks should be kept sacred for the thousands of poor Londoners who want for a moment to escape from the brick walls and chimney-pots. But this was a special occasion and Mr. Walpole, considering all the circumstances, was certainly most incredibly foolish in provoking riot where everything might have gone off as peaceably as the most determined enemy to Reform could have desired.
> (AH, July 28, 1866)

It is interesting that Hale White ('my duties elsewhere') did not actually go to Hyde Park but stayed in the vicinity of the Parliament Buildings to watch the marchers. Typically anxious and fearful of large crowds, he was probably wise to stay away. There was a known possibility of disturbance as soon as the marchers, headed by Beales (in his own carriage) tried to enter the Park. The march, officially banned, put Liberal Reformers in a difficult position. Bright himself chose not to come down from Rochdale for the event but, like Hale White, supported the rights of the demonstrators from a safe distance.[46] After the riot in the Park the situation dissolved into a series of window breaking incidence around London. Matthew Arnold, in a letter to his mother, describes a scuffle he observed from a balcony:

> On the Monday night we were on our balcony, saw the crowd break into our square, throw a few stones at Sir R. Mayne's windows opposite us, and then be dispersed by the police. The whole thing has been an exhibition of mismanagement, imprudence, and weakness almost incredible; but things being as they are in this country, perhaps the turn the matter has taken is not to be regretted.[47]

After the riot some difficult questions were asked of Walpole in the House during what could have been another political turning point. Much had been going on behind the scenes and it was rumoured that Walpole, while officially banning the League from the park had held unofficial meetings with them beforehand, meetings which the League misconstrued as a form of consent. Ultimately, the debate centred around who was to be trusted the most; Walpole or the leaders of the League? 'Many of the members of the League were in the Gallery', wrote Hale White, describing the day Walpole defended his decision in the House, 'amongst them Messrs. Holyoake, Odger [also President of the General Council of Marx's International Association] and Howell [the secretary of the League], names which are beginning to assume an ominous importance in our history':

> Then Mr. Walpole rose and the House suddenly became as still as the very grave. I never recollect a silence as perfect or as eloquent. It meant that . . . the House really believed in the possibility of a dangerous crisis which might terminate, nobody could tell how. I have heard questions put on every imaginable subject during the last ten years. There have been declarations of war, of peace, of Reform Bills, of dissolutions, of votes of confidence and no confidence, but I never saw members so tremblingly alive to every word that fell from the lips of a Minister as they were on that Thursday evening. The fact is, that let them say what they like they were afraid. They knew that Mr. Beales and his friends held the ministry in their hands. The Reform League need but to have said the word and pronounced in favour of a meeting in the Park on Monday, and there would have been a collision between the people and the soldiers which, if it would have done nothing more, would have terminated the existence of the Tory Government in a week. Mr. Walpole, too, felt the responsibility of the situation almost to the point of being overwhelmed. (AII, Aug. 4, 1866)

There was serious concern of insurrection and it is hard to know if the League were containing or channelling these forces of unrest; Hale White wrote of the 'ominous importance' of the men leading the League. The role of Odgers, the working class communist as well as League member, was especially crucial now and Hale White seems to have known this. A 'collision between the people and the soldiers' was exactly what Marx was hoping for. Mill, whom Hale White usually described as a gentle, reasoned speaker, took to the floor and angrily denounced Walpole's inference that the League were not to be trusted, but he was interrupted in mid-flow. The Spinoza in Hale White was anxious about the venting of so much passion at such a politically delicate moment:

> Accordingly Mill flared up in an instant. He stopped, and giving his hands a most peculiar wrench, passionately and in the

> greatest wrath declared that the members of the League were as much men of honour as any member of that House. His voice rose quite to an *altissimo* pitch, and the gentlemen opposite startled by such a sudden explosion were still in a moment and suffered him to go on in peace. I cannot say Mr. Mill was exactly right in allowing himself to be thus overcome. He should either have taken no notice of the interruption or have treated it with more dignity, but still great allowance must be made for time and place. Could there possibly be more incredible folly than to sneer at the Reform League at such a moment, when in twenty four hours we might have seen the streets running with blood? It is not to be wondered at then that Mr. Mill, with his almost feminine susceptibility should temporarily have got into a passion. He must not though lose it again. He must try and imitate Mr. Bright, the best abused man in the House, and one of the very few who never lost his temper there.
> (AH, Aug. 4, 1866)

In passages like this we are aware of Hale White as a moral arbiter not only of *issues* but of individuals acting in testing times, his column placed moral conduct right at the centre of Parliamentary life. Looking down from the reporter's gangway Hale White had ample time to weigh up the conduct of members; he applied Spinoza's Ethic to the behaviour of politicians, just as he would later discuss the passions of Mark Rutherford or Clara Hopgood. Despite the 'great allowance for time and place' (the kind of excuse Mark Rutherford would use) Mill 'must not lose [his temper] again' or the Reformers would be dismissed as hot-tempered fanatics.

His fear of the 'streets running with blood' may seem extreme. Looking back at this time in his novel Deliverance, however, Hale White would remember his deep fear of insurrection; 'Our civilisation seemed nothing but a thin film or crust lying over a volcanic pit, and I often wondered whether some day the pit would not break up through it and destroy us all'. (AD, p. 178). The journalism enables us to place Mark Rutherford's thoughts in a precise historical context. It is curious to think that Hale White witnessed the start of a celebratory demonstration 'with a band of music and colours flying' which ended in such an impassioned show of strength, strong enough to bend iron railings and which seemed even to possess otherwise quiet men like J. S. Mill in the House. The thin 'crust lying over a volcanic pit' was something he, and many others at this time had almost witnessed erupting. Hale White was linked to the very men in the League who had the power to tip the scales.

The story of the Reform demonstration echoes Hale White's account of the Peterloo Massacre in The Revolution in Tanner's Lane. This book appeals to the idea of recurrences in history and a great deal of Zachariah's story is a rewriting of the kind of turbulence Hale White witnessed during the 1860s. In 1817 several of the Reform clubs proposed to gather in Manchester, in St. Peter's Fields, before walking all the way to London to present a petition to the King. While meeting in Manchester, the army moved in and killed several people, including women and children, with their bayonets. Hale White's account of the Major's and Caillaud's role in the conflict mirrors the position of Beales and Holyoake, saddled with a popular movement they had very little actual power over, heading for a confrontation which could only end badly. Like the Major, the League also counted amongst its leaders a retired soldier, Colonel Dickson, whose presence fuelled fears of the formation of a working class army. Yet such fears were really unfounded and, as Hale White writes in The Revolution in Tanner's Lane, illogical:

> Never was the Major more despondent. As for organisation, there was none, and every proposal he had made had been thwarted. He saw well enough, as a soldier, that ten times the enthusiasm at his command would never carry a hundred men to

> London in that cold weather, and that if twenty thousand started, the number would be the difficulty. The Yeomanry cavalry were under order to oppose them, and what could an undisciplined mob do against a semi-military force? The end of it would be the prompt dispersal of the pilgrims and the discredit of the cause. Nevertheless, both he and Caillaud had determined not to desert it. (RTL, pp. 180-181)

After an evening of over-blown political rhetoric from Caillaud, Zachariah expresses his basic 'English' dislike for the whole idea of marching the masses to London. None of Hale White's fictional characters, apart from Clara Hopgood, ever completely unite themselves to a cause. They lived, as did Hale White, very close to the main political activists but they are ultimately reticent about taking extreme actions. At one point Zachariah is very honest about his frustration with the whole reform movement in ways that Hale White never openly admitted while he was a journalist:

> 'Is it worth all the trouble' at last he said, an old familiar doubt recurring to him - 'Is it worth all the trouble to save them? What are they? - and, after all, what can we do for them? Suppose we succeed, and a hundred thousand creatures like those who blackguarded us last week get votes, and get their taxes reduced, and get all they want, what then?' (RTL, pp. 162-163)

There is more to Zachariah's life than this series of clandestine, fantasist political meetings, although Pauline finds him 'dull' in this lack of revolutionary ardour.

The Hyde Park demonstration did not result in massacre or 'the streets running in blood' but there were many arrests, including some of the Leaders of the League and a fund for legal costs was set up for those arrested. Had he been there with Holyoake and Beales, Hale White would probably have been among those needing bail. It was, nevertheless, a defining moment in British political and cultural life and led to an even greater polarity of ideas regarding

Reform. For those on the right, it was not a demonstration but a 'riot'. It was this event which was to provide much of the political incentive for Matthew Arnold's Culture and Anarchy, begun the following year in 1867. Arnold believed the reform movement was self defeating because he perceived its aims as purely materialistic. He quotes a phrase repeated to Daniel Gooch, the chairman of the Western Railway, by his mother as he set off to work each day as a boy:

> *'Ever remember, my dear Dan, that you should look forward to being some day manager of that concern!'* - this fruitful maxim is perfectly fitted to shine forth in the heart of the Hyde Park rough also, and to be his guiding star through life. He has visionary schemes of revolution and transformation, though of course he would like his class to rule, as the aristocratic class like their class to rule, and the middle class theirs.[48]

Arnold believed 'the Hyde Park roughs' threatened the collective stability while possessing no coherent conception of the State, as, to be fair to Arnold, he thought none of the other social groups had either:

> The rough has not yet quite found his groove and settled down to his work, and so he is just asserting his personal liberty a little, going where he likes, assembling where he likes, hustling where he likes, bawling where he likes. Just as the rest of us, - and the country squires in the aristocratic class, as the political dissenters in the middle class, - he has no idea of a State, of the nation in its collective and corporate character controlling, as government, the free swing of this or that one of its members in the name of the higher reason of them all, his own as well as that of others. He sees the rich, the aristocratic class, in occupation of the executive government, and so if he is stopped from making Hyde Park a bear garden or the streets impassable, he says he is being butchered by the aristocracy.[49]

Arnold was writing at a time when it was becoming fashionable for middle class radicals to project their own idealism onto the average working man, a radicalism which did not always exist. Marx, especially, had been planning for a more decisive act of subversion, which never came. Even, Holyoake, a man at the very heart of the League, admits in his memoirs, many years later, that he was pick-pocketed at the moment he entered the park with the radical throng, a moment which he must have recalled like a guilty secret.[50]

On Monday, December 3rd 1866 there was another large demonstration in London, marching from Hyde Park to Brompton. Hale White was in Pall Mall counting the rows of men as they passed by. The purpose of the League marches was to demonstrate that franchise reform would create a respectable, democratic, working-class vanguard, as 'Metropolitan Notes' reminded its readers:

> So the great stream rolled on for a little over an hour and a half without break or hindrance, and without a single act of insubordination, or a single accident - so far, at least as could be observed from our point of view . . . I must say the sight to me was very suggestive. An American gentleman who stood by us was remarkably struck with the appearance of the men. He had never seen finer-looking fellows, he said, and I quite agreed with him that if the next extension of the suffrage is on their behalf, we may congratulate ourselves on a diminution rather of the venality and drunkenness which now, as we all know, so extensively prevail. (AH, Dec. 8, 1866)

For Hale White such fine-looking 'fellows' were not representative of the whole of the working-class but acted as a kind of pressure valve for the real miseries, 'venality and drunkenness', which lay below the surface of London life. It is as if this respectability has been engineered by the middle class reformers; 'we may congratulate ourselves . . .' he writes, as if the well behaved men were really a credit to their superiors. The phrase reveals a telling contradiction at the heart of Hale White's writing on the poor. While constantly arguing for their inclusion in democracy he would also describe the working-classes as inhabitants of a completely separate world and his writing conveyed a mixture of both compassion and fear towards that world. He wrote with passion about the wider London underclass for whom the prospect of social equality was much further removed and for whom life was a relentless matter of survival amidst daily squalor, drink and prostitution.

During the December march he was especially inspired by the bright trades union banners (and popular, crude art always did inspire Hale White):

> Bands and flags there were innumerable, and where they came from was a mystery to the Westenders, to whom the organisation of the trades' unions of the East are as much unknown as the secret tribunals of ancient Germany. Some of the devices on the flags were very curious, and one remarkable feature they almost all had in common, was their originality. The mottoes in some cases might be rude but there was a freshness about them which showed that those who composed them walked by the light of their own opinions, and not by those of other people. One of the most conspicuous exhibitions was that of a boot very handsomely worked, and raised aloft on a pole, with the appropriate inscription underneath, that 'Only the wearer knew where the shoe pinched'. Then there were the silken banners of the different societies, used by them on State occasions, some of them most gorgeously embroidered, much to the amazement of the occupiers of the Club windows, who had never seen such an array of political emblems in London before. (AH, Dec. 8, 1866)

Out of a hoped for 200, 000, Hale White estimated that roughly 24, 000 marched. Unstirred by the opposition's cynicism about the numbers, Hale White devoted an entire column to describing what, in the absence of the army, was a peaceable event and he wrote in very direct terms about the strength of feeling that brought so many people to march through London on such a miserable day in late December:

> Nobody, though, who knew London, believed that it would be possible, on any occasion whatever, to bring together 200, 000 or the half of 200, 000, working men. If the metropolis were a manufacturing town, the thing might be done, but the trades here

> are so multifarious, the hours of labour and the exigencies of different occupations are so diverse that, except on a universal holiday, like Easter or Whit-Monday, no large masses of people can cease their work. Fifty thousand, however, were found who were sufficiently zealous for Reform to lose a day's pay for it, and get through a soaking; and of these fifty thousand, twenty-three thousand marched four miles through the muddy streets from the Park to Brompton, and then marched, most of them, probably four miles home again, without getting very certainly anything to eat or drink by the way. It is all very well to say there were only fifty thousand. The question is whether the middle class would have made a greater proportionate sacrifice for the sake of their votes. (AH, Dec. 8, 1866)

Clearly such massive demands for Reform could not be deferred indefinitely. 'They had been taunted with indifference', wrote Hale White of the demonstrators, 'and they wanted to show they were in earnest'. (AH, Dec. 8, 1866) He was now waiting to see which Reform measures the Conservative party would initiate. By the end of December, Hale White wrote 'I have the best of reasons for believing that the Reform question has scarcely advanced a single stage in the discussions of the Cabinet . . . there is no sign of a Bill' (AH, Dec. 29, 1866). With a new Conservative government in office the Reform Bill was now being kept, purposefully, on pause.

In Deliverance, while looking back at how little he felt his articles achieved, Hale White mentions how 'I don't think that one solitary human being ever applauded or condemned one solitary word of which I was the author . . . I wrote for an abstraction; and spoke to empty space'. (AD, p. 132). And yet this was an occasion when his column did attract some notice. In February 1867 Hale White tried to draw attention to the success of his own political predictions regarding the slow progress of the Reform Bill:

> I trust you will allow me to remind the readers of the *Herald*, with a sort of creditable pride, that my prophesy which I made in

> the *Herald* so many weeks ago, when all the London newspapers were in doubt - a prophesy to which I have steadfastly adhered, despite all rumours and confident 'special information' to the contrary - has at last been verified, and as I predicted there is no Bill . . . I trust thst you will forgive my egotism, but when so many people, editors of *Telegraphs, Stars and Standards* all went astray, it is perhaps excusable that I should indulge in a little quiet self-congratulation. (AH, Feb. 16, 1867)

In response to this, a columnist on the rival paper, The Aberdeen *Journal*, launched a critical (or rather, satirical) attack on Hale White. The columnist, perhaps envious of Hale White's sources, claimed that *he* had known of Disraeli's intentions since the preceding Spring (a far fetched claim considering Gladstone did not announce the Bill until early summer). It was a petty matter of rival journalists, but it was the self-assured tone of Hale White's 'creditable pride' which riled his (probably first ever) critic. Hale White was always predicting and prophesying to the people of Aberdeen and liked to remind them when he was proved correct. The columnist in in The Aberdeen *Journal* wrote:

> 'Our London Correspondent'
>
> This is the great political Augur. He appears in print here and there, sometimes wrapt in mystery like a prophet's mantle, sometimes as condescendingly and ostentatiously candid as a juggler . . . He never tells us whether he reads futurity in the flights of birds, or the entrails of beasts, like an old Roman augur, or by mesmerizing a Cabinet minister and getting his secrets out of him . . . 'Our London Correspondent' is, if anything, too much of a mystery - too much of a prophet - too much of a political free-mason . . . He is as good as an Almanac . . . He must be a clairvoyant. He actually prophesied there would be no Reform Bill. What will he not prophesy next? . . . He has the access to the Cabinet which the old Lord Duffus had to the King of France's wine cellar. A rare Correspondent . . . And in this matter of so many predictions . . . we may mention . . . that Mr. Disraeli all but intimated last spring the course which recommended itself to him.[51]

Hale White, never one to let any kind of criticism go, coolly replied to the outburst the following week:

> Through the kindness of a friend I have been enabled to see your amusing contemporary the *Journal* of yesterday week . . . I am not sufficiently familiar with its most peculiar style to know precisely how it intends the remarkable article on myself to be interpreted, and I shall feel very much obliged if anybody, who knows the *Journal's* ways, will tell me in ordinary English what it all means . . . [T]he *Journal* strings together an extremely curious series of most bewildering paragraphs about myself; a sort of jumble from which I defy any human beings to extract any purpose or meaning whatever . . . You would have secured a much greater reputation than you will ever do by indicting articles in the *Journal* upon Reform . . . Augury, my friend, is a science to which you are specially adapted, far more than you are to writing politics. You talk about my divination - it is nothing to yours. I merely concluded by rigid induction; whilst you, from the flight of the veriest cocksparrow, which you saw a twelvemonth ago, inferred, in the secret recesses of your own bosom, the history of the past fortnight. If you know your own capabilities, you will come up to London, and devote yourself to vaticination. One thing you must be careful to do, and that is to vaticinate before the event, and not after. (AH, March 2, 1867)

There was not a great deal at stake in this rather absurd dispute and it is a shame, after his more substantial opinions about Reform, that Hale White is only picked up on a quibble regarding his predictions. But the incident does give us some insight to Hale White's defensiveness as a writer. He could easily have let the remarks about his journalism pass. Very few people (apart from the kind 'friend' he mentions) probably ever noticed the comments about him tucked away on page eight of the Journal, and yet this was something he had to settle before getting down to the more important business of the week's news.. Over the years, there were a few similar incidents when his 'creditable pride' could not resist redressing such minor knocks to his reputation.

The following session of 1867 did see Disraeli's government successfully passing its own Reform Bill and it was much more radical than anyone had expected. Disraeli introduced his Bill on March 18th in which he proposed to give the vote to all rate payers of the towns, with the country qualification standing at £15 rental. This sweeping piece of legislation went much further than anything proposed by the Liberals and the House entered a period of genuine confusion, radicals, Liberals and Conservatives alike opposing Disraeli for different reasons. Gladstone, despite his previous defence of the 'flesh and blood' of the country and almost for the sake of making a stand, now asked for a *restriction* of the franchise to exclude ratepayers who were paying less than £5. The situation was becoming absurd.

For radicals like Hale White, Disraeli was a shrewd opportunist, acting against the wishes of his own party in order to stay in office and yet, at the same time, the proposals were significant. It was as if Disraeli was appropriating the very movement which he had opposed so vigorously for nearly a decade. In the light of what was increasingly perceived as the inevitability of Reform, it was a clever and expedient move on Disraeli's part to be seen as chief proponent of reform and snatch the moment. The Liberals after all had failed the disenfranchised because of their own divisions. Hale White watched Gladstone's reply to Disraeli:

> [Gladstone] was evidently chafing and fuming during the whole of the time Mr. D'Israeli was speaking, and hardly knew how to contain himself . . . He began with scarcely any prelude and, in two or three minutes was in *medias res*, cutting and slashing at the Chancellor of the Exchequer's statement, with a swift and fatal dexterity that at times was perfectly bewildering. His ridicule was overwhelming . . . Mr. Bright, in particular, who is generally rather undemonstrative in his signs of approbation, was very cordial in his approval, and Mr. Mill was at times fairly convulsed at some of the more comic and telling passages. It was afterwards said that the leader of the Liberal party had gone too far for his followers, and, that they were not prepared for such a sweeping

> condemnation of the Government scheme. This, however, was an entire mistake, Mr. Gladstone was enthusiastically cheered, far more so in fact, than was Mr. D'Israeli. (AH, March 23, 1867)

It was impossible for Hale White to switch his allegiances from Gladstone to Disraeli, as many Liberals showed signs of doing. It was not 'a mistake', he thought, to support Gladstone. Yet there is nothing here of the content of Gladstone's speech, only the fact that he was 'enthusiastically cheered', probably cheered as much out of sympathy than for his 'overwhelming' ridicule of Disraeli.

In May, a final clause, Hodgkinson's amendment, was added to the Bill, thus abolishing the compound ratepayer, a clause which had previously disenfranchised those whose rates were included in their rent. A further half a million people were suddenly enfranchised by this amendment. Hale White's column for May 25th 1867 is important as it represents the final chapter in his reporting of this Bill. He gets more furious the more it dawns on him what the Conservatives have achieved:

> Mr. D'Israeli stated that he should not only abide by what he had said on Friday, but that he would even go further and abolish the compound householder in the Reform Bill itself instead of compelling us to wait for a separate Bill. So ends this eventful story. That the Conservatives should have come down to household suffrage is romantic enough, but even that is partially intelligible . . . What we should like to know is exactly how long previously the Cabinet had determined to yield, and, in fact whether they had determined to yield one iota before they saw how many men they had been able to muster . . . It may be, as I have said before, that he is using the Tory party as tools for the establishment of a democracy. One thing is clear, the majority of them now begin to suspect something of the kind. The hatred of him is growing daily more and more intense, and at any moment there may be a defection of one-half of his followers. He will then gracefully retire from their leadership altogether. He will say 'Very well gentlemen, you have always hated me, and I have always despised you. I have annihilated you as a party. I do not

> want you and I can carry the Reform Bill without you, and remain the most popular man in all England, whether you like it or not'. If there be no consummation of this kind, if the Tories continue to adhere to a detested leader and a detested policy, merely for the sake of few months' tenure of office, if they sacrifice all their creed, traditions and common honesty for this, they will deserve what they are sure to get, the contempt of all human beings who have a spark of decency in them.
> (AH, May 25, 1867)

Hale White, in his defiance, could not concede anything to Disraeli and has to have the last word. The oppositional politics he had enjoyed dissolved (if it had ever existed in the first place) with this final amendment of Disraeli's. It was as if the Conservatives were not being *themselves*. 'The Tory of today', he had written, rather stringently, the year before, 'is precisely the same kind of creature he was fifty years ago - ever taking the side of the aristocracy against the people'. (AH, July 7, 1866). Things, however, were suddenly a little more complicated in Parliament.

In June 1867 a Liberal MP, Mr. Fawcett, rose in the House and indeed *thanked* Disraeli 'for his conduct of the Bill'. This was almost the last straw for Hale White (no end of last straws):

> Now this is going a little too far. Does Mr. Fawcett really believe that Mr. D'Israeli offers us the present extension of the franchise because it is a thing in which he believes, and upon which he has set his heart; or is it rather because he can do nothing else, and is, above all things, anxious to remain in office? Can the leopard change his spots in such a fashion as this, and is the D'Israeli of the last twenty years suddenly become a person to whom an enlightened Radical must feel 'the most lasting gratitude' for anything whatever? (AH, June 1, 1867)

The moral distinctions Hale White believed in simply did not exist in British political life. The Reform Bill was passed but the Liberals had lost. Worse was yet to come when, the following year in 1868, J. S. Mill, who had always fought openly from the left of the Liberal Party, was defeated by his old opponent, W. H. Smith. There was now no radical intellectual presence in the House. For Hale White, even the name 'Smith' symbolised the drabness of English intellectual life, as if Westminster had settled for the average, the conventional:

> Mr. Mill is well known in France and Germany and the people in those countries think it profoundly illustrative of English manners that a philosopher should be replaced by a wealthy tradesman, whose only qualification for Parliament is that he has made a very large sum of money. The very name Smith is suggestive and gives a kind of completeness and rotundity to the transaction. (AH, Jan. 30, 1869)

Many Liberals now had to ask themselves what had been the most important; the success of the Reform Bill, or the failure of their own party? This was a very difficult question, especially for someone like Hale White whose party allegiances ran very deep and whose suspicion of Tory motives ran even deeper. It was clear that, from now on, progress in the House would always be slow, frustrating and bound by compromise. Many years later in Deliverance Hale White had not changed his position on what he perceived as the distinct, opposing interests of the Parties and the conciliatory but shallow spirit which disguised the essence of political conflict:

> What a mockery was controversy in the House! How often have I seen members, who were furious at one another across the floor, quietly shaking hands outside, and inviting one another to dinner! I have heard them say that we ought to congratulate ourselves that parliamentary differences do not in this country breed personal animosities. To me this seemed anything but a subject of congratulation. Men who are totally at variance ought not to be friends, and if Radical and Tory are not totally, but merely superficially at variance, so much the worse for their Radicalism and Toryism. (AD, pp. 134-135)

It was not so much political defeat as the absence of any clearly defined battleground which caused Hale White to despair over Parliamentary politics.

Defeat for Hale White was usually a test of inner resolve, a spur to greater strength. 'It is a poor religion which makes no provision for disaster, and even for apparently final failure. The test of faith is its power under defeat' he wrote in The Revolution in Tanner's Lane. (RTL, p. 186)[52]

The Reform movement, even the defeats, *defined* Hale White throughout the 1860s. Without this 'battleground' then, how are we to characterise his journalism in the years which followed? It would be too convenient to explain his life as a process of political disillusionment leading to some freer spiritual plateau, the kind of final phase which, for example, Dorothy White was so keen to impose on her late husband's biography. Hale White himself, as we shall see in what he wrote about Wordsworth, was extremely sceptical of these kinds of explanations. He never signed up to what Doris Lessing calls 'the package', 'the God-is-dead, Science-is-king materialism'.[53] He was never a Marxist during the 1860s, while many writers from similar backgrounds became just that. Hale White retained a keen interest in Parliamentary politics until he died and it is not as if he simply gave up the House for his novels.

One of the political figures he admired most throughout this period was Mazzini, who campaigned for the cause of Italian Nationalism and who also appears as an exiled hero in Clara Hopgood. Something Hale White wrote about Mazzini in 1865 shows the kind of religious values and motives he looked for in all politicians:

> He is the only man of eminence in the political world who is fervently religious and who is not ashamed, publicly and privately, to set before you his beliefs in religion as the foundation stone of everything he does. No such co-mingling of statesmanship, genius and piety has been seen in England since the days of Cromwell. (AH, Aug. 5, 1865)

Significantly, Mazzini is seen as a nineteenth-century Puritan revolutionary. Hale White always wrote about him with a strong degree of optimism, as if Mazzini stood for a moral determination and political will and which could just as readily be resurrected in England as in Europe. All that was needed was for the people to find the same 'foundation' of *'belief'* in their cause.[54]

In 1872, after so many political disappointments and set-backs Hale White wrote an important piece for The Nonconformist about the dangers of political apathy, dangers which especially await the more isolated, less partisan artist:

> Constant attendance at the House, at least as a stranger, is apt, I observe, to beget doubts as to the efficacy of representative institutions, and a carelessness about politics. Probably, if I were a member, the zeal for my own cause and the interest I should take in my own speeches would over-weigh the indifference to the causes of other people and the lack of interest in their speeches; but having no particular cause, and not making speeches, the doubts and carelessness do prevail . . . The English people take none too much interest in politics, and have not too much faith in politicians. Their apathy is perfectly natural so long as the newspapers, day after day in their Parliamentary columns, are nothing but a record of the Bentincks and their friends. But this apathy is very dangerous. It will be a bad day for this country when, having learned to consider Politics as a selfish struggle for power, and the House of Commons as the arena of unintelligible wranglings and intrigues, we determine that it is best to mind our own private affairs and to allow our wranglers and intriguers to do what they please. (Non, April 17, 1872. pp. 406-7)

Despite being a radical, Hale White asserts his intellectual independence in this passage; 'having no particular cause, and not making speeches, the doubts and carelessness do prevail'. Yet he is still determined not to lead a narrow, self-seeking life, concerned only with 'our own private affairs'. In the absence of easy solutions politics becomes a matter of daily facing difficult questions which too often seem like '*unintelligible* wranglings and intrigues'. His aims as a writer - to clarify, to engage the interest of his readers, to prevent an *indifference* to public affairs, (or as he put it; 'a cloying of the appetite'. AH, March 14, 1866) were at the root of his defiance.

Orwell once wrote, very significantly, of Dickens that although he had no systematic grasp of the society he attacked he did possess 'an emotional perception that something is wrong'. 'The vagueness of his discontent' wrote Orwell 'is the mark of its permanence . . . *as a matter of course* he is always on the side of the underdog, always and everywhere'.[55] The phrase corresponds exactly to Hale White's allegiances throughout the Reform Bill. Although Hale White was mildly sympathetic to the ideals of socialism the temperature of his commitment to it varied. There is a revealing letter a little later in which Hale White discusses socialism with his son, Ernest. The letter, undated, would have been written sometime during the mid 1880s. Hale White draws a blank when it comes to a systematic socialist policy, but he still encourages his son to stick to some particular social problem:

> You have had so much to do with working men that I always listen with respect to anything you have to say about labour. I agree with you that the root of the labour and capital difficulty is interlaced deep down with the very foundations of modern society. I myself am totally unable to deal with such a vast and intricate question. The only thing I *could* do if I were younger would be to devote myself to some small reform within my compass and trust that any kind of success would tend towards the solution of bigger problems. For example, if we could give the poor better dwellings they would be better qualified to discuss what is called socialism. It is not possible for a man to think a reasonable thought about it as long as he shares a single room with his wife and six children two of whom are grown up. Of course it will be said that until we are socialists we shall not get better dwellings. I reply that I have no confidence in any reform designed and carried out by a majority which would be made up from the men (and women) whom I encounter in Whitechapel on Saturday night. Could such people as these carry

> out any scheme, just and effectual, without corruption?
>
> I am afraid I shall have to give up politics. Argument has given place to smashing windows. If you want to get anything done you must break a certain number of panes of glass. It will be done then. I am not now referring exclusively to these crazy women. I do not want to despair. I struggle against it but it is the truth that in the end it is force in some shape which decides controversies. If a set of men are strong enough to get what they want they will get it.[56]

This letter is written in an idle mood, and there is no way out of its circuitous arguments. Hale White recommends sticking to 'some *small* reform' and then immediately settles on housing, possibly the *biggest*. Only to express his scepticism in socialism again, associating it, in quite Arnoldian terms, with violence. 'I do not want to despair' he writes, 'I struggle against it but . . . in the end . . .' Although it was controversial at the time, the cause of the new Reform Bill, with its picky property qualifications, was a very specific, inherently limited piece of legislation and perhaps its very limitedness *suited* Hale White. Although he railed against the narrowness of the Bill, this still enabled him to safely launch himself beyond its bounds. Hale White is expressly vague when it comes down to the big, more wide ranging political solutions at the far end of the radical spectrum. There is an acute awareness of the problem; - 'the root of the labour and capital difficulty is interlaced deep down with the very foundations of modern society' - but a distrust of large scale solutions; - 'I myself am totally unable to deal with such a vast and intricate question'. Hale White's background makes him too suspicious of orthodoxy to be a committed socialist, too concerned with individuals to sign up to the party, too fond of his language to abuse it.

In November 1878 he wrote a piece on the socialist press of Europe which serves as another important indication of the level of his 'socialist awareness':

> I observe that in 1878, 56,336 Socialist votes were given in Berlin. I think that few people know how prevalent Socialism is, or what its exact tenets are. I have now before me four Socialist newspapers obtained in London: *Le Mirabeau, Le Cri du Peuple, Le Petit Languedor* and *La Guerre Sociale*, all of them preaching Socialist doctrines, are disseminated far and wide across the continent. There are also one or two Socialist newspapers printed in English, but in them the true Socialist doctrine is subordinated to warfare on theology and the priests. The main doctrine in these newspapers are the decentralisation of government and the reversion of land to the State. These are not all the articles in their creed but in the majority of them there is nothing more terrible than these two. With regard to the first article it is one which is not only healthy but harmless, and with regard to the second it is an article which has been held by many men of eminence, reflecting upon the fact that the quantity of land in a country is fixed, and that upon the land we all ultimately depend. Socialism will become revolutionary if it be suppressed by force, but like steam, if the safety valve be loosened, it will do no harm, but if the German Government be going to sit upon the spring, there will come one day an explosion worse, I believe, than that of 1789. I am bound to admit that Socialism is not limited to the dogmas just enumerated. Socialists do hold, at least as many of them as Proudhomme their apostle said, that property is robbery, and many of them also approve of the attempts of Hoedel and Nobiling. But these are extreme forms of the heresy, and as I take it, speaking I admit from imperfect acquaintance, are begotten by the oppression of dogmatism. (NN, Nov. 30, 1878)

How strangely the Marxist terminology jars against Hale White more human, more ancient biblical terms, of 'creeds', 'belief', and 'apostles'. Hale White is clearly writing about *others*; 'the articles in *their* creed'. His intellectual independence is, again, obvious; 'I am bound to admit that Socialism . . .' But it is extraordinary that the most Stalinist proposal, the 'reversion of land to the State', appeals to Hale White as quite 'healthy and harmless'. Neither does he wonder how such a powerful State might be 'decentralised'. Neither does he understand that what Marxists mean by 'property' is the very land and 'means of production' itself, not his book collection or his telescope. He is naive about Socialism, perhaps even *purposefully* so, but his naivety only shows how untheoretical Hale White always was. Throughout the Reform crisis his roots in the particulars of life save him from the worst pitfalls of political dogma.

Notes

1. Matthew Arnold, Culture and Anarchy 1867-1869, ed. Stefan Collini (Cambridge: CUP, 1993), p. 69; hereafter cited as Anarchy.

2. These thoughts about Cobden could have come from Orwell's biography. The anti-establishment atheist, who had no connection with any church, priest or vicar, wanted to be buried in the nearest, quiet C of E graveyard. All Saints in Stoke Newington was eventually chosen. Bernard Crick writes: 'Perhaps Orwell's request was not so surprising. He loved the land and he loved England and he loved the language of the liturgies of the English church. 'Orwell-like' conveys all these things; 'Orwellian' other things. He should be remembered for both'. Bernard Crick, George Orwell (London: Secker, 1980), p. 580. Hale White's grave outside Groombridge Parish Church in Tory, C of E, Kent has a similar, non-contradictory effect. It expresses the need for dissenters to claim the 'heart of England' as their own.

3. The address was 11 Serle Street, Lincoln's Inn Fields. See; Catherine Macdonald Maclean, Mark Rutherford, A Biography of William Hale White (London: Macdonald, 1955), pp. 128-129; hereafter cited as Maclean. Hale White wrote an extended letter about Elizabeth Street shortly after she died. He had the piece printed privately for friends and family. William Hale White, A Letter Written on the Death of Mrs Elizabeth Street (London: Griffith and Son, 1877).

4. Maclean, p. 144.

5. Maclean, p. 149.

6. Before arriving at no. 142 Hale White had taken a job as a teacher at a private school in Stoke Newington. He lasted only one day. See EL, p. 79.

7. Maclean, pp. 47-49.

8. William White's Parliamentary sketches were collected together and published some twenty years after his death: William White, The Inner

Life of the House of Commons Vols. I-II, ed. Justin McCarthy, with an introduction by W. Hale White (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1897); hereafter cited as Inner Life.

9. The Imperial Dictionary of Universal Biography ed. John Francis Waller (London: Mackenzie, 1857-1866). Hale White's contributions can be found in Vol. II, pp. 478-480. Vol. III, p. 532, p. 544, pp. 562-563. Vol. IV, pp. 577, p. 585, pp. 677-678, p. 681.

10. [W. Hale White], 'Births, Deaths and Marriages,' Chamber's Journal IX (March 6, 1858), pp. 155-157.

11. Letter to Mabel Marsh, September 27, 1903, Letters To Mabel Marsh and Lady Robert Cecil [Typescript] Bedford Public Library. Also quoted in Maclean, p. 162.

12. Wilfred Stone wonders whether it was another Dissenting heretic, Macrae Moir, who found Hale White his Aberdeen column. It may be Moir who is mentioned in Early Life, (See Stone, p. 40): 'I found at this time a Scotch graduate who, like myself, had been accused of heresy, and had nothing to do'. (EL, p. 81). Hale White writes about Moir at greater length in his column: 'An old Aberdeen MA, formerly student in Marischal College, and now secretary of the "Garibaldi Italian Unity Committee". (AH, Oct. 25, 1862) Hale White would certainly have known Moir from his involvement in the Italian cause and so Stone's theory is a good one.

13. Maclean found a letter from Hale White to his son Ernest in which he says that he received two and a half guineas for each article bringing his wage up to £260 a year, (Letter dated March 7, 1905). As usual Maclean makes no reference as to where this letter was kept while she was writing her biography. Maclean, p. 164. Hale White's son, Jack, also wrote a few 'Notes' in which remembers his father at this time:

> I see him now coming home between six and seven in the evening, and running upstairs to prepare for the evening meal, after which he would often work upon his articles. He retired generally quite early, slept badly, and rose early; often by 4 o'clock . . . in those early morning hours, he read and wrote as his own spirit moved him . . . Nevertheless, when he had an article to finish . . . he would rouse me up at six o'clock to meet the newspaper train on its arrival at the station and bring him the morning papers. Sometimes the article was finished in the waiting room at Victoria Station on his way to the Admiralty.

Irvin Stock, William Hale White (Mark Rutherford) (London: Allen and Unwin, 1956), pp. 60-61. The passage is from : Jack Hale White, William Hale White, 'Mark Rutherford 1831-1913 [sic] Notes by His Second Son [Typescript] Geneva - 1931. The Bodleian Library, Oxford. MSS. Eng. mis. c. 443-447.

14. Charles Dickens, 'The Newspaper Press Fund,' Letters and Speeches Vol. II, 1879-1881, ed. Mamie Dickens, Georgina Hogarth and Richard Herne Shepherd (London: Chapman and Hall, 1908), p. 475. Hereafter cited as Dickens.

15. Hale White could well have been at this dinner, it was certainly covered by The Morning Star in an article printed in the column adjacent to Hale White's 'Below the Gangway'. Hale White's article almost reads like a re-working of Dickens's speech. Dickens writes: 'I have worn my knees by writing on them in the old back row of the old gallery of the Old House of Commons; and I have worn my feet by standing to write in a preposterous pen in the old House of Lords . . . Returning home from excited political meetings in the country to the waiting press in London, I do verily believe I have been upset in almost every description of vehicle known in this country. I have been in my time belated on miry roads, towards the small hours fourty or fifty miles from London . . . Accept these little truths as a confirmation of my undying interest in this old calling'. Dickens, Vol. II, p. 478.

16. Wordsworth, 'Letter to Benjamin Robert Haydon,' c. 8 July 1831. William Wordsworth, The Letters of William Wordsworth ed. Alan G. Hill (Oxford: OUP, 1984), p. 254.

17. Asa Briggs, The Age of Improvement (London: Longman, 1979), p. 254; hereafter cited as Briggs.

18. From: William Wordsworth, 'Composed After Reading a Newspaper of the Day,' The Poetical Works of William Wordsworth ed. Thomas Hutchinson (London: OUP, 1895), p. 513.

19. Lewis Apjon, John Bright and the Party of Peace, Retrenchment and Reform (London: Tyne, 1884), p. 231.

20. Speech delivered in Birmingham, October 27, 1858. John Bright, Speeches on Questions of Public Policy ed. James E. Thorold Rogers (London: Macmillan, 1869), p. 290; hereafter cited as Bright.

21. Charles Dickens, 'Letter to W. W. F. de Cerjat, Feb. 1, 1859,' The Letters of Charles Dickens Vol. IX, ed. Madeline House, Graham Storey and Kathleen Tillotsen (Oxford: OUP, 1997) p. 21.

22. Letter to George Jacob Holyoake, Feb. 10, 1866, The George Jacob Holyoake Collection Manchester Co-op Library. Ref. no. 1647.
Nick Jacobs has pointed out to me that Hale White also sent his Argument to Ruskin. Hans Klinke, in his early ground-breaking biographical study, quotes from a letter which Ruskin wrote to Hale White on the subject of Franchise Reform. This important correspondence has completely vanished from all subsequent bibliographies. Although it

appears that Klinke read this letter while visiting Dorothy White, at present, it is untraceable to any known source:

> 'I am much interested by your letter [*Argument*] and understand well the pressures of life and toil in the classes you represent and for whom you plead. But I have always looked upon them as the victims of many forces and wills, with which for the present there is no direct contest possible'. Ruskin to W. Hale White. Oct. 5, 1865.

Hans Klinke, William Hale White, Versuch einer Biographie (Frankfurt: B. W. Bohn, 1930), p. 53. In total, Klinke lists eleven letters from Ruskin to Hale White, written from the 1860s to the late 1880s, all of which have seemingly vanished. Klinke himself was killed during the Second World War.

23. George Orwell, The Lion and the Unicorn 1941 (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1982), p 41

24. Quoted in Bright, p. 373.

25. Inner Life, Vol II, p. 54.

26. Bright, pp. 345-346.

27. From Considerations on Representative Government included in J. S. Mill, On Liberty and Other Essays ed. James Gray (Oxford: OUP, 1991), p. 329; hereafter cited as Liberty.

28. Liberty, p. 78.

29. From 'Professor Sedwick's Discourses,' by J. S. Mill; quoted in Walter E. Houghton, The Victorian Frame of Mind. 1830-1870 (Yale: Yale University Press 1957), pp. 98-99; hereafter cited as Houghton.

30. Quoted in Houghton, p. 114.

31. Letter to George Jacob Holyoake, July 10, 1865, Letters to George Jacob Holyoake Bedford Public Library. MR6/1.

32. The analogy of 'Sir Lancelot and Mr. Gradgrind', derives from E. P. Thompson and is the title he gave the first chapter, about the romantic revolt in Victorian Britain, in his study of William Morris: E. P. Thompson, William Morris. From Romantic to Revolutionary (New York: Pantheon, 1976), p. 1.

33. Inner Life, Vol. II, pp. 30-31.

34. Inner Life, Vol. II, pp. 32-33.

35. Briggs, p. 501.

36. Maurice Cowling, Disraeli, Gladstone and Revolution (Cambridge: CUP, 1967), p. 50; hereafter cited as Cowling.

37. [Anon], 'Our Letters by a Radical,' Supplement to The Rochdale Observer (Feb 17, 1906), p. 8.

38. It is worth noting the aside here; 'for a good many years'. It suggests that prior to 1861, long before he became a journalist, Hale White was a frequent observer in the House. One sentence in his column in The Norfolk News verifies this; 'It was in 1849 that I first entered [the House]'. (NN, Jan. 21, 1882)

39. William White said the following about Disraeli's Jewishness in Inner Life:

> The First Lord of the Treasury signs his name Disraeli. We have his signature before us, but his father signed D'Israeli. Mr Disraeli does belong to the old Jewish community. He professes the Christian faith, but he does allow that he is a 'converted Jew'. The Christian religion is, he says, the Jewish religion completed . . . Mr Disraeli then, did not attempt to conceal his race when he began his political career; on the contrary he openly avowed that he was a Jew - boasted of the fact, gloried in it. Inner Life, Vol. II, pp. 84.

In 1896 Hale White was discussing a review of his father's Inner Life and was unhappy with the fact that the reviewer believed 'my father always wrote of Disraeli as a charlatan', as if this observation cast William White in too harsh a light. He was forgetting his own published comments: 'the *merest charlatan* that ever played fantastic tricks before high heaven' (AH, April 12, 1862). Hale White tried to balance this account of his father's prejudice, yet, in doing so he was really re-writing *himself*:

> It would be easy to pick out hard things about him from my father's sketches; but it would have been impossible for him, although he was a Radical, to sum up Disraeli in such a phrase. The truth is that the better Disraeli was known the more difficult it became to sum him up in such a phrase, or any collection of phrases . . . Men entirely opposed to Disraeli both in character and politics acknowledge an authority in him which no mere charlatan could ever wield'. W. Hale White, 'Mr White's Parliamentary Sketches,' The Weekly Sun (Sept. 20, 1896). Letter. Note that by 1896 'D'Israeli' has become 'Disraeli'.

40. Roy Jenkins, Gladstone (London: Macmillan, 1995), p. 262.

41. Briggs, p. 515.

42. David McLellan, Karl Marx. His Life and Thought (London: Macmillan, 1973), p. 368.

43. Cowling, p. 249.

44. Cowling, p. 265.

45. George Jacob Holyoake, Sixty Years of an Agitator's Life (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1906), p. 186; hereafter cited as Holyoake.

46. Keith Robbins, John Bright (London: Routledge, 1979), p. 183.

47. Matthew Arnold, Letters Vol. I, ed. George W. E. Russell, (London: Macmillan, 1895), p. 335.

48. Anarchy, p. 88.

49. Anarchy, p. 55.

50. Holyoake, p. 190.

51. [Anon] 'Our Correspondent,' The Aberdeen Journal (Feb. 20, 1867), p. 8.

52. The quotation is taken from a chapter aptly named 'The School of Adversity'. Hale White was familiar with 'Danger' and 'Destruction', the two easy paths which avoided the Hill Difficulty. John Bunyan The Pilgrim's Progress 1678, ed. Roger Sharrock (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1987), p. 39.

53. Doris Lessing, Walking in the Shade (London: Harper Collins, 1997), p. 316.

54. Mazzini's name features regularly in the journalism during the 1860s. Hale White even visited him once and often wrote about him in the Aberdeen Herald:

> The last time I saw him was in his old house in Brompton, and it appeared to me then as if he were in the last stage of consumption. It was winter, and he was shut up in a little London parlour, close, draughty and cold . . . He was eager and intense beyond any man I know . . . Mazzini's mind never seems to know a moment's rest. When first I saw him many years ago I remember that was what chiefly struck me. Before I had been with him more than a few minutes he was driving at something which filled him with interest - and we were discussing it as if we were the oldest of friends and had been with one another all day long. (AH, Dec. 12, 1868)

There is still a great deal to be discovered about Hale White's connections with Mazzini. Hale White certainly knew Madame Mario (otherwise known as Jessie White Mario) who dedicated her life, like Clara Hopgood, to Mazzini's cause. Jessie White was the sister of Fred White, one of the three students expelled from New College. The story of Mazzini's disguise and escape from Austrian guards (CH, p. 122) is also related in (AH, Aug. 29, 1863) Unlike Clara Hopgood, Mme Mario did not die for the cause yet she *was* imprisoned; Hale White wrote once about her arrest: 'It is to be feared that the treatment she will receive on this occasion will not be quite so lenient as it was when she was arrested before. Her friends fear very much for her safety . . . ' (AH, Sept. 6, 1862) See also Elizabeth Adams Daniels, Jessie White Mario: Risorgimento Revolutionary (Columbus: Ohio University Press, 1972).

55. George Orwell, Collected Essays, Journalism and Letters Vol. I, ed. Sonia Orwell and Ian Angus (London: Secker and Warburg, 1968), p. 502.

56. Letter to Ernest about Socialism, Undated, Letters to Ernest Bedford Public Library.

Chapter Three.

The Radical Journalist. Part II

London Poverty and Social Conditions

Although the Reform Bill and its aftermath provided the main political context for his journalism during the 1860s, Hale White wrote about any local issue which interested him without consciously seeking a unity or theme. Each of his weekly columns usually separates into about seven sections and in the course of a single week his subject matter might range from a description of London poverty, to a visit to an art exhibition, a critique of a theology lecture or a recently-published book. He was thinking aloud about anything which struck him or which he experienced in the city. As in the novels, he is a thoroughly digressive writer; the journalism is characterised by abrupt changes in scene, mood and subject matter.

Long after the compromises of the Reform movement of 1866-67 Hale White continued to write about the London poor and in ways which kept to the particular, to the lives of individuals. Many of these writings focus on the powerlessness of working class women whom he saw as bearing the worst effects of deprivation. In October 31, 1863 he told the story of a woman from Bethnal Green who died, according to the coroner's verdict, of starvation, something most boroughs were more than reluctant to face up to. Hale White began his column with, what appears to be, a quotation from a daily newspaper:

> Winter is beginning early with London fog, wretched London cold, and worst of all with London starvation. Bethnal Green has been the first 'to acquire the distinction of having publicly and fairly starved a person to death in the winter of 63-64.'
> (AH, Oct. 31, 1863)

What follows is a Dickensian story of social neglect and brutality. Hale White's indignation forces him to face the worst in a very clear-cut style of reporting:

> Here are the facts. In Wellington Street, Bethnal Green, lived Mrs. Carolyn James, a poor woman, who kept, or attempted to keep, a small confectionery shop. Her husband was in prison, she therefore was left the head of a family of nine children, three of whom contributed to the support of the others. The wages, however, of these three were seriously diminished by the claims made for the interest of money borrowed to stock the shop, which did not pay, and the net result at last was that fourteen shillings was all that remained at the close of each week for the support of ten persons. The mother of course, mother-like, tried to live on less than nature would allow in order that her children might have enough, and as she had disease of the lungs, it is not to be wondered at that she very soon found herself beginning to sink. At last she could struggle on no longer, and went to the house of a friend, saying that she had come there to die. Here, by some means or other, she was visited by the medical officer of the parish, who seems to have been a kind-hearted generous man, but who is very unpopular with the parish authorities because he has let a little daylight into their filthy misconduct and neglect of their charge. He immediately wrote a note to the relieving officers, stating that Mrs. James was delirious from having no food, and that she should at once be admitted into the Infirmary. The note was taken by a friend, but the gentleman to whom it was addressed declared, on reading it, that it had nothing to do with him, that it was no business of his, and finally kicked the messenger on the legs because he naturally wished for a more satisfactory answer. The end was, that admission to the Infirmary and relief having been denied to the poor wretch, she died. An inquest was held, and we are told with a ghastly minuteness that the liver was white from want of blood, showing that the absence of food had been of some duration.
> (AH, Oct. 31, 63)

As we read pieces like this we can sense Hale White trying to wring a solution from these stubborn facts, trying to grasp the sum total of the tragedy. He offers a complete picture of the deteriorating world in which Carolyn James lived and yet even this brief extract reveals two quite distinct, yet complimentary, levels of social criticism. On the one hand, she is seen as a clear victim of inequality. Hale White describes her exact economic circumstances very carefully, down to the fourteen shillings a week that she lived on and the shop 'which did not pay'. Her poverty is an inevitable result of the loss of her husband's wage.

Yet he also describes her as the victim of the *moral* indifference of others, especially of the callous relieving officer who, having washed his hands of Mrs. James, leaves her to starve without any help from the authorities. Hale White was making a broad appeal for human compassion and he uses the methods of story-telling, rather than abstract analysis, to involve and move the reader. His descriptions of poverty come close to the images of squalor found in the work of Gissing, Arthur Morrison and George Moore. There is a sense of despair alleviated only by appeals to a lost religious idea of the sacredness of life. The pitiful tale of Mrs. James is complicated by the personal dislike of the officers for the parish doctor but it is the victim's suffering which claims moral priority in the account:

> What must have been the history of that brain and heart during the last few weeks of their existence? What thoughts were those that passed through the mind while the liver was getting white? Is it wicked to suggest that the relieving officers should be allowed to taste a little of the lot of their victim? This wretched history does but confirm the experience of every one, I should think, who has had anything to do with London workhouses - that too often they are simply brutal, and are administered by brutes.

> There is more consideration, so far as I have seen, shown to the worst of convicts than to the poor. (AH, Oct. 31, 1863)

The workhouses are not only 'simply brutal' but, crucially, are 'administered *by* brutes'. It is that detail in all its 'ghastly minuteness' of the white liver which sticks in Hale White's mind and prevents this story from becoming a rehearsal of sentiment. The passage is driven partly by what Hale White imagines; 'What *must have been* the history . . .', 'What thoughts are those . . .' and partly by a recourse to actual experience; 'This wretched history does but confirm the experience of everyone, I should think, who has had anything *to do with* London workhouses'. Although the story was probably gleaned from a newspaper Hale White keeps to the particular, physical horrors of poverty, even the relieving officer kicking the messenger boy gives back a reality to events.

Despite this strong sense of the reality of London poverty, it is still difficult, however, to trace the precise nature of Hale White's involvement in any official or unofficial forms of social work at this time. The passage reminds us ('as far as I have seen') that he may, at one time, have visited a prison and yet he also seems to hint of a wider awareness of social deprivation.

A few years later Hale White wrote another, slightly different article about the reverse side of Carolyn James's plight. Mrs. James, dying of starvation, sacrificed herself for the sake of her children because she hadn't enough money for food. In 1865, however, he describes an opposite case; servant women who allow their illegitimate children to starve for the sake of their own survival. The article begins with a reminder that Hale White once worked as a registrar of birth, marriages and deaths in Marylebone:

> The public is awakening at last [*sic*] to reflect that English morality, over which we have thanked God that we are not as those publicans on the other side of the water, is not in a satisfactory state, that seduction, illegitimate children and child-murder, are not so uncommon as they ought to be. I should rather think not. For four years I was once placed in a position that I was able, perhaps as well as any man in London, to form an opinion upon the morality of servant girls. Not a case of a birth or death of an illegitimate child in a large district could have escaped my notice. I was amazed at what I then learnt. In the first place I was amazed at the illegitimacy itself, at its frequency and, if I may coin a word, its matter-of-coarseness. (AH, Aug. 19, 1865)

In this article it was not just the growing rate of illegitimate births which bothered Hale White but the fact that many of the babies appeared to die so quickly afterwards. As in the death of Carolyn James, Hale White describes the social network conspiring to keep such facts at bay and we sense him trying to grasp the whole picture in order to 'form an opinion' of what might be done:

> A large class of apparently respectable well-dressed women seemed to think nothing of it. When the expectant mother began to feel herself uncomfortable, she would quietly leave her situation. She would either procure an order of admission to the Infirmary, or she would go to a private lying-in establishment, and would there give birth to the child. After her recovery she would get a new place. The demand for servants in London is so great that no questions would be asked. She would drop into new society, in a week or two be perfectly at home, and everything would go on as if nothing had happened. The child, meanwhile, is put out to nurse. No direct poisoning, I believe, is attempted; but the nurse is hired and knows perfectly well that the mother after all will be relieved if it dies. Food hastily and carelessly prepared is given, perhaps sometimes there is no food at all, and then comes diarrhoea. No effort is made to arrest it, not the slightest interest taken, and an hour before death a doctor is called in just for the sake of a medical certificate of cause of death. In nine cases out of ten, in the district to which I have referred, it was the parish doctor who had the poor of a population of 30,000 to attend to, and a £100 a-year for his labours. Naturally enough he used merely to snatch a hurried glance at the poor little sufferer, hastily scribble an order for a common drug or so, and then rush out. Next day a woman would call on him, remind him of his visit, get from him a scrap of

> paper to satisfy the registrar, the child would be shoved into a coffin, huddled under ground and the mother would be once more at liberty. Altogether, her frailty, you see, would cost her about thirty shillings; and all she would lose besides would be her place, for which she would not care a farthing. I do not think it would be an exaggeration to say I have known hundreds of cases of poisoned children - poisoned, not by prussic acid or arsenic, but by almost criminal neglect, which is as sure in its effects as the deadliest chemical. (AH, Aug. 19, 1865)

At first Hale White places these deaths at the hands of the servant women yet he is still unable to ignore their 'matter-of-coarseness', as if the deaths were yet another gruesome facet of a morally corrupt society. The indifference of the doctor reflects his low wages and long hours with as many as 30,000 poor to attend to; the fact that 'the demand for servants in London is so great' ensures 'that no questions will be asked' about illegitimacy; the fact that there are 'nurses' willing to starve babies for a bit of extra money ensures that the job will be discreetly carried out. Prostitution would have been one of the few options left for a single working-class woman alone in London with an illegitimate child. Hale White's call for moral reform is directed towards the whole of society, the 'awakening' public. For a weekly column in a provincial paper Hale White was posing some fundamental questions:

> What is the remedy? Ah, that is large question. The evil goes deep. It is but one aspect of human guilt, and curable by no nostrum whatever. A Royal Society for the Prevention of Sin would look strange, would it not! And in reality, a Society for the Prevention of Infanticide is not the less strange. The cure is nothing less, after all, than the cure of individual British souls. Till the sacred instincts come back again - till the hearts of men are turned from their cursed greed and mammon-worship back to the Almighty - this thing will be. (AH, Aug. 19, 1865)

We can tell that Hale White is not looking for surface solutions but appeals directly to the human conscience; 'the evil goes deep'. He is not just looking for economic solutions but the moral and religious conversion of the whole nation. Even Hale White ('a scrap of paper to satisfy the registrar') was a small part of the vast machinery, seeking a neat entry in his books in order to eliminate the social discrepancy.

When Hale White wrote about 'sin' he was almost invariably thinking about sexual corruption. In 1862 he wrote a piece on London prostitutes and yet his opinions go beyond the condemnation of 'immoral' women:

> A great noise is being made about the state of the streets in London at night, and Sir George Grey has been memorialized on this subject. That they are bad, execrably bad, there cannot be the slightest doubt. It is utterly impossible for any decent person to walk up Regent Street and the Haymarket after dusk without being annoyed by invitations from disgusting, tawdry, painted dirty wretches, both French and English, who ply their trade there. Worse than this, there are scenes which take place in the Parks every night which had better not be described, and certain paths and roads are as well known for certain purposes as Piccadilly is for shops. So far we are all agreed, but what is to do done? (AH, June 14, 1862)

He sees that the issue is related as much to the power and money of men as of women, a progressive line to take in an age which tried to forget the true extent, or causes, of prostitution. Hale White here is writing about Marylebone, and the Portland Road, the area very close to where he lived. Significantly this piece was written in 1862, the year in which he also decided to move out to the suburbs:

> Sweep out the filth with a steel besom of force, say most people. 'They don't allow this in France.' This is all very well, but a Government by a majority must do what the majority likes, and perhaps English people will not stand such interference . . . Besides, where are the wretched women to go? The Vestry of Marylebone has lately exorcised the neighbourhood about the Portland Road by instituting prosecutions against the brothels, and the consequence is that the disease is no longer confined to

> certain well known spots, but has become sporadic, and respectable people living in decent neighbourhoods are suddenly obliged to move because some of the expelled have taken up their abode next door. Let us license these dens, say others. Very good, but will the public agree to this? In the present state of opinion it is not at all likely. The problem, therefore, becomes very difficult. One thing, however, we may observe, that the solution attempted by the midnight meetings will only succeed so far as this, that those who detest their calling may be enabled to leave it. Their places will inevitably be filled up by others, so long as the present demand continues. (AH, June 14, 1862)

There is that same relentless 'demand' for prostitutes as there is for unblemished servant-girls. Hale White writes about the problem like a growing 'disease', as sexual diseases were indeed an increasing problem at the time. Hale White's London is not a glittering place of commerce and enlightenment but a centre of moral and physical decay.

In this respect there is a great deal of continuity of thought between the journalism and the Drury Lane scenes of his second novel, Deliverance. Both are set in exactly the same area of London. Since the early eighteenth-century, Drury Lane had been notoriously a centre of prostitution and by the end of the nineteenth-century the area was filled with the worst slums in London.[1] Both Hale White's novels and his journalism ask the same question; 'What is the remedy?' Deliverance is much more guarded in its depiction of the problem of prostitution than the journalism and yet it is obvious that this is one of the aspects of Drury Lane poverty which disgusts Rutherford the most:

> At the doors of the houses stood grimy women with their arms folded and their hair disordered. Grimier boys and girls had tied a rope to broken railings, and were swinging on it. The common door to a score of lodgings stood ever open, and the children swarmed up and down the stairs . . . All self-respect, all effort to do anything more than to satisfy somehow the grossest wants, had departed. (AD, p. 146)

Mark Rutherford tells how he and M'Kay, his journalist-friend, set up some meeting rooms near Drury Lane in an attempt to redress the spiritual emptiness at the heart of the city:

> M'Kay had found a room near Parker Street, Drury Lane, in which he proposed to begin, and that night, as we trod the pavement of Portland Place, he propounded his plans to me. (AD, p. 146)

Knowing the exact location of this room shows more clearly the context for M'Kay and Rutherford's mission. M'Kay is especially worried about the conditions of Drury Lane whose 'hovels' conspire to create an atmosphere of utter degradation and hopelessness:

> In the alleys behind Drury Lane this instinct, the very salt of life, was dead, crushed out utterly, a symptom which seemed to me ominous, and even awful to the last degree . . . What could he do? that was the question. He was not a man of wealth. He could not buy up these hovels. He could not force an entrance into them and persuade their inhabitants to improve themselves. He had no talents wherewith to found a great organisation or create public opinion. He had determined after much thought, to do what he was now doing. It was very little, but it was all he could undertake. He proposed to keep this room open as a place to which those who wished might resort at different times, and find some quietude, instruction, and what fortifying thoughts he could collect to enable men to endure their almost unendurable sufferings. (AD, pp. 147-148)

M'Kay had 'no talents' and neither had any money, but the ideals of the two men follow as a result of this initial intent ('he had determined, after much thought . . .') to do *something*. His moral instincts would lead Hale White to value solutions which worked closely with individuals while always retaining the long term, larger public aim. Rutherford, however, like Hale White the journalist, is both inspired by, and highly sceptical of the use of religion in Drury Lane. He knows that it is impossible to preach immorality out of existence; 'The preaching of Jesus would have been powerless here', he writes. Nevertheless, a kind of moral preaching still enters into their aims, a hope to bind the 'hearts of men':

> We are in a state of anarchy, each of us with a different aim and shaping himself according to a different type . . . He was firmly persuaded that we need religion, poor and rich alike. We need some controlling influence to bind our scattered energies. We do not know what we are doing . . . His object, therefore, would be to preach Christ, as before said, and to introduce into human life His unifying influence. He would try and get them to see things with the eyes of Christ, to love with His love, to judge with His judgement. He believed Christ was fitted to occupy this place . . . He would try by degrees to prove this; to prove that Christ's way of dealing with life is the best way. (AD, p. 149)

M'Kay is the inspirational drive behind these meeting rooms, while Rutherford is the quiet doubter, only aware of the material conditions they are up against and the ultimate futility of the task they face. He paints a picture of the torment of city poverty as if he were describing a kind of living hell:

> To stand face to face with the insoluble is not pleasant. A man will do anything rather than confess it is beyond him. He will create pleasant fictions, and fancy a possible escape here and there, but this problem of Drury Lane was hard and round like a ball of adamant. The only thing I could do was faintly, and I was about to say stupidly, hope - for I had no rational tangible grounds for hoping - that some force of which we are not now aware might some day develop itself which will be able to resist and remove the pressure which sweeps and crushes into a hell, sealed from the upper air, millions of human souls every year in one quarter of the globe alone. (AD, p. 178)

That sense of the vast scale of human suffering compared to the limitedness of the individual is crucial to Deliverance. He writes about the single concerned man; '*a man* will do anything', 'the only thing *I* could do . . .', and places this worry up against the almost inconceivable 'million of human souls every year' who are crushed into hell.

Rutherford mentions the few individuals who found some kind of help in the meeting room, all for a variety of reasons. There was Taylor, a coal porter from Somerset House, John, a waiter from the Strand, Cardinal an unemployed commercial traveller and Clark - a poor clerk, to name a few. 'We ventured *humbly*' writes Rutherford, 'to bring a feeble ray of light into the dwellings of two or three poor men and women' (AD, p. 198). Rutherford adds 'and women' here, but he records no actual women attending the room in Deliverance. He is purposefully addressing the men of Drury Lane, trying to find a religious solution in an area dominated by male sexual craving; 'A man may endure much,' he wrote in Deliverance, 'provided that he knows that he will be well supported when his day's toil is over; but if the help for which he looks fails, he falls'. (AD, p. 183)

Hale White often wrote about the moral dangers of pure sexual gratification without any love or belief behind it, as if men could be rendered passive prisoners to their desires. The city was not only a place of loneliness but it was anonymous, a hopeless combination which could prove fatal for men, as well as women. In 1882 he saw a boy looking through a photographer's window which must have been displaying a form of early pornography. It is as if he is watching someone losing his soul:

> Cannot the police, by the way, be a trifle more strict in the matter of photographs? Everyone who walks the London pavement must know that there are shops which sail as near the wind as they can, and yet nobody interferes with them. I do not think I have regretted anything more for a long time than I did the sight of a boy, a day or two ago, evidently from one of our public schools, ingenuous, and apparently pure, arrested opposite one of these degrading exhibitions. Perhaps images are stamped on his mind from which he will never free himself his whole long life. (NN, May, 20, 1882)

Hale White, seeing the boy from a distance, is immune to the effects of the photographer's window but his language really seems more concerned with *himself*; 'Everyone who walks the London pavement *must know* . . .'; 'I do not think *I have regretted* anything more for a long time . . .' Many times in his novels Hale White would write about sexual desire almost as if he was that child, '*apparently* pure,' unable to fully understand his own feelings for women, and often at the mercy of such 'images':

> He had hoped that as he grew older he might be able really to *see* a woman, but he was once more like one of the possessed. It was not Clara Hopgood who was before him, it was hair, lips, eyes, just as it was twenty years ago, just as it was with the commonest shop-boy he met, who had escaped from the counter, and was waiting at an area gate. (CH, p. 106)

As a civil servant in the Admiralty, and frequently having to visit sailing ports, Hale White was also aware that much of the trade for prostitution was provided by sailors. It was a part of their culture, as were the sexual diseases spread by them too. Hale White was calling for an understanding of sexual matters in a very open way which went beyond a blanket religious condemnation:

> Sailors have a great quantity of spare time which hangs heavily on their hands. Why should not they be taught a little plain physiology? Why should not they be shown, in red and blue the consequences of the crimes to which they are most addicted,? No doubt the evil would not be cured. Men are men and passion is passion, but who shall set limits to the power of knowledge to combat crime. (AH, Jan. 14, 1865)

Even his Reform Bill Argument at one point branches off into a discussion of 'profligacy', and points out, optimistically, how the vote, 'in the long run' might be able to redirect the passions of men:

> But what means is there so powerful to take a man from the

> contemplation of his own appetites and unite him to society, as teaching him to feel an interest in the welfare of society? . . . [I]t is idleness which is our ruin, that is to say the want of anything vitally to interest the mind, and so diminish sensuality. There is no way of killing profligacy and drunkenness but by stimulating the intellect . . . But give to every man a sense of his own consequence in the state, and he will naturally begin to care, and the result of his caring, and of thousands like him caring, will be that in the long run the grosser vices will lose their hold. There is a much closer connection between political freedom and private morality than some people suppose. (Argument, p. 12)

This small-scale, local effort in Drury Lane was not only sustained by a large religious creed but a close knowledge of London, its men and its hopeless poverty; '[M'Kay's] object' writes Rutherford 'was nothing less than gradually to attract Drury Lane to come and be saved' (AD, p. 146).

In her biography of Hale White, Catherine Maclean describes, albeit rather vaguely, a similar project which Hale White was actually involved in. She tells how a room was taken in Little Portland Street (very near to the Marylebone Road where Hale White lived) for Sunday meetings of exactly the kind described in Deliverance. The novel changed the location to 'Parker Street', bringing Rutherford's room even closer to Drury Lane than Little Portland Street, which is still just around the corner. Although it is not clear how often Hale White actually led these meetings it seems he was one of its founders:

> In the end a room was taken in John Arthur's [Hale White's brother-in-law] business premises, a manufactory of dress-trimmings, fringe and lace, in Little Portland Street. Mrs. William White's Diary has the entry under January 2^nd^, 1859: 'The room opened in Portland Street' . . . But the main function of the room was to provide a place of meeting on Sundays to any known to Hale and his friends to whom such a gathering might be of service.[2]

Maclean gives no indication where she came across this information although the specific fact of John Arthur's business premises suggests it was passed onto her from relatives, a part of family memory. The brief entry in Hale White's mother's diary, which is now kept in Bedford, certainly verifies Maclean's account of which little else is known apart from the fact that William and Hale White both occasionally preached there.[3] The idea possibly came from William White himself. His pamphlet, To Think or Not to Think, seemed to be calling for just such a new form of religion, with the same kind of vehemence and enthusiasm which Rutherford attributes to M'Kay:

> Never was there a time, in my opinion, when there was a greater need, or a grander opportunity for a new movement. A movement apart from all sects - formed upon a wider basis - having nothing to do with dead orthodoxy, spiritless creeds, and cumbrous theology. We want, the world wants, a renovation of the teachings of Christ and his apostles. In all our large towns there are immense numbers who go to no place of worship, as they are called. They have been looked upon as outcasts, irreclaimably wicked. But it is not so . . . And there are also the uncultivated classes, the masses as they are styled, the operatives, shopmen, warehousemen, etc, of our towns. These for the most part go to neither church nor chapel, and we have been accustomed to think that the fault lies wholly with them.[4]

William White's utopian objectives seem almost too big for the humble venture of a little room in Little Portland Street. His mighty intentions drain his ambitions of reality before he has actually begun; 'A movement, formed upon a wider basis . . . We want, the world wants . . . In all our large towns there are *immense* numbers . . .' Yet for Hale White too, although he never mentions this room outside of Deliverance, this would have been an important venture:

> For my own part, I was happy when I had struck that path. I felt as if somehow, after many errors, I had once more gained a road, a religion in fact, and one which essentially was not new but old, the religion of the Reconciliation, the reconciliation of man with God. (AD, p. 192)

One of the few dates we have concerning the Little Portland Street meeting room is the opening date - the first Sunday of 1859. Maclean states that Hale White's cousin also preached in Little Portland Street in April 1873 but this could well have been at the Unitarian Chapel on the same road.[5] Yet the room's existence is important for two reasons. Firstly, it grounds the Drury Lane chapter of Deliverance in biographical reality and confirms that Hale White worked with the poor in ways which were not just political. It also explains the strong religious language of his column which he uses when writing about inequality.

Stone also speculates (and this aspect of Hale White's life is still a matter of informed speculation) on the extent to which the account of M'Kay and Rutherford in Drury Lane is based upon actual experience. He draws attention to the fact that among Hale White's literary remains were copies of letters sent to a Reverend C. Anderson from Matthew Arnold and Brooke Lambert:

> Brooke Lambert was a prominent worker among the poor of London's East End, a clergyman who saw the gospel more in terms of soup kitchens and workingmen's clubs than in words. The Reverend C. Anderson, Vicar of St John's, Limehouse, was a sympathetic associate in this religious social work. It seems likely therefore that one or both of them might also have shared in Hale White's portrait of M'Kay.[6]

Stone also suggests that it is probable that Hale White knew Cowper-Temple, the MP who set up coffee taverns for the poor in Soho. At a time when most drinking water supplies were still potentially hazardous, the growth of public houses was partly due to the fact that it was far safer to drink beer. Hale White wrote a couple of articles on these taverns in the Norfolk News after visiting them himself. He only sees one prostitute take advantage of the coffee and yet the sight still gives him cause to hope:

> Wandering about this week in the unaccustomed neighbourhood of Drury Lane, cold and tired, I happened to espy a coffee tavern. I went in, and for one penny I had a large cup of coffee, hot and good. The Tavern was just open, and the average number of customers hitherto had been 2000 daily. There were several decent persons there drinking and smoking, but what pleased me better than anything was to see a perfect specimen of the Drury Lane slattern come in with her mud-coloured rags and rusty black thin shawl. She swallowed her coffee, and departed hastily. Perhaps she is not to be reformed by coffee, but the substitution for half-a-pint of it that morning for half-a-quartern of Drury Lane liquid fire was so far a distinct gain. There are few gospels now-a-days which we can all believe, but assuredly this of Mr. Cowper Temple's is one, and as much as in me lies I mean to preach it. (BJ, Dec. 28, 1878)

This is another example of Hale White finding a gospel worth preaching in a particular instance of localised reform. But he is still battling with that sense of scale and disproportion. Two-thousand, purportedly, visited the tavern, but he only saw *one* actual 'Drury Lane slattern' during his visit. Nevertheless her presence was 'so far a distinct gain'. There is also a degree of fiction-making here. At first Hale White says he found the tavern by chance; - 'Wandering about this week . . . I happened to espy . . .' and yet he would have come here purposefully to see what Cowper Temple had set up and how effective it was. Hale White often presents himself as a casual city wanderer, finding some chance opportunity to express his fiercely reforming mind.

It is Hale White's detachment which is also notable in the description of the coffee tavern, the 'slattern' is described as a 'perfect specimen', a type, as if he had spotted an aspect of London's natural history. There is always that curious combination of disgust and wonderment in the way he describes people who, socially, he would never come into contact with, as if they offer him a glimpse into another world. Two weeks before he reported upon the death of Carolyn James, Hale White wrote another vivid piece on the squalid living conditions of the inner city poor:

> Bad as reports are which from time to time are made public, the worst is never told. I myself have been into a home of eight rooms in which there are forty people living, and the whole forty had but one miserable water closet which they could use, the like of which I never saw before, and which I wish I may never see again. In one of the rooms lay a woman dead, discoloured with mortification, and smelling horribly, while in the same apartment the dinner was being cooked, the children were playing, and the whole family had to sleep there at night. (AH, Oct. 17, 1863)

Stone cites another article from the Norfolk News in which Hale White, again, enters one of the slums and describes what he sees. The paragraph has a curious beginning:

> This very morning my duty took me to a slum, one of the most slummish of the slums hereabouts. About a dozen children were playing about the entrance of a court and not one of them had shoes or stockings. There was a muckheap opposite a row of cottages and the little imps swarming over it and at play on it. One of them followed me. He was about ten or eleven years old and he spoke to grown women words of filthy debauchery. He bawled them out openly and they took not the slightest notice. The man whom I wanted to see is a drunkard and beats his wife. I pushed open the door, but could not find anybody. Rags, the remains of a supper, boots, dirt of all kinds were huddled up together on the floor and on the table. Most likely the owner was asleep up above - with sleep of gin or beer. I walked on and the next object which attracted my attention was a magnificent new church, dedicated to St. Michael and all Angels, and about three-parts finished. It is like a little cathedral, and if it costs a penny it will cost thirty or forty thousand pounds . . . This is the way in which it proposed to meet the problem of the slum. It is absurd and preposterous. Does anybody suppose that the inhabitants of that slum will venture in their rags into such a building as that and seat themselves by the side of the exquisite young ladies, devotees in curate worship? (NN, Aug. 20, 1881)

Exactly what these duties were, and why Hale White wanted to meet with 'a drunkard who beats his wife', again remains unexplained. It could even be a partially imagined account or related, somehow, to the Little Portland Street room. It would have been difficult to have gained admission ('I pushed open the door') to any house on the strength of his curiosity alone. Yet the function of this piece is to draw attention to the 'absurd and preposterous' world of the church. He is even more sceptical about the usefulness of established religion than he is with M'Kay's intentions to save Drury Lane. M'Kay at least had an awareness of the reality of street life, while the magnificent new church, like 'a little cathedral' is too big and expensive to meet the more practical needs of local people, what he calls, 'the problem of the slum'.

Hale White's personal repulsion at these surroundings is obvious, he notices the language of the children, their 'words of filthy debauchery', he is disdainful of the mess inside the house, 'the remains of a supper, boots, dirt of all kinds', and he condemns the 'drunkard who beats his wife' whom he pictures in a drunken stupor somewhere upstairs. Yet the image, at the start, of the children playing barefooted in the street immediately broadens the scope of Hale White's condemnation. He had four children of his own by this time and nearly all of these articles notice the presence, or rather the neglect of small children. 'There was a muckheap opposite a row of cottages and the little imps swarming over it and at play on it'. Their lives are rubbished from the start, like the children running up the stairs of the 'hovel' in Deliverance, or the illegitimate baby starved out of life; 'shoved into a coffin, huddled under ground'.

All of these writings on the poor are preoccupied with the dire material conditions of life, with prostitution, putrid smells and foul sanitation. In the earlier piece there was that 'one miserable water closet which they could use, the like of which I never saw before', and the rotting corpse left in the same room where the dinner was being cooked. Such articles were written at a time when the need for safe public sanitation was a major public health issue and all of Hale White's writings on the living conditions of the poor are compounded with his fears of disease, hence his own personal need to keep away from its worst effects. In Deliverance M'Kay and Rutherford wander the streets, trying to work out what can be done for anyone living in such a claustrophobic, nauseous hell. This novel is cast as a distant memory, as if Rutherford is looking far back in time to his youth and yet it was published in 1885, only three years after Hale White had finished writing similar descriptions for the Norfolk News:

> As we walked over the Drury Lane gratings of the cellars a most foul stench came up, and one in particular I remember to this day. A man half dressed pushed open a broken window beneath us, just as we passed by, and there issued such a blast of corruption, made up of gases bred by filth, air breathed and rebreathed a hundred times, charged with odours of unnameable personal uncleanliness and disease, that I staggered to the gutter with a qualm which I could scarcely conquer. (AD, p. 146)

Hale White records his own personal reactions as faithfully as he records the squalid reality itself. The window is opened from beneath them (the man, half dressed) from a cellar and not above street level, as if it was literally a window to hell.

The increased concentration of more and more people in London and the existence of impure water supplies produced a string of cholera epidemics in the middle of the nineteenth-century, and in the 1880s the debates continued about sewerage and waste disposal. Hale White followed the progress of sanitary reform very closely in his column, seeing it as a more urgent issue than the building of new churches:

> One of the great fights of next session will be over the question of metropolitan drainage. What to do with our London filth we do not yet know, after all that has been said and done. The plan which is at present in operation, and which will come into play next summer, is to turn all the sewerage out into the river - at a good distance it is true, from London, but a vast distance too near to Woolwich and Erith to be pleasant to the inhabitants of those places. Fever, it is to be asserted, has been produced extensively in the neighbourhood of the out-fall and whether the epidemic can be traced directly to the out-fall or not, every one will admit that to have millions of tons of metropolitan muck rolling up and down a tidal river under one's nose cannot be pleasant or healthful. (AH, Nov. 19, 1864)

This kind of reporting is, for a puritan, quite unpuritanical. He prides himself in portraying the situation without a shred of grace. 'Millions of tons of metropolitan muck', like the 'blast of corruption' from the cellar, created serious health problems which had to be confronted frankly and openly, however distasteful this may be to the classes who were to legislate:

> The Thames sewerage is coming to the front, or rather to the top, in a most disgusting manner, and what is said is perfectly true, that the river at the out-fall is abominable. But what is to be done? It is all very well to talk of sewerage farms: but where is the sewerage farm big enough to absorb the sewerage of this ever increasing city? Besides, the taxes in London are, at the present moment, almost intolerable, and what will they be if we are to pay for another main drainage system?
> (NN, Aug. 27 1881)

The sense of a public health problem getting out of hand and almost beyond legislative control, or even science, is typical of the way Hale White perceived London at this time. This problem of the rising sewerage level in the Thames is associated with the whole growth of the city population (which rocketed from one-million to seven-million during the nineteenth-century alone). He particularly associates the Thames' sewerage with the growth of the underclass itself whom he describes as subterranean, spreading like a disease from under the ground. Both the stench from the Thames and from the London poor reaches him from *below*. Passages like this, from the Norfolk News, hint at a growing political and social turbulence, yet the 'cesspool' of Drury Lane adds another aspect to these rising underground pressures:

> Underneath the smoothness of the ordinary aspect of life in London lies simple chaos, and it is ever augmenting with the growth of this great city. It is like the central cesspool of Dante's Hell, into which flows the blackguardism of four-millions of people, and it daily rises higher. Some day or other, it may break out and overwhelm us all. (NN, Feb. 11, 1882)

In one passage from the journalism, describing some people camping out by the road side on the way to the Epsom Derby, Hale White goes even further in expressing the disgust with which he sees and smells the living poor. That same rising cesspool has literally spilled out onto the Epsom roads:

> It was my miserable destiny to travel along one of these roads last week, and I encountered a type of human beings, different altogether to anything which was to be seen even in London at any other time of the year. It was as if these wretches had been drawn out of filthy, squalid holes, by some preternatural change of weather. They looked as if they had escaped on the overturn of a heap of filth, under which they had swarmed and grovelled safe from the sun's eye. It was infectious to pass within twenty yards of them, unless to windward. They were not the criminal classes - by no means the thieves, housebreakers or footpads. They were simply human sewerage, - about the colour of sewerage, with its peculiar odour. When they came to a halt they bent half-a-dozen green sticks from the hedge in the ground in a series of arches about four feet high. They covered these over with old bits of carpet and other rags, and then they crawled inside for the night, male and female, old and young.
> (NN, June 11, 1881)

Stone writes that pieces like this reveal 'a somewhat patronising middle class superiority' combined with a 'sincere shock over their condition'. 'Patronising' is too mild a term for a writer who talks about people as 'human sewerage', without the slightest attempt to conceal his extreme disgust at their presence. Hale White finds the Derby crowd 'different altogether to anything which was to be seen even in London'. His horror is like a passage from Aurora Leigh when the working classes pour into a Hampstead church for a mixed-class marriage:

> The humours of the peccant social wound
> All pressed out, poured down upon Pimlico,
> Exasperating the unaccustomed air
> With a hideous interfusion. You'd suppose
> A finished generation, dead of plague,
> Swept out from their graves into the sun,
> The moil of death upon them. What a sight!
> A holiday of miserable men
> Is sadder than a burial-day of kings.[7]

The annual Derby was one of the few occasions which brought the London poor out of the city and into the suburbs, very near to Hale White's home in fact. His uneasy awareness of poverty habitually led him to exaggerate rather than underplay the squalid conditions of the London poor. 'Human sewerage' is too grotesque and too bold to be merely patronising.

That movement between political anger and personal disgust is very close to George Orwell's journalism. Orwell was familiar with Hale White's works (he knew Rutherford's true identity some ten years before the publication of Maclean's biography) and he wrote a substantial piece comparing Rutherford to Gissing in his 'As I Please' column in the Tribune. He described Deliverance as 'one of the best novels written in English' and he especially draws attention to Rutherford's class attitudes.[8] The passage Orwell's discusses follows straight on from the 'cellar window' incident in Deliverance:

> It was an awful thought to me, ever present on those Sundays, and haunting me at other times; that men, women, and children were living in brutish degradation, and that as they died others would take their place. Our civilisation seemed nothing but a thin film or crust lying over a volcanic pit, and I often wondered whether someday the pit would not break up through it and destroy us all. (AD, pp. 177-178)

Orwell comments on this:

> Apart from the prose, you could recognise this as coming from the nineteenth-century because of the description of the unendurable filth of the slums. The London slums of the day *were* like that, and all honest writers so described them. But even more characteristic is that notion of a whole block of the population being so degraded as to be beyond contact and beyond redemption . . . Above all, gone are the days when it seemed natural to write off a whole stratum of the population as irredeemable savages. The most snobbish Tory alive would not now write of the London working class as Mark Rutherford does. And Mark Rutherford - like Dickens, who shared his attitude - was a Radical![9]

Orwell saw Hale White as a progressive, confined by the extreme conditions of his age, only able to perceive things as getting worse. 'It was natural to believe this', adds Orwell, '(even Marx seemed to believe it), because it was hard at the time to foresee the enormous increase in the productivity of labour . . . The London slums are still bad enough, but they are nothing to those of the nineteenth-century'.[10] For Orwell, Rutherford was a realist, refusing to compromise his descriptions of the worst aspects of poverty, even when there seemed little prospects of any major improvement. Mark Rutherford's political scepticism confirms Orwell's view of him in the following century:

> The only thing I could do was faintly, and I was about to say stupidly, hope - for I had no rational, tangible grounds for hoping - that some force of which we are not now aware might some day develop itself. (AD, p. 178)

In the absence of any foreseeable hope, hope itself is expressed as a dogged commitment to the real. And like Orwell, Hale White revelled in the awfulness of what he would depict, - 'It is wonderful, horrible' (NN, Aug. 31, 1871). He was purposefully trying to provoke the distaste of his readership, reflecting less a set of class attitudes than a *reality* which is ignored at a cost. His honesty about the repulsive, physical, aspects of poverty comes very close to that of George Orwell's in The Road To Wigan Pier:

> Here you come to the real secret of class distinctions in the West . . . It is summed up in four frightful words which people nowadays are chary of uttering, but which were bandied about quite freely in my childhood. The words are: *The lower classes smell* . . . They are bound to be, considering the circumstances in which they live, for even at this late date less than half the houses in England have bathrooms . . . It is a pity that those who idealise the working classes so often think it necessary to praise every working-class characteristic and therefore to pretend that dirtiness is somehow meritorious in itself. Here, curiously enough, the Socialist and the sentimental democratic Catholic of the type of Chesterton sometimes join hands; both will tell you that dirtiness is healthy and 'natural' and cleanliness is a mere fad or at best a luxury. They seem not to see that they are merely giving colour to the notion that working-class people are dirty from choice and not from necessity. Actually, people who have access to a bath will generally use it.[11]

Orwell here has the key to Hale White's tone and disgust in all of his pieces on poverty and conditions. It is part of an utter refusal to idealise the poor. Where this refusal may lead to extreme outbursts, 'the cesspool of Dante's Hell', the 'human sewerage' settled by the road, Hale White never compromises the truth of the conditions in the name of respectability. Neither does he, in the name of Socialism, 'praise every working-class characteristic'. Hale White's passages on the poor contain a subtle critique of a tame middle-class radicalism which simplified everything it touched.

The deep associations that the Thames had in Hale White's imagination with disease, death and with the dispossessed of the city culminates in a piece he wrote in 1871 about the unclaimed bodies of the poor which were frequently washed up on the banks of the river:

> In London, human beings slip out of existence unknown and unnoticed without leaving so much as the smallest gap. It is wonderful, horrible, and the thought of the loneliness through which these poor castaways have passed is too oppressive to be held for more than a moment. Fifty-two bodies, says a return now before me, were found in the Thames during the year 1871, not including those who it is known were accidentally drowned. Thirty-two were afterwards recognised but to the remaining twenty no clue could be traced and nobody ever asked after them. The lives of those twenty men and women, if they could have been faithfully written, would have been interesting and more profitable than all the remaining history of the year in which they died. (NN, Aug. 31, 1871)

It is both 'wonderful' and 'horrible' to him how the social dimensions of London are radically altered by these bodies. Again, they are evidence of another world and yet they are silent, dead witnesses. Hale White writes about the dead poor with a solemnity he rarely brings to bear upon the living. These are described as *people*; 'twenty men and women'. The bodies from the Thames render their world as real, yet so distant from his own. This is similar to the article on Carolyn James; 'What must have been the history of that brain and heart . . .' The article becomes the funeral sermon that such paupers are not going to have. It is as if religion has nothing to say, or no way of explaining the way in which the poor really died. This habitual focusing on the worst side of London life, and death, inevitably lead Hale White to even darker speculations.

Crime and Punishment

Hale White is not a writer we readily associate with issues relating to crime, punishment or justice. And yet, consider how many instances occur in his fiction of people wrongly accused, persecuted for their beliefs or unjustly, even fatally, punished. In Revolution, for example, Caillaud is about to be hanged in Lancaster for shooting a soldier during the Peterloo Massacre. Zachariah visits him in jail and is 'taken by a warder along a corridor with whitewashed walls to the condemned cell where Caillaud lay'. Caillaud speaks of his helplessness in the face of the power of the State:

> 'To be hung like a forger of bank-notes - not even to be shot - and then to be forgotten. Forgotten utterly! This does not happen to be one of those revolutions which men remember'. (RTL, p. 226)

The mention of the whitewashed walls, the solitary fears of Caillaud and all the locked doors through which Zachariah passes, creates a very credible picture of a prison visit. Zachariah, a co-conspirator and wanted revolutionary, is also implicated in this crime and so it is an act of considerable courage to visit Caillaud at this moment. Stupidly, Zachariah signs his real name in the prison visitors' book, not knowing if he will ever be let out again. The air is thick with suspicion and dread. Time hangs heavy:

> Zachariah entered, the warder locking the door behind him, and seating himself on the edge of the bedstead, where he remained during the whole of the interview, jingling his keys and perfectly unmoved. The three friends spoke not a word for nearly five minutes. (RTL, p, 225)

Hale White would often wonder about the physical, as well as the moral, isolation of convicts. The appalling conditions of nineteenth-century prisons, and the obscene finality of the scaffold, seemed to create yet new injustices, new victims, and did not so much redeem people as destroy them outright. It is that small detail of the warder 'unmoved' which is typical of Hale White. In such grim institutions, where systematic, emotional detachment was a part of every day practice and ingrained in the law, any small change of heart seemed impossible to imagine.

Solitary confinement is also a part of the imaginative legacy of Hale White's Puritanism. He knew and often rehearsed all the harsh facts regarding Bunyan's twelve years in prison:

> The bare fact that he was shut up in a seventeenth-century prison in which a hundred years later, when it could not have been worse, gaol fever broke out, killing many of the inmates as well as the doctor and people outside, is surely sufficient to convince us that he must have endured much misery. (Bunyan, pp. 45-46)

Spinoza is another writer who would have been deeply influenced by the way the Dutch State dealt with its convicts. The notorious Spinhuis gaol was situated near Spinoza's home in Amsterdam and was intended as a cruel imitation of purgatory. For the price of a loaf of bread Spinoza could have watched shackled prisoners sawing logs of brazil wood into sawdust, or ceaselessly pumping water out of a tank to prevent themselves from being drowned. Spinhuis was a fate Spinoza himself only narrowly escaped for his heresy. Spinoza was adamant on the need for justice and yet he also said that a man was never improved 'because he fears the gallows.'[12] For Spinoza, it was more necessary for the State to be merciful than to be cruel:

> To cruelty is opposed mercy, which is not a passion, but a power of the mind by which a man restrains anger and vengeance. (Ethic IV, p. 171)

It was the finality of the death sentence which, therefore, disturbed the man so concerned for the unfolding process of life. The scaffold was to be the end of Caillaud. In Catherine Furze the two condemned Christians, Charmides and Damariste, are thrown to the lions before an excited crowd of Romans:

> They were chained together in mockery . . . They were marched through the streets of Rome, the crowd jeering them and thronging after them to enjoy the sport of their torments and death. Charmides saw the eyes of Damariste raised heavenwards and her lips moving in prayer.
> 'He has heard me,' she said, 'and you will endure.'
> He pressed her hand, and replied, with unshaken voice, 'Fear not.'
> They came to the place of execution, but before the final stroke they were cruelly tortured. (CF, pp. 168-169)

There were several reasons why Hale White was against the death sentence. The most obvious was that he found it barbaric and yet, ironically, this was one of the hardest arguments with which to defeat to those in support of it. The ideology of the death penalty was fuelled by a religious fundamentalism, unswayed by its mission to purge the world of sin. To many people, execution was seen as a *merciful* act, a way of releasing tormented souls from further temptation. The opponents of public execution had to continually find new angles on the debate.

In Catherine Furze, Damariste died a martyr's death and Hale White, with his firm admiration for those able to stand by their beliefs, even when faced with torture, admired martyrs like Caillaud. He would frequently invoke the cause of the Christian martyr to those for whom religion had become a cosy, comforting matter of pretty candles and routine prayer. Hale White argued that public executions created martyrs, not out of revolutionaries, but out of mere murderers, people who had done nothing to merit respect apart from killing or stealing. The sight of a man or a woman bravely facing the scaffold evoked feelings of heroic admiration in the crowd and the original crime was lost in the act of sacrifice. Hale White thought that public executions were the remnant of a primitive need for sacrifice, a kind of social purging of sin (he wrote a short story, 'Sacrifice', about this). It went against all his more rational beliefs in the personal atonement and moral education of the individual.

Capital punishment was the subject of much contemporary debate, as was, more particularly, *public* execution. Many writers and campaigners displayed a keen interest in the subject. In 1841 Wordsworth published his 'Sonnets Upon The Punishment of Death' in favour of capital punishment. He is moved by the exact phenomena which, as we shall see, Hale White found so ridiculous and false; the so-called last-minute penitents:

> Then mark him, him who could so long rebel,
> The crime confessed, a kneeling Penitent
> Before the Altar, where the Sacrament
> Softens his heart, till from his eyes outwell
> Tears of salvation. Welcome death! While Heaven
> Does in this change exceedingly rejoice;
> While yet the solemn heed the State hath given
> Helps him to meet the last Tribunal's voice
> In faith, which fresh offences, were he cast
> On old temptations, might for ever blast.[13]

There is nothing *particular* about Wordsworth's descriptions of penitents, and the idealised account perhaps reflects more about Wordsworth's own fears, as he approaches death in old age, than the actual feelings of the condemned.

The main argument in favour of public executions was that it formed a deterrent. Dickens, however, writing in 1846, found that most criminals under the sentence of death had themselves been in constant attendance at hangings before being convicted. For Dickens, maybe nudging Wordsworth's memories of the Terror, the morbid sight of so many executions encouraged people to take death (and life) too lightly:

> I have stated my belief that the study of rude scenes leads to the disregard of human life, and to murder . . . I have made an inquiry, and am assured that the youth now under sentence of death in Newgate for the murder of his master in Drury Lane, was a vigilant spectator of the three last public executions in this City. What effects a daily increasing familiarity with the scaffold, and with death upon it, wrought in France in the Great Revolution, everybody knows.[14]

By the 1860s there was increasing agitation against executions. One of Hale White's associates in this campaign was George Jacob Holyoake, the radical who was not only involved in the Reform League but was an enthusiastic supporter for a number of left-wing causes, including Chartism and the Co-operative movement. It was Holyoake who invented the term Secularism; his revolt against the death penalty was a part of his revolt against established religion, or rather, established *sentimentality*. He believed that the death penalty was closely related to superstitions regarding the afterlife. Remove the certainty of the afterlife and execution becomes pure murder, not the merciful pathway to redemption.[15] Both Hale White and Holyoake were clearly aware of each other's concerns and each wrote about the death penalty to call into question the ethics of the church. Both men recognised, as well, that these two issues, the secular re-thinking of the afterlife and the repeal of the death sentence, were closely linked.

In 1864 Holyoake published a pamphlet in which he criticised the latest vogue of spiritualist meetings in which the still-living-dead were summoned up in darkened meeting halls while answers to specific questions were mysteriously received, via the spiritual medium. At the back of this pamphlet comes an advertisement for another of Holyoake's papers, printed with a recommendation from the Aberdeen Herald. The pamphlet advertised was Holyoake's Public Lessons of the Hangman:

> One of the best things written against strangling in the open streets, Holyoake writes in strong picturesque language, as is his wont. People who think that capital punishment should be abolished, or the method of carrying them into execution be reformed, should buy this tract for gratuitous circulation.[16]

The quotation on the advertisement is taken from Hale White's 'Metropolitan Notes' column, easily detectable by the author's tone of satirical outrage. Hale White would frequently refer to public execution as 'street strangling' or 'public strangling' - knowing how easily legal language was being used to civilise a barbarous act.

When Hale White reported the hanging of Wright, a murderer, in January 1864 his main concern was that such a sentence forced attention away from the horror of his crime and towards a transformation of the criminal into a martyr:

> The day before yesterday, that poor wretch Wright was hung. I never recollect seeing so much sympathy manifested for a criminal as was shown for him. Passing through the streets on the Tuesday night, the evening before the execution, the attention was arrested by the earnest manner in which the poor people talked about the event of the morrow, and it was easy to see that they had got a settled conviction in their heads that Wright was to die simply because he was not rich enough to baffle the law. Townley had been saved, he had money, Wright was to perish because he had none. In some cases there were threats of rescue and vengeance. I myself heard a slouching costermonger-looking fellow urging one of his friends to be before the scaffold early 'for there were hundreds whom he knew would be there, and they would - ' the rest of the sentence was lost. It was curious to note how an idea spreads, just like a contagion. Nine-tenths of the mob who considered Wright as an offering to the aristocracy, had forgotten, or never knew anything, of the circumstances of the murder of which he was guilty, but the word that he was a victim to unjust laws made by his oppressors passed from mouth to mouth and grew into almost a storm . . . One thing is certain, whether this murderer deserved to die or not, the hideous evils of public strangling were never seen so plainly as they were in

> this case. At the meeting held the night after his death he was elevated to almost martyrdom . . . When the man, too, stood on the drop, barring the gallows and the halter, he looked very much a successful author receiving the congratulations of the pit after the curtain had dropped. 'Bravo, bravo', 'God Bless You Lad' resounded from all sides and the miserable outcast bowed repeatedly, bowing, in fact, till his neck was in the noose. He evidently went into the next world dreaming he was a hero.
> (AH, Jan. 16, 1864)

It is still difficult to tell whether Hale White was present at this execution. The sort of phrase which usually characterises his eye-witness accounts - 'I saw . . .', 'Your correspondent was present at . . .' - is missing here. This contrasts with his description of the evening before the hanging took place - 'I myself heard', 'it was curious to note'. Hale White always made it clear when he was writing from personal experience. He describes Wright's hanging as if he had seen it through another's eyes. It seems unlikely, in any case, that he would have wished to attend a public hanging himself, only to describe so little of the actual event. Yet his account is nevertheless, a clever piece of understatement. The hideous evil of the 'public strangling' is confined to the martyrdom of Wright and breaks off as soon as his neck is in the noose. The reporter appears to be unstirred by what he is seeing, sticking to the absurdity of the situation, Wright 'bowing, in fact, till his neck was in the noose'. It is the unsaid here which counts as much as the said.

Holyoake's Public Lessons of the Hangman was published later in the same year as Wright's death and by the same Strand publisher, F. Farrah, who was to publish Hale White's Argument. Holyoake did witness a public execution (was it he who described Wright's hanging to Hale White?) and like Dickens he believed that public hangings made morbidity more acceptable by familiarizing a crowd with it, week after week:

> The Hangman lures by the scent of blood. It is said there is something of the beast in every breast, which civilisation and every holy influence struggle to extirpate. The Government call out this beast - they appeal to it by a spectacle of public murder - they attract the ruffianism and brutality of the metropolis and consecrate a morning to its indulgence . . . I came away with a feeling of callousness. I felt that I was made sensibly worse by the spectacle.[17]

There is little in all of this, as yet, to promote sympathy for the condemned man. Both Hale White and Holyoake would have known they had to be careful on this point lest it appear they were siding with criminals. Instead, they concentrated on the perverse effect of the death sentence upon those who enjoyed watched it:

> [The hangman] is simply regarded as a vastly superior 'tremendous header' and as for the moral teaching he is supposed to present to the crowd that surges beneath him, you might as well talk about the moral teachings as drams of vitriolic whisky. He feeds the appetite for maddening excitement with consummate success, and how much that excitement in its turn increases the proclivity to crime, we know too well.
> (AH, Dec. 12, 1864)

'Metropolitan Notes' attracted some attention when Hale White published his objections to 'the publication by prison chaplains, of the horrible so-called 'religious' experiences of the wretched murderers who are condemned to the gallows' (AH, Jan. 15, 1870). This controversy related to the execution of John Grigson of Kirkdale. Grigson, a condemned murderer, was befriended by the prison chaplain who claimed to have converted him to Christianity and subsequently published many of Grigson's statements of faith prior to his death. The conversion happened a bit too quickly for Hale White; such confessions had the stench of an established church seeking to prove, like

Wordsworth, the redemptive power of the death sentence. The following brief announcement by the clergy man can be found in the letters page of the Aberdeen Herald in 1870:

> January 15th 1870 Kirkdale County Prison,
> Liverpool.
>
> John Grigson desires me to ask all the preachers of the gospel in Wigan on Sunday 16th January to warn their hearers, especially colliers, against the sin of drunkenness, as he wishes no one to come to the same kind of death as he suffered as it is through Sunday drinking that he has been brought to this end. He earnestly wishes colliers to go every Sunday to a place of worship. (AH, Jan. 15. 1870, p.3)

On the very next page, Hale White used his column to speak out against the same prison chaplain:

> John Grigson was a drunken collier, who wanted his wife to pawn some clothes in order to get some liquor. This she would not do, whereupon he flew into a passion, knocked her down and kicked her about the head, till she became insensible. Afterwards she died. When told by a neighbour that he had killed his wife, he said 'If I haven't I ought'. The defence at the trial was that he was an ignorant, debased man, with a craving for drink. Nevertheless, after some little manipulation by the prison chaplain, he sends to tell his friends that he has 'met with Jesus, his Saviour, and dies happy'. Is it possible to restrain an instinctive shudder? What does the phrase mean, if it is anything more than a phrase, and is it true that the brute, in a day or two, could really understand it? (AH, Jan. 15, 1870)

He refuses to sentimentalise about the condemned man, to do so would have undermined his argument. Grigson's execution relinquished the need for any real, protracted atonement for the murder of his wife. By rubbing out the guilty party the death penalty erased the guilt and responsibility that would need the rest of a life to become real.

But then, for the fundamentalist, it was not *this* life that was crucially important, but the next. Grigson was being prepared not for moral reparation but for eternity and this was what nettled Hale White:

> The effect on the world outside, if it believes in the prisoner or the chaplain, cannot be very edifying. It cannot conduce very much to the public morality to proclaim to all mankind that after a long life of sin the sinner being brought to the gallows, has somehow made it all right, and wins the prize that our apostle or martyr barely succeeded in reaching. (AH, Jan. 15, 1870)

Hale White was being critical of a church which was too easily satisfied with surface solutions, superficial morality. Hale White's piece in the Herald provoked an angry response from one of its more evangelical readers who appeared, unwittingly, to be in favour of crucifixion:

> Sir - Permit me, as a reader of the *Herald*, to say a word or two in condemnation of the flippant tone of the remarks made by your correspondent in his 'Metropolitan Notes' of the 13th inst. . . I would not dare, as your correspondent does, set limits to the mercy of God, which I believe, may be extended even to the chief of sinners . . . Your correspondent will do well to recall the case of the dying thief . . . who, 'after a long life of sin,' being brought to the cross 'in a few short hours' was made 'all right,' and won 'the prize which an apostle or martyr barely succeeded in reaching' . . . In conclusion, I would venture to express a hope that your correspondent may be able to carry out his intention to refrain from discussing theology, at all events until he has more fully studied the subject; for, Sir, I fear he has 'nothing to draw with and the well is deep.' - I am your obedient servant,
>
> R. Davidson. (AH, Jan. 22, 1870)

Curiously, the editor of the Herald also inserted a little note after this letter, a useful indication of the full backing Hale White received from the paper for his views:

> ['Editorial sanction?' Certainly not. A man does not lose the right to his own opinions when he becomes a London correspondent; and where the right lies the responsibility lies . . . Our correspondent, . . . however, will prefer that we shall let him speak for himself]

Nothing could have provoked Hale White more than the suggestion that he should keep away from discussing religious matters. Hale White saved his reply for the final paragraph of the following week's column:

> [Mr. Davidson] calls me 'flippant'. No word could possibly have been more inappropriate. It is precisely because I objected so strongly to the flippant use of sacred phrases that I protested against their being bandied about by people to whom, as it appears to me, they have no meaning whatever . . . I say that the natural, instinctive, healthy voice of human nature tells us to hold our tongues about the wrestlings and agonies in the last moments of poor wretches like these who are face to face with eternity, and that the language used to describe these wrestlings is utterly untrue. Mr. Davidson hints that I do not understand theology. Perhaps not; but there is one book I do hope I understand, and that is the New Testament. I frankly admit that an understanding of the New Testament by no means includes an understanding of theology. Well, when the thief on the cross came to die - that thief who is the favourite argument of those who believe in sudden conversions in gaols, which now are so much a matter of course - what did he say? His last words were not an 'experience' but a prayer, 'Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom.' This is piety and true religion; anything else, it appears to me at least, is presumption. (AH, Jan. 29, 1870)

Davidson hit upon a key characteristic of Hale White's style when he notices his 'flippant tone'. Flippancy was something he often used to send up the perverse sentimentality of the respectable classes. Hale White keeps Grigson at arm's length, calls him a mere 'brute' and other's like him, 'poor wretches'. He says that the effect of reading his confessions 'cannot be very edifying', as if Grigson's penitence was simply a matter of bad taste. Hale White's apparent trivialisation of the issue is all part of his satirical strategy, calculated to provoke and tease the self-righteous indignation of others. Hale White's first criticism of the Kirkdale minister focuses on his own personal distaste, but the retort concentrates on the chaplain's lack of '*true* piety'. It was a critical strategy which ensured he always got the last word:

> But I can say no more on this subject, which is not exactly suited

> for discussion in a newspaper. I have endeavoured to make myself perfectly clear, but as Mr. Davidson's letter, and, to some extent, even his spiritual dialect, are unintelligible to me, I have no doubt that my position will be as unintelligible to him. At any rate, further correspondence will be useless. (AH, Jan. 29, 1870)

The word 'instinctive' crops up twice in this debate; the 'natural, instinctive, healthy voice of human nature' and the 'instinctive shudder'. For Hale White, the final moments of life were too serious for crude sentimental supposition. He would have brooded at length on the utter desolation the death sentence contrived to reproduce in its victims. In Public Lessons of the Hangman Holyoake writes about such moments in a way that Hale White would later re-imagine in his fiction:

> The man is here, aware of the intention to kill him. He is brought out alive and well, and conscious, upon the scaffold. Twenty thousand eyes glare upon him with hungry terror striking warning. He is shown to the excited mob before his face is covered. The spectators see the last spark of hope die out in his soul. No reprieve has come - no horseman rushes up to the throng - no shout of pardon is heard - no impossible rescue, which always lingers in the mind of the doomed, occurs. The wretch stands face to face with inevitable, pitiless, premeditated death.[18]

This is strikingly similar to the thoughts of a dying soldier from Hale White's short story, 'Dreaming':

> He looked with dim and closing eyes over the vast, dreary, snowy and silent plain. What were the images which passed before them? Were they of home, of the Emperor and the retreating army, of the crucifix and the figure thereon? Who can tell? Death is preceded by thoughts which life cannot anticipate . . . But I dream and I dream; the dying, wintry day, the dark, heavily-clouded sky, the snow. and the blood. A Cossack came and drove his lance through him. (MP, pp. 174-175)

In the moment before death, the thoughts of the condemned man represented a world-view completely without hope, a view almost unimaginable, thoughts 'which life cannot anticipate'. Unimaginable and yet contagious. In both the journalism and later fiction, Hale White's death scenes were about looking, about trying to *imagine* how the world might look through the eyes of such hopelessness.[19] Even in The Autobiography the dying man of the opening poem tries to imagine how the world might look when he is no longer there to see it:

> A few weeks hence and spring will come;
> The earth will bright array put on
> Of daisy and of primrose bright,
> And everything which loves the light. (AD, p. 7)

Both Hale White and Holyoake dreaded the full consciousness of the loss of life which 'inevitable, pitiless, premeditated death' brought with it. The false gallows-confessions angered Hale White because, while alleging salvation of the soul, they proved the church to be utterly without compassion, willing to inflict the worst while professing piety.

Neither did Hale White's indignation rest when *public* hanging was brought to an end. In 1868 he wrote a piece complaining that private executions were becoming a new source of attraction to crowds of journalists who now reported on every hanging at even greater length, in the press:

> Formerly when a man was hanged I could keep out of the way if I wished to do. Now, however, they go within the walls of the prison, stand close to the poor wretch while he is being strangled and fever the world the next morning in the columns of their respective papers, where I must see it, with a full particular description of every revolting detail . . . *The Telegraph* told us the following day exactly how the neck was twisted, and what was the colour of the hands of the corpse. Worse still, one of the papers had the unspeakable audacity to repeat a hymn about our Saviour and Heaven, which the brute is said to have sung while he was dying . . . it was evidently meant that our sympathy should be enlisted on his behalf, and that we should believe he was semi-sanctified, almost better for having shot his brother, and

> deadly and diabolically wronged for being judged for his crime. (AH, Aug 22, 1868)

In July 1881 (four months *after* the publication of the Autobiography) just after another debate on capital punishment, Hale White writes; 'I happened to be reading that marvellous translation of Thucydides, just published by Professor Jowett. I came to the speech of Diodotus delivered in the Athenian Assembly, 2308 years ago, against the proposal to punish the revolted Mityleneans with death' (NN, July 2, 1881). The truth about 'strangling' was obvious to Hale White, and yet it seemed to take thousands of years for so little to be learnt. He quotes at length from Thucydides and finishes with characteristic, defiant flippancy:

> 'Men have gone through the whole catalogue of penalties in the hope that by increasing their severity, they may suffer less at the hands of evil doers. In early ages the punishments, even of the worst offences would naturally be milder, but as time went on, and as mankind continued to transgress they seldom stopped short of death. And yet there are transgressors. Some greater terror then, has yet to be discovered, certainly death deters nobody'.
> What newer thing could be said in the year 1881 than this which was said in the year 437 BC? Of a truth, the thoughts in the world are but few, but people go on thinking and expressing them over again. Half a dozen books will make a man acquainted with nearly all that the human mind has ever conceived was worth much. (NN, July 2, 1881)

The death penalty imposed a fsentence upon his own imagination because it forced him to speculate and think upon it endlessly ('I must see it'); exactly the opposite of what Spinoza advised in the Ethic:

> A free man, that is to say, a man who lives according to the dictates of reason alone, is not led by the fear of death (Prop. 63, pt. 4), but directly desires the good . . . his wisdom is a meditation upon life'. (Ethic IV, p. 235)

Yet, this was only one of the contradictions which troubled Hale White as a journalist. He had to engage with an increasingly morbid world and retain a Spinozan hope, a hope 2308 years overdue.

The Case of William Roupell.

Most of the hangings Hale White wrote about in his column were of working class criminals, people he usually referred to, with that mixture of disdain and pity, as 'poor wretches'. Yet there was one notable instance in which Hale White concerned himself with the fate of a completely different class of rogue, someone who was not so far removed from his own social circle. In The Revolution in Tanner's Lane Caillaud's dislike of being hung 'like a forger of bank notes', recalls an actual forger, and an actual prison visit, which Hale White reported during 1863.

William Roupell had been the Liberal member for Lambeth since 1856 and was convicted of forgery in 1862. While many saw his case as an example of the corruption at the heart of public life, Hale White was more concerned for the suffering of individuals in the prison system, especially educated middle class individuals. The background, however, needs some unravelling before proceeding to Hale White's reports, the name of Roupell having almost completely vanished from recorded history.

Known as both an extremely wealthy and well educated man, sometime after his father's death William Roupell suddenly fled the country, having squandered his substantial savings, in March 1862. In April the same year he returned to England and abruptly handed himself over to the Police having confessed that his personal property had been unlawfully obtained by him and that he had come by it by forging not only his late father's will but a deed of gift. Such an unequivocal, candid manner of confession was virtually unprecedented in legal history.

Roupell's case was complicated by the unconventional marriage arrangements of his parents. Although he was the eldest son, William Roupell was also illegitimate, having been born many years before his parents' actual marriage took place. However, a younger brother, Richard Roupell, was born *after* their marriage and so would have been made the chief beneficiary of his father's fortune. Just before Richard Roupell-the elder died, William forged his father's will, making himself the executor and giving all of his father's property to his mother. Young Richard was still at school at the time and so, assured of his mother's implicit trust, William's forgery effectively placed all his father's fortune at his own disposal. Within a matter of years this fortune was nearly all gone, at which point Roupell fled. With considerable ingenuity and extravagant, even mysterious, expenditure, he had betrayed not only the wishes of his dead father but the trust of his entire family.

When Roupell openly, and calmly, confessed his crimes to a packed Crown Court he attracted a great deal of press, as well as public, attention. The Times devoted page after page to the case proceedings. The Roupells were a well-known, respectable London family with business dealings and enormous property holdings all over the country. For one writer on The Times it was as if Roupell had just stumbled out of a novel:

> It is one of those cases which acquires the character of *causes célèbres*, uniting in itself a story as striking and incidents as strange as ever have occurred in the most startling fiction, and involving, indeed, charges of wholesale forgeries and frauds on

> the part of a person moving in the most respectable position in society, and even at one time holding a seat in Parliament, which probably no writer of fiction has ever ventured to imagine.[20]

Hale White knew the young, dandyish figure of Roupell from the House of Commons and was greatly struck by what he read about him in the press and wrote at length about the case for the Aberdeen Herald.

The analogy The Times reporter invokes is with sensation fiction, not a style of narration Hale White would sympathise with. Nevertheless, secretly forged wills, entangled inheritances and disputing lawyers had indeed long been the fascination of Victorian novelists keen to tell how rich families could so easily be undermined by awkward property relations. The subject interested not only Dickens but Trollope whose Orley Farm, a novel about a forged will, was published, somewhat prophetically, in 1862 only a few months before Roupell's crime came to light. His Cousin Henry, of 1879, relates even more closely to the interest in Roupell's case in that he expresses what it might have felt like for a young gentleman 'of good conduct' to be suddenly criminalised for concealing a will and gaining an inheritance by deception, his guilt and fear of persecution gradually piling up in his troubled mind. Like Hale White, it was the personal aspects of guilt and damnation which brought Trollope to write about such people:

> To be made to stand in the dock and be gazed at by the angry eyes of all the court, to be written of as the noted criminal of the day, to hear the verdict of guilty, and then the sentence, and to be aware that he was to be shut up and secluded from all comforts throughout his life! And then, and then, the dread hereafter! For such a deed as that would there not be assured damnation?[21]

Forgery was not only a gentleman's crime but was essentially a *writer's* crime, one had only pick up a pen to forge a will, (or, significantly, like Cousin Henry, one only had to find the book in which it is hidden) to incur a life sentence. Roupell openly confessed in court:

> I wrote my father's signature with his own pen, a short quill pen. My own I wrote with my gold pen, and lightly as I could to make the contrast as strong as possible with the others. I did this a few days after my father's death.[22]

Roupell left the House to serve a seven year prison sentence in October 1862. Many rumours about the man's dark character circulated in the press attracting a lot of bad publicity for the Liberal Party. MPs were quick to dissociate themselves from him and, invariably, he became a symbol of political infamy and utter moral corruption.[23] Hale White, however, was disturbed by the news of Roupell's sudden decline and, rather like Trollope, tried to understand the man, and his motives from the inside and a little more cautiously than public opinion had so far allowed. What interested Hale White in the case was the fact that Roupell had confessed and appeared to be driven to confess by a deep, inner need for atonement. He became a symbol not only of deception but of an almost greater, *more* fundamental truthfulness. Roupell's crime and and subsequent honesty struck a chord with a society obsessed with all matters relating to guilt and redemption; 'I am not the only man of good conduct who has sometimes made such a mistake' said Roupell at his trial, stating why he decided to return to face up to his crime:

> I was influenced then by the same feeling which influenced me in returning to England from a place of safety. I was at last awakened to a sense of my sin.[24]

It is not difficult to sense how these words, 'I was *at last* awakened' with that language of spiritual awakening, almost of conversion, would have sounded to

Hale White when he first read them in The Times.

Hale White's first mention of Roupell comes on April 12th 1862. At this stage his crimes were unknown. Previously thought to be a very wealthy man, Roupell suddenly resigned from the House, having lost his entire fortune. At first, Hale White saw Roupell's abrupt departure as just another good opportunity to ridicule those superficial Liberals who obviously had more money than good sense:

> Mr. Roupell, the member for Lambeth, has gone to the dogs. He was reputed to be enormously rich, and fabulous stories were afloat about his princely generosity and the prodigality with which he almost squandered his money. His wealth, however, seems to have been grossly exaggerated, and a little over-speculation has rendered it prudent for him to forsake the House of Commons and accept the Chiltern Hundreds. His election for Lambeth cost him more than £5000, and I do not think he opened his mouth half-a -ozen times in the House. For £5000 he purchased the inestimable privilege of representing a dirty metropolitan constituency, and being bored to death by being obliged to sit in committee on subjects about which he knew nothing whatever. Was not the £5000 well laid out. *De gustibus non est*, &c. The proverb is a little stale. (AH, April 12, 1862)

So wrote Hale White, not expecting the subject to surface again. A few months later, however, a more serious and better-informed Hale White returns to Roupell. In the summer of 1862 Hale White and his brother-in-law John Arthur had taken a trip to Germany and it was here that he first heard about the trial:

> To one wandering on foreign shores, the news of Mr. Roupell's trial came like a thunder clap. Of course it is somewhat late in the day to offer now any new observations on this extraordinary tale of misery and crime, but as another act in the drama is yet to be played out, I may, without incurring the danger of sending you stale news, tell you what I recollect of the late member for Lambeth. (AH, Aug. 30, 1862)

His distance from London enabled him to give Roupell's story the wider, ethical attention it demanded and he questions his reputation as a mere rogue. He sees Roupell's case more objectively as a 'drama', 'a tale' and looks at this tale across a distance of time as well as miles:

> Mr. Roupell, when I first knew him, was a good-looking young man of about six and twenty, rather inclined to be a bit of a dandy, but well educated and gentlemanly. Not a trace of anything like dishonesty or swindling was discernible in his countenance. In fact he was rather over scrupulous, at any rate, a little too much for his constituents, who generally measure a man's parliamentary capacity by the number of times he appears in the division lobby. Over and over again has Mr. Roupell, to my certain knowledge, declined to vote, simply because, as he said, he did not understand the subject. This conscientiousness, I am certain, was not feigned, for there was no reason why it should be. He was well acquainted, too, with the best literature, and once said to a friend of mine that he made it a principle never to buy a new book until he had read and comprehended, if possible, the one he had last purchased. Putting all this together, I cannot assent to the theory, therefore, that this wretched forger was a predetermined swindler, whom good people ought to have avoided from the very first, and my belief is confirmed by his recent conduct. Why should he have come back from abroad? He says his conscience forced him back . . . Why go further for an explanation when such an obvious one is at hand?
> (AH, Aug 30, 1862)

'I *cannot assent* to the theory'; the blanket condemnation of Roupell has brought out the Dissenter in Hale White. Roupell has suddenly switched in his imagination from being the object of sarcastic scorn ('a little over speculation has rendered it prudent for him the forsake the House of Commons') to being a conscientious, cultured MP, reluctant to speak on matters on which he is ignorant or waste valuable time. It is interesting that here Hale White finds virtue in Roupell's silence in the House, where he previously ('I do not think he opened his mouth half a dozen times in the House') only sought to ridicule him. This switch of allegiance recalls Orwell's pronouncement on Dickens that; 'as a matter of course he is on the side of the underdog, always and everywhere . . . He loathes an aristocratic class even more, but as soon as they are really overthrown his sympathies swing round'.[25]

Now, 'like a thunder clap', Hale White is converted to defending the forger and part of his defence is his plea for Roupell's 'literariness'. How could any man 'well acquainted with the best literature', a man so politically conscientious, suddenly turn out to be so scheming? It is also curious that Hale White did not mention that he knew Roupell *before* he was convicted. Once Roupell became a victim of public opinion, Hale White described him as a familiar acquaintance:

> It seems scarcely credible now, of course, that the man whom I have known so well should from the very first moment of our acquaintanceship have been a felon. Yet so it was. That gentleman who has passed up, and gossiped with us so often, was from the hour when we first met a forger, a thief, a liar! More extraordinarily still; for years nobody suspected that anything was wrong. (AH, Aug 30, 1862)

Neither could Hale White believe that Roupell was a purely selfish man. There was no evidence that he had spent such a vast fortune all on himself. And yet where, exactly, had his money gone? Hale White believed that he was being blackmailed:

> It was said that he had squandered all his fortune but nobody knew how it had gone, for he never gamed or betted or got drunk. That he lived rather a fast life I knew: he had a House in St. James' Square, he had spent a good deal of money in electioneering; he had an expensive mistress, but still £150,000 was not to be dissipated without difficulty, and where it had gone I was puzzled to know . . . It was whispered that he was pursued by somebody who had got one of his secrets and that he had been obliged to part with his blood to keep everything quiet. I incline now to think this a true explanation of his losses. He said at his trial that he had been swindled, and very likely it was in this way. What he must have suffered from such torture by the rack, during the last two or three years, if this be correct, nobody hardly can tell, and it will certainly entirely explain his voluntary

> return and self exposure. It must be a relief to him, that no one can prosecute him any further, and that he has told the world all he knows. (AH, Aug 30, 1862)

'What he must have suffered from such torture'. This is the exact opposite of Caillaud's warder, 'unmoved' in the company of the prisoner. It is his imaginative engagement with individuals, caught within history, which defines how Hale White reported on his times.

Hale White tried to balance what had become the established and superficial notion of sin with a more sympathetic understanding of basic, human moral weakness. A good man who makes one single, yet decisive, mistake commands his interest more than the details of the 'fast life'. The loss of the fortune so obtained is explained by Roupell's being blackmailed for some unspecified sexual indiscretion. Hale White does not substantiate this, he has no solid proof, and yet, very quickly, he builds upon the idea; 'very likely it was in this way'. How to contain or *conceal* desire was a great question for Hale White, as both a man and an artist. Roupell might be forgiven his crimes if sexual desire, the need to conceal 'one of his secrets' were 'the parent', the root of his 'cursed fall':

> He did not become this all at once. The will was not forged in 1856. It took five years of gradual hardening before the last point of iniquity was reached, and each succeeding iniquity can hardly be called a new sin, but merely a natural development of the first, the parent of all his subsequent ones. My theory of William Roupell, from what I know of him, is just this - He yielded under great pressure to one temptation, and everything he did afterwards, was simply the natural consequence of this single cursed fall. What the moral is I need not say. It certainly is not that which is drawn by some of the papers. A Tory snob would have you believe that the great lesson is the corruptibility of all large constituencies. No borough smaller than Lambeth would ever have chosen such a rascal. Other people will read you a homily on the hypocrisy of mammon-worship of a wicked world

> which welcomed into its ranks a coarse and vulgar criminal fit for nothing but the halter. The only thing which I venture to preach is, that apart from all theology, one sin is quite enough to damn a man. Strictly speaking, William Roupell sinned once, when he forged the first deed of gift, and once only. (AH, Aug 30, 1862)

Very quickly this becomes a theological argument about the consequences of sin. It is not the subsequent implications of Roupell's many forgeries which interest Hale White - those are mere financial matters which will have to be cleared up. But it is the first 'temptation' he yielded to and which utterly corrupted his conscience which really matters. Hale White's moral 'theory' of Roupell lies at the very heart of many Victorian novels, and especially of George Eliot's novels, in which one shameful act leads the protagonist into a chain of greater trouble, taking him further from his natural self and his community. For George Eliot, as for Spinoza, forgiveness, however hard, was an unfolding necessity of justice. In his public confession Roupell resembles someone like Arthur Donithorne coming home to face Adam Bede:

> I never meant to injure her. I deceived you afterwards - and that led on to worse; but I thought it was forced upon me, I thought it was the best thing I could do . . . But I was all wrong from the very first, and horrible wrong has come of it. God knows, I'd give my life if I could undo it.[26]

Roupell himself, if he was as well read as Hale White suggests, would have known exactly the kind of destiny he was playing out in court. In writing about him, Hale White was rehearsing the arguments he would use in his own moral fictions; 'one sin is quite enough to damn a man. Strictly speaking, William Roupell sinned once'.

By the end of 1862 Roupell's name had vanished from the press altogether; he died ten years after his release from jail in 1880. Neither does

Roupell appear in any contemporary accounts of Victorian trials or criminals; he is totally forgotten, like the forger Caillaud speaks about in prison. And, apart from Hale White, most Liberals of the day, it seems, were glad to forget him as soon as they could. In one of his evening strolls about London, Hale White picked up a cheap pamphlet from a news stall which claimed to be a copy of Roupell's confession. It turned the moment of Roupell's confession into a slice of cheap melodrama:

> You can almost, in every sentence, hear the nasal tone and see the seedy look of the ballad monger, with his papers on his arm, and a crowd round him devouring the full, true, and particular account of this prince of forgers. 'Sitting here in the solitude of my cell, stung with remorse at the enormity of the crimes I have committed, without a friend here to console or advise me, and having no communication with the family I have disgraced and ruined, I the once courted and proud senator, that have doomed myself to a life a penal servitude to make reparation to the mother, brother, and sisters I have robbed, make this full confession of my crimes, and my pen shall reveal the deeds of infamy that seem too daring to be believed'. Mark the 'once courted and proud senator'. Not a bad touch that for a Seven Dials audience. (AH, Oct. 25, 1862)

He wonders how anyone can sell such rubbish and that appears to be the last of it.

Yet there is an interesting footnote to the story. A year later, in August 1863, Hale White commences a lengthy paragraph about prison conditions, 'one of the most pressing of all reforms':

> What to do with our criminals, is a subject which will probably be discussed a good deal before Parliament meets. In the midst of the conflict of great theories on this question, it is to be hoped that one of the most pressing of all reforms will not be allowed to lie neglected, the separation during the period of their confinement of those who are radically and almost incurably depraved from who have but yielded to a sudden and overpowering temptation. (AH, Aug. 8, 1863)

The paragraph which follows could well be describing a visit Hale White made to Roupell in prison. The circumstances are very similar except that the 'young man's' occupation is different, given here as a banker, a logical occupation for a forger. Hale White is mixing a little fiction with the truth - it would have been a great coincidence if he had known two convicted forgers at this time and anyone in Aberdeen who had closely followed his column in the preceding year would have known he was really writing about Roupell. The moral Hale White draws from the banker's plight is exactly the same as that in the case of Roupell, except that this time the plea for compassion is extended to demand a change in prison management. It was repulsive to Hale White to think that 'gentleman' criminals, not 'incurably depraved', were thrown together in gaol with those he describes as thoroughly evil, habitual lawbreakers, the poorer wretches beyond redemption:

> I was most forcibly struck the other day with the necessity for some change in our present system, when I had occasion to pay a visit to one of the largest of our Government penitentiaries. In one of the cells there lies a young man, of some very well to do people at the west-end of London. His sister was but a week ago married into a very good family, and he himself held a very high position in a banking house. He is sensitive, by no means immoral and has a most lively sense of the difference between right and wrong. Nevertheless, in a moment of sudden pressure, he fell, forged a signature to a cheque, and is now a common convict. He is perfectly reclaimable. The overt crime which he committed is, it is true, felony in the eye of the law, but to the eye which can look a little deeper, he is, except at one - I was about to say important point - sound and healthy . . . Well, close by him, in the very next cell, and communicating with him, lies one of the very worst villains that London can produce. He has been convicted no less than fourteen times, and unnameable crimes are as familiar and as pleasing to him as his daily food . . . Now, what man is there living who could avoid being dragged down by constant intercourse with such a blackguard as this? How much greater then does the evil of association with him become when his companion is almost a boy, whose sense

> of being cut off from the world would be likely to lead him to despair. No one can calculate how irresistible is that power of slowly depreciating moral sentiment which is exercised by daily intercourse with evil. (AH, Aug. 8, 1863)

Roupell's story would have haunted Hale White because it would have underlined the precarious nature of 'civilized', 'respectable' life. One false move 'in a moment of sudden pressure' damaged the man irrevocably. Prison, far from refining Roupell's ethical code, encourages, by association, an even greater moral decay. Hale White's characters are outcasts, people leading pressured lives on the edge of society and forced back all the time upon their own solitary decisions. Mark Rutherford often writes about how people narrowly escape the consequences of equivocal or dangerous moral situations; Mark himself was accused of heresy twice over, then there were the accusations against Zachariah and George, Catherine's attraction of Mr. Cardew, Maggie's condemned and socially vulnerable status as an unmarried mother. The proximity of Roupell to Hale White's own social sphere must have contributed to making the world seem all the more precarious and unpredictable; 'It seems scarcely credible now, of course, that a man whom I have known so well should from the very first moment of our acquaintanceship have been a felon. Yet so it was.' Hale White's defence of Roupell was a part of his search for solid, moral ground, a defence of the idea of human redemption, and a further warning of the chaos 'augmenting' in London, like a disease of modern life; 'Some day or other it may break out and overwhelm us all' (NN, June 11, 1881).

Notes

1. Ben Weinreb and Christopher Hibbert, The London Encyclopædia (London: Macmillan, 1983), p. 246.

2. Catherine Macdonald Maclean, Mark Rutherford. A Biography of William Hale White (London: Macdonald, 1955), p. 155; hereafter cited as Maclean.

3. This room is not be confused with the Unitarian Chapel situated on the same street. Dickens used to visit this chapel during the 1840s and corresponded with the minister, Edward Tagart. See; John Forster, The Life of Charles Dickens Vol. I, 2nd edition, (London: Chapman and Hall, 1876), p. 297. See also Peter Ackroyd, Dickens (London: Sinclair Stevenson, 1990), pp. 531-533.

4. William White, To Think Or Not To Think (London: Robert Theobold, 1852), p. 27.

5. Maclean, p. 201.

6. Wilfred Stone, The Religion and Art of William Hale White (Mark Rutherford) (California: Stanford University Press, 1954), p. 137; hereafter cited as Stone.

7. Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Aurora Leigh 1856, ed. Kerry McSweeney (Oxford: OUP, 1993), p. 127.

8. George Orwell, The Collected Essays, Journalism and Letters Vol. III, ed. Sonia Orwell and Ian Angus (London: Secker and Warburg, 1968), pp. 75-76; hereafter cited as CEJL.

9. CEJL, Vol. III, pp. 74-76. One passage from Dickens which Orwell would have been familiar with, and which is also very similar to the kind of thoughts expressed in Deliverance, (especially in that association with a living Hell) can be found in Bleak House;

> 'Mr. Snagsby passes along the middle of a villainous street, undrained, unventilated, deep in black mud and corrupt water - though the roads are dry elsewhere - and reeking with such smells and sights that he, who has lived in London all his life, can scarce believe his senses. Branching from this street and its heaps of ruins, are other streets and courts so infamous that Mr. Snagsby sickens in body and mind, and feels as if he were going, every moment deeper down, into the infernal gulf.'
> Charles Dickens, Bleak House 1852-1853, ed. Norman Page (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1983), p. 364

10. CEJL, Vol. III, p. 75.

11. George Orwell, The Road to Wigan Pier (London: Gollancz, 1937), pp. 159-162.

12. Margaret Gullan-Whur, Within Reason. A Life of Spinoza (London: Jonathan Cape, 1998), p. 31.

13. William Wordsworth, The Poetical Work of William Wordsworth ed. Thomas Hutchinson (London: OUP, 1895), pp. 519-520.

14. Charles Dickens 'Capital Punishment' Reprinted Pieces 1858, ed. B. L. Matz (London: Chapman and Hall, 1908), p. 428.

15. George Jacob Holyoake, The Logic of Death (London: Austin and Co, 1861), p. 12.

16. Advertisement attached to: George Jacob Holyoake, Public Performances of the Dead (London: Farrah, 1864).

17. George Jacob Holyoake, Public Lessons of the Hangman (London: Farrah, 1864), p. 7; hereafter cited as Public Lessons.

18. Public Lessons, p. 6.

19. See also Orwell's article 'A Hanging'. CEJL, Vol. I, pp. 66-71. The whole tone of this piece is strikingly similar to the sort of thing Hale White was writing during the 1860s.

20. [Anon], 'Roupell's Crimes,' The Times (Aug. 19, 1862), p. 11.

21. Anthony Trollope, Cousin Henry 1879, ed. J. Thompson (Oxford: OUP, 1987), p. 96.

22. [Anon], 'Roupell's Crimes,' The Times (Aug. 20, 1862), p. 10.

23. Gladstone only ever mentions Roupell once in his diaries, his name

cropping up on a dinner party list for May 23, 1860. see: W. E. Gladstone, The Gladstone Diaries Vol. V, ed. H. C. G. Matthew (Oxford: OUP, 1978), p. 489.

24. [Anon], 'Roupell's Crimes,' The Times (Aug. 20, 1862), p. 10.

25. CEJL, Vol. I, p. 502.

26. George Eliot, Adam Bede 1859, ed. Stephen Gill (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1985), p. 470.

Chapter Four

The Radical Journalist. Part III

Religion, Belief and Writing

Even when he writes about social and political issues, Hale White uses religious terms, his fundamental interest is with the moral identity of man. He protested against the death sentence because he believed in atonement, not revenge. His support for Reform is part of a call for true equality and the 'moral regeneration' of the State. Many of his descriptions of poverty are also there to show up the hypocrisy of the established church - he comments on the large amounts of money spent on new 'little Cathedrals' and communion plate while, in the shadow of those same churches, the poor lack the most basic human needs. More importantly, throughout much of this period spent as a journalist Hale White and his father had set up their own religious meeting rooms above a draper's shop, very close to the 'hovels' and slums of Drury Lane, so that Hale White was himself a practising preacher (albeit in an unofficial capacity) in London. As his columns continued through to the 1870s this preoccupation with the role of the church grew more marked until he was writing about some aspect of Christianity every week. The religious questions and the experiences recorded within the journalism paved the way for the doubts and memories of the Rutherford novels.

Throughout Hale White's period as a journalist the Church of England came under constant attack and was having to defend itself not only from critical Dissenters but from the beliefs and actions of its own clergymen. There were three different debates which converged on the church at that time. Firstly, the Disestablishment movement, in which many Dissenters were involved, aimed to sever the Anglican church, and especially the Irish church, from the State. Secondly, the Oxford Movement aimed to Catholicise the church and bring the emphasis back onto ceremony and ritual. And thirdly, like the orthodox Dissenters of Hale White's college, the Anglican Church had its own heresy trials to contend with, revolving around the textual authenticity of the Bible. All three of these movements were inter-related but before I look at how Hale White reported on these debates it is important to have some idea of how his own Dissenting background entered into his weekly column.

The Dissenting Dissenter

> Newspaper correspondents, unfortunately, are not absolutely fixtures. Like other people, they have holidays to take, and their own affairs to attend to, which, for the time being, reduce them to the level of ordinary mortals and render them deaf to the world of news and politics. This week too, I believe, that, if I had been able to listen, I should have heard nothing worth reporting, for, as I understand, there is not a particle of intelligence which would pay for postage. I, therefore, send you an account of a hasty visit I have paid, partly for business and partly for pleasure, to one of the most famous shrines of north Germany - to Eisenach, the town of Wartburg. (AH, Sept. 28, 1861)

Shortly after Hale White began his 'Metropolitan Notes', a few months later in the summer of 1861, he went on short holiday to Germany. He devoted an entire column to recording his thoughts on the trip and so established what was to become something of an annual tradition. Each year Hale White would describe his vacation visits, either to the Lake District or abroad, and the places he wrote about would always have some connection with his own bookish pursuits. He visited a wide variety of literary destinations, including several locations associated with Wordsworth and, on one occasion, Goethe. But the first visit to north Germany in September 1861 is especially important.

It was in a castle, on the summit of a mountain in Wartburg in 1521-1522, where Martin Luther, recently excommunicated for his heretical writings, continued his task of translating the Bible into German. This solitary act of translation is seen as a landmark in the growth of Protestantism; in preparing a Bible which could be read and disseminated in his own national language, Luther was reclaiming Christianity from the edicts of the Catholic church. Hale White saw him as an intellectual hero who, through this democratic act of translation, made the very role of the hero less necessary:

> Less and less is the probability that the stream of truth can ever narrow itself into one individual, as it did then . . . The greatest, perhaps, of all the blessings which Luther gave men is that, by breaking the caste which made one small body of men the thinkers and depositories of thought for the human race, he has immeasurably increased its spiritual safety. (AH, Sept. 28, 1861)

Like Bunyan, Hale White saw Luther as one of the forefathers of Protestant Dissent and the article is his way of asserting his own religious roots. Yet it is not any distinct church which interests Hale White in connection with Luther but more the fact that he provided 'thought for the human race'. Hale White saw Luther's Bible less as instrument of orthodoxy and more as a unique source of ideas and human stories.

This article shows all the signs of careful composition and reads more like a considered essay than a hasty piece of journalism, gradually moving towards a heated centre. He first takes his leave of events at home, dismissing them as 'nothing worth reporting'; that done, he boards several trains, noting a few villages along the way, his perspective sharpened by a pilgrim's intent; ('as I had a special object in view and did not loiter by the way, I was able to see what most particularly interested me'). He eventually arrives at Eisenach, and looks out towards Wartburg with a growing sense of history:

> I must say that I got out of the station with a very peculiar emotion. Here, I could not help thinking, was the very birthplace of Protestantism, for here the Bible was translated. If other events than those which did take place had taken place here, I should not have been standing here at this moment, or, at any rate, with the same individuality as that which I now possess. There are very few things in history of which so much as this can be said. Battles and sieges, huge diplomatic intrigues, filling the whole world with their noise for the time, are all gone, and the destiny of no one human being alive has probably been in any degree affected by them. But there, straight before me, stands a rock on which a deed was done by a solitary individual, which has not only changed the face of the world, but which has altered the private existence of every man in it, and which makes me at this moment a totally different creature to what I could have been if that deed had not been done. I felt, therefore, as I walked through the town as if I were upon sacred ground.
> (AH, Sept. 28, 1861)

It is important to note that this piece was not actually written at Wartburg but composed back home in London; Hale White went to Germany so that he could rework the memory *afterwards*. This produces a curious mixture of tenses, a combination of the retrospective and the immediate. Even in London he is still, internally, in Germany, at the shrine; 'But there, straight before me, stands a rock . . . which makes me at this moment a totally different creature to what I could have been'. 'At this moment' refers to Hale White writing in London in the present, but it is also an echo of the earlier; 'I should not have been *standing here* at this moment . . .' Despite this being such a momentous, historical act, it is the fact that Luther determined every man's 'private existence', his 'individuality' which is important. For that reason his personal response matters to the reader; it is as if Hale White were describing a trip home to Bedford; 'I *felt*, therefore, as I walked through the town . . .'

He takes another train nearer to the mountain with some of the other tourists (the party includes a newly married couple who he notices are constantly kissing, quite openly, in a very un-English way) and eventually arrives at the castle and Luther's study which looks out over the woods and hills. Here we come to the centre of the essay. After musing on the solitude and determination of Luther, Hale White is stirred by the story in which, supposedly, he encounters the devil while at work on his translation. First he 'quotes' Schraubenschnecke, the sceptical rationalist, the boring insect who doubted the reality of this encounter:

> 'After careful examination of the account of the diabolic manifestations - after a most thorough scrutiny of the scene in which they are said to have been manifested, and after a close comparison of the different versions of the story . . . I have come to the conclusion that it is a myth'. (AH, Sept. 28, 1861)

Hale White, however, finds an imaginative sense in this idea of Luther seeing the devil and builds a psychological portrait of the man, totally cut off from others, worked up into an intensity of scholastic purpose and immensely torn by what he is doing:

> I do not wonder that he saw the Devil here . . . With all respect for the learned Professor I think differently. I myself, if I had lived up there for a little while, should have seen a good many things which I don't see in Piccadilly and which Schraubenschnecke will never see. What shall we say, then, of Luther, with the Reformation in his head? The manner in which his work absorbed him up here was something wonderful, and marks his genius . . . Who that knows what an average existence in civilized Europe means - the occupation with a thousand things but the absorption in none - the acquaintance with a thousand ideas but the life-and-death attachment to none - does not envy Luther, with all his sorrow and devils? Would you not sooner be a man like him, with all his struggles, but with one distinct, consistent, firmly-grasped intellectual system, and one determinate design in his head, which sucked up every thought and feeling, than lead the customary life of educated mortals. (AH, Sept. 28, 1861)

Hale White admires in Luther what he also strongly admires about Spinoza; his 'one distinct, consistent, firmly grasped intellectual system'. The word 'distinct' is important, giving Luther's ideas a singular reality, like the mountain, 'the rock itself', while the modern age drowns out true thought in its own confusion and noise.[1] Rather than being a restrictive belief, the 'one distinct' vision is glimpsed as a liberating intellectual discipline, especially when combined with such a wide, panoramic view of nature.[2]

The essay typifies the fierce religious debates constantly going on in Hale White's mind, sometimes without him being conscious of it. He always envied Luther's all consuming single belief in what he was doing, he describes him like a determined artist, a 'solitary individual', a '*genius* with the Reformation *in his head*'. Yet also he writes in praise of shared cultures and common truths. Hale White's excited Carlylean thoughts have to be balanced with his memories not only of the study looking out over the mountain but of the restrictive nature of the Congregational church he grew up in.

In 1852 Hale White had been expelled from New College for his rational, Spinozan questioning of the unity of the Bible. Over ten years later, in 1863, he wrote a short piece about the increasing incidents of heresy and expulsion in Dissenting colleges:

> The Dissenters in England are always in trouble about their Colleges. They are constantly breaking out into heterodoxy. Not that there is ever any grand eruption to relieve the system of its foul humours once and for ever, but the disease is always coming up to the skin in pimples, disfiguring the complexion exceedingly, and causing no small annoyance. (AH, Jan. 17, 1863)

In the Aberdeen Herald Hale White was writing for a Scottish public, largely Presbyterian and so mildly sympathetic to the English Free Churches. But this does not prevent him from being heavily ironic about the deteriorating priorities of these churches. He goes on to discuss the plight of 'some poor Dissenting student' accused of heresy for using certain forms of language not approved by his college, an event which reminds him of his own expulsion eleven years before:

> Some years ago at New College, three or four young men were dismissed for some quibble about inspiration, and ever since that time there has been great constitutional irritation, much itching from pimples as aforesaid, inability consequently *to sleep*, and great tendency on the part of the hands which had better have kept quiet, to scratch and make matters worse. Casually looking at the *British Standard* the other day, I perceived that some poor Dissenting student had been committing himself by using some phrase or other, not found in the College vocabulary, and that the whole Dissenting public had been, by an alarmed editor, summoned to arms to resist this outbreak of heresy. The absurdity of the controversy and the tremendous importance assigned to the tweedledum and tweedledee discussion forcibly reminded one of that immortal picture in *Punch*, where the old gentleman, just waked out of his slumbers, is represented watching at his hall door, and exclaiming as he listens to the fancied murderers and thieves, that 'there are three of 'em, if not four, by the footsteps;' while outside a jackass is sniffing through the key hole. Seriously, though, what a mercy it is to be out of all

> this Colenso-Pentateuchal authenticity hubbub. What a mercy not to have every expression and almost every gesture watched and searched for any symptoms of unorthodoxy. (AH, Jan. 17, 1863)

Hale White's infectious 'disease' is a craftily ambiguous metaphor with which to satirise the ignorance of the college hierarchy; a growth at once both harmful, inevitable and liberating. The 'itching pimples' are like a series of youthful, burning questions which won't go away and which stir the sleeping body to life. Rather than openly confronting them, the college expulsions only scratch at the surface, thus spreading the questions and rebellions even further. What is more, he sees his own expulsion (which his readers would not have known about) as something of a turning point in the progress of these teasing questions; '*ever since that time* there has been great constitutional irritation, much itching from pimples as aforesaid'.

And yet no-one has *chosen* to spread this disease. Taking the analogy even further - the epidemic comes from *outside*, colonising the rather naive 'poor Dissenting students' as much as the church they belong to. Hale White's satirical tone speaks of an increasing detachment from the church. He knows that whatever happens in any specific heresy case, the days of the established church, of *any* church, are numbered. The piece is written from what he knows is a privileged position of intellectual independence; 'what a mercy it is to be out of all this . . .'

Hale White would rarely describe his life, post-expulsion, in a positive light. Generally, he portrayed himself as a wage-slave and a bored civil servant 'wandering over the pavements' (AH, Sept. 28, 1861) without a cause, insignificant in the vastness of the city. Yet it is obvious that he does appreciate the intellectual freedom of his life, even though this is something he may usually take for granted or play down. It is striking how he jumps from this paragraph on the plight of Dissenting students, to his next paragraph - on the luxury of the newly opened Metropolitan Line. The radical change of subject is significant. We gain a sense of someone liberated from a stressful, narrow past by the experience of modern Piccadilly:

> . . . What a mercy not to have every expression and almost every gesture watched and searched for any symptoms of unorthodoxy.
>
> The Metropolitan Railway is open at last, and from my own personal experience, I can testify that there is no such comfortable travelling on any other line in England. The carriages are large and roomy, and, greatest improvement of all, are well lighted with gas, so that it is possible to read without any difficulty the smallest print. Not a particle of foul air or steam could be perceived in the tunnels, and, indeed, the difference between the wholesome atmosphere of the railway and the foul stench of a regular Paddington omnibus crammed to suffocation with a dozen hot and reeking and perhaps dirty bodies was most perceptible. (AH, Jan. 17, 1863)

This sense of intellectual freedom lies in the adjectival phrases 'open at last', 'large and roomy', 'well lighted' and most important, 'it is possible to *read* without any difficulty'. And whereas he wrote of the 'foul humours' of the college, in the new train 'not a particle of foul air or steam could be perceived'. Hale White always associated the intellectual oppression of the chapel with a serious lack of fresh air. 'The atmosphere of the chapel', he wrote in The Autobiography, 'on hot nights was most foul . . . Oftentimes in Winter, when no doors or windows were open, I have seen the glass panes streaming with wet inside, and women carried out fainting'. (AD, p. 14) We can imagine Hale White preparing his newspaper column in the context of modern Metropolitan comforts, writing and thinking in the roomy space on the new train that was taking him speedily home.

When Hale White reported on contemporary religious debates and heresy trials he wrote from these two different viewpoints. The viewpoint of a Bible-Christian, still finding real meaning and purpose in the beliefs and writings of his past; and that of the chapel-exile, travelling through life, blissfully free of the constraints of theological controversy. This dual role of the sceptical believer, the Dissenting-Dissenter, enabled Hale White to cover the main religious debates of his day without ever being restricted to any single, conventional viewpoint. In consequence, the readers of his columns would have had a rather contradictory idea of where, intellectually, their London correspondent was coming from.

Biblical Controversy

In 1861 Hale White describes Disraeli making a speech in Aylesbury on behalf of church unity in which he claims that Disraeli made a 'shallow and stupid' statement about the destructive effects of philosophy. Hale White often protested that his expulsion for heresy was unjust and that religion and freethinking were compatible. He disapproves of Disraeli's speech but he does not fully quote what he says regarding philosophy, launching instead into his own essay:

> Not more happy is Mr. D'Israeli in his history of German philosophy, nor in his excessively shallow and stupid remark that no religion has ever been destroyed by a philosophical theory, and that philosophers destroy themselves. One would have thought that a writer and a statesman, with such pretensions, would not have descended to set philosophy and religion against one another in a manner worthy of a Ranter. Is not religion the highest philosophy? - and with regard to philosophers destroying

> themselves, is the net result of the lives of Plato, Aristotle, Descartes and Spinoza nil? Mr. D'Israeli makes the capital mistake of supposing that, because, after all has been discovered and said which lies within the reach of any one age, another rises which includes what has been accomplished in something wider and higher - therefore the second destroys the first. As well might we say that Judaism was destroyed by John the Baptist, or John the Baptist's teaching by that of the Saviour. But enough of all this. (AH, Nov. 23, 1861)

It became habitual for Hale White to pick-up on everything Disraeli said and turn it to his own advantage. But, when the speech is seen in its context, what the politician meant by his statement - 'philosophers destroy themselves' - was probably quite different from what Hale White supposes. Disraeli was not so much refuting Plato, Kant or Spinoza, (it is Hale White who brings them up in his discussion) but condemning the increasing influence of *German* biblical criticism, the rational philosophy which consistently refuted the authenticity of the Bible on scientific grounds. What Disraeli feared was a narrowing, rationalist intellectual climate, a climate which had already torn Hale White in two different directions; hence his very defensiveness against Disraeli's contentious remarks.

In 1862 a complex heresy case came before the public in the form of the Bishop of Natal, John William Colenso, a man who seemed to be so many persons in one. Not only was Colenso an enthusiastic missionary but he was also a dedicated mathematician and Biblical critic. In 1862 he published his book, The Pentateuch and the Book of Joshua, Critically Examined, in the logical manner of Strauss's The Life of Jesus, Critically Examined. By applying a mathematical scrutiny to many of the facts in the Old Testament, Colenso was questioning its original authorship. Here he is, applying his maths to a sentence from the book of Chronicles which describes how a large number of sacrificial lambs were killed 'in the court of the temple'. From this, Colenso deduced that the Bible lacked a basic logical integrity; it was surely impossible, he argued, to have killed so many lambs in so small a space in so short a time:

> But the area of the courtyard contained, as we have seen, . . . only 1,692 square yards, and could only have held, when thronged to the uttermost, about 5,000 people. How then are we to conceive of 150,000 lambs being killed within it, by, at least, 150,000 people, in the space of two hours, - that is, *at the rate of* 1,250 *lambs a minute?*[3]

Scientific Biblical criticism was already becoming a predictable, and rather absurd, intellectual orthodoxy. So many of these kinds of calculations were intended to test the patience of the established church, rather than to prove a ground-breaking, more useful, theological theory. Many claimed that Colenso had been influenced by the 'pagan' Zulus he met while in Africa, and someone even published a poem about him which Holyoake, who knew Colenso, reprinted in his memoirs:

> To Natal, where savage men so
> Err in faith and badly live,
> Forth from England went Colenso,
> To the heathen light to give.
>
> But, behold the issue awful!
> Christian, vanquished by Zulu,
> Says polygamy is lawful,
> And the Bible isn't true![4]

Hale White's attitude towards Colenso was ambiguous. By the 1860s he was no longer interested in 'negative', rational Biblical criticism, and yet as an expelled heretic himself he had little sympathy with rigid church orthodoxy either, hence his protest against Disraeli's speech. Hale White was aware of the main thrust of Colenso's arguments before the book was published and he anticipated its reception in his column. His anticipation proves that the critical climate around Colenso was more important than the actual reading of the book itself:

> A book is about to appear, which will create an excitement in the theological world, equal only to that produced by the *Essays and Reviews*. Bishop Colenso is, it is said, about to publish a work in which he will maintain that the Mosaic books of the Old Testament were written long after the time of Moses. The Bishop, although he has now for some time lived abroad, is very well known over here, both for his heresy and ability, although, as yet, he has pertinaciously refused to express his unorthodox opinions precisely in that form which would render him liable to formal ecclesiastical censure. It is very doubtful, indeed, even if he should boldly declare his belief that the Pentateuch is not to be ascribed to Moses, whether he could be ejected from the church. There is certainly nothing in the thirty-nine articles, [*sic*] or the Book of Common Prayer, which a man might not say he believed, and yet dispute the authenticity of half the Bible. So will it ever be with all attempts to preserve orthodoxy by a formula. We must rely for the purity of our religion on the good sincerity of the clergy and people, and not upon a code. After the example of Mr. Maurice and Professor Kingsley, who will say that a coach and six may not be driven through the most stringent system of dogmatic theology ever devised!
> (AH, Oct. 11, 1862)

Forty-one Bishops in the Church of England tried to eject the Bishop from the Church but failed due to subtle legal differences with the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council. As Hale White says, Colenso 'refused to express his unorthodox opinions precisely in that form which would render him liable to formal ecclesiastical censure'.

The issues surrounding Colenso's heresy charge were, for Hale White, a repeat of the debates surrounding his own expulsion in as far as they questioned the inspiration and authorship of the Bible. Certainly, Hale White is still reluctant to regard himself as a wholly secular thinker, and in this article he offers the church some heartfelt advice; 'We must rely for the purity of our religion on the good sincerity of the clergy and people, and not upon a code.' Significantly he writes; '*we* must rely' and '*our* religion'. The remark suggests there was a great deal of common ground between Anglicans and Dissenters when both were confronted by the claims of science. The *human* content of religion still matters for Hale White not the historical or scientific accuracy, the rigid 'formula'.

The controversy surrounding Colenso's book now showed that religion was becoming the domain of scholarly semantics and no longer a matter of individual conscience, of saving souls. Very soon, Hale White grew tired of the debates surrounding the heretical Bishop which he felt distracted the church from thinking on more important matters:

> Of course I have read the book too, and that is all I mean to say here. As I put the volume down I could not help feeling profoundly grateful that, to attack or defend orthodoxy, or to take any part in religious disputes, was no part of my business. If a man wishes to preserve his peace of mind - supposing him to be capable of any peace worth preserving - he had better be an omnibus conductor than a clergyman nowadays. If he has the misfortune to be in the Church nowadays, he may wake up some morning and discover that some wretched Hebrew vowel or Greek article has separated him forever from his friends, has lost him his living, and according to the best authorities, has ruined his soul. (AH, Nov. 8, 1862)

Again, his tone is ambiguous. It is misleading, and probably wishful thinking, to say that the Colenso case was 'no part of my business', especially when it so closely reflects his own troubles as an expelled heretic. This is Hale White the modernist speaking again, sweeping by in the train, looking at the 'Colenso-Pentateuchical hubbub' out of the window. But as ever, it is the little asides, his half-thoughts, which hint at his continuing doubts and inner conflicts, his psycological ties to Congregationalism. Hale White talks about a man's need to preserve 'peace of mind' and then adds, dryly; 'supposing him to be capable of *any* peace worth preserving'. Whatever new belief or occupation one finds - be it as an omnibus conductor or a radical journalist - the spiritual damage has already been done. The intellectual comforts of the modern age are all just temporary illusions.

Hale White would still preserve his religious habits of mind, his moral principles, despite all the narrow quarrels of orthodoxy and heresy still raging in the world. And he shares these deep, religious feelings with another central mid-Victorian writer. In 1863 Matthew Arnold also published an essay about Colenso. 'The Bishop and the Philosopher' expressed an irritation with a critical debate which had no grand moral aims but, instead, submerged itself in trivialities:

> What informing influence can the Bishop of Natal's arithmetical demonstrations exercise? . . . They are a series of problems, the solution of each of which is meant to be the *reductio absurdium* of that Book of the Pentateuch which supplied its terms . . . For example: if we take the Book of Genesis, and the account of the family of Judah there related - '*Allowing 20 as the marriageable age, how many years are required for the production of three generations?*'. The answer to that sum disposes (on the Bishop's plan) of the Book of Genesis . . . Again, as to the account in Leviticus of the provision made for the priests: '*If three priests have to eat 264 pigeons a day, how many must each priest eat?*'. That disposes of Leviticus.[5]

Although he knew that Colenso's Biblical criticism had a rational, Spinozan root, Arnold insisted that Spinoza's thought went far deeper than this. In November 1862, Arnold wrote to his mother about his proposed essay :

> I am going to write an article called 'The Bishop and the Philosopher,' contrasting Colenso and Co.'s jejune and technical manner of dealing with Biblical controversy with that of Spinoza in his famous treatise on the *Interpretation of Scripture*, with a view of showing how, the heresy on both sides being equal,

> Spinoza broaches his in that edifying and pious spirit by which alone the treatment of such matters can be made fruitful, while Colenso and the English Essayists, from their narrowness and want of power, more than from any other cause, do not.[6]

'Narrowness' is Hale White's word too. At one point in his new book, Colenso launched into a discussion questioning a sentence in Leviticus which claimed that hares chew the cud:

> By the bye the great Colenso controversy has narrowed itself considerably of late . . . The book of Leviticus, according to Colenso, affirms that a hare does ruminate, and Professor Owen says it does not. Dr. Lee, Bishop of Manchester, on the other hand, believes that all hope is gone if Leviticus is not correct, so what is to be done I do not know. My opinion is that if a hare does ruminate, and if it ruminates on this Colenso controversy, its ruminations will not be very favourable to the commonly received opinion as to the natural supremacy of the human race over that of the four-footed beasts generally. With that safe opinion (how dreadfully cautious now one is obliged to be), I leave the matter. (AH, April 4, 1863)

For Hale White, the absurdity of these debates only showed the intellectual vacuum which Biblical rationalism had created. And, in seeking to refute the rationalists on their own terms, the established church was demonstrating an even greater spiritual vacuum, concentrating on the superficial proofs of belief rather than upon inner conviction. The authority of the Church, for Hale White, depended not upon the authenticity of Leviticus but 'good sincerity'.

In 1863, the year after Colenso's book, appeared Ernest Renan's La Vie de Jésus. This book attempted to consolidate all the known facts about Jesus found in the New Testament and arrange them into a modern biography, with the emphasis on Jesus' humanity. Although this was yet another work of rational Biblical scholarship, Arnold found Renan's work far more useful than Colenso's, and quite different in its overall aims:

> Renan's attempt is, for criticism, of the most real interest, since with all its difficulty, a fresh synthesis of the New Testament *data*, - not making war on them, in Voltaire's fashion, not a leaving them out of mind, in the world's fashion, but the putting a new construction on them, the taking them from under the old traditional, conventional point of view and placing them under a new one, - is the very essence of the religious problem, as now presented; and only by efforts in this direction can it receive a solution.[7]

Hale White also liked Renan's book and wrote at length about it. It is the fact that Renan was retelling the Gospels, and not converting them into cold logic, 'not making war on them', which mattered to both writers. This piece on Renan constitutes Hale White's very first book review and has not been reprinted since. It tells us much about how he saw the role of the biblical scholar during the 1860s and is worth quoting at length:

> Judging from the difficulty of procuring Renan's *Life of Jesus* from the Library, the book seem to have almost to have as great a run in England as in France. However, at last, by dint of great perseverance, I did get it, and have nearly finished it. Upon the theological portion of the work, that which deals with the supposed legends and accretions of time in the received accounts of the life of our Saviour I must be silent, and leave each of your readers who cares to study the matter to think and speak for himself. In the present excited state of the public mind upon all questions concerning the authenticity of any portion of the Bible it is not advisable to offer an opinion without duly weighing a good many things beforehand. There is, however, one piece of criticism upon M. Renan to which I am sure the most orthodox will not object. No one can deny that he has managed to write in a most singularly attractive style, and that he has contrived to make his biography as novel and as interesting as if it were for the first time now being told, instead of having been for centuries, the faith of Christendom. M. Renan has effected this, firstly, by his vivid and most exquisite descriptions of the scenery of the country in which the Life he records was lived. He has been there, and has lived there, and has become penetrated with all the influence of the Galilean sky and lake. Secondly, he has told the story of the Life as a continuous whole. In this country the New Testament is too often used as a mere repertory of texts, and thousands of good Christians go on believing in Christ, as they call it, to the end of their days, without ever having taken

> so much interest in Him as to be able to give a *connected* account of what he really did and said. The *Life* is altogether ignored, and the *office* is that which is exalted and of which the most is made. The consequence is, that when all that can be extracted from the New Testament and other sources is properly collated and placed in chronological order, people are amazed to find how interesting it is, and what a number of problems are solved, even by the mere sequence of events . . . [Renan's] works have circulated well in France, for his *Études d'Histoire Religeuse* is now in its sixth edition, and his *Histoire Générale des Langues Sémitiques* is in its third, while I should be afraid to say how many thousands of the *Vie de Jésus* have already been circulated. About thirty answers have already been published, but they are made up, for the most part, of nothing but coarse personal invective. (AH, Aug. 29, 1863)

Renan, again, brings the reader of the Bible back to the human, reminding readers of the actual life which inspired the original writers of the Gospels. This was something Hale White would frequently do himself; he would prefer to imagine Jesus not as an 'office', a role or a 'mere repertory of texts' - but as an actual *man*. In The Autobiography there is a short debate between Mardon and Rutherford over the existence and biographical reality of Christ. Mardon dissolves the existence of Jesus by his textual arguments:

> We do not know that Christ ever lived, or that if He lived His life was anything like what is attributed to Him. A mere juxtaposition of the Gospels shows how the accounts of His words and deed differ according to the tradition followed by each of His biographers. (AD, p. 49)

Rutherford, stumbling slightly, replies that; 'it did not matter whether Christ actually existed or not'. It was the *idea* of Christ which mattered - 'whether it was ever incarnated or not in a being bearing His name.' (AD, p. 49) Rutherford's substitution of the man for an 'it' is quite a different view from the Hale White of 1863.

The review of Renan's book is written by both Mardon *and* Rutherford, by the rational sceptic and the doubt-ridden Christian. There is still the need to know that Jesus actually lived; Hale White is frustrated with those who are unable to give 'a connected account of what He *really* did and said'. And yet the doubts about the many miraculous happenings in the Bible remain unspoken; 'Upon that which deals with the supposed legends . . . of the life of our Saviour I must be silent'. The unspoken thought that is emerging from this review, and from the debates between Rutherford and Mardon, is that the 'continuous whole' of the Gospels is an *imaginative* whole, not necessarily a factual one. In a perceptive introductory essay on Rutherford, Don Cuppitt is right to point out that Hale White's Jesus 'owes rather more to Ernest Renan than to the Gospels' (AD, p. xxii). Hale White argues that whatever discrepancies exist between the Gospels, Renan has succeeded in making Jesus real again through a faithful retelling; 'he has contrived to make his biography as novel and as interesting as if it were for the first time being told'. What we have here is Hale White's first vindication of the art of fiction as form of moral truth-telling.

Hale White would often say that the thing he enjoyed most about reading the Bible was that it took him to a completely different Eastern landscape populated with with camels and fishermen, not city clerks or London rain, and that this was one vital clue to its appeal.

> I do not find encounter in it a re-hash of modern Western thought, but something quite strange, foreign, Eastern, and yet so true. Compared with anything in our own literature, it is like a palace at Damascus contrasted with a British 'gentleman's residence' . . . The moment I open the Bible, I feel I am in new world. (LTF, p. 86)

The Bible stories were not only cast in a distant in time but in far-away places with beautiful names like Jerusalem, Nazareth and Galilee. The strangeness of the setting to the average English reader threw into vibrant relief the human, eternal truths. This was also one reason why Renan's book worked; 'M. Renan has effected this, firstly, by his vivid and exquisite descriptions of the scenery of the country in which the life he records was lived. He has been there, and has lived there, and has become penetrated with all the influence of the Galilean sky and lake.'

A few years later, in 1866, Hale White reviewed a book of photographs of Jerusalem, the first time he had actually seen the places he had been reading about for his whole life. The collection:

> . . . strikingly confirms the truthfulness of Renan's description of the scenery about Jerusalem, giving the idea of a country, arid, rocky, with no softness or delicacy, and blasted by fierce sunlight blinding the eyes by the intensity and contrast of its glaring brilliancy and deep shadow. It is just the country in which the stony decisiveness of the Jewish national character might have been expected to develop itself with all its peculiar energy.
> (AH, Dec. 29, 1866)

The existence of the *world* of the Bible is the only proof Hale White really enjoys contemplating. As if 'true' fiction, wherever it is made, is always 'penetrated with all the influence' of its surroundings. Hale White himself tried to re-create this same intense, Bible landscape when he wrote the three Old Testament stories which open Miriam's Schooling, stories completely influenced by Renan's biography of Christ. Hale White's novels are all set in completely authentic surroundings - he may change a few place names but all his locations actually exist and usually have close personal associations. The device insured he was never indifferent to the story he was telling and prevented him from drifting off into mere fancy, in the same way that it was necessary for Renan to become totally absorbed in the country he was writing about. Hale White's insistence on the imaginative reality of the Bible always placed him at odds with the scientists like Colenso who were interested less in *seeing* the stories in a fresh, contemporary light than in testing their supposed factual basis.

Many years later, writing in the Norfolk News, Hale White defended the Revised Version of the New Testament for the same reasons, that it constituted a fresh retelling:

> The new edition of the revised translation of the New Testament will be ready in March, and it will show the authorised version on one side and the revision on the other. I suppose we may then expect a renewal of the insensate clamour against the revisers, and the old howls will be howled over again by Dean Burgon, the curates, and the pious, sentimental young ladies and old women, who dispose of the vexed questions of Biblical criticism by writing poetry in the religious newspapers. To those who really want to know what can be said for the version I commend Canon Farrar's article in this month's *Contemporary*. As the canon puts it very properly, the unlicensed critics who attack the new readings are really not critics of the revisers, but of the authors, of the New Testament. (NN, Mar. 11, 1882)

Secular Debates

Passages like this show the extent to which theological issues in the nineteenth-century increasingly became a matter of sparring opinions, rigid polarised arguments. Hale White anticipates 'the insensate clamour *against* the revisers', and 'unlicensed critics who attack . . .', the pious ladies who 'dispose of the vexed questions'. It is as if religion was mirroring the legislative world of politics and law courts, of parties, sects and juries. Holyoake, one of the first Secularists, had already been imprisoned for his lectures on the freedom of thought. When Colenso tried to introduce mathematical deduction into Biblical criticism, the Church wanted him expelled. When Hale White showed an interest in similar ideas - he *was* expelled. Theological controversy was an inherent part of Victorian culture and although its protagonists were often caricatured as eccentric, obsessive figures, their arguments were defended in earnest.[8]

The growing influence of Darwinism was tested by heated public debates on science and religion, lectures given by two opposing speakers, each trying to out-do the other and win the audience's backing. This debating culture was driven by a belief that the truth is revealed through open competition and Hale White's novels reflect his century's preoccupation with theological combat. Mark Rutherford is constantly sparring with Mardon, Zachariah with Pauline, even though the exercise never satisfies, or answers to, their wider emotional longings. Hale White was especially interested in the attitude of the losers, as well as the winners, of such debates. Mark Rutherford uses his intellectual defeat to *confirm*, rather than undermine the truth of his position, as if his profound hunches and Spinozan theories are too big to fit neatly in the confines of a brief intellectual tug of war with Mardon:

> 'Your side of the argument naturally admits of a more precise statement than mine. I cannot encompass God with a well-marked definition, but for all that, I believe in Him. I know all that may be urged against the belief, but I cannot help thinking that . . .' (AD, p. 78)

While this defiant note follows a debate with the atheist Mardon, there were times when Rutherford is struggling, in just the same way, with himself, to-ing and fro-ing within his own mind.

In the Autobiography Rutherford describes an atheistic lecture he attended and the conflicting thoughts he had about it afterwards. The lecturer was criticising Christian belief by invoking a hypothetical God - if he exists why did he not make a more perfect world?:

> I happened to hear once an atheist discoursing on the follies of theism. If he had made the world, he would have made it much better. He would not have racked innocent souls with years of torture, that tyrants might live in splendour. He would not have permitted the earthquake to swallow up thousands of harmless mortals, and so forth. But, putting aside all dependence upon the theory of a coming rectification of such wrongs as these, the atheist's argument was shallow enough. (AD, p. 76)

That little self-editing aside - 'and so forth' - is important here. It is an implicit acknowledgement that Hale White is addressing readers whom he knows are familiar with such predictable arguments, so familiar that the lecture hardly needs to be transcribed at length, as if the speaker's ideas were only 'shallow' echoes of their *own* endless doubts.

To counter such purely rationalist objections, Rutherford offers a Spinozan idea of the necessity of evil as well as good; 'Perfectly uninterrupted, infinite light, without a shadow, is a physical absurdity. The atheist was dreaming of a shadowless light, a contradiction in terms . . . good and evil must exist'. (AD, p. 76) Yet even Rutherford's theory of the necessary imperfections of life, still does not satisfy him as an ethical viewpoint:

> But though all this came to me, and was not only a great comfort to me, but prevented any shallow prating like that to which I listened from this lecturer, it could not be said that it was a gospel from which to derive apostolic authority. There remained morals. (AD, p. 76)

Rutherford is his own self-debater *and* his own audience, the arguments are happening purely inside his head. He criticises the atheist for his 'shallow prating' but then he finds his own ideas, although comforting, were not the kind of conclusions '*from which to derive* apostolic authority'. That phrase, with its hopes fixed on future debates, gives us a glimpse of Rutherford trying to store up firm conclusions. He uses the lecture, in other words, as a trial run, to inwardly prepare himself for Mardon's 'sledgehammer' tactics.

In Deliverance Rutherford and his friend M'Kay also attend crowded lectures and debates at a freethinkers' hall, partly as a substitute for going to church:

> One morning we found the place completely packed. A 'celebrated Christian', as he was described to us, having heard of the hall, had volunteered to engage in debate on the claims of the Old Testament to Divine authority . . . He was introduced by his freethinking antagonist, who claimed for him a respectful hearing. (AD, p. 136)

The evangelical Christian failed to impress Rutherford, whom he found over-demonstrative and sentimental, yet the debate could not be said to have been won by the atheist either, whom Rutherford describes as rather conceited; ' a little man with small eyes; his shaven face was dark with a black beard lurking under the skin, and his nose was turned up' (AD, pp. 137-138):

> He was evidently a trained debater who had practised under railway arches, discussion 'forums', and in the classes promoted by his sect . . . Then followed a clever exposition of the inconsistencies of the Old Testament history, the impossibility of any reference to Jesus therin . . . (AD, p. 138)

And so forth. In this instance, the preacher came off worse than the atheist, yet this was not because his ideas were inherently wrong, but he was merely under-'trained' as a debator. These theological debates, with their entrenched positions and carefully rehearsed arguments, often became just another, tamer, form of duelling. Rutherford writes that he went partly to be 'entertained'

(AD, p. 136.) which is something he later regrets:

> To waste a Sunday morning in ridiculing such stories as that of Jonah was surely as imbecile as to waste it in proving their verbal veracity. (AD, p. 139)

Nevertheless, Hale White, himself, attended several such meetings, often by extremely well respected thinkers and writers of the day. In his columns he outlines not only the conflicting beliefs of the day but the curious spectacle of watching intelligent men taking the platform, publicly defending their intellectual reputations by attacking the opinions of another.

There were, however, sect-like differences and shades of opinion within the free-thinking world itself. Although Holyoake held to a completely rational interpretation of the Bible, he still claimed that he was not an Atheist - but a *Secularist*, a distinction which was crucial for him. Holyoake argued that Atheism was a wholly negative creed, a *non*-belief, obsessed only with disproving the existence of God. While Secularism (which he called the 'sequel' to atheism) was engaged in solving the moral and practical problems of living:

> It was to this new theory of secular life, the sequel and compliment of free criticism, that the name of Secularism was given. Some societies, simply anti-theological, have taken the secular name, which leads many unobservant persons to consider the term Secularism as synonymous with atheism and general church fighting; whereas Secularism is a new name implying a new principle and a new policy.[9]

Holyoake's position, argued in several books and pamphlets, is similar to Hale White's, in that he displays no wish to refute the supernatural facts of the Bible, but only to learn from its human, moral truths:

> To myself it was not of moment whether the Scriptures were authentic or inspired . . . If I find maxims obviously useful and true, judged by human experience, I adopt them . . . To miracles I did not object, nor did I see any sense in endeavouring to

> explain them away.[10]

Yet for others this distinction did not exist. Charles Bradlaugh insisted that Holyoake was a plain atheist, like himself, a claim which started a great deal of public debate and refutation between the two men, especially in the years 1856 and 1870.[11]

Charles Bradlaugh was a renowned atheistic debater of his day and someone who would frequently share the platform with priests who were eager to convert him. It was Bradlaugh who had also started the whole controversy about Parliamentary oaths for atheists. Having been elected as MP for Northampton, Bradlaugh, as a known 'non-believer', was prevented from swearing the Parliamentary oath and so was unable to take up his seat. The precarious position of atheists and agnostics in society interested the heretical Hale White a great deal and at one point he supported Bradlaugh in the Aberdeen Herald:

> Not one in a thousand of those who cry out against Mr. Bradlaugh know what his opinions are. 'Atheist' is the word usually applied to him, but most likely in this as in other cases, what is meant by the charge is not that the poor wretch, who is so charged, does not believe in any God, but that he does not believe in a God of his accuser's creation. (AH, Oct. 17, 1868)

On another occasion Hale White would highlight the need for the law to sensibly reflect the dramatic changes that had taken place in religious thought:

> The other day a person, calling himself a Secularist, presented himself at one of the Police Courts, and tendered his evidence in a criminal case. The poor man said that he believed only in the Universe - a tolerably large creed by the way - and that he objected to be sworn. He was consequently, under Lord Hathersley's Act, allowed to make an affirmation. That Act has had this curious effect. It imposes an oath on the Christian, but not on the unbeliever. The law says to the Christian, 'You are such a doubtful person that before we can trust what you say you

> must swear;' while to the sceptic it says, 'You are such an honest person that we can rely on anything you say, even if you do not swear.' Surely this is absurd, and we had better abolish oaths altogether. (AD, Nov. 26, 1870)

It is that little dig at the 'poor' Secularist which is clever here, whose belief '*only* in the Universe', the Spinozan Hale White finds 'a tolerably large creed by the way'. This Secularist is in danger of affirming only emptiness, when, like Holyoake, he could have been proclaiming some wider human intention, greater than himself but of which he is still a part. Neither the freethinker nor the State, have really bothered to think out the full implications of what they stand for and so truth is reduced to a kind of game, hence the absurdity of their principles.

Ten years later Hale White published three articles in the Secular Review, stating precisely what such a belief 'only' in the Universe ought to entail. After arguing that the popular view of God was pure self-delusion, Hale White calls for a more courageous view of nature which does not place man at the centre of God's concern. It is his clearest Spinozan utterance:

> Nor will the popular creed fall unless its adherents are taught a loftier unselfishness. Our Gods are the product of our necessities. Until we have learnt that self-annihilation which is the goal of all ethics, each man will have a God for himself; but when we come back to look upon ourselves as part of the universal life, and cease to be careful about the 'me' in which it happens at this moment to reveal itself, our God will no longer be a God who would reverse the rules of this great universe to gratify the whinings of foolish children, but will be the vitality and purpose of the whole.[12]

The larger 'rules of this great Universe' present man with the challenge of grasping a greater humility, even *humanity* as 'part of the universal life', a 'loftier unselfishness'. At no point in his novels or his essays does Hale White ever fully identify himself with any single creed or convenient intellectual label, yet the existence of these articles and the great similarity between his own stated religious views and the opinions of Holyoake place him, here at least, in the position of a mid-nineteenth-century, Secularist thinker.

In December 1872 Hale White went to hear Bradlaugh taking part in a debate about Christianity at the New Hall of Science in Old Street. He wrote about this meeting twice, both for the Nonconformist and the Norfolk News, an example of him having to stretch his experiences across two different but concurrent columns:

> Two meetings have already been held at the New Hall of Science in Old-Street, and a third is announced, the date of which is not yet fixed. Those persons who care to know what the secularists really intend should make a point of being present. Your correspondent went to the last meeting, and although his opinion of Father Ignatius was modified for the better, he was much struck with the total impotency of the reverend Father's philosophy against Mr. Bradlaugh and his friends. Imagine a man in such a place gravely declaring his belief that the burning bush was the Virgin Mary, and asserting that this was a Christian article of faith! It was a great pity that the secularists should have such a caricature set before them as the religion of the New Testament, because it merely confirmed their prejudices. The Father's style is altogether unsuited to controversy. He is rhetorical and rhapsodical beyond anybody I ever saw, and occasionally he almost overleaps himself, and provokes mirth when he meant to be specially serious. Ptolemy Philadelphus was one of his witnesses, and instead of appealing to him soberly, he clasped his hands, looked up to the ceiling and cried, 'O Ptolemy!' in rapt tones, as if he were invoking a ghost. The effect upon me at least was the reverse of what was intended.
> (Non, Dec. 24, 1872)

This does appear to be the debate described in Deliverance. There is that same recognition that the priest was 'unsuited to controversy', as if he might have been invited as an easy target for the secularists, a 'caricature' of irrationality. But it is significant that Hale White encourages serious attendance at the meeting; 'those persons who care to know what the secularists really intend should make a point of being present'. Like Mark Rutherford, he listens to Bradlaugh in order to 'know' his intentions and so try to defeat his atheistic ideas afterwards. Hale White has nothing to say about Bradlaugh's speech here - as in the novel, his criticism's are entirely directed towards the priest who, on this occasion, has badly let the side down. In The Deliverance the event is reported almost as a farcical comedy, while here, ten years before, it really matters much more to Hale White. Here he is in the Norfolk News, in a column written on the same event, only three days earlier:

> The Father spoke with immense dramatic and rhetorical passion, but was altogether over weighted. He had to prove too much, and his weapons were not heavy enough to fight a practised debater like Mr. Bradlaugh . . . I could not help feeling sorry that Christianity was represented in such a place by such a type of it, because its enemies were necessarily confirmed thereby in all their prejudices. (NN, Dec. 21, 1872)

It is not altogether different principles which Christianity needs but better, heavier 'weapons' to 'fight' with.

The following January, only a few weeks later, Hale White attended another of Bradlaugh's public debates at the New Hall of Science. This time the subject was spiritualism, a phenomenon already discussed by Holyoake in his pamphlet Public Performances of the Dead. The spiritualist claims directly related to those Christian hopes of eternal life, of the continuing existence of the dead, the one aspect of traditional religious belief which Hale White found the hardest to relinquish. Bradlaugh was attempting to refute a spiritualist advocate, Mr. Burns, who claimed to be able to prove that, among other miracles, he regularly contacted the dead during organised séances. Hale White relates Burn's account of a séance:

> A circle was formed by holding hands, the doors were locked, the room searched, and the lights put out. The musical instruments on the table were immediately lifted up, carried about the room and played four or five times at once. Then the medium was heard speaking and breathing. Then a person came and spoke to Mr. Burns, putting his hands upon Mr. Burns's face, touching his hands, slapping him, laying instruments upon his head and upon various parts of his body. Another person came, a little girl who called herself 'Rosie', and went round and kissed everybody. She took hold of Mr. Burns's ear with her hand, put her mouth upon his cheek and kissed it with an audible intonation.
> (Non, Jan. 8, 1873)

Hale White's comments are interesting and, on this occasion, quite different. He devotes two lengthy articles to a discussion of these Spiritualist claims and it was Burns himself who interested Hale White as much as the actual ideas he was putting forward. It was obvious that Burns's lecture was seriously intended and so, in a revealing digression, Hale White tries to explain something of the psychology behind his act. One passage is especially significant in what Hale White says about the broader delusions and 'performances' integral to so many human natures:

> The real difficulty which most people have in dealing with Spiritualism is that they are loth to accuse so many persons of pure imposture. But there is really no reason for doing. Students of human nature know well enough that cases are not uncommon in which self-delusion, semi-conscious delusion of others, the commonest cheating, piety, blasphemy, and half a dozen other apparent contradictions, are all mixed up in one man and in everything he does. We suppose that each deed of a man is either good or bad, honest or dishonest, and the result of some one simple and definite tendency or faculty in him, the truth being rather that each deed is more frequently the result of the whole man, and that even when we should be most direct - in the manifestation of affection for example to our dearest friends - there is generally a little acting, a little dramatising more or less.
> (Non, Jan. 8, 1873)

It is that afterthought - 'even when we should be most direct' - in which we catch Hale White trying to be honest about himself and the construction of his own public persona. Burns only seemed to represent an extreme example of 'a little acting, a little dramatising' the potential of which he finds '*even*' in himself. It is not *what* Burns believes, or pretends to believe which interests Hale White, but *why* he needs to believe it.

As this debate continued Hale White took a firm rationalist stance, Bradlaugh's side in fact. In the following week's Nonconformist, he went even further, arguing that Bradlaugh had not been rigorous enough in his refuting the Spiritualists. He then uses a whole column to explain some of the basic laws of scientific deduction, thus playing an important part in the debate himself:

> The public debate on Spiritualism between Mr. Bradlaugh and Mr. Burns still continues, and I am not ashamed to say that I find it interesting, because the arguments which Mr. Burns uses are typical in their way of those which have been used on behalf of larger delusions, and show the ignorance which prevails as to the true character of the laws of nature and of evidence.
> (Non, Jan. 15, 1873)

Hale White is very thorough in the way he makes his argument. As Burns claimed that Spiritualism was a new science, so Hale White returns to basics, clarifying the steady fundamentals of scientific discipline. It is significant that this was published in the Nonconformist, for it shows the extent to which political Dissenters not only concerned themselves with questioning the role of the established church but in asserting all aspects of rational thought and refuting, what Hale White calls, 'larger delusions':

> Mr. Bradlaugh has not pointed out, nor indeed has anybody pointed out, so far as I know, the essential difference of attitude between the scientific facts discovered by men like [Galileo and Copernicus] and many of the so called facts of spiritualism . . .

> Mr. Burns professes to have heard miraculous communications by clairvoyants of what is happening in distant parts of the world . . . What we have to say in their favour is that there is no substantial evidence. The experience of the human race is that man cannot see beyond a certain distance, and that he possesses no powers by which he can unassisted know what is happening five hundred miles away. If anybody says man has these powers, the evidence must be overwhelming, capable of being tested in every conceivable mode in broad daylight under the most rigorous conditions, and excluding all possibility of mere coincidences - for it must always be borne in mind that if an indefinite number of persons were at this moment to set to work describing what is going on, say, in a certain farmhouse in Iowa, there would probably be some verisimilitude in the descriptions given by some of them. But the Spiritualists have no evidence of this kind. All that we hear about clairvoyance comes to us in an underhand way, as a rumour, or as a twice-told, doubtful tale . . . [Mr. Burns] calmly asks us to put our trust in the spirits, because Mr. Wilson, ironmonger, at Aylesbury can show us a copy of Turner's picture of Childe Harold's Pilgrimage done by a little boy in a 'sleepy state' . . . I hope to inspect the facsimile the next time I go to Aylesbury. One thing I pledge myself - that if anybody, spirit or human being, has produced an exact facsimile of the Childe Harold I will accept Spiritualism . . . The new religion, unless it comes with better credentials than those which it has brought hitherto, need disturb nobody.
> (Non, Jan. 15, 1873)

What is marked here is the absence of the cutting, satirical jab at Burns; this is a completely serious article and it runs to a far greater length than is quoted here. Perhaps it was because Spiritualism so captured the popular imagination at this time that Hale White felt the need for such an earnest entreaty; 'If *anybody* says . . .', 'It *must* always be born in mind . . .', 'One thing *I pledge* myself . . .' He goes on to consider the questionable phenomena of people passing through walls and of the dead speaking to the living in séances, and he might very well have considered going to Aylesbury to inspect the child's mysterious portrait. Yet beneath his attentiveness to the debate - 'and I am not ashamed to say that I find it interesting' - is the suggestion that Hale White would really like there to be much *more* to nature than he presently comprehends, but only as long as such hopes are not proved to be mere temporary illusions; 'If anybody says man has these powers, the evidence *must* be overwhelming'.

There is still a frustrated sense of the limitedness of physical existence fuelling an aspiration to drive beyond those limits; 'The experience of the human race', writes Hale White, who was constantly frustrated by the plain, bare facts of mortal life, 'is that man cannot see beyond a certain distance'. It is curious that many of the more imaginative Spiritualist claims anticipate the future discoveries of science. Today, it would be as easy to observe what is happening in a farmhouse in Iowa with, for example, satellite TV, as it would be to hear a recording of a deceased loved one's voice. Yet this is exactly what *would* have interested Hale White, scientific development not 'rumour':

> Nobody who knows anything of scientific progress would dare to set limits to the marvellousness of what science may have to tell us in the future, but we should justly refuse to listen for a moment to anybody who said he had found out perpetual motion, or that there was a certain class of material objects in the world which was not subject to the laws of gravity.
> (Non, Jan. 15, 1873)

In 1864 Hale White wrote a long letter, arguing these same principles, to the Exeter and Plymouth Gazette. 'The Priesthood versus the Human Mind and Science' was a response to a criticism of a lecture given by his cousin Thomas William Chignell. Although not published since, Hale White kept this old article of his and pasted it into his scrap book. It is an urgent call to the devout not to mould science to fit the traditional myths of religion - but to extend one's beliefs to embrace the increasing discoveries of science:

> When a new fact, or a supposed new fact, is presented to us are we to reject it because it is not what our theological predilections would have it be? or are we to examine, and if necessary believe it, trusting that in the end no 'discrepancy' whatever will be found between any of the works of the Almighty? The world, sir, notwithstanding the denunciations of Mr.____ and his friends, is every way pronouncing pretty strongly as to which side it will take, and marches on in its own grand way, discovering new truth after truth, and leaving the so-called defenders of the faith to follow in the rear and find out, as they have done in the disputes on the seven days of the Mosaic creation, about the sun and moon standing still, about the arithmetic of the Pentateuch, and in earlier times about the discoveries of Galileo and Columbus, that if they can't get the new light to accommodate itself to their eyes, they must even accommodate their eyes to the new light.[13]

Anglicans and Ritualists.

Throughout his time as a journalist Hale White also kept a close eye on the Disestablishment movement, a cause with which he had several close connections. It was Edward Miall, the movement's leading voice, who had first published Hale White's letter in protest at his expulsion in 1852, and for two years during the 1870s Hale White himself wrote a weekly column for this same militant periodical, The Nonconformist. Founded by Miall in 1841, this paper consistently argued for the severance of the Anglican Church from the State. In 1844 it had also spawned a pressure group, the Liberation Society, and tried to win the support of MPs in the House. In 1852 Miall himself became a Liberal MP, persistently agitating on this single issue and Hale White often described his way of speaking in the House, blatantly praising the editor in his very own paper:

> In Mr. Miall there was not a sentence or even an attitude which was not genuine. There was not a word which did not bear its own proper weight, and which was not, in the strictest sense of the term, expressive. I do not recollect any speech, excepting

> those which he has delivered on the same subject before, which have affected me in the same way save the speeches of the late Mr. Cobden. It was to this perfect sincerity that Cobden owed his ultimate success, and from the same sincerity I believe we may prophesy a similar success, if not for Mr. Miall personally, at least for the cause of Distestablishmentism . . . I ought to add something about the subsequent course of the debate, but writing at nine o'clock in the morning after sitting up half the night is not easy work, especially in such weather as this; and I trust therefore that I may be excused. Non, July 4, 1872.

All of the debates throughout the nineteenth-century about the role of the Anglican Church closely relate back to this movement. Even the attention given to Bishop Colenso's book was part of an attempt to prove that the Church of England was not as holy, nor as uniform, as it supposed and so had no special claim to represent the spiritual life of the entire nation.[14]

During the 1860s the whole Disestablishment movement was agitating for a free Irish Church. Hale White, however, was never that enthusiastic about these debates which struck him as polarised, repetitive and dull. One quotation is enough to demonstrate the extent of his frustration:

> How long ago was it since the Irish Church was debated in the House of Commons, and how long ago is it since a single new argument was advanced upon either side? This is one of the penalties, thought I, as I listened wearisomely to the sound of the thrashing of this thousand times thrashed straw, this is one of the penalties of representative Government. They are not many, to be sure, but this is one. Here are two parties at utter dead-lock. Each knows all that the other has got to say, and yet this dreadful iteration comes again and again year after year. Would that some mighty power, logic having now got to the end of its tether, would persuade those honourable gentlemen opposite a trifle further, simply by taking their Church away from them . . . Oh it is dull and weary work. Those passionate words, those unexampled flights, those waving arms, those Ciceronic appeals to hearths and homes, that expenditure of wind on such a scale and all for the Irish Church forsooth, the most antique humbug existing. (AH, April 14, 1866)

Once Irish Disestablishment was achieved in 1869, Miall continued pressing for the same legislation to create an independent Church of England, which, of course, never happened. Yet, increasingly, it was not only radical Dissenters who were demanding change. Prominent clergymen from *within* the Anglican Church seemed to be supporting Disestablishment from a completely different perspective. Many were calling for a return to Catholicism with a renewed emphasis on ritual and ceremony. For a time, even Fr. Mackonochie, the Anglo-Catholic vicar of St. Alban's, was a member of the Liberation Society causing many political Dissenters to re-think their strategy - wondering how they came to be sharing a platform with supporters of the Pope.[15]

Hale White was more interested in the growth of Ritualism than any other religious issue. Unlike the plight of the Irish Church, Ritualism was much closer to home, and he was able to report on it more directly, or rather, *deride* it more directly, week after week. This ceremonial tendency infuriated him; it represented the exact opposite of his own religious principles. Yet, however much he disliked Ritualism and the whole of the Oxford Movement of which it formed a later part, its presence enabled him to define, more clearly what he himself expected from a church. It was Hale White's thoughts about the Ritualists which connect with his own memories of the repetitive routines of chapel life. The Church of England was asking itself the same questions that he had asked of Dissent; how to make the Church a revitalised, real force in the world.

Ritualists were falsely preoccupied, in Hale White's opinion, with the outward show of religion, with vestments, incense, crosses, candlesticks - all of the props needed to evoke the correct atmosphere of sacred religious ceremony. Its origins can be traced to the actions of Dr. John Rouse Bloxam, the successor of Newman in the chapel of Littlemore. With the kind of devout stubbornness which characterises all the early Ritualists, Bloxam set about adorning his alter with various sacred ornaments in a way that seems calculated to have provoked Protestant outcry. Another minister, Charles Seager, was then spotted in St. Thomas's, Oxford wearing a black stole with an embroidered cross. 'Mr. Seager's stole' as Ollard puts it in his history of the movement 'aroused excitement.'[16]

As the Ritualists gained more influence, few were as scornful of their practices as the correspondent for the Aberdeen Herald:

> An antidote has been at last discovered for the moral diseases of Sheffield. The incumbent and curate of the parish, in which resided Linley, the poor wretch who was shot, have come to the conclusion that what the Sawgrinders want is Ritualism: 'Where Rubrics have been ignored and slavishness of Ritual has reigned supreme, where Eucharists have been rare and at novel and uncanonical hours, is it surprising', ask these gentlemen in a letter to a High Church newspaper, 'that there is much ungodliness in the place?' They then go on to enumerate their wants. 'We greatly want', say they, 'funds for schools, for the relief of the destitute, and to meet many purposes. We want communion vessels (we have at present only pewter!)' This note of admiration after the word 'pewter' was what staggered them, and they had no doubt it would stagger others too . . . This then, is what we have come to. After thousands of years of philosophising, after thousands of years of prophesying, after 1800 years of Christianity - in short, after all that the finest intellects, the noblest heroisms could do by word or deed to teach us something about the mystery of iniquity, and its appropriate remedies, the depository of all the learning on this subject, the Church itself, the very men who are supposed to make the human soul its special study have discovered that the very means of cleansing it from its foulest stains are vestments and communion plates of genuine bullion hall marked. How long, O Lord, how long. (AH, Sept. 28. 1867)

This essentially, is all that Hale White has to say about Ritualism. What is astonishing, however, is that he re-fires his rhetoric, quite obsessively, nearly every week. He was amazed how Ritualism could be taken at all seriously and was quite unable to overlook their practices, especially when brought to more earthy, industrial districts, such as Sheffield. The article from 1867 especially sums up his mounting impatience as he waits (and it is as if he had been waiting for 1800 years) for Christianity to enlighten his century.

The periodical which Hale White quotes from here was the Ritualist paper The Rock. Hale White read it incessantly in order to recreate within himself exactly this kind of rhetorical outburst. He refused to give the Ritualists even an inch:

> The old staff of *The Rock* newspaper, dissatisfied with the present Rock are going to start a new ultra-evangelical journal called *The Anchor.* 'Anchor' is, in some respects, a better title than 'Rock'. A rock may be a very dangerous impediment to navigation, and ships may come to grief upon it. On the other hand, there is something to be said against 'Anchor', for a vessel perpetually at anchor will make no progress. (NN, April 3, 1880)

Hale White's humour in these religious articles is a sure sign of his confidence and his portrayal of the absurdities of ritualism always makes for lively reading; here at least he knows what is so terribly mistaken. In 1875 The Rock claimed to have discovered the origins of church vestments in the clothes and ornaments used in the Old Testament. Hale White ponders on how this might relate to the 'vestments' of Adam and Eve and finds a hint of the 'emperor's new clothes' in these claims:

> The reasoning must, I think, be admitted even by true friends of the cause to have its defects. In the first place, the 'vestments' of our first parent, if we are to trust the Bible clearly, had not ritualist intent. Would the ritualists like to return to those 'vestments' and use them alone? If they do this our quarrel with them ceases instantly. In the next place, if the 'vestments'

> adopted by Adam after the fall were good, those which he used before the fall must have been better. Will Dr. Irons, or Mr. Mackonochie, or Mr. Body use these? In that case too, whatever the Police may think fit to do, we will guarantee not to object. (AH, Feb. 27. 1875)

The Rock also carried advertisements, for what Hale White called, 'ecclesiastical upholsterers' and every so often he enjoyed noting the range of goods and prices on offer:

> The great ecclesiastical upholsterers, milliners, costumiers, wine merchants, bakers &c &c, to wit, Messrs. Pratt and Sons of Tavistock-Street, Covent-garden, now supply 'Pure Altar Breads in lead-lined boxes, warranted to keep in any climate.' A box containing one hundred for communicants is to be had for ninepence, but the breads for priests are exactly four times this price. Whence the difference, if both are veritably transubstantiated after the belief of the sect which makes and bakes them? I confess to a metaphysical difficulty which I am unable to solve. One thing is clear, that the Body consumed by the priest is not that which is to be consumed by the vulgar laity. (NN, March 7, 1874)

The intellectual challenge which the Ritualists posed for Hale White was not immense. The issue for him was not a complicated one and yet his relentless criticism shows just how much Hale White needed a clear enemy at this time, something to write *against*. It was easy to deride the Ritualists; much harder to fill the spiritual vacuum in which they laboured. Nevertheless he continued to follow their every move as if their influence might one day become the predominant one. In this respect he is being utterly faithful to his own Puritanical roots. While Hale White wanted a religion of pure essentials and strong sermons; the Oxford Movement, in his eyes, sought to embellish and mystify.

Significantly he found himself at the very heart of the Ritualistic movement when, in 1876, he visited the Church of St. Alban the Martyr, Holborn. Hale White stood in the High Church service looking around him with the eyes of one of Cromwell's troops. 'Round that beautiful church and its devoted vicar the battle of the ceremonial raged for the next twenty years', wrote Ollard in his Short History of the Oxford Movement. St. Alban's first vicar was Mr. Mackonochie who immediately marked it out as his own ceremonial territory. Ollard continues:

> At St. Alban's, from its consecration, the ceremonial at the Holy Communion included the eastward position, the mixed chalice, the unleavened bread, alter lights, and linen vestments . . . In 1865 silk vestments (presented by the congregation) replaced the linen, in 1866 the use of incense was begun. These usages were later known as the six points. The new church was marked down for Puritan attack, but the weapon chosen was not that of mob violence nor of episcopal censure . . . The moment seemed propitious for a suit in the law courts.[17]

High Church practices in other churches had provoked public outcry and in some cases, riots. The politics behind the ritualist movement became plain when, in 1874, Disraeli and the Archbishop of Canterbury managed to pass a new law - The Public Worship Regulation Act, the object of which was, in Disraeli's words, 'to put down ritualism' which he described as 'mass in masquerade'.[18] In religious disputes Hale White's usual political allegiances were becoming increasingly blurred, his favoured political leader, Gladstone, was a ritualist, and so it was now left to the despised Disraeli to preserve the Protestant identity of the Church of England.

Between 1877 and 1882 four clergymen were imprisoned for ritualism under the Public Worship Regulation Act, thus creating the atmosphere of a religious witchhunt, with its new, victimised, Catholic martyrs. But even Hale White, who had greatly pitied the forger Roupell, had no such sympathies for men who had been caught merely displaying too many candles or vestments in their church. One of the imprisoned was Sydney Faithhorn Green, rector of St. John's, Miles Platting and convicted of ritualism in 1882. Hale White insisted he was no martyr:

> Why does not the Church Congress proceed to debate, for example, a motion or two like the following: -
> That Mr. Green deserves all that he has got and his prison door is locked on the inside . . . If Mr. Green having *abjured* his Church, were to be sent to prison even for such a ritualistic performance as standing on his head on the altar we should all object . . . But being a priest of the Established Church we see that if he refuses to obey her laws he is no martyr.
> (NN, Aug. 5, 1882)

It is important to remember that this is written after the publication of the Autobiography. If the Dissenting Colleges had the power to forcibly imprison their own heretics this would have been quite a different novel altogether, probably with an urgent chapter on prison reform.

When Hale White visited St. Alban's in 1876 he found himself in the place regarded by many as the focus of the Ritualist movement and he described the service at length:

> Last Sunday being Easter day, I consented, not without some misgivings, to accompany a curious friend to the far-famed St. Alban's, Holborn. This church is squeezed into an out-of-the-way corner of Brook-street, Holborn, and close to the unsavoury Leather-lane. It was built by Mr. Hubbard with the notion that something might be done to reclaim Leather-lane, if a thoroughly High [*sic*] Church service were brought into its midst. But, as yet, Leather-lane is unreformed and unreclaimed. The Sunday market is as busy and noisy as it was when I was a child, before St. Alban's was in existence, and profane damsels were playing at skipping-rope in the very shadow of the church when we left it after the morning service. The congregation, too, although it was very large, did not contain even a sprinkling of the Leather-lane classes, but was made up of very well to do ladies and gentlemen. This was the first impression on entering. I had heard a good deal about the susceptibility of the lower

> Orders to the influence of St. Alban's, and about the missionary work which was being done amongst them; but certainly nothing of the kind was perceptible to me. (NN, April 22, 1876)

Hale White describes leaving the church before he tells us what he saw inside, as if his description will only work when contrasted with everyday reality. His un-Puritanical approval of the children playing outside the church connects with that brief memory of seeing the market, busy and noisy 'when I was child'. The freedom of the children's play seems more elemental, more natural, than the presence of St. Alban's, the 'profane damsels' are playing 'in the very shadow of the church', as if the building were a threat to their own natural light. Hale White, who never took his own children to church, had a particular dislike for any religion which sought to indoctrinate the young. Two years before he had some harsh words to say about a publishing exercise which sought to 'possess the minds of children with High Church doctrines by means of the use of picture books in which all that is most pronounced in the extreme church creed is pictorially represented' (NN, March 7, 1874).

Also important are the strong links which Hale White felt existed between the High Church movement and the upper classes, the 'well to do Ladies and Gentlemen' packing the pews. He felt Ritualism only existed because of the church's alienation from the people, the building and its contents became the focus of the religion, providing a colourful escape from the actual conditions of life outside:

> It was the altar, however, which was the centre of the attractions of the place. That it was an altar could only be made out by reason of its position, for it was surrounded by silk hangings, flowers, lights, and every imaginable kind of upholstery and adornment. A great number of candles were placed around it, two of which were lighted although the sun was shining brightly.

(NN, April 22, 1876)

Hale White is most puritanical in his stern disapproval of details. In the bright sunlight of St. Alban's the candles become merely symbolic, and it is symbol and myth of which his pragmatism disapproves.

He also describes the sermon (which may have been given by Mackonochie) on the text 'Come, see the place where the Lord lay':

> The text he said, did not say, Come see the place where the body of the Lord lay. It said, 'Come, see the place where the Lord 'lay'. But our Lord was dead when he was placed in his tomb. The scripture therefore meant to tell us that the Lord *is* his body, and consequently, where the body is - as for example on the altar, and here the preacher pointed to the altar, He *is*. I am sure my readers will think I am joking, but I solemnly affirm to them that these ears of mine heard a man seriously utter this rubbish to over a thousand well-dressed English men and English women who apparently swallowed it without wincing. To such a pass as this the Church of England has come. Is it wonderful that Leather-lane is unsubdued, and that the New Hall of Science prospers in the City-road? (NN, April 22, 1876)

The sermon was used only to indicate the importance of the sacraments but nothing displays Hale White's deep non-conformity more than his total denial of this issue. For him the altar should never have become the 'centre of the attractions'. Generally, he felt this ceremonial focus was producing weak, unthoughtful sermons - 'rubbish', as he calls it here. For Hale White the strength of a good church sermon was indicative of the intellectual confidence of the church itself. He believed English oratory was the source of the best English prose, yet his own age seemed to be taking sermons less and less seriously, concentrating less upon inner conviction and 'rhetorical force' and more upon superficial display:

> There is a growing intensity in the agitation by the Church people against sermons, and it has been proposed - seriously too

> - not merely to diminish their length, but to intermit them, and that the parson should not preach oftener than once or twice a month . . . The reason why the High Church clergy are so hot about the abolition of the sermon, in the first place, is that the sermon unnecessarily puts them on a much lower level with their hearers, or perhaps upon a much lower level. While the priest, with his back to the people and with a gorgeous vestment on his shoulders, is performing amidst a blaze of lights and the smoke incense, he is far removed from us and altogether in the clouds; but when he gets up into the pulpit and has to talk, the charm is gone, and we discern him to be nothing more than a silly young curate whom we heartily wish at home. (NN, Nov, 6, 1875)

Compounded with this dislike of ceremony is the feeling that it was mystifying religion and so was at heart, elitist. The minister had 'his back to the people' and 'is far removed from us'.

In 1875 one of the voluntary associations of the Evangelical movement, the British and Foreign Bible Association, held a meeting in St. Paul's. Hale White was enraged when one writer in the Rock condemned the Association for daring to discuss the Bible, in a place of worship, without the presence of a minister, stating this was a 'scandal' in 'flat contradiction to the doctrine and discipline of our church':

> The reason for this outbreak is, that the Catholics of the Church of England . . . consider that the reading of the Bible in the absence of notes or comments from the priest is worse than not reading it at all, and that without the Church's ever present assistance to explain doubtful passages, the unskilled layman must of necessity lapse into heresy. That the Bible needs explanation, continual explanation, nobody will deny. The days are past when it was supposed that the commonest peasant wanted nothing for the interpretation of the minor prophets but such knowledge of the English language as might have been picked up at the National School and retained after fifty years constant workings in the fields. But it is altogether another thing to say that nobody but a priest is capable of insight into divine mysteries. The essence of Protestantism is not that everyman can comprehend the Bible, whether he be wise or ignorant, but that everyman - if he become wise instead of ignorant - *may* comprehend it, and the essence of the damnable doctrine, to

> protest against which in this country 'many martyrs have' in truth 'shed their blood', is that only a certain body of persons peculiarly dressed, and on the whole, more foolish than other persons, can comprehend the Bible. (NN, May 15, 1875)

Hale White, the Secularist, will still write fervently of 'the essence of Protestantism'. It is almost as though Ritualism is driving him to recover something of his original beliefs. This is the same Hale White who paid homage to Luther's translation which broke 'the caste which made one small body of men the thinkers and depositories of thought'. He is now opposed to the slightest hint that this work was being undone, re-translated back into Latin. In 1874 he reported on the implications of a small clause decided upon in a meeting of the breakaway Old Catholic Movement:

> It is very important that the English people should clearly understand what the precise points of agreement are which have been settled at the Old Catholic Conference. I have obtained a list of most of them, and amongst others is this - 'We agree that the reading of Holy Scripture in the vulgar tongue cannot lawfully be forbidden.' Now it is settled by all people to whom religion is anything else than a device of the priest to darken our eyes, that the reading of the Bible in a foreign tongue was one of the worst devices of the Papacy, and it was an insult to men's minds so flagrant that the marvel is it could ever have been tolerated. Nothing contributed more singularly to elevate the priest above the worshippers and to depress them into mere recipients of whatever grace he might be pleased to distribute to them, than their non-participation in the liturgies of the Church and the reading of the Scripture. Upon this very centre and key stone of the Roman policy, all that the English High Church party has to say is that the Church may or may not speak in the vulgar tongue as she thinks proper. It was true that this article was followed by another which shows some signs of remorse, but it did not mend matters much. It affirmed that 'in general it is more fitting, and in accordance with the spirit of the Church, that the liturgy should be in the tongue understood by the people'. Supposing, as is clearly intended, that these resolutions should form the basis of a common creed, it would be open to any minister of the Church of England to go through his Sunday performance in Latin or Greek. An ill-natured person might perhaps say that it might not much matter . . . Still, as a rule, the

> English nation will hardly think of tolerating any additional ritualistic hocus pocus. (NN, Oct. 3, 1874)

It is the fact that the conference decided that the Bible read in the vulgar tongue 'cannot *lawfully* be forbidden' which is the controversial point here. For Hale White the negative formulation is alarming since it provides a loop-hole for those clergymen now determined to Latinize the service. Hale White's politics and his religion, his democratic instincts, are at one here. To encourage 'non-participation in the liturgies' was going somewhere along the same road as the opponents to political Reform.

His attack on 'ritualistic hocus pocus' is part of an attempt to conserve some of the basic principles of his Protestant Dissent. While Hale White was criticising the High Church Movement he would also, simultaneously, recall the example of some of the neglected churchmen from his own Dissenting past. The year in which the above article was written, 1874, was a very significant one for Hale White, for it was the February of this same year which saw the death of one of his great religious mentors.

Thomas Binney.

Rev. Thomas Binney was the original of Thomas Bradshaw in The Revolution in Tanner's Lane and has been described as 'at once both representative and architect of nineteenth-century Dissent'.[19] Born in 1798 he had spent a few months in the pulpit of the Bunyan Meeting in Bedford before eventually moving, in 1829, to the King's Weigh House Church, the Congregationalist Chapel on Fish Street Hill, London, where his influence was profound, especially among the young men of the congregation.[20] Hale White would describe him as one of the few people he had known who had remained faithful to the moral and imaginative vitality of the Bible.

While the previous minister at the Weigh House, John Clayton, had cultivated 'loyalty, order, discipline and orthodoxy', Mr. Binney, a well-read, literary man, is remembered as an inspired, unconventional artist as much as a preacher, often improvising his sermons on the spot, speaking fluently from the heart, to the heart.[21] And Binney was very adamant, and very outspoken, about the relationship of a Dissenting minister to the established Church. While Clayton had made it clear 'I never introduce politics into the Pulpit,' Binney proved to be the archetypal Political Dissenter.[22]

When Mr. Binney was laying the foundation stone for the new Weigh House Church in Fish Street Hill in 1833 he made a speech which also laid the foundations for the whole of the Disestablishment movement:

> I have no hesitation about saying that I am an enemy to the Establishment; and I do not see that a Churchman need hesitate to say that he is an enemy to Dissent . . . It is with me, I confess, a matter of deep, serious religious conviction that the established Church is a great national evil; that it is an obstacle to the progress of truth and godliness in the land; that it destroys more souls than it saves; and that therefore, its end is most devoutly to be wished by every lover of God and man.[23]

It was this speech which sparked a furious pamphlet war, culminating in Edward Miall's resignation from his Congregational ministry in 1839 and the birth of the Nonconformist periodical in 1841, for which Hale White was subsequently to write.[24] 'Although he took no active part in politics', wrote Hale White on Bradshaw, 'he was republican through and through, and never hesitated for a moment in those degenerate days to say what he thought about any scandal. In this respect he differed from his fellow-ministers.' (RTL, p. 95)

Binney was not a straightforwardly orthodox Congregationalist and was tolerant of the New Biblical Criticism to the extent that Holyoake described him as 'the first preacher of Secular Christianity'.[25] In 1856 he had tried to defend Thomas Lynch's unorthodox hymn book, The Rivulet, from accusations of heresy and, as a member of the New College Council, had argued, in vain, against Hale White's expulsion in 1852.[26] From the start Disestablishmentism was as conciliatory towards unorthodox theology as the state Church was dismissive. For Hale White, Binney represented the best of the Dissenting tradition and not only for his Disestablishment views. In The Revolution in Tanner's Lane Hale White depicts Bradshaw as someone who preached from a deep sense of suffering following the death of his wife:

> Mr. Bradshaw had been married when he was about thirty; but his wife died in giving birth to a daughter, who also died; and for twenty years he had been a widower with no thought of changing his condition . . . One thing, however, was known, that for a twelvemonth after the death of his wife he was away from England, and that he came back an altered man to his people of Bedfordshire. His discourses were remarkably strong, and of a kind seldom, or indeed never, heard now. (RTL, p. 95)

Thomas Binney lost his wife, after a long illness, in 1843 after which he visited America for a year before returning, spiritually refreshed, back to London to preach.[27] In this respect he shares much with Hale White, whose own wife was near death herself while The Revolution in Tanner's Lane was being written. Binney, 'who came back an altered man to his people', was an example in overcoming, and even finding spiritual strength through loss. Hale White wrote of Bradshaw's preaching:

> His discourses were remarkably strong, and of a kind seldom, or indeed never, heard now. They taxed the whole mental powers of his audience, and were utterly unlike the simple stuff which

> fashionable with the Evangelistic movement . . . Occasionally . . . when he sets himself the task of getting into the interior of a Bible character, he is intensely dramatic, and what are shadows to the careless reader become living human beings, with the reddest of blood visible under their skin. (RTL, pp. 95-96)

When Thomas Binney died on February 24, 1874 Hale White wrote his own tribute to him in the Norfolk News:

> I waited till all the biographies of Mr. Binney which were to appear in the newspapers had been written, in order to see whether any of them gave a correct account of his early life. As not one of them has done so, I may be permitted to say that he first began preaching as a settled minister at Bedford, and not at Newport. He was the pastor of the church assembling at Howard Chapel where the Rev. W. Alliott afterwards preached. Even then Mr. Binney showed signs of unusual power, and the town was aflame with the excitement which he produced. The old place, which had been nearly empty for years, was crammed; and steady-going church folk, to whom, under ordinary circumstances, Dissent was mere schism, and one of the deadly sins, compounded with their consciences by going to hear this gifted student who spake with another tongue than that to which they had been accustomed, and actually made a sermon interesting . . . The usual result of such living interpretations of the Bible followed. Mr. Binney was covertly pronounced 'suspect.' Some 'ism or 'ology was secretly breathed against him, and indirectly he was forced to leave Bedford. Apart, however, from mere historical accuracy, none of the biographies or reviews have distinguished the central experience of Mr. Binney's preaching. He has been described as a 'moderate' Dissenter, as one of those whose mind was not 'disturbed' by doubt, as the author of *How to Make the Best of Both Worlds* and of the *Service of Song*. But it was not his moderation, nor his freedom from 'disturbance', nor his authorship, that impelled the present writer, with hundreds of other young men, to walk across London every Sunday in all weathers to the Weigh House Chapel five and twenty years ago, and which impelled us to almost passionate enthusiasm. It was simply the power he possessed above all other London preachers to identify the Bible with genuine human experience. Abraham, Paul and the other Biblical heroes, whom he was never weary of depicting, were made to stand in our place, and their experiences became our own. That was the meaning of his almost miraculous influence. (NN, Mar, 14, 1874)

Hale White was constantly lamenting the lack of real preachers, in the same way he was always looking for strong political speakers in the House. Bradshaw 'taxed the whole mental powers of his audience', while Binney 'actually made a sermon interesting' and so had a very broad appeal. Hale White describes him as talking very directly from his whole self and 'with another tongue than that which they had been accustomed'.

Hale White believes he is the sole witness to the essence of Binney's preaching, something which all the other writers have managed to ignore; 'None of the biographies or reviews have distinguished the central experience of Mr. Binney's preaching . . . As not one of them has done so, I may be permitted to say . . .' As Binney's chief obituarist, Hale White has two tasks to perform here, he has to record not only the early history of the preacher but the secret of his art; 'It was simply the power he possessed above all other London preachers to identify the Bible with genuine human experience'. This power is described as 'almost miraculous', a significant phrase for someone who doubted the existence of miracles all his life. For Hale White the art of Binney is in the 'almost', in the ability to convert powerful human feelings into seemingly spontaneous inspirational readings of the Bible. That capacity to make the Biblical heroes 'stand in our place' underlies the transformation of Gideon, Saul and Samuel into short-stories in Miriam's Schooling.

Binney was also known as the preacher who tried to make exemplary characters out of the young men listening to him in his own congregation. One of his published sermons, a fictional life of an unknown and morally weak young man who transformed himself into a successful entrepreneur and honourable philanthropist, closely echoes the thoughts of the unknown Mark

Rutherford. Thomas Fowell Buxton may well have been an unknown individual and yet his everyday struggles were heroic ones:

> Men talk about heroes and the heroic element; - there is abundant room for the display of the latter in many positions of obscure city life, - and many of the former have lived and worked nobly, though unknown . . . The world once saw your 'hero' in nothing but the strong, stalwart, fighting man; - and has not quite got above that yet . . . Fifty-to-one - as Buxton says of Plaistow and the Pope - fifty-to-one on the great unknown - on Brown, Smith and Jones - on any one of them against Cæsar and Napoleon. Wood Street against Waterloo, the world over.[28]

It is little wonder that even before Binney's death Hale White was defending his reputation against those who cast him in a too grey, conventional 'Little Bethel' light. One such heresy was even committed by a distinguished writer whom Hale White particularly looked up to, forcing a real crisis of allegiance.

When John Forster published the second volume of his Life of Dickens in 1873, he included in it a humorous letter, which Dickens had written to an American friend describing a funeral he had recently attended.[29] At the request of Cruikshank, Dickens, rather reluctantly, went to the funeral of an enthusiastic admirer of his, the bookseller and publisher William Hone. He had not really wanted to go, especially in the awkward capacity of honorary celebrity and his description of the event, sent across the Atlantic, verges on farce. Dickens describes a little argument with the stern Minister 'with his bands on and a Bible under his arm' who castigates Cruikshank 'in a loud emphatic voice' for having published a false story regarding Hone's failure in business:

> 'It is not only an insult to me, who am the servant of the Almighty, but an insult to the Almighty, whose servant I am . . . [The paragraph] is false, incorrect, unchristian, in a manner blasphemous and in all respects contemptible. Let us pray'. With

> which, in the same breath, I give you my word, he knelt down, as we all did, and began a very miserable jumble of an extempore prayer.[30]

The minister at Hone's funeral, although Dicken's does not mention him by name in his letter, was none other than Rev. Thomas Binney. Dickens adds; 'I was really penetrated with sorrow for the family, but when Cruikshank whispered me, "that if it wasn't a clergyman, and it wasn't a funeral, he'd have punched his head", I felt as if nothing but convulsions could possibly relieve me . . .'

Hale White, writing in the Nonconformist, was not amused; neither was Binney who immediately published an essay complaining about the 'vulgar nonsense put into the mouth of the clergyman by Mr. Dickens' in the Evangelical Magazine.[31] It is interesting that when faced with two huge intellectual influences (for it could be said that at this time that Hale White admired Dickens as he admired no other writer) he stands by Mr. Binney:

> To those who know Mr. Binney, no contradiction of Dickens's romance is of course needed. But almost every effective point in it can be contradicted by testimony. Mr. Binney is not a person of ceremony, as many of his former hearers can affectionately declare; he never wore bands; he had no Bible under his arm; the speech assigned to him is a total misrepresentation; he did not kneel down directly he had spoken it; and as for the 'miserable jumble,' we want nobody to tell us it is a sheer impossibility. (Non, Jan. 29, 1873)

Based upon Binney's account, Hale White's contradiction of Dickens's letter then evolves into his own essay (which he also calls 'a favourite doctrine of mine') about the dishonesty of novelists, and especially of Dickens, even though the blame ultimately rests with Forster for deciding to publish what was really a private joke:

> I have no wish to undervalue the power of a man like the great novelist so recently dead, but it is clear that the gifts of humour and imagination have serious drawbacks, one of the most serious being an irresistible lust - that is the proper word for it - to twist a fact into something which is not a fact, if the fact be not in itself grotesque. I do not believe that with Dickens it was the mere vulgar love of applause which lead him to do this constantly: it was a passion; he took secret pleasure in transforming a common spendthrift into a Swiveller, a miserly dwarf into a Quilp, and an ordinary hypocrite into a Chadband. How intense this passion was, and how incapable of restraint, is seen from his practising it on Mr. Binney. Mr. Binney at this time was known a long way outside the Dissenting circle as the preacher of all preachers in London who most satisfied the religious intelligence of men, and it is impossible to think that Mr. Dickens had not heard of him. Besides, even if he had not, the very aspect of the minister of the Weigh-House chapel ought to have told him that he was in the presence of a genius and a piety which were not to be played with, but with which he ought intensely to sympathise . . . Temporary laughter may be raised when the trick succeeds, but in the end it becomes intolerably wearisome and ruinous, both to the joker himself and to his reputation amongst all people whose opinion is worth having. If I were a preacher, I should like to take this noble little sermon of Mr. Binney's in *The Evangelical Magazine*, so free from heat or extravagance, so wise and so tender, and would preach upon it a bigger sermon upon the importance of reporting to others exactly what we ourselves see, without any admixture of ourselves; and then I should like to go a little lower and preach about the deeper importance of reporting to ourselves without disguise or exaggeration, all objects which present themselves to us, of trying to see the thing itself, and not any fiction or pretence of it.
> (Non, Jan. 29, 1873)

The incident gives us a very clear insight as to what happens, or rather the 'serious drawbacks', when Hale White's Puritan sensibility comes up his against his literary instincts, his imagination. Because of his own feelings for Binney, Hale White is certain that Dickens's description is completely false. He goes so far as to investigate whether Cruikshank and Dickens were, in fact, sitting beside each other at the funeral (he discovers they were not). He is adamant, in other words, that there is only *one version* of the funeral service. Hale

White wants Dickens to see things in exactly the same way that he does, and he is surprised when he does not; 'the very aspect of the minister of the Weigh-House chapel *ought to have told him* that he was in the presence of a genius and a piety which were not to be played with.' For Hale White, just to *look* at Binney is to recognise his genius.

However prone to exaggeration Dickens could be, his letter still reveals the strong current of his own subjective feelings. There he was, stuck at a funeral for someone he really did not know, on a day when he should have been writing, having to listen to a minister who struck him as grey, dull and overbearing. When confronted with a quick caricature of someone he both respects and admires Hale White wants Dickens to be not only true but *benign*, even though all humour is invariably made at the expense of someone else. Yet how is it possible to be a writer - 'reporting to others exactly what we ourselves see' - without causing offence somewhere down the line? It is this question which may well have deterred Hale White from writing fiction for as long as he did, especially as his own books were so closely connected with people he actually knew, not the least his own wife.

Hale White's Puritanism made him despair at the thought of being discovered as the author of the Rutherford novels, of being both a Mr. Binney *and* a Charles Dickens. Stone points out that once it was discovered that Hale White had been specifically attacking Dr. Harris of New College in his fictional portrait of the narrow minded, ogrish 'President' of Rutherford's college, some of Dr. Harris' colleagues took real offence. One such letter to Stone from the then president of Cheshunt, Mr. A. Victor Murray, protests:

> Hale White . . . maligned Harris. Harris seemed to have been a very forward looking progressive person, quite a good German scholar and familiar with German theology. But White refers to him in *Mark Rutherford* as a reactionary . . . when he had already created some disturbance in the denomination for being, if anything, too much the other way. White seems to me to have been a thoroughly unbalanced fellow altogether.[32]

The defensiveness of Hale White shows how easily his religious identity could be undermined by those very same 'gifts of humour and imagination', from what he calls, very knowingly, the '*secret* pleasure in transforming'.

The memory of Mr. Binney, and of radical Dissent, suffered yet another blow when, in 1882, the Metropolitan Railway Company announced that they were going to take possession of the Weigh House Church in order to build, what is now, the Monument Tube Station. It is ironic that the modern world of city trains, whose comforts Hale White had praised in the early 1860s, was now encroaching upon the sacred 'shrine' to Binney's power. Again, Hale White found himself in the role of a witness to a vanished way of life:

> Is it really true that the Weigh House Chapel is about to be demolished and that a district train will run under - or over - the spot on which Mr. Binney preached? If so, then one more shrine is to be desecrated, which, to a number of middle aged persons like myself, is sacred with a thousand memories. Many persons will probably ask who was Mr. Binney. His reputation, certainly, is not upheld or at any rate has not been created by books. Mr. Binney was emphatically not a writer but a preacher, and one of the strongest preachers ever possessed by the Independents. He was unequal, and when he felt that perhaps he had gone too far and endeavoured to retract he was uninteresting, but when he allowed himself full liberty and had a subject such as an Old Testament patriarch or the Apostle Paul, he rose to heights of grandeur. His style of speaking was perfect. I have heard many orators in my time, but I do not think I ever heard oratory which was so attractive to thinking men as Binney's. It was something like Cobden's in its plainness, and something like Roebuck's in its incisive rhetorical force, but it had a depth and a pathos in it of which Cobden and Roebuck were not capable. Mr. Carlyle knew and appreciated Mr. Binney,

> and I recollect a kindly note from Chelsea asking Mr. Binney to pay a visit there and assuring him that he would find a friendly kettle on the hob and a pipe on the corner. (NN, Sept. 2, 1882)

Hale White says that Binney's 'reputation . . . has not been created by books' although Binney did, nevertheless, write about eighty publications. He wants to remember Binney as an inspired, spontaneous amateur rather than an author, even though his 'incisive rhetorical force' and 'plainness' are the very literary values Hale White would make his own. The mention of the 'friendly kettle on the hob and a pipe on the corner' may be a strange, much gentler way to end what had been a very forceful account of a mighty religious influence but it is as if these objects, placed by the fire, are still waiting for Mr. Binney's return and for the revival of his style of sermons in The Revolution In Tanner's Lane.

These memories of Binney represent Hale White's interiorisation, even his *fictionalisation*, of his own Dissenting background and he would constantly draw on this memory source when writing about the latest religious trends. As the nineteenth-century progressed and Hale White reported on the various religious voices, ranging from mathematical Bishops to Ritualists, Atheists, Secularists, and 'Little Bethel' Dissenters, the figure of Binney would have been a comforting and strong reminder of what had once been so important. As Matthew Arnold would gently mock at such figures of political dissent on nearly every page of Culture and Anarchy, so Hale White felt this figure needed defending. Their very lives expressed, quite literally, where he came from:

> The 'political Dissenter' has for a long time been a favourite dummy to be battered and mauled by political Church people

> after the fashion of Mr. Quilp with the figurehead. For my own part I must confess that I do not quite know what kind of a creature this political Dissenter may be. He is supposed, I believe, to be a creature of modern times, and in some way or other his political convictions, which are strong, are understood to interfere with his piety. But as a matter of fact the old Dissenters, whom I remember as a child, were far more political than their descendants, and I was about to say more pious. Certainly they were very pious and many of them were almost Republican. An ancestor of the present writer of this column, a godly elder of his Church, had his windows smashed because of his ardour in the cause of reform before the Reform Act of 1832 was passed, and his father refused to illuminate for the victories over the French because he considered that we ought to let the French people manage their own affairs, and that if we had not interfered with them they would not have interfered with us. Cromwell and Milton were political, and are supposed to have had a few religious convictions. It is surely impossible indeed for a man to have imperious and ardent beliefs on religion without having beliefs equally imperious and ardent on a subject as important as politics. (NN, July 1, 1882)

Hale White never forgave the Dissenters who expelled him from the church, yet neither could he betray his own roots. He always had to have his heroes, his mental monuments, like Binney, to revere within the spiritual and intellectual uncertainties of the future. It was Hale White's role as a radical journalist which perfectly suited his identity as a political Dissenter more than his belonging to any specific organised religion. It was journalism, not the pulpit, which gave Hale White the audience he needed and the means with which to communicate what most concerned him. Throughout all of his columns Hale White maintained a close perspective on the world of newspaper journalism; his own style of clear, communicative prose needed constant defending amidst the noise of an increasingly complex and divided age.

On Writing, Periodicals and Newspapers.

Hale White began writing journalism in what was a significant year for the newspaper industry. 1861 saw the repeal of the paper duty, an act which enabled newspapers to be run much more cheaply thus making the market even busier and more competitive than before. On the 5th October 1861 The Aberdeen Herald began not with Hale White's column but with the editor's note about price reductions:

> REPEAL OF THE PAPER DUTY.
> Our readers are reminded that on and after this day, as we intimated formerly, the price of the *Herald* is reduced from 4½d. stamped, to 4d; and from 3½d. unstamped to 3d. per copy, with proportionate reductions from former rates on yearly, half-yearly and quarterly subscriptions. (AH, Oct. 5, 1861)

Cheaper paper meant more paper, more choice and therefore more canvassing of opinion. Immediately below this notice, and with little sign of any enthusiasm for the new price cut, 'Metropolitan Notes' considered the consequences of these changes. Hale White, a particularly widely read journalist, had always tried to keep up with the latest periodicals and newspapers yet now this discerning task was becoming almost impossible:

> The 1st October has come and with it the repeal of the paper duty. At present of course, it would be premature to speculate upon what the ultimate results of this measure will be, but I confess that the immediate consequences, to me at least, are rather alarming. I am perfectly snowed up in paper. It would really seem as if it were cheaper to print paper than to leave it alone. It would be folly to attempt any catalogue or even classification of the chaotic mass which, under the name of literature, daily, weekly, and monthly storms in upon me until one is tempted, in sheer despair, to pitch the whole to the dogs, and read nothing at all. Not a single crudity or absurdity seems as if it were to go unrepresented. Morning, noon and night, Sundays even not excepted, I am waylaid and ensnared by the emissaries of some new periodical, whose anxiety for me to profit by its wisdom is really quite pathetic. Dirty, miserable-looking

> little urchins crowd the places where every omnibus halts, beseeching me to purchase a most ghastly penny imitation of *Punch*, while, if I am seriously disposed, I am advised by large placards to invest my money in the *Breadbasket for Christians*, the crumbs in which I am sorry to say are very small and very stale. To crown everything, and to confuse people still more, here is a journal called *Public Opinion*, professing, so far as I can make out, to take no side upon any question, but to give the people everything that has been laid on all sides! Fancy a poor man's bewilderment who, in his anxiety not to be misled, takes in, or rather is taken in by this remarkable print, and reads, for instance, side by side, the criticisms of the *Morning Star* and the *Herald* upon any public man or any political event! Or if he be desirous of knowing the merits of an appointment to a bishopric, fancy him studying, in his solicitude to be enlightened, the choice sentences of the *Union* and the *Record* with no word of comment or explanation! I do not doubt that in the end the cheapening of paper will be a great good, although it would be foolish to expect that it will be unaccompanied with many evils, which at present, to my mind, are more prominent than the advantages. (AH, Oct. 5, 1861)

Although he was able to observe the House of Commons first-hand, Hale White still depended upon The Times and the periodicals for the wider picture of London life; many of his columns begin with him noticing an interesting news item or a controversy in the press and then pursuing his own thoughts upon it. Yet now, the repeal of the paper duty has made London news an even more diverse phenomenon than before. Hale White presents himself as a victim of the information revolution, 'perfectly snowed up in paper', trying to keep on top of such a mass of print. His metaphors here are apt; snow, rather than mediating reality, *covers* it, hides it and Hale White would have to sift, endlessly, through this snow to reach the buried truth beneath the growing mound of paper. Such pieces, ringing with that familiar note of personal frustration, read more like letters to the reader than objective reports. He is not only frustrated by the mounting snow but by his own conflicting principles.

On the one hand, the increase of printed matter 'will be a great good'; the cheaper the papers the more people will be able to read them, the more will be produced. Hale White's father, had, after all, been Bedford's printer and bookseller. In this respect the 'great good' of mass production strongly relates to Hale White's own Protestant roots; just the week before he had written, in relation to Luther's Bible; 'With every book that is printed - with every child that is educated - the danger lest the world's salvation should be left in the care of one person is indefinitely diminished'. (AH, Sept. 28, 1861)

On the other hand, however, this mass of print 'will be accompanied with many evils' and compromises; the more papers produced, the more third-rate trivia will be churned out of the press, the more bewildering the prospect of trying to get to what is most essential. The differing contents of all these magazines, the sheer variety of subjects and tones, is difficult to assimilate. He mentions several kinds of magazines here; the 'crudity and absurdity' presumably refers to the gossip columns with their grotesque murder reports and scandalous stories. He also picks out an obscure religious paper, Breadbasket for Christians, ready-baked for the masses. Putting the 'world's salvation' in the hands of many people seems, in this case, as potentially hazardous as leaving it in the care of the few.

However, this expansion of Grub Street only strengthened his resolve to argue for a few basic principles of the press. He finished this same article:

> Certainly, it becomes the duty of every one who reads more than ever to resolve, unless infinite time is to be wasted, to become scrupulously particular, I had almost said exclusive, in what he reads. If a man wishes to preserve any individuality whatever, let him now be doubly cautious, remembering that, because a thing has been affirmed by fifty penny prints, when before it was only

> asserted by two or three, it does not therefore become more true, and also remembering that there is a vast difference between an increase of echoes and an increase of voices.
> (AH, Oct. 5, 1861)

Most important of all is that notion that all this mass of print threatens the reader's very 'individuality'. This idea works on a number of levels, for not only does this growing amount of reading waste *time* but can erode the *self*, substituting serious, careful thought for passive page flicking. That notion of disciplining oneself to being 'scrupulously particular' and 'exclusive' in our reading resembles Bunyan's 'strait and narrow' path.[33] He speaks of 'duty', 'resolve', the need to be 'doubly cautious' especially when tempted with such an array of differing opinions which 'storms in' upon him, 'ensnared' him.

So much of Hale White's radical journalism displays a craving for certainty in an age in which opinions and allegiances were becoming increasingly complex, increasingly chaotic. It was only in Deliverance, twenty years later, that he could dare to admit to 'writing so much of which I was not certain' and of having a Tory journalist, M'Kay, as a best friend (AD, p. 131). His columns, however, are full of short, condemning reviews of new journals which appeared and disappeared without ever having stood for any single principle or party. His comments on the balanced talking-piece, Public Opinion, anticipate something he would say, a few years later, on the Pall Mall Gazette; 'all things to everybody, or rather nothing to nobody' (AH, Feb. 21, 1865). This in turn echoes his brief dismissive critique of The Iron Times:

> The new daily newspaper is called *The Iron Times*. Why it exists or whom it represents are matters, which, so far as I can learn, nobody can make out. Its name is singularly appropriate, for it is about as dull and heavy a paper as could possibly be desired. It seems to take no particular side in politics, and, altogether, looks

> as if it were hung up for sale, and purposefully left in its present indefinite indeterminate shape so that it might be cut to fit any intending purchaser. The only approach to any novelty about it is the length of the city article, and the quantity of space devoted to railway news. (AH, Jan. 17, 1863)

In the competition for readers, the 'indefinite indeterminate' politics of The Iron Times was a shrewd marketing device as much as it was an attempt to remain unbiased and objective. Yet Hale White knew that the balance between banal neutrality and predictable dogmatism was as difficult as it was necessary to achieve. At other moments he could be equally anxious about the predictable line of radical Dissent:

> What we want at the present time is a good thoroughly general daily, at the low price, carefully edited, less Palmerstonian, and Tory than the *Telegraph*, less American and Dissenting than the *Star*, free in religion and with leading articles and a little more thoughtful and quiet than the curious mixture of pungency and wateriness which prevails in the present penny journals. In fact we want solid mutton rather than curry powder and hot water. (AH, Jan. 21, 1865)

A cheap, freethinking Liberal daily, (but not too 'Dissenting') no religious bias, 'carefully' composed, 'thoughtful and quiet' - this sounds quite a tall order for any age, let alone the Reformist climate of 1865. Despite such tenuous proposals, this article does, however, outline one factor which is completely consistent with all of his thoughts upon journalism.

Hale White's would often repeat this need for a solidity - 'solid mutton' as opposed to wateriness - in written English. Previously he had wanted an 'increase in voices', not 'echoes'; he feared the fierce competition in the newspaper market was having a detrimental effect on the strength of the language itself. Good writing, for Hale White, demanded time and careful composition - he wrote as if he was talking to the reader, aiming for a style of journalism, 'thoughtful and quiet', which resembled the monologue more than conventional reportage. He was especially critical of the Times which he felt was poorly written precisely because it had been too *speedily* written. This was partly due, he felt, to the increasing use of telegrams:

> I am gradually growing more and more suspicious of the 'telegram' column in the papers. Generally speaking, the proper names are mis-spelt, the news disjointed and bare, and frequently utterly untrue. These despatches are for the most part left till the very last moment, and then the person who compiles them has to snatch up just what will go into the smallest compass, and make the greatest sensation. Two or three days ago I was startled by hearing that Garibaldi had actually left Caprera, and my imagination went to work to discover what he could possibly be about. Now, it turns out that he never left Caprera at all. Let us give your readers one word of advice. Never trust a telegram. If you want really to know what is going on abroad, read the letters from the various correspondents there. (AH, Oct. 19, 1861)

Passages like this should remind us of another important essayist who, in style and subject matter, closely parallels Hale White.[34] In essays like 'Politics and the English Language', 'Literature and Totalitarianism', George Orwell would say such similar things that it goes some way to proving a hidden tradition in radical journalism. In their distinct centuries both writers not only stood for truthfulness but *plainness* of expression. Even Orwell's satirical 'Newspeak' was a form of telelgraphist language, 'mis-spelt', 'disjointed' and 'bare', designed to be typed quickly and to prevent further thought.

In a world in which language is mass-produced, literally churned out for mass consumption, Hale White would frequently remind his readers of the need to preserve the human voice, even when writing about the most impersonal, political subjects. 'The whole tendency of modern prose' wrote Orwell, 'is away from concreteness',[35] echoing the values Hale White cherished in Bunyan's prose; 'The articles of his creed required a *concrete* expression'. (Bunyan, p. 231). That need to defend and express solid meaning was one of Hale White's standards and parallels Orwell's interest in unravelling particular instances of bad English. In 1862 Hale White digressed from the news to write what was really a short, quite Orwellian essay about newspaper language:

> Can anyone say who is answerable for the telegrams which from time to time lighten our darkness through the columns of *The Times*? Supposing them to be written in decent and grammatical English, and that the proper names are spelt in such a manner as to be intelligible, they are not very luminous guides, and it would be just as easy to extricate yourself from a forest by the way of a flash of lightening, as to gain any clear idea of what is going on by means of a telegraph despatch. Frequently, however, the laws of composition are violated in the most frightful manner, and it has been suggested that a Lindley Murray ought to hang on every wire in the kingdom. What for example can possibly be made from this extraordinary sentence which was revealed to us this week? It professes to be a portion of a speech of Baron Von Beust in the Saxon chamber, and represents the worthy gentleman speaking as follows: -
>
> 'A resolute acceptation of the alteration in the tariff is not only the best guarantee for the continued existence of the Zollverein, but it would present a basis upon which the development of the existing commercial treaty with Austria, and the adhesion of that power to the Zollverein must be successfully pursued'. (AH, May 31, 1862)

'When you are composing in a hurry - when you are dictating to a stenographer, for instance, or making a public speech - it is natural to fall into a pretentious, latinised style', wrote Orwell.[36] Hale White delights in unpicking this sentence, showing how impossible it is to *think* with it. The journalist appears to be making quite intelligent noises while actually saying very little, if anything, at all:

> First of all observe, we are 'presented with a basis.' Having got that, and much good may it do us, the first thing we are to do is to 'pursue a development upon it.' Pursuing a development upon a basis is rather a ticklish business, and would require, one would

> think, all our powers, but no sooner has this development been started, than we are diverted from the chase by the attempt to run after an 'adhesion.' Hunting a 'development' and an 'adhesion', or as the telegraphist more euphoniously has it, 'pursuing' a development and an adhesion both at once and upon a basis too, is a process which we may venture to predict will end in nothing but disaster. To such nonsense as this do people come, who instead of trying to write just as they would speak, are impressed with the idea that they may say something fine whenever they take up a pen. (AH, May 31, 1862)

Hale White's vocabulary is founded on his habits of religious Dissent:

> 'My boy,' my father once said to me, 'if you write anything you consider particularly fine, strike it out.' (EL, p. 31)

'Fine', in this context, means *seeming cleverness*, intricacy, pretension; the lazy products of a faster age.

In 'Politics and the English Language' Orwell warned against the habitual use of ready-made phrases, all of which deaden the language, or, as he puts it 'anaesthetizes a portion of one's brain'. Such phrases 'group themselves automatically into the familiar dreary pattern' and Orwell's own yawning examples include; 'a justifiable assumption', 'felt impelled to write', 'a radical transformation', and so on.[37] In 1901 Hale White also published a letter on 'Misleading Unions', predictable groups of words which destroy the freshness and spontaneity of the language. Such pieces show the extent to which Hale White always tried to redefine and recast his own sentences. Without his original manuscripts we cannot actually see his original deletions, yet his letters and scrap books are full of such scourings; Hale White always honed-down rather than extended his original text.

His list of lazy expressions is interesting - it not only shows the clichés which have since gone out of use but quite a few which stubbornly remain embedded in the language:

> Sir, - There are many words which have been married so long that it is time they were divorced. They have lost their proper quality by prolonged association, and the inseparable adjective has also in some cases an injurious effect in limiting the noun. For example, if 'diametrical' always comes into my head when I speak of 'opposition', I shall most likely describe incorrectly a particular opposite, for those which are really 'diametrical' are rare. I subjoin a preliminary list of words which it would be as well to disconnect, say, for a hundred years, and perhaps some of your readers may be inclined to add to it. I exclude all mere penny-a-lining phrases, such as 'progressing favourably' and 'devouring element'.
>
> Inevitable consequence
> Inclined to surmise
> Sweep from recollection
> Arrived at his destination
> Hurled from power
> Apprehensive of danger
> Chequered career
> Fabulous sum
> Acme of absurdity
> Depth of disgrace
> Irretrievable disaster
> Penetrated with the conviction
> Unavoidable necessity
> Indispensably necessary
> Rooted aversion
> Pet ditto
> Cardinal objection
> Profound sensation
> Hopeless muddle
> Ditto confusion
> Inextricable ditto
> Initial blunder
> Palmy days
> Element of uncertainty
> Bone of contention
> Master of the situation
> Vexed question
> Transports of enthusiasm
> Blood curdle
> Sovereign contempt
> Trying ordeal
> Diametrically opposite.[38]

Even in his scrap book, where this article can be found, he has added some more misleading unions; 'dominant factor', 'pale of civilisation'. After 'supreme excellence', a coupling which must have particularly irritated him, he has scribbled, as a pained afterthought; '*in fact almost always*'.

Yet surely no writer, however conscientious, could always sustain such high standards of perfect, limpid prose. At the end of 'Politics and the English Language' Orwell himself wrote; 'Look back through this essay, and for certain you will find that I have again and again committed the very faults I am protesting against'.[39] Even Hale White could add his own '*prolonged* *association*' to his list; he was, after all, a journalist himself, continually writing to a deadline and concerned how the pressure to produce copy might force him to compromise his own standards. Hale White's renewed attempt to resist dullness is the real subtext of all his journalism and links his discussion of every single subject he writes about. Throughout his columns we can sense him looking for new ways of saying things, finding intriguing digressions to keep his interest going, introducing a pinch of satire, a burst of outrage, *anything* to preserve his instinctive, urgent approach to writing:

> To the public, we newspaper peopele must ever be the same . . . We must supply the appointed article, and if it contain but a trace of the dullness which devours us, the world will say - 'Oh, not so brilliant as he used to be,' and the manager will take the hint and down we go . . . Few persons know what it too often costs to produce that mass of print for which they are so eager every breakfast. (AH, Aug. 19, 1865)

That sense of trying to resist 'the dullness which devours us' produced one important passage which could stand as an epigraph for all of his writing during this period, as well as for everything which came after. How is it possible to write with continuing interest and verve, about a life which, at times, seemed to hold so little promise, so little genuine excitement or variety:

> I cannot promise anything very exciting, but then, what is there that is exciting if it is genuine? Romantic incidents occur only in three-volume novels, and our actual history is built up of very tame commonplaces, such as getting up in the morning and going to bed at night - the same walks, the same remarks, the same faces, the same emotions, the same thoughts. Happy the man who is not disgusted and weary at the perpetual monotony, but knows how, by alchemical power, to translate the lead into gold. (AH, Aug. 23, 1862)

Hale White did concede that such regular journalism necessarily compromised his own language, weighed him down like lead, especially when his writing aspired towards the literary, the philosophical, 'the gold'. His own column ran to an average of two-thousand words, far more than he would have liked:

> There is no doubt however that habitual writers for the press are guilty of certain excess of words. It cannot be helped. They have no time to be anything better. It is utterly ridiculous to demand of a man who has to write a column and a half in an hour, the conciseness and condensation of Emerson's Essays. 'C and C' are the fruits of slow and laborious thought, and if newspapers are to exist at all, there must occasionally, at least, be commentaries on the events of the day to some extent loose and a little inflated. (AH, Jan. 14, 1865)

While he admired Emerson for his 'conciseness and condensation', his 'C and C', this was not a trait that he believed was shared by all intellectuals. It is interesting that Hale White considers the habitual writer's primary sin as 'excess of words', of writing too much that is unnecessary. Being a writer in a world of too many words raised serious questions about the real need of what was being written. In this respect, he was concerned not only about the weaknesses of the popular press but with the serious publishers as well, with the intellectuals forever churning out more and more stodge. It is important to remember that when he began writing for the provincials Hale White had already had some experience in publishing. For just over a year he had been Chapman's assistant on The Westminster Review, a job which certainly coloured the way he perceived the intellectual press, not the least because of Chapman's very careless management. The readers of the Aberdeen Herald would not have been aware of their correspondent's connection with this periodical and yet every so often he would mention The Review, in quite disappointed terms:

> The *Westminster Review*, a very old radical organ - and a very able one occasionally, is again on the rocks. I say again, because

> it has been so fifty times before. With all its talent it manages to be unattractive, and that is the cause of its failure. It is never stupid, never sensational or shallow, and yet it is never brilliant. Nor is its lack of brilliancy owing to an excess of erudition, like that which distinguishes *The Academy*, for example, but there is a certain ponderosity or opaqueness about it which became very tedious. It is like what we call close bread. On the present occasion there has been a whip of £1,500, Mr. J. S. Mill has sent £100, I believe. What a different destiny has been that of *The Quarterly*, whose circulation keeps up as well as ever, or even better than ever, though it is no longer the organ of the Conservative party. It sells from four to five thousand every quarter. (RO, Jan 1, 1870)

Hale White said similar things in the Aberdeen Herald in another column published on the same day, adding that The Westminster Review had 'no *life* in it'. (AH, Jan. 1, 1870) Although the above paragraph does not directly describe Chapman, in *effect* it does. Mark Rutherford describes Wollaston as a similarly opaque figure; 'for ever drawn to some new thing; without any love for anybody particularly'. (AD, p. 107) While remaining intelligent, The Review, like so many intellectual journals, was too dense and 'unattractive' to be read with pleasure and lacked vitality, 'it is never brilliant'. The danger of the sober intellectual journal was that seriousness became an end in itself.

When The Fortnightly Review, edited by G. H. Lewes, first appeared Hale White expressed a weary sigh over its heaviness, longing for mental breathing space in a periodical which was too intense to be enjoyable. These blunt criticisms, which appear whenever Hale White writes about Lewes, are compounded with just a hint of jealousy towards the man who also lived with George Eliot. Hale White always championed Eliot at the expense of Lewes, as if he imagined her novels existed in despite of his 'heavy' influence:

> *The Fortnightly Review*, under the management of Mr. G. H. Lewes, has appeared. It is intended not to make it the

> organ of a party, but an expression of liberal opinion amongst all parties on every conceivable subject. The first number, I speak now not my own private opinion, but rather that of the public, is heavy. It is heavy, people will say, simply because it demands too much thought. It is certainly not an attractive book for an idle half hour in a railway train or before dinner. All its articles, with the exception of the inevitable story, demand serious reflection. Here, for instance, is a most elaborate essay on the English constitution, by Mr. Walter Bagehot, a review of a *History of Rationalism*, a discourse upon the Heart and Brain, another upon Atoms. I doubt very much whether the public will stand such strong meat as this. And, in one sense, the public is right in its dislike of heavy magazines. No man who cares enough about a subject to undergo the pain of thinking about it will be satisfied with what is known as an 'article,' unless the subject be singularly definite and one which we can really go round in an hour. The Heart and Brain! Who that sincerely desires to understand the relations between these two organs will be content with half-a-dozen pages, which take for granted all that a genuine enquirer is most anxious to establish for himself. But worse than that, a serious person generally has some decided leanings towards some particular study, and feels slightly aggrieved if a mass of such extremely distant relatives as atoms, hearts and brains, strikes, constitutions, and what not, are all intruded upon him, pell-mell, once a fortnight. Imagine the chaos a man must be in who had really tried to comprehend something on all these matters within the space of two hours. Therefore the public demand of such magazines, first of all, amusement. 'We will be amused,' say the swinish multitude to the magazine writer, 'and if we want instruction we will go elsewhere'. The proprietor of the *Daily Telegraph* is reported to have said to his editor - 'We want, Sir, not strong thinking, but strong writing'. So say the many. Therefore it is to be hoped that Mr. Lewes will take warning in time, and either in a measure bend to his patrons or gracefully die before the expense has become a burden. There is one article in the *Fortnightly*, by-the-by, worth particular notice. It is by the incomparable author of *Romola*, and it professes to be a critique on Mr. Lecky's book on Rationalism. It is very good, but a long way off from *The Mill on the Floss*, or, still better, the work named just before. The character-producing faculty has no play here - all is abstract and cold, and it is an instance, a shining instance, of the danger into which poets and story-tellers run when they attempt to write ordinary prose on ordinary topics. The charm is gone. One sentence of the immortal Mrs. Tulliver is worth all that is curious and clever in this essay. (AH, May 20 1865)

'Whenever humanity seems condemned to heaviness,' wrote Italo Calvino, 'I think I should fly like Perseus into a different space'.[40] Hale White did not like the density of the Fortnightly Review, it was too cramped, offering little 'amusement' with no break from 'serious reflection'. 'Serious reflection', 'demanding' reading, big essays proclaiming the unity of literature and science - this is exactly the sort of thing we associate with Victorian intellectuals like Ruskin, George Eliot and Lewes - and even Mark Rutherford himself. But Hale White wanted reading to be pleasurable not merely instructive - or rather pleasurable *in order* to be instructive. He had enough drudgery during the day time and probably enough of Spinoza at night; periodical reading should be 'attractive', something to discover in an 'idle half-hour' or 'two'.

This piece about the Fortnightly Review makes for a lively read, if only because we can sense him thinking *while* he is writing it, warming to what appears to have been a subject he felt very passionately about, namely, the need to revitalise the spirit of English letters. At first, trying to appear objective, he says; 'I speak now not of my own private opinion', as if he is speaking on behalf of the wider reading public. And then, a few sentences on he realises that, in fact, he *is* this public so he suddenly jumps, as if across a dividing line, from the company of detached journalists and asserts the priorities of imaginative readers:

> I doubt very much whether the public will stand such strong meat as this. And, in one sense, the public is right in its dislike of heavy magazines.

Comments like this anticipate Hale White's own more hospitable collections of essays which always keep to very particular, personal concerns, interspersed with short notes and stories. Hale White is only concerned with books that will be truly memorable, not clever articles stored up for the dilettante. The Fortnightly Review represented a mere over-crowding of experts, never leaving enough space for the deeper consideration their subjects actually demanded:

> Who that sincerely desires to understand the relations between the two organs will be content with half-a-dozen pages . . .

In an age of such a vast outpouring of journalism, periodicals and essays, the conscientious reader not only has to ask himself what to read, but what *not* to read. Compact, serious intellectual miscellany seemed slightly absurd:

> Imagine the chaos a man must be in who had really tried to comprehend something on all these matters.

The word 'chaos' had appeared earlier in his anxieties surrounding the repeal of the paper duty. While it could be argued that periodicals, like the Fortnightly, should be read selectively, Hale White was anxious about the loss of the older idea of the educated mind. He wanted periodicals to have a unity. It seemed strange to him that Lewes should publish a magazine, knowing that most people were only going to read bits of it. To read the *whole* of the Fortnightly was rather like attending a packed academic conference; one came away with nothing but a headache and a list of vaguely distinguished names.[41] In his articles Hale White asserts his passionate literary priorities above the intellectual grind, for him strong writing *was*, actually, strong thinking.

His cutting critique of the Fortnigthly is really another defence of the novel as a vehicle for ideas. Rather than the 'abstract' and 'cold' critique' Hale White wanted to see Eliot's 'character producing faculty', the 'charm' rather than the merely 'curious and clever' essayist. Considering the strength (and length) of this appeal it is surprising that he waited a further sixteen years before publishing his own stories. All of Hale White's comments upon journalism suggest he was an impatient reader. 'Unless *infinite time* be wasted,' he said about the paper storm, we must become 'scrupulously particular' in what we read. So, as a critic, he drew up his own criteria, wanting to prevent literature from losing its firmness, freshness and humaneness.

Although outspoken and frustrated, all of his opinions on the press underlined a basic belief in journalism as a whole. Hale White grew up in what would have been a very small, more detached Bedford, a place much more separate and distinct from London than it is today. And yet this place, steeped in the history of Dissent, gave him an intense sense of the past, of religion and change. Newspapers connected the smaller world of the Whites with the larger world of London and Europe, lifting a lid from that smallness:

> London editors have never been able to understand the change which has come over newspapers of late years. When I was a child we had one little dirty weekly in the town in which I lived. Its circulation was seven-hundred and fifty and it existed upon reports of proceedings before the magistrates, meetings of Boards of Guardians and intelligence of this kind. The London paper was everything. But the electric telegraph has changed all this. If a man goes to Birmingham, or Manchester, or Liverpool,. or Edinburgh, he finds that the London newspaper is nothing and the provincial daily paper not only has all the news before the London papers arrive but that it is written with an ability quite equal to that which adorns its cockney contemporaries.
> (NN, Aug. 28, 1880)

It is significant that Hale White believed the provincial press could be 'written with an ability quite equal' to its 'cockney contemporaries'. He wrote some of his best, most engaging columns for Aberdeen, one of the remotest towns in the country, as if the responsibilities of the provincial journalist increase the further the paper is published from London. But there is still a contradiction in his wonder at the changes happening to journalism; he complains about over-production, yet values its spread to innumerable local centres, he regrets the telegraph replacing the pen, yet credits the machine with the dissemination of news. That familiar tension between the old world and the modern is still there, pulling him in contrary directions simultaneously.

Nevertheless, from such passages we can see here what motivated Hale White to stick with the provincial press for as long as he did. He was writing to people like his younger self, or like Catherine Furze, stuck with their locality yet needing more. When one considers the range of places he wrote for - Rochdale, Birmingham, London, Norfolk, Aberdeen, - his influence, although totally unknown, was extensive. His father was also writing regular columns for Liverpool and Birmingham, as well as London, from the 1850s so that between them the Whites broadcast their particular brand of radical, literary opinion to all corners of Britain. Hale White was very conscious of the changes in communication and reading taking place all over the country. His plain style of writing was a way of both launching himself into, and bracing himself against, - the future.

Notes

1. Over fifty years later Hale White is having the same thoughts about Luther: 'The public evils which weigh upon us most heavily are so formless, so universally-penetrating that it seems hopeless to combat them. Luther had a definite foe. He believed that if he could overthrow the Papacy the world would be regenerated. Happy prophet! What can we do against omnipresent dishonesty, moral scepticism, and modern political methods?' (LP, p. 306)

2. Hale White's impressions of Wartburg are echoed by James Atkinson in his book about Luther: 'To visit this study is an awe-inspiring experience. The height, the beauty, the utter stillness make a very deep impression . . . Here a man meets history, for here a man talked with God and made history. The visitors always file off in whispers.' James Atkinson, Martin Luther and the Birth of Protestantism (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1968), p. 211.

3. James R. Moore, Religion in Victorian Britain. Vol. III Sources (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988), p. 38; hereafter cited as James R. Moore.

4. George Jacob Holyoake, Sixty Years of an Agitator's Life (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1906), p. 90; hereafter cited as Holyoake.

5. Matthew Arnold, Lectures and Essays in Criticism ed. R. H. Super (Michigan: Michigan University Press, 1862), p. 48.

6. Matthew Arnold, Letters Vol. I, ed. George. W. E. Russell (London: Macmillan, 1895), p. 176.

7. Matthew Arnold, Culture and Anarchy 1867-1869, ed. Stefan Collini (Cambridge: CUP, 1993), p. 46.

8. There were many contemporary cartoons in Punch, which Hale White was fond of collecting (hence the old man listening to the Jackass outside his door) which were quite merciless in their depictions of Colenso, Bradlaugh

and priests. See: James R. Moore.

9. Holyoake, p. 294.

10. Holyoake, p. 291.

11. Holyoake, p. 293.

12. W. Hale White, 'Ixion,' The Secular Review (Sept. 11, 1880).

13. W. Hale White, 'The Priesthood Versus The Human Mind and Science,' The Exeter and Plymouth Gazette (Jan. 6, 1864). Letter.

14. P. M. H. Bell, Distestablishment in England and Wales (London: SPCK, 1969), p. 19.

15. Gerald Parsons, Religion in Victorian Britain. Vol. II Controversies (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988), pp. 148-149.

16. S. L. Ollard, A Short History of the Oxford Movement (London: A. R. Mowbray, 1932), p. 163; hereafter cited as Ollard.

17. Ollard, p. 191.

18. Roy Jenkins, Gladstone (London: Macmillan, 1995), p. 383.

19. Elaine Kaye, The History of King's Weigh House Church (London: Allen and Unwin, 1968), p. 62; hereafter cited as Kaye.

20. Despite being given two honorary doctorates Thomas Binney insisted on being as known as plain 'Mr' Binney. See; Herbert S. Skeats and Charles S. Miall, History of the Free Churches of England (London: Alexander and Shepheard, nd), p. 618; hereafter cited as Skeats and Miall.

21. Kaye, p. 52.

22. Kaye, p. 48.

23. Skeats and Miall, p. 480.

24. R. Tudor Jones, Congregationalism In England (London: Independent Press LTD, 1962), pp. 215-216; hereafter cited as Tudor Jones.

25. Holyoake, p. 306. This phrase can be found as a heading in Holyoake's index.

26. In a footnote in his history of Congregationalism, Tudor Jones cites a work: Memoir of Thomas T. Lynch by William White. This is certainly Hale

White's father and yet the reference has appeared in no other study of the Whites or, to my knowledge, of 19th century Dissent. This is probably a short pamphlet although no publisher is given, only the date, 1874, significantly the year of Binney's death. Hopefully, one day, this hitherto unknown work will turn up. For the footnote see: Tudor Jones, p. 250.

27. Kaye, p. 79.

28. Thomas Binney, Sir Thomas Fowell Buxton. A Study for Young Men (London: James Nisbet, 1853), pp. 150-151. Binney also wrote a few works under the pseudonym of 'John Search'.

29. Charles Dickens, 'Letter to Prof. Cornelius Felton. March 2, 1843' The Letters of Charles Dickens Vol. III, ed. Madeline House, Graham Storey, and Kathleen Tillotson (Oxford: OUP, 1974), pp. 453-455; hereafter cited as CD lett. The letter does not appear in later editions of Forster's Life of Charles Dickens. Peter Ackroyd mentions the controversy surrounding Dickens's description of the funeral but does not discuss the identity of the minister. See: Ackroyd, pp. 407-408. Dickens was notorious for lampooning the world of Dissent. In The Old Curiosity Shop, for example, Kit tries to convince his mother not to become too serious and heavy-hearted after attending chapel:

> 'I know who has been putting that in your head,' rejoined her son disconsolately; 'that's Little Bethal again. Now I say, mother, pray don't take to going there regularly, . . . [Y]ou'll keep that bow on your bonnet, which you'd more than half a mind to pull off last week'.

Charles Dickens, The Old Curiosity Shop 1840-1841, ed. Angus Easson (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1985), p. 231.

30. CD lett, p. 454.

31. Forster, in order to ensure there was no ill feeling between himself and Binney, printed parts of Binney's complaint in the appendix of the third volume of his biography of Dickens from which this quotation is taken. John Forster, The Life of Charles Dickens Vol. III, 1st edition, (London: Chapman and Hall, 1874), pp. 520-521.

32. Stone, p. 36.

33. John Bunyan, The Pilgrim's Progress 1678, ed. Roger Sharrock (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1987), p. 27.

34. 'I saw great battles reported where there had been no fighting, and complete silence where hundreds of men had been killed'. George Orwell, Homage to Catalonia 1938 (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1966), p. 234.

35. George Orwell, 'Politics and the English Language,' Collected Essays

Journalism and Letters Vol. IV, ed. Sonia Orwell and Ian Angus (London: Secker and Warburg, 1968), p. 163. hereafter cired as CEJL.

36. CEJL, Vol. IV, p. 164.

37. CEJL, Vol. IV, p. 167.

38. W. Hale White, 'Misleading Unions,' The Pilot IV (London: July 20, 1901), pp. 80-81. Letter.

39. CEJL, Vol. IV, p. 167. See also; Alain de Botton How Proust Can Change Your Life, which has a succinct chapter on the need to transcend clichés and stock phrases: 'Clichés are detrimental in so far as they inspire us to believe that they adequately describe a situation while merely grazing its surface. And if this matters, it is because the way we speak is ultimately linked to the way we feel, because how we *describe* the world must at some level reflect how we first *experience* it.' Alain de Botton, How Proust Can Change Your Life (London: Picador, 1997), p. 97.

40. Italo Calvino, 'Lightness,' Six Memos for the Next Millennium 1988, trans. Patrick Creagh (London: Jonathan Cape, 1992), p. 7.

41. Hale White was as uncomfortable with academic lectures as he was with heavy periodicals. He would have approved though of seminars:

> I should like to know officially what the professors do for their money. If what I hear is true they give a course of lectures for their handsome salaries, and as the lectures of one year will with little alteration do for the next their labours are not very arduous. In Germany the professors really direct the studies of their pupils and explain matters to them. Mere lectures are almost a waste of time, as any thorough student knows. All they have to tell can be read in books. (NN, March 4, 1882)

Chapter Five

Literary Writings

In 1881, while he was still writing for the Norfolk News, Hale White published his first novel The Autobiography under the pseudonym Mark Rutherford. In so doing he initiated a series of short novels, each appearing after a gap of about three years, a sequence which was completed in 1896 with the appearance of Clara Hopgood. Four years later, he used the same pseudonym to publish a collection of short stories and personal reflections, Pages From A Journal, followed by More Pages From A Journal in 1910 and finally the posthumous Last Pages From A Journal in 1915. These late collections are of a highly miscellaneous nature; Pages, for example, begins with 'A Visit To Carlyle', continues with some reflections on the passing seasons, pauses to consider the value of 'Faith', makes a defence of 'Judas Iscariot', discusses (among others) Milton, Wordsworth, Byron, Spinoza and ends with the novella, 'Mrs. Fairfax'. These books return the reader to the imagination, the range of concerns and the literary personality which had created the Rutherford novels.

There is something very intimate about the three volumes which make up

Pages From A Journal. Even the titles of various sections - 'Ourselves', 'Belief', 'Talking About Our Troubles', 'Time Settles Controversies' - all seem to speak to a hypothetical reader who brings to the book several urgent questions and private worries. Although such pieces are too brief to offer any definitive solutions to life's troubles, they are all composed, nevertheless, in a spirit of empathy and recognition; to read them is to overhear Hale White thinking aloud to himself. The short stories also embody the same feelings and doubts that are explored in the essays so that, for example, as we read down the index of Pages or More Pages it is very difficult to know exactly which titles are essays and which are short stories. 'Conscience' is a short story, while 'Faith' appears twice, as both a short story *and* an essay.

As well as these thought-pieces the three volumes also include a selection of Hale White's literary articles. He wrote extensively for the periodicals; published two short books about Wordsworth; another about Bunyan and edited several other literary works including his Selections From Dr. Johnson's Rambler and Carlyle's The Life of John Sterling. The literary essays published in Pages From A Journal compliment all of these editorial interests although most appear in these books for the first time. If at the end of The Autobiography Reuben Shapcott felt he wanted to 'represent [Rutherford] . . . in a somewhat different light to that in which he appears now' (AD, p. 121), these writings continue to show the broader range of Mark Rutherford's output.

Many of Hale White's characters are deeply influenced by what they read as well as being puzzled by the indifference of the wider world to the power of literature and ideas. His literary enthusiasm stems from a strong and life-long belief in the transformative power of reading. Rutherford claims he was converted from orthodoxy by Wordsworth; Zachariah Coleman discovered in Byron 'exactly what answered to his own inmost self, down to its very depths' (RTL, p. 25), while Clara Hopgood finds a job in a bookshop and discovers a collection of essays, 'After Office Hours', very similar to Hale White's published journals and written 'in a measure for herself' (CH, p. 81). While speaking to the 'inmost self' books also make connections *between* people, often forming the basis of important friendships, even loves. His literary writings always drew attention to the personality within the text, the living voice of the author. Two writers in particular preoccuppied him.

The Authentic Wordsworth

There are three strands to Hale White's writings on Wordsworth. Firstly, there are the more autobiographical pieces in which he describes the initial effect that Wordsworth's poetry had upon him as a young man, pieces which are to be found scattered throughout his essays and the Mark Rutherford novels. Secondly, there are several articles which mark his contribution to the ongoing research into Wordsworth's life and work; Hale White not only edited a selection of Dorothy Wordsworth's unpublished letters for the Athenæum but he was a meticulous textual scholar. He reviewed and scrutinised new editions of Wordsworth's poems for the periodicals and he published a book on some original manuscripts; A Description of the Wordsworth and Coleridge Manuscripts in the Possession of Mr. T. Norton Longman appeared in 1897, the year after Clara Hopgood. Thirdly, there are several essays and articles in which Hale White attempts a critical defence of Wordsworth; An Examination of the Charge of Apostasy Against Wordsworth was published the following year in 1898 and sought to rescue the poet not only from the charge of apostasy but of conventionalism.[1]

All of these three strands are closely related; Hale White's defence of Wordsworth springs from a strong sense of having been intellectually liberated by his work in his youth. Apostasy suggests that those who see Wordsworth as an essentially middle aged, predictable laureate *must* be mis-reading him, mis-representing him. Similarly, the textual scholarship is another aspect of Hale White's personal devotion - he wanted the public to be able to read the 'authentic' Wordsworth and consistently argued for an accurate, unadulterated edition of his poems. Hale White believed that Wordsworth was one of the few writers who could actually change the way we think about almost everything - religion, nature, love, memory, ourselves. As such, he represented a landmark in Hale White's reading experience and throughout his life he would recollect the time he first encountered his work, as if this moment represented a kind of conversion experience.

Discovering Wordsworth.

> The most important changes in life are not those of one belief for another, but of growth, in which nothing preceding is directly contradicted, but something unexpected nevertheless makes its appearance. On the bookshelf in our dining-room lay a volume of Wordsworth. One day, when I was about eighteen, I took it out, and fell upon the lines -
>
> Knowing that Nature never did betray

> The heart that loved her[2]
>
> What they meant was not clear to me, but they were a signal of the approach of something which turned out to be of the greatest importance, and altered my history.
> It was a new capacity. (EL, p. 61)

Hale White would still have been a student at Cheshunt College, undergoing dry preparatory courses in Calvinistic theology, when he first read these lines from 'Tintern Abbey'. At first sight, this passage in Early Life seems straightforward enough - a case of an apparently free-thinking poet inspiring a youthful, open-minded reader - yet in what it suggests of the relationship between reading and the growing self it is, psychologically, much more complex; 'What they meant' he writes about these lines, 'was not clear to me', nevertheless they seemed to begin a process of 'growth'.

While clearly remembering the very moment he first 'fell upon' Wordsworth, Hale White claims that the poet had a largely unconscious influence upon the way he thought; a reading which worked an unfolding effect upon his mind without him fully knowing it; 'a signal of the approach of something which *turned out to be* of the greatest importance'. Hale White also described this early discovery of Wordsworth in the Autobiography and in both books this awakening experience is seen in the context of his subsequent expulsion from New College. Wordsworth opened new vistas of thought which, once glimpsed, were impossible to forget. It was this new outlook, he claims, which freed him from the dogmatism of the Dissenting tradition, making it impossible to comply with the orthodox creeds of the chapel hierarchy; 'His poems imply a living God,' he wrote, 'different from the artificial God of the churches'. (EL, p. 62.) Considering the lasting influence of Spinoza and the rationalist context of Hale White's expulsion from New College this passage in Early Life constitutes a re-interpretation of his own life:

> The revolution wrought by him goes far deeper, and is far more permanent than any which is the work of Biblical critics, and it was Wordsworth and not German research which caused my expulsion from New College . . . For some time I had no thought of heresy, but the seed was there, and was alive just as much as the seedcorn is alive all the time it lies in the earth apparently dead. (EL, pp. 62-63)

The image he uses here for Wordsworth's influence derives from John's Gospel - 'Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.' (Ch. 12. v. 24) Although the young Hale White may not have been fully aware of these profound inner changes, there is still the feeling that Wordsworth's poetry sowed a patient 'seed' of thought, 'far deeper, and . . . far more permanent' than other influences which he was more conscious of, or admitted to, at the time. The poet represents a return to more fundamental roots of belief.

Wordsworth, however, had always had a strong religious effect upon his readers and there are no shortage of 'conversion' stories; even during his life time Wordsworth received letters from admirers who claimed he had 'rescued' them from utter faithlessness.[3] In his first novel Hale White described a man who actually claims to have been turned from his path as a Dissenting minister by reading The Lyrical Ballads. The whole episode is recounted as if Rutherford was a living experiment in applied reading; Wordsworth is presented as the ultimate cure for the disenchanted, wavering mind, there is a before *and* an after state of reading him. Before reading Wordsworth, Rutherford is becoming bored and uninspired by the cramped intellectual climate of the Dissenting college:

> During the first two years at college my life was entirely external. My heart was altogether untouched by anything I heard, read, or did, although I myself supposed that I took an interest in them. (AD, p. 23)

Having discovered by chance The Lyrical Ballads, the poet enables Rutherford to think and feel again:

> But one day in my third year, a day I remember as well as Paul must have remembered afterwards the day on which he went to Damascus, I happened to find amongst a parcel of books a volume of poems in paper boards. It was called *Lyrical Ballads*, and I read first one and then the whole book. It conveyed to me no new doctrine and yet the change it wrought in me could only be compared with that which is said to have to have been wrought on Paul himself by the Divine apparition. (AD, p. 23)

The kind of language used is very similar to the description of the same moment in Early Life, especially as this is another retrospective account. Rutherford refers us back to his past, as if this first moment of Wordsworthian discovery can never be returned to in quite the same way. The language also has some contradictory yet characteristic elements; he describes Wordsworth as having an evangelical effect, like a mighty voice calling to him from outside; 'the change it wrought in me', but then he compares this to the miraculous change '*which is said* to have been wrought on Paul'. Looking back at his younger self, Hale White seems to realise that he first read Wordsworth with a religious zeal that he is now much further removed from. He both recalls and questions this past with every sentence:

> Looking over the *Lyrical Ballads* again, as I have looked over it a dozen times since then, I can hardly see what it was which stirred me so powerfully, nor do I believe that it communicated much to me which could be put into words. But it excited a movement and a growth which went on till, by degrees, all the systems which enveloped me like a body gradually decayed from me and fell

> away into nothing. Of more importance, too, than the decay of systems was the birth of a habit of inner reference and a dislike to occupy myself with anything which did not in some way or other touch the soul, or was not the illustration or embodiment of some spiritual law. (AD, p. 23)

We can tell from this that, at various times in his life, Hale White has tried to repeat this first-time experience - 'as I have looked over it a dozen times since then' - but it was never quite the same, as it never is. Wordsworth would never be completely new again, only re-interpreted, re-read.

Hale White also appears to be describing the liberating effect of reading Wordsworth; 'all the systems which enveloped me like a body gradually decayed from me and fell away into nothing' - but in the next paragraph he finds *new* systems of belief to 're-create' and live by:

> There is, of course, a definite explanation to be given of one effect produced by the *Lyrical Ballads*. God is nowhere formally deposed, and Wordsworth would have been the last man to say that he had lost his faith in the God of his fathers. But his real God is not the God of the Church, but the God of the hills, the abstraction Nature, and to this my reverence was transferred . . . Wordsworth unconsciously did for me what every religious reformer has done - he re-created my Supreme Divinity; substituting a new and living spirit for the old deity, once alive, but gradually hardened into an idol. (AD, pp. 23-24)

Rutherford's formulations constantly lead him to contradict himself; systems 'fell away into nothing', and yet the Supreme Divinity was 'recreated', substituted, 'transferred'. The 'abstraction Nature' sounds less like Wordsworth and more like Spinoza who is not mentioned in The Autobiography but was Hale White's own new orthodoxy. Even that description of the old life falling away from him is like Bunyan's Christian, losing the weight from his back as he comes to the foot of the cross; losing the weight but accepting Christ.

Describing the Wordsworth-effect in a later essay called 'Revolution', Hale

White is much more aware of this tendency, and a little more cautious in saying too much about it lest he falls into the same trap. When Hale White felt enthusiasm for writers it was natural for him to express this in religious terms of belief, 'awe', 'wonder' and 'glory', language which seemed to carry him, quite unconsciously but inevitably back to the gates of the celestial city:

> Wordsworth holds a singular place in literature. He preaches no sermon; he teaches no definite lesson, and yet a man who devotes himself to Wordsworth and is religious and a lover of beauty will find himself looking at the world in a certain way; it will no longer be what it was without Wordsworth; hills, clouds, sea, and human beings will not be the same. Of no other writer can this be said, at least not so distinctly. Shakespeare is our greatest genius, but he is miscellaneous, and when we have finished a course of his dramas the effect is awe, expansion, but no direction is given to the mind. With Wordsworth the case is different. Something is added to the wonder and the glory of the world, and this addition varies with the temperament of the reader. For a few it is the Godhead; for almost all of us it is a something which demands reverence; the tree becomes more than a mass of fair colour enclosed in graceful outline. When first I read Wordsworth I saw God in Nature. As I grew older I felt difficulty in saying so much. Nevertheless, the 'something added' has always remained and will remain as long as I live.
> (LP, p. 93-94)

In this instance Hale White is forcing himself to take a more cautious view. Wordsworth's poetic vision represents an *approximate* religion rather than a new orthodoxy of 'God in Nature'. Rather like Spinoza, Wordsworth enabled Hale White to hold religious feelings and secular thoughts simultaneously.

Editing Wordsworth.

There is an important critical context to Hale White's account of his own engagement with the poet's works. The Autobiography was published in March 1881, while The Wordsworth Society, the meeting point for all Wordsworthian scholars and critics, had been established in the September of the preceding year, a society which Hale White soon joined.[4] In stating Wordsworth as the root of his spiritual and intellectual salvation Hale White is not only claiming him as his own but doing so at a time when the whole Wordsworthian field was being dominated by a new proliferation of experts and academic scholars.

Hale White reported on some of the society's meetings for the Norfolk News and, typically, he was both highly sceptical and deeply interested in the proceedings. He never enjoyed the atmosphere of conferences and yet he was unable to wholly ignore them just in case something of interest cropped up. Part of one meeting was given over to a discussion of Wordsworth's eating habits:

> I duly attended the meeting of the Wordsworth Society, and I must confess that I was more than ever convinced of the folly of these assemblies. All the papers are read, and what purpose can be served by sitting and listening to people reading for hours documents which are going to be printed, I cannot imagine. Mr. Browning was present, and there was a touch of irony in his silence, while half-a-dozen persons, whose names we hardly knew, were discoursing upon matters indifferent, including what had been picked up from the ancient butcher boy whom the Wordsworths honoured with their orders for mutton and beef. If butcher boys find that their observations upon the families whose areas they visit are saleable in literature, we shall have some remarkable discoveries. While the butcher boy's revelations were being promulgated Mr. Browning, as I have said, was dumb. If *he* would but have told us what were his thoughts of Wordsworth, I should not have grudged the loss of time. I very much doubt whether these new-fangled personal societies are not the cause of much harm, and whether they really promote genuine sympathy with and love for their centre. That they evoke an immensity of vanity is only too obvious.
> (NN, May 13, 1882)

Hale White would have wanted to hear what Browning had to say on Wordsworth as 'lost leader', something in any case, which might have directed the audience back to some discussion of the meaning of the poems.[5] A publication appearing in the August of the same year proved more interesting:

> The Wordsworth Society has published two more numbers of its transactions and amongst them is a most interesting communication from Mr. Bonamy Price which will be of real interest to all admirers of Wordsworth. He says that he was once prompted to ask Wordsworth what the meaning of the famous but mystical line in the 'Ode to Immortality' about the 'fallings from us - vanishings'. Wordsworth explained to him, with great simplicity, but much earnestness, that 'There was a time in my life when I had to push against something that resisted to be sure that there was anything outside of me. I was sure of my own mind. Everything else fell away and vanished into thought'. Considering the popularity of this ode, Mr. Bonamy Price's account of Wordsworth's idealism is very valuable. I may add, by the way, that the first two volumes of the new monumental octavo edition of Wordsworth have now appeared.
> (NN, Aug. 5, 1882)

Not only was this society turning up much new information about Wordsworth but many of its members were busy editing new editions of Wordsworth's works. There were three key editors at this time - Edward Dowden, Thomas Hutchinson, and William Knight. Hutchinson was the nephew of Mary Hutchinson and editor of the Oxford Wordsworth, the same version which is still in print today. He was also an acquaintance of Hale White's who wrote an appreciation of Hutchinson's editorial work for The Sketch. The article also seemed a good place in which to recognise the contribution of all similarly dedicated editors:

> I have not attempted to review Mr. Hutchinson, but merely to make it intelligible why he is here in *The Sketch*. It is, I repeat, because he is an ideal *editor*. If any simple person should be inclined, after what I have said, to take up editing as a profession, let him remember in the first place that he cannot just take it up. It must take *him* up: his subject must seize and possess him, and, although it may appear strange to the author of 'A Purple Passion,' who has depicted such remarkable phrases of amatory emotion hitherto undiscovered, editing demands

> *genius*. Secondly, it demands lifelong prayer and fasting; and, thirdly, it does not pay.[6]

While Hale White championed Hutchinson's genius he was less enthusiastic about the efforts of his contemporaries. The new eight volume edition of Wordsworth which Hale White refers to in the Norfolk News was edited by Knight, a person whom Hale White saw as a bungling rival in the field. It was in the pages of The Athenæum where all these new editions were most thoroughly reviewed by the various scholars, including Hale White himself. Editing Wordsworth was to prove a perilous activity and Hale White particularly prided himself on his attention to detail when it came to discussing the layout and accuracy of the text. The terms of this critical discourse were by no means friendly and Knight was dealt with particularly harshly by Hutchinson and Hale White. Despite Knight's mammoth and lifelong effort to collect, preserve and transcribe every line of Wordsworth through two different sets of eight volumes, Hale White only ever drew attention to his tiny errors. After a damning review of Knight's work Hale White wrote to Hutchinson:

> I have heard nothing from our friend. I suppose he is forging a thunder bolt which will strike me dead.[7]

The need for an authoritative text of Wordsworth was a serious matter for all involved and reputations were at stake. When the final book of Knight's eight volume Wordsworth appeared, Hale White, writing in The Athenæum, was coldly dismissive:

> It is a great pity that Prof. Knight's valuable edition of Wordsworth should be printed so inaccurately. I have just been looking through vol. vi, the last delivered, and I find that in the sixteenth sonnet of the Duddon series a whole line has been omitted so that the sonnet is quite unintelligible. Mistakes in punctuation like those quoted below are common:

> As the dread voice that speaks from out the sea
> Of God's eternal Word, the Voice of Time
> Doth deaden, shocks of tumult, shrieks of crime,
>
> p. 287.
>
> The comma after 'deaden' is, of course, wrong . . . I have not read the edition through critically, but although this volume is, on the whole, better printed than the others, I could give you many more mistakes which I have found in it, and I have a collection of at least a couple of pages of errors which I have casually noted in the preceding volumes. (Ath. March 21, 1885)

Much of Hale White's article gives the impression that such errors were spotted fairly easily - 'I have just been looking through . . .' - but there was nothing casual about Hale White's approach. The correspondence between Hale White and Hutchinson shows that such criticisms were the result of their combined efforts of scrutiny. Hale White would read through each volume, make detailed notes - each supposed error carefully numbered - which he would then send to Hutchinson for further correction, every single comma and full-stop checked and double-checked:

> 10. 349 - xxxvii l. 13 comma after 'deaden'. This is one of the cases in which Wordsworth's punctuation cannot be followed if sense is to be preserved, 'shocks' ie being clearly the object of 'deaden'.[8]

In the case of the mysterious comma after 'deaden' Hutchinson believed Hale White to be wrong. Hutchinson replies to this query in a letter which has to deal with seventeen similar tiny points:

> 10. The comma here is a characteristic point in WWs system. Instead of putting a comma after 'Time' (L. 12) he puts it, to guide the reader to the proper pause and emphasis in reading, after deaden, even though this severs object from verb.[9]

In this way, line by line, comma by comma, Knight was picked over by Hutchinson and Hale White. Certainly a note of rivalry creeps into these reviews as, on one occasion, Hale White insists that Knight owns up to his mistakes. In 1888 Hale White learned that Knight was about to work on his biography of Wordsworth:

> It is more than two years since the last volume [of the poems] was published, and in the preface to it Prof. Knight announced a biography, of which, however, we have no further intelligence. He would be doing no more than simple justice to those persons who have bought his expensive book if he would issue a list of errata, the result of careful revision, and if the biography, with which it might appear, is not forthcoming, the list should be issued by itself, for as it now stands this handsome edition is worthless. (Ath. Nov. 24, 1888)

In 1892 all of Wordsworth's work was to come out of copyright and it was Knight who won the approval of the Wordsworth family, enabling him to have unprecedented access to manuscripts and poems.[10] He set about editing yet another eight volume edition of Wordsworth and Hale White wrote personally to Knight, expressing concern over his aptitude for the task:

> 5 High Wickham,
> Hastings.
> 31 Oct. 1895.
>
> Dear Sir,
>
> Just before . . . Mr. Dyke Cambell died, he told me he was revising the proofs of a new edition of Wordsworth to be brought out by you. You will doubtless remember the unfortunate inaccuracies, the subject of much comment at the time, in the eight volume edition. You and I had some correspondence on the matter and my object in writing to you now is to implore of you not to hand over the proofs to anybody less competent that Mr. Dykes Cambell, to nobody who will betray you as your reader betrayed you before.
>
> I have not the slightest personal interest in the subject. You however have material which nobody else has, and all Wordsworth students would rejoice, myself included, if you could produce a text upon which dependence could be placed. A correct text is of more importance than notes.
>
> I trust you will pardon the liberty I have taken. It seemed to me that the most straightforward course was to address myself to you directly and I am sure you believe my only motive is that we may know what it was that Wordsworth really wrote.
>
> Faithfully yours
> W. Hale White[11]

There is a subtext of 'personal interest' here though. Hale White, by this intervention, calls Knight's competence directly into question: 'You will doubtless remember the unfortunate inaccuracies . . .' There is also that slight hint of envy; 'You however have material which no one else has . . .' And behind it all is the continuing search for the authoritative, Wordsworth, the 'correct text'.

The Description of the Wordsworth and Coleridge Manuscripts in the Possession of Mr. T. Norton Longman also came out of Hale White's feelings of rivalry with Knight and was an attempt to make public some of the manuscript sources he had secretly been using. The book contains no new thoughts upon Wordsworth's poems but is, in the main, a straightforward listing of the printer's copy of Poems in Two Volumes which Knight had made unauthorized use of in his notes for his new edition of Wordsworth. It is as if Wordsworth was being tracked down by rival scholars, each trying to claim him for their own 'possession', each trying to come up with the definitive *find*.[12]

Knight's 'Eversley' edition did follow, the first volume appeared in the spring of 1896. Hutchinson proof read the work and Hale White took it to pieces in his reviews. Hale White's reviews of the Eversley Wordsworth contained more than a few textual quibbles but also contained many of his own opinions on the poet. There are three reviews in all, covering all eight volumes but it was the first article which got straight to the heart of their dispute. Hale White took issue with Knight's chronological arrangement of Wordsworth's work, a decision which, he believed, might alter, significantly, the way in which Wordsworth would be read in the future.

During his lifetime, Wordsworth had chosen an unconventional way of arranging his poems. While some of his headings kept to a particular subject or theme - 'Inscriptions', 'Evening Voluntaries', 'Poems Written in Youth' - others grouped poems under a personal and quite idiosyncratic classification system. Such headings included; 'Poems of the Fancy', 'Poems Founded on the Affections', 'Poems of the Imagination', 'Poems of Sentiment and Reflection'. In the absence of any chronological arrangement it is difficult to feel the progress of Wordsworth's art across the years, while the highly suggestive nature of the headings also makes it difficult to know where particular poems might be found - which poems, for example, express 'sentiment' as opposed to 'fancy' or 'reflection'? In honouring this system Hutchinson not only insists upon the totality and wholeness of Wordsworth's work but he was allowing the poet to be the posthumous interpreter of his own art. He wrote in the preface to the Oxford Wordsworth:

> On this question of arrangement, the Editor is fain to confess, his affections are most humble; he has no ambition to see a goodlier scheme than Wordsworth's. Accordingly, those who purchase the Oxford Wordsworth must needs be content themselves with the works of the poet arranged according to an antiquated scheme of his own devising.[13]

Hutchinson, however, was not completely dismissive of a Wordsworth chronology - his volume did include a brief time-chart of Wordsworth's life - but he believed that it was, as yet, impossible to be completely accurate; even the dates which Wordsworth's gave for the composition of his poems, were, he believed only 'provisionally correct' and sometimes misleading.[14] A meticulous man, rather than risk error Hutchinson played safe. Matthew Arnold, however, disliked Wordsworth's arrangement:

> Wordsworth classified his poems not according to any commonly received plan of arrangement, but according to a scheme of mental psychology . . . His categories are ingenious but far fetched, and the result of his employment of them is unsatisfactory. Poems are separated from another which possess a kinship of subject or of treatment far more vital and deep than the supposed unity of mental origin.[15]

Without any chronological arrangement the sense of the life, the 'kinship of subject' and the intellectual development of the poet is missing from Hutchinson's edition. Knight, who was after all writing a biography of Wordsworth, was especially keen to show the various stages he went through in his life, chronological arrangement he says, makes it possible to trace 'the progressive development of Wordsworth's genius'.[16]

Writing in The Athenæum Hale White strongly dissented from Knight's editorial plan but for reasons which, at first, he is reluctant to face. We can see him in this review lifting a lid upon some difficult questions concerning the relationship between life, art and old age. Torn between his own personal devotion towards Wordsworth's reputation and his need to understand him more objectively, he stumbles through his opening paragraph:

> Our first objection is to the substitution of a chronological arrangement for Wordsworth's own . . . Right or wrong, Wordsworth's system, therefore, although it may not be so much a part of himself as his versification or his opinions, should not be put aside if we wish to overlook nothing which may assist us to comprehend him. (Ath. May 2, 1896)

Eventually he reaches the nub of his argument. To arrange Wordsworth's poems in chronological order is to accompany him on the inevitable path towards an undistinguished old age, leaving some of his best, most radical work in the past. While for Hale White, Wordsworth was, in fact, more complicated and less predictable than his biographers might suppose:

> We expect a man to become (as ordinary men do become) less idealistic as he grows older, but it is not always so. The passion of youth may assume another form in riper years, but it is often even more ardent and more romantic, and in pursuing 'development' we miss what is translated and transfigured, and seize mere external change. It would be easy to show how this general remark applies to what is thought to be the Conservatism and ecclesiasticism of the later Wordsworth, but we must forbear. (Ath. May 2, 1896)

For Hale White, there were really *two* Wordsworths; the inner, self-questioning poetic thinker and the outer, established but reluctant laureate. Because of this, Hale White uses the term 'objective' with misleading effect; he writes about the need to trace the 'objective process' of Wordsworth's development and then worries that we might 'seize mere *external* change' if we pay too much attention to any chronological explanation of his work.

Wordsworth, he suggests, never arrived at a settled stage in his existence and in reviewing Knight's edition, Hale White unwittingly finds the words which most perfectly express his own position as a distinguished, but no less self-questioning, writer. Republican poets may become established laureates, in the same way that radical journalists may also become civil servants and retire to fashionable Hastings, and yet some unchanging vital self-essence remains intact:

> Another objection to the Professor's scheme is that 'development' generally is much too big a thing to handle. It is interesting to know what Wordsworth thought upon a particular subject in 1793, and what he thought *upon that same subject*, say fifty years later; but this can only be found out by putting the two expressions of his thought side by side. There is no even advance or change in him, modifying his opinions on every subject alike, and no man more continually than he startles his readers by the unexpected contradictions which no commonplace development will explain. (Ath. May 2, 1996)

Hale White is defending Wordsworth from the lazy summary of literary biographers; he holds onto the idea of a surprising, contradictory inner-self - 'no even advance or change *in* him'. The argument, which only just manages to stumble out of this review, contains the seeds of Hale White's pamphlet An Examination of the Charge of Apostasy Against Wordsworth published two years later in 1898.

Defending Wordsworth.

In his study of Wordsworth and the Victorians Stephen Gill describes how, by the middle of the nineteenth-century, about the same time that Hale White first discovers him, the critical appreciation of Wordsworth had all but dissolved into a series of sentimental and simplistic appraisals.[17] The radicals - Mary and Percy Shelley,[18] Leigh Hunt,[19] Keats,[20] Browning - had already abandoned Wordsworth - 'the lost leader' - to the welcoming arms of the church and the establishment.[21] Even when The Prelude appeared very shortly after Wordsworth's death it confirmed, rather than undermined, the image of the distinguished old, laureate who died in comfort and peace of mind in Cumberland, the French revolution far behind him.[22]

The first authorised biography, Memoirs of William Wordsworth was published shortly following the poet's death by his nephew, Christopher Wordsworth, the Canon of Westminster. Emphasising his uncle's concern for the Church of England, the Canon seemed to create the poet in his own image and greatly underplayed his literary and philosophical worth. 'Christopher Wordsworth' remarked Mary Wordsworth to Edward Quillinan, 'knew less of Wordsworth's poetry than almost any of her acquaintance'.[23]

Paxton Hood had produced a similar biography with no added background in 1856 and in 1862 appeared Alexander Patterson's Poets and Preachers of the Nineteenth Century, a book which, like many others, described the gentle and *tranquilised* sage of the mountains:

> His lovely little home was the seat of calm, domestic affections; and he, its honoured head, was the somewhat stately, but, notwithstanding, mild and meek-eyed shepherd of the flock. Tranquil, and almost passionless, he sometimes might appear. But sedate solemnity of manner is quite compatible with yearning earnestness of heart; and those who knew him best aver that, when his words were few and his countenance was calm, his inward being overflowed with deep, though noiseless tenderness.[24]

In so many accounts of his life not only were Wordsworth's early radical years almost completely neglected but this settled domesticity was shown as the ultimate aim of his poetic vision. John Cambell Colquhoun also portrayed the true Wordsworth as the wise old man of the mountains, in fact few biographers *could* have said much more, so little was known of the wider picture of Wordsworth's life - the poet seems to disappear behind a cloud of sentimental piety and biographical assumption. It almost seemed disrespectful to discuss the poems in too great a depth; such a discussion might open hidden doors and old associations best left in the past:

> Wordsworth was led by sincere sympathy with humanity, and his intense love for the humbler classes of mankind, to regard the French Revolution as the advent of a new era which would scatter countless blessings on the poor . . . But the excesses, into which the Revolution soon passed, and by which his own friends were destroyed, dispelled these visions; and after this time, chastened by experience, Wordsworth reverted to his natural habits, and resumed the retired pursuits and thoughts which had occupied his youth.[25]

In 1864, in an essay entitled 'Wordsworth: The Man and the Poet',[26] the

Wordsworthian scholar, John Cambell Shairp observed that Wordsworth's critical reputation was 'at the ebb' and significantly it was in this same ebbing year that Hale White took a trip to Wordsworth's grave in the Lake District, describing his thoughts for the readers of the Aberdeen Herald. The article records no dramatic Damascus experience, only a sad feeling of neglect and death while standing outside the church. The poet has only been dead for fourteen years and already it seems as if the true memory of his best work was in real danger of being trampled beneath the weight of his own later celebrity. Rather than paying his final respects, Hale White seems to be waiting for him to return:

> One of my first pilgrimages here was a walk over the hills to Grasmere churchyard, where Wordsworth lies buried. The village is beautiful enough, situated at the head of an exquisite little lake, over which tower Loughrigg and Helmcrag; it is just the place where a man like Wordsworth should have lived and died. Gazing around at the beauty of the prospect, Wordsworth lives again, and is felt to be immortal. Man, though, has done everything in his power in this sweet little place to make you feel mournfully enough the fact of Wordsworth's mortality.. The church belonging to the churchyard is execrable, a dull, stupid, unwashed, uncared for looking barn of a building, looking very much as if it were a most uncomfortable appendage to a very fat living. The churchyard, if possible, is worse. Everything that nature could do for it she has done. She has surrounded it with a slow murmuring trout stream; she has shadowed it over with the eternal hills, and yet it is a mere cemetery, with no more order or beauty about it than about the garden of a house to be let. Wordsworth's grave, although some stones have been placed round it since attention was called, through the newspapers, to its disgraceful condition, seems designed to convey, with a vengeance, the lesson, 'vanity of vanities, all is vanity'. The grass is partly worn off, there is no railing to protect it, and it is all trodden over and bemired by the heedless feet of gaping tourists. There is a most sickening smell of mortality about it. What would it have cost to have put up a neat tomb, to have fenced it in, and have covered the poet's resting place with evergreen turf? If this had been done, the thought that would have predominated when working at the grave would have been that of immortality. Now,

> the doctrine which is dinned into our ears is death, death, when a man is under the earth how speedily the living cease to care anything about him! (AH, Sept. 10, 1864)

Like so many of such visits he would make throughout his life, Hale White describes this one as a 'pilgrimage'. Wordsworth was a figure of faith to him, to visit his grave is a solemn act of remembrance and devotion. What is curious however, is that at the grave side, of all places, he hoped to find evidence of a living 'immortal' Wordsworth and is shocked that the grave has a 'most sickening smell of mortality about it'. Hale White's literary instincts make him want to tend, fence in and preserve this place, keeping the memory of the poet 'evergreen'.[27] His mood focuses the article upon himself, as if he were the only person standing at the spot, the sole witness to the poet's true memory.[28]

The article and that feeling of neglect and abandonment at Wordsworth's grave anticipates the whole drive of what Stephen Gill calls 'the Wordsworth Renaissance' in the latter part of the nineteenth-century. In his influential preface to his Poems of William Wordsworth Arnold also draws attention to the lack of real consideration given to the poet's work and, in so doing, invited others to take up the cause:

> Wordsworth has been in his grave for some thirty years, and certainly his lovers and admirers cannot flatter themselves that this great and steady light of glory as yet shines over him. He is not fully recognised at home, he is not recognised at all abroad . . . But taking the roll of our chief poetical names, besides Shakespeare and Milton . . . I think Wordsworth's name deserves to stand, and will finally stand, above them all.[29]

A concerted effort was eventually made by members of the Wordsworth Society to ensure that anyone either coming to his grave or his works did so with a far greater knowledge of what the poet stood for. 'Wordsworth', continued Arnold, 'is something more than the pure sage master of a small band of devoted followers and we ought not to rest satisfied until he is seen to be what he is'.[30]

Hale White was in his late sixties when he wrote Apostasy. He had retired from the Admiralty and was living in High Wickham, the beautiful cliff-top houses overlooking Hastings. Externally he might have appeared to be an elderly, mellowing widower, his novels all completed, his radical journalism long in the past. Apostasy, however, insists upon a much more complex, more richly layered view of literary genius and opens with a straightforward declaration of intent:

> There is a widely-spread opinion that Wordsworth towards the middle of his life underwent a great change, and that he apostasised from his earlier faith both in politics and religion. I shall attempt to show that there is no real foundation for this charge against him. (Apostasy, p. 1)

In his book Hale White stresses the undercurrents of being, rather than surface opinion. Perhaps Wordsworth became externally reactionary in his opinions; Apostasy, however, wants to show that there is 'no *real* foundation for this charge'. This notion of 'real foundation' is important; the word 'foundation' is a brief concession to the charge - while 'real' undermines it, claiming there are deeper, *more* real, more lasting emotional foundations.

In his preface to his Life of Wordsworth Knight retells an anecdote handed down by Hartley Coleridge which is pertinent to this discussion, even though it is likely to be a myth. In later life Wordsworth was walking to Lord Lowther's to lunch. He comes across a wall blocking the public right-of-way, placed there by a new landowner, a friend of Lowther's. The poet kicks down the wall and then owns up to his vandalism in the face of the very landowner whose property he had just ruined:

> I am the person who broke down your wall, and I shall do it again; for there is an ancient right of way through that field, a right of the people, and I am determined to maintain it. You bought your property with the right attached to it, and, Conservative as I am, scratch me thus and you'll find the radical underneath.[31]

For Hale White, the radical Wordsworth was to be found 'underneath' appearances. Even more confusing, however, is the fact that this apparently radical act is really a Conservative kick towards an older order. What Wordsworth claims as 'the radical underneath', Hale White might describe as the 'passion of youth' assuming 'another form'. What is still important, however, is the idea of the Wordsworth *within* Wordsworth; the constant inner-self continually resurfacing.

Apostasy was written in two halves. The first part deals with Wordsworth's politics and the second with his religious views. Significantly it is the latter which comprises most of the book. Out of the book's sixty pages the politics takes up only nineteen, yet we shall see that these two halves are thoroughly related and in a sense, tell the same story. Hale White's introduction to the first part takes him straight to the central point:

> We will, in the first place, consider the political accusation - that, although in his younger days he was a republican, or even revolutionary, he afterwards became a commonplace Tory. (Apostasy, p. 1)

As in 'real foundation' Hale White wants to show that Wordsworth was no 'commonplace' Tory. The book is not a repudiation of Wordsworth's politics but an explanation of it; in a way, a kind of rescuing of the poet from himself.

Apostasy is a difficult work to unravel if only because there is no single line of argument to follow. It is really made up of many separate arguments all used to counter the charge and the final conclusion, as we shall see, does not really answer the original charge but redefines it.

The books starts by pointing out that in later years Wordsworth reprinted many of his earlier, more Liberal works. The Descriptive Sketches, for example, was revised in 1836; although the first version was slightly altered Hale White writes:

> Meanwhile, we must admit, as a fair inference, that Wordsworth's opinions in 1793 could not have been totally condemned by him in 1836. The two lines:
>
> 'May in its progress see thy guiding hand,
> And cease the acknowledged purpose to withstand'
>
> were added in 1836. (Apostasy, p. 3)

Certain ideas which should belong to certain earlier stages in Wordsworth's history keep cropping up in unexpected moments of later poetry. But even in looking at the earlier radical Wordsworth, Hale White is not so sure that this represents his true self, nor his best. In seeking to maintain Wordsworth's integrity Hale White tries to understand what lies *behind* his early radicalism as well as his later Conservatism. Of the letter to the Bishop of Llandaff, Hale White believed that:

> His republicanism, however, is mainly a statement of general principles, and he does not recommend immediate action. It is one thing to accept a proposition and it is another to have such confidence in it that we are compelled to go out in the street and make it real. Wordsworth was a thinker, and he may have been conscious of the doubt which infects all abstractions, the suspicion that there are limitations and equally valid counter-abstractions. (Apostasy, p. 4)

There is that inference that real politics is about *action* not abstract thinking.

'General principles' remain only that unless we 'make it real'.

Hale White continues by quoting many pieces which are intended to explain Wordsworth's opposition to Buonaparte and his disillusion with the French revolution. Wordsworth's rejection of Whig politics derived from the violence and 'hollow words' he encountered in France:

> I think we must now admit that, so far as the French Revolution was concerned, Wordsworth did not turn traitor. We may be so amazed at Buonaparte's military skill as to forget that it was used for a person and not for a noble cause or we may thank God for him because he overturned the thrones of Europe; but we cannot honestly accuse Wordsworth of being an enemy to freedom because he rejoiced over Waterloo. (Apostasy, p. 11)

Typically, for Hale White, the fortunate consequences of the war do not excuse Napolean's meglomania. However complicated Wordsworth's changing allegiances, Hale White is trying to persuade his readers that Wordsworth was not so much an active Tory as a dissenting left-winger - 'we must admit that', 'we cannot honestly accuse'.

Hale White can understand Wordsworth's break with barbarism but after this his argument becomes more contradictory. Wordsworth's opposition to political Reform is explained in terms which are completely at odds with Hale White's own way of thinking:

> Rightly or wrongly, he had come to the conclusion that in an uncontrolled democracy, to which he foresaw the Reform Act must lead, power would be wielded by unreflecting masses and the units would not act individually. (Apostasy, p. 13)

While conceding Wordsworth the right to use his own political judgement Hale White distances himself from his conclusions. 'Rightly or wrongly' were terms Hale White never used in his own political writings. Without passing any judgement on Wordsworth's view, Hale White suggests that, at his best, he was not really a political poet at all but an emotional, moral voice, one who speaks most strongly to the worries and beliefs of individual lives:

> Perhaps the deepest root of Wordsworth's indifference to popular 'aspirations' was the conviction that individuals must be changed before the condition of the people as a whole can be improved . . . He affirmed that 'the world is running mad with the notion that all its evils are to be relieved by political changes, political remedies, political nostrums - whereas the great evils, sin, bondage, misery lie deep in the heart, and nothing but virtue and religion can remove them'. (Apostasy, pp. 15-16)

For Hale White, Wordsworth was a disillusioned radical with nowhere to go once the horrors of the revolution had been experienced and democracy became edged with fears of mob-rule.[32] Having lived through the turbulence of the 1860s himself, Hale White could understand something of Wordsworth's position. Rather than building a total defence of Wordsworth's Conservatism, Hale White offers a sympathetic and historical *explanation* of it.

In the second half of Apostasy Hale White defends Wordsworth's religious beliefs. First of all he takes on Coleridge who, in a letter to Allsop criticised Wordsworth for the vulgar religion of his later publications, what Coleridge called the 'vague misty, rather than mystic, confusion of God with the world, and the accompanying nature-worship' (Apostasy, p. 20). While stating that this letter was 'unworthy' of Coleridge, Hale White in turn criticises Coleridge for expecting a more formal, philosophically outlined system of belief. For Hale White belief and faith were matters of deep rooted feeling, not Coleridge's meticulous philosophical enquiry:

> Whatever Wordsworth's theology may have been in later years, he did not spend half his life in attempting to find a philosophy in it. He could not have written five treatises on the Logos and the Logos alegos. Grant all that is said about his submission to orthodoxy, it was nothing but acceptance, and if it is to be

> condemned, much more to be condemned is Coleridge's attempt to interpret the Bible and the catechism by Kant and Schelling, and put upon plain statements of the church creeds meanings which they were never intended to bear . . . It was this determination to justify theology by the intellect which made Coleridge such a sad object to Carlyle. (Apostasy, p. 22)

Wordsworth's orthodoxy was, for Hale White, 'nothing but acceptance'. To criticise conventional religion from a philosophical standpoint was mistaken and probably confused. The point was an important one for him to make. After his friend Mabel Marsh read Apostasy, Hale White sent her the following note:

> Mabel,
>
> I am glad you have read *The Prelude* and glad that you were urged to do so by my little book. Odd, that not a single critic - and I have received a few notices - has taken the smallest notice of the only point in the book which is worth anything, the justification of Wordsworth's indeterminate attitude towards religious matters.[33]

In his fourth preface to the Ethic Hale White tells the story of Spinoza's attitude to his landlady's churchgoing:

> His landlady asked him once whether he believed she could be saved in the religion she professed. He replied, 'Your religion is a good one, you need not look for another, nor doubt that you may be saved in it, provided, whilst you apply yourself to piety, you live at the same time a peaceable and quiet life'.
> (Ethic IV, p. xviii)

The story appears again in Apostasy, as if Spinoza is called in as a witness:

> Genuine convictions much more discordant than any which [Wordsworth] held are to be found side by side in honest men. Spinoza's philosophy is strict, but even Spinoza declared *revelationem maxime necessariam fuisse* . . . and told his landlady that her religion was a good one and not to look for another. (Apostasy, p. 62)

That inherent sense of what is 'good', for Spinoza, was more important than the outward forms in which 'goodness' is expressed by any religion. Coherent belief systems were less essential than one's basic humanity and Wordsworth's orthodoxy, for Hale White, was more an indication of the latter.

Hale White goes on to discuss Wordsworth's religious doubt in The Prelude, as if to test whether doubt is more fundamental to the poet than certainty. This in turn leads him on to a discussion of Wordsworth's temporary acceptance of Godwin's ideas. Hale White sees this as a reaction to the shifting political climate:

> The declaration of war against France in 1793 and his consequent hatred of the established political creed drove him to a general reconstruction of creeds by Reason alone. He was -
> 'Pleased with extremes, nor least
> With that which makes our Reason's naked self
> The object of its fervour.' (Apostasy, p. 23)

In his essay 'Godwin and Wordsworth' Hale White believed these extremes of ideology represented a kind of mental illness:

> Hypchondriacal misery is apt to take an intellectual shape. The most hopeless metaphysics or theology which we happen to encounter fastens on us, and we mistake for an unbiased conviction the form which the disease assumes. The *Political Justice* 'found in Wordsworth the aptest soil for germination; it rooted and grew rapidly. (MP, p. 210)

Hale White rejects the 'layer cake' version of Wordsworth's life in which Godwinian radicalism is seen as the true basis and the later, more conservative ideas, deposited on top of it. Instead of representing Wordsworth's considered beliefs - Godwin's anarchy becomes the expression of personal unhappiness. Hale White insists that Wordsworth's thought was not an abstract construction, like Godwin's, but had grown from within his daily life. His ideas were not merely received, like a dogma, but discovered by Wordsworth, step by step:

> He possesses a rule by which for fifty years he can live. This rule, however, is one peculiar to himself, and is not coincident with

> that of any church or sect. It is as true of his religion as it is of his politics, that the line of his convictions cuts across recognised lines, and that at one moment we find him within the authorised limit and at another far beyond it. (Apostasy, p. 26)

This idea of the 'inner rule' is fundamental to the argument of Apostasy, and shows more clearly than any other writing why Wordsworth mattered so to him:

> He believes there are presentations, perceptions which if we like we can reduce to nothings, but are nevertheless realities - in fact, the essential realities of life. He goes very little further than this: for him it is enough, and he leaves each man to obtain for himself what increase of definiteness he needs. (Apostasy, p. 33)

What emerges more than anything from Apostasy is that Wordsworth was the poet who inspired Hale White himself to become a writer, not just a thinker but a *writer*, someone who was always looking and reflecting about what was there before him, or even within him. Here he talks about the 'presentations, perceptions' which are 'the essential realities of life'. The above passage describes the incitement to writing which Wordsworth carries, like a faith. Wordsworth was about *looking* at the world and thinking through the eyes, any dogma which could be found in his later works was merely there as a result of not looking:

> One more remark about 'Ecclesiastical Sketches'. They are dull but their dullness is significant, because although Wordsworth was so far misled as to suppose that such material as the Commination Service and Dr. Sacheverell could be transmuted into poems, he does not attempt to get up any fervour over it. He does not whip up his feelings, and there is less emotion in the 'Sketches' than in his addresses to kittens and butterflies. He felt less emotion and was too honest to manufacture it.
> (Apostasy, p. 55)

The original question about Wordsworth's descent into orthodoxy is redefined - *as an insignificant one*; 'It was nothing but acceptance'. Wordsworth only mattered to Hale White when his writing came out of the real - began with the real, not the Commination Service. Hale White quotes a late Wordsworth poem, from 'Memorials of a Tour in Italy, 1837,' about a cuckoo he heard at Laverna:

> This little poem may not be of much value, but it shows how unaffected Wordsworth is by ordinary associations, and how he makes his own. The simple cuckoo becomes the great Christian prophet, and spring is the advent of our Lord. The common distinction between sacred and profane is nothing to him. (Apostasy, p. 58)

In his essay, 'Revolution', Hale White said the man who devotes himself to Wordsworth will find himself '*looking* at the world in a certain way'. (LP, p. 93) Apostasy also stresses the clear associations which exist in Wordsworth's poetry between the visual, palpable world and his feelings about it. It was futile then to see Wordsworth as fitting into any total theological category - his surface opinions seemed so at odds with his writerly instincts, which Hale White completely adhered to and admired. Hale White held on to this idea so firmly that it provoked his most definitive statements of literary criticism:

> He is a man of such mark that all cultivated men and women feel that they have something to say about him, and so they take up 'Lucy Grey' and '1815' and pass, summing him up in a phrase, 'inspired poet, dullest of renegades'. The antithesis does not exist, and could not have existed; but it saves them much trouble, not only in criticism and conversation, but in their thinking. It is also seductive, because it is so much more *brilliant* to shut up a man like Wordsworth in a formula than to confess we can but put down a point here and there which cannot be connected by any circumscribing outline. (Apostasy, p. 62)

Hale White's own literary essays always evoke caution, as well as humility, before the subject. Anything to prevent that blocking-off of ideas and feelings.

This passage, and many other similar passages in Hale White's writings on books, is also suspicious, and more than a bit cross, with those who use literature as a display of their own cleverness. Such formulas 'save them the trouble, not only in criticism and conversation, but in their thinking'. This passage could belong to any of Hale White's critical essays; he needs it the most, though, in defending the integrity of Wordsworth.

Most of Hale White's literary writings draw strength from their sense of the whole life of the writer; the life held within their words. For this reason some of his most compelling essays recount an actual journey made to the site of an author's birth, lodgings or grave. Pages From a Journal begins with the memory of 'A Visit to Carlyle in 1868', while Last Pages includes 'Notes on Shelley's Birthplace' as well as 'George Eliot As I Knew Her'. In 1899 he visited the Quantocks and wandered, for a few days, in the footsteps of Wordsworth and Coleridge, noting his thoughts on their work as he went:

> Woke very early the next morning and went down to Alfoxden House, where Wordsworth and Dorothy lived a century ago. Here also came Coleridge. It was almost too much to remember that they had trodden those paths. I could hardly believe they were not there, and yet they were dead - such a strange overcoming sense of presence and yet of vanishedness.
> (MP, p. 186)

The second edition of Pages From a Journal included a description of a lecture on 'Little Nell' supposedly given to the Hesperus Club at Hazelhurst. Although this club seems to have been expecting a more historical and blankly informative discussion, Rutherford insists on talking about the emotional power of Dickens's works, as if Dickens was still alive in what he wrote. Rutherford pays homage to the inner strength Dickens saw in the most ordinary, unknown people; 'What Dickens wrote he felt, every line of it'. (PJ, p. 312) Maclean is right in stating that, despite being a meticulous reader, Hale White always kept close to his personal feelings and thoughts in his essays. Yet what seems like a spontaneous critical response is really the result of a continued imaginative absorption of the writer's life and voice:

> He had read over and over again all that Wordsworth had written until he had drawn the poetry so closely into his being that his commentary, while always exquisite in it its scholarship, often seems the effect of intuition.[34]

Hale White's only other full-length study is of Bunyan, the writer who not only had such a powerful influence upon his religious thinking but who was closely associated with Bedford itself. To write about Bunyan was tantamount to going home - a journey which offered a whole set of critical problems which the Romantics did not.

Bunyan

In 1904 Hale White's longest critical study, John Bunyan, was published.[35] Few other writers, one would think, would have been as suited to the task; when reading Bunyan, Hale White was on home territory. Yet in a letter to Philip Webb he writes:

> I was asked two years ago to write it and I refused, knowing that I was unfitted for the task. Some time afterwards the invitation was renewed. The publisher said that I was Bedford born and bred, knew the country well, that through my Puritan ancestors I was in sympathy with Bunyan, &c., &c. I had in my desk a paper, not published, although written a long while back, on *The Pilgrim's Progress*, and I thought I would try to add to it. The present volume is the result . . . To say that I did not enjoy my little labour would be untrue. I *did* enjoy it, and naturally all the more because Elstow and the Ouse and in a measure the temper of the man are in my blood. (LTF, pp. 327-328)

Why, then, did Hale White at first refuse the offer to write this book, feeling 'unfitted' for it, even though subsequently he admits 'I did enjoy it'? Why was his unpublished paper on The Pilgrim's Progress hidden away for so long in his desk drawer? In what he says to Webb, Hale White seems to have both consigned Bunyan to the past while simultaneously holding him to his heart, the temper of the man is 'in my blood.' From the outset the book was defined by Hale White's reluctance to return to Bunyan; his devotion, as we shall see, pulling him in two different ways, simultaneously.

There was certainly no shortage of readable information about the man at the time Hale White's John Bunyan appeared. John Brown, the minister of the Bunyan Meeting in Bedford had written the standard late-Victorian life of John Bunyan, a book of which Hale White gave a favourable review in one of his columns, despite the fact that there had been real religious differences between the two men in the past:[36]

> Mr. Brown of Bedford, is a man of much ability, who has devoted as great deal of time to the history of Bunyan, and collected a number of most precious facts about Bunyan, all first-hand. The minutest details relating to Bunyan are of larger magnitude than most historical events which are signalised with cannon of the largest type in the *Daily Telegraph* placards.[37]

Froude had also contributed his Life of Bunyan in the 'English Men of Letters' series, a work, which Nicholl writes, 'exasperated' Hale White who said, when it first appeared:

> Mr. Froude was most unfitted to write the *Life of Bunyan*. Anybody reading his Bunyan and knowing nothing about the author of the *Pilgrim's Progress*, save what Mr. Froude tells him, would imagine that Bunyan was a spiritually dyspeptic person, overhung all his days with the gloomy shadow of insoluble Calvinism. That is what Mr. Froude would have been had he, to use an Irishism, been Bunyan. But Bunyan was really nothing of

> the kind. He was one of the sunniest of souls. He had his conflicts and his troubles, but, as Richter says, the blue sky above him was bigger than all the clouds therein.[38]

Between the devout Brown and the purely humanist Froude it might have seemed there was too little space left for a new study. Certainly the opening sentence of Hale White's study is apologetic: 'an excuse may be offered for *another* word or two upon Bunyan'. [my italics] (Bunyan, p. 1) The publisher who eventually persuaded Hale White to work on the book, however, was W. Robertson Nicholl (otherwise known as 'Claudius Clear') who was editing a series of 'Literary Lives' for Hodder. Bunyan was to be considered as a *literary* writer, a distinction conferred upon, among others, Matthew Arnold, Ibsen and Edmund Gosse in the same series.

Nicholl had been Hale White's most enthusiastic critic and had written key articles about each of the Rutherford novels as they appeared (as well as one surprisingly mean-spirited review which condemned Clara Hopgood as 'immoral').[39] He had also interviewed Hale White at length about his background and Nicholl's Memories of Mark Rutherford was one of the first biographical essays about Hale White himself.[40] Nicholl wrote that Hale White's Bunyan 'cost him more labour than any other of his works'.[41] As Nicholl was aware, every single one of Hale White's novels had been, in some way, about Bunyan and Puritanism. The Rutherford novels not only reflect his intellectual differences from his Puritan ancestors, but they express Hale White's basic attachment to their religious instincts - the same contradiction which would inform every page of his John Bunyan.

In introducing Bunyan's literary life Hale White was following a common format; a first biographical chapter, an introduction to the personal writings and succeeding chapters on the major works, including the sermons, yet he also held a lot of himself back in the process. Much of the book is given over to a précis and summary of Bunyan's works; Hale White's own thoughts only surface at certain important moments when he felt he *had* to say something either as a defence or an explanation of the work. Yet this is the same for all of his shorter literary writings; Hale White was reluctant to interpret books which he felt spoke best for themselves, as he explained to Webb:

> Friends and critics have complained that I have given too much of Bunyan himself. My theory has always been that if you really wish to exhibit a great man you should let *him* speak. If you wish to use him as a text for a sermon in which to display your own cleverness, the case is altered. (LTF, p. 328)

It is not quite appropriate therefore to label Hale White as a Bunyan 'critic' just because he wrote about him. There is no actual systematic thinking-through of Bunyan in Hale White's writings, he is just *there* on every page, an inner force pushing through the language. Hale White, as he says here, was an introducer - an 'exhibitor' - of literature; he wrote no single essay, and very few letters about the books he disapproved of but always kept to his enthusiasms. His sense of allegiance to his favourite authors also translated, very quickly, into a personal *defence* of their work, as in the case of Wordsworth and Apostasy. The summary of Bunyan's books which Hale White provides was an effective compromise between himself and Nicholl - a way of introducing Bunyan without saturating his works with critical analysis.[42]

Yet for Hale White, Bunyan fitted very uneasily into contemporary England. His very first mention of him was in 1862, writing for The Aberdeen

Herald. A proposal had been made to erect a statue of Bunyan in a corridor of the House of Commons; Hale White could scarcely believe it:

> A more ludicrously unsuitable position could scarcely be found. Imagine the immortal dreamer about the Celestial City, the poet of man's pilgrimage heavenwards, overlooking his own Vanity Fair, and forever beholding the intrigues of electioneering agents and place hunters. For mercy's sake, do not perpetually remind those of us who have to pace those halls of the existence even of such a world as that in which Bunyan lived. It is only by forcibly closing the eyes, and refusing to think upon the things upon which he lived, that existence in a House of Commons atmosphere is tolerable. Raise a statue to him on the sea shore or in a cathedral, in any place you like, which we visit in a vacation, when the House and its turmoils are far over the horizon, and we are once more ourselves; but don't mention him, or anything that is Christian and human while Parliament is sitting. (AH, July 26, 1862)

Bunyan's religion seemed completely incompatible with the political world of 1860s London in which Hale White lived and moved, despite the fact that Hale White himself was there, trying to balance both. Although never erected in the House, this statue of Bunyan was standing in Hale White's own conscience; forty years later he still found Bunyan's moral vision more fundamental than party politics:

> He was not a political person, and did not believe that it was the duty of everybody to be political. He knew his own limits. (Bunyan, p. 62)

He quotes Bunyan at some length on this point, indicating that his works stood for a moral unity which had to start with *personal* accountability:

> Bunyan understood well enough how much more difficult it is to fall out with sin at home than to join a committee suppressing it in the streets. 'To rail sin down, to cry it down, to pray kings and parliaments and men in authority to put it down, this is easier than to use any endeavour to overcome it with good. A sin must be overcome with good at home, before thy good can get forth of doors to overcome evil abroad'. (Bunyan, p. 61)

It is important that Hale White believed that political morality was 'easier' to establish than one's personal moral integrity; home was the true realm of each individual conscience. To establish real 'good' in the soul of the country as opposed to a superficial political consent demanded a more patient, yet more lasting, resilient moral certitude. It also meant that public life, for the Bunyan reader, became a guilty compromise and not the be-all-and-end-all; 'It is only by forcibly closing the eyes, and refusing to think upon the things upon which he lived, that existence in a House of Commons atmosphere is tolerable'. Hale White always wrote about Bunyan with the air of a man with a larger mission, as if he is trying to stretch out beyond the smallness of everyday life into a more profound and serious thinking-space. He is calling out to his roots.

The Bunyan Meeting, which Hale White had attended every Sunday throughout his youth, was still completely dominated by Bunyan's influence when Hale White was a boy, many of the services and styles of preaching unchanged since his day. Bedford, in its relations and character, was embedded in the history of non-conformity and Dissent. Hale White's father, William White, was a lay preacher, a trustee of the Bunyan Meeting as well as a superintendent of the Sunday School.[43] Nicholl was correct to remind Hale White that he was 'Bedford born and bred and knew the country well'.

Bunyan, however, raised a standard of belief for Hale White which was not only insurpassable but which was impossible to return to as the nineteenth-century neared its end. Hale White put this contradiction more passionately in Catherine Furze:

> Had Catherine been born two hundred years earlier, life would have been easy. All that was in her would have found expression

> in the faith of her ancestors, large enough for any *intellect or any* heart at that time . . . Poor Catherine! the world as it is now is no place for people so framed! When life runs high and takes a common form men can walk together as the disciples walked on the road to Emmaus. Christian and Hopeful can pour out their hearts to one another as they travel towards the Celestial City and are knit together in everlasting bonds by the same Christ and the same salvation. But when each man is left to shift for himself, to work out the answers to his own problems, the result is isolation. People who, if they were believers, would find the richest gift of life in utter confidence and mutual help are now necessarily strangers . . . Not so, Christian and Hopeful! for when Christian was troubled 'with apparitions of hobgoblins and evil spirits, even on the borderland of Heaven - oh, Bunyan! Hopeful kept his brother's head above water, and called upon him to turn his eyes to the Gate and the men standing by it to receive him.'
> (CF, p. 189-190)[44]

This is a key passage in Hale White's fiction in which he tries to come to terms with the loss of that largeness of belief which Bunyan stood for, and the loss of the religious community, 'the common form' who believed together. Catherine's religious instinct remained inside her ('All that was *in* her') and found no 'expression' in her immediate world and yet there is that vital connecting thought that she still possesses the moral *remnants* of the departed religion. Hale White was keenly interested in people, like Catherine, who seemed to have interiorised their Dissenting past and were 'so framed', possessing a religious zeal without any secure framework of belief. As if they held a *potential* religion; people who '*if* they were believers *would* find the richest gift of life . . .'

Yet, in recommending Bunyan to a twentieth-century readership Hale White was not advocating a return to Puritanism or Calvinism, or even Christianity. Rather, he was reminding humanism of its religious roots, roots from which it might draw more than a little strength and nourishment and which might still connect with the moral earnestness of others like Catherine and Michael Trevanion.

While seeming to be in 'sympathy with Bunyan' we can begin to see why Hale White also felt himself to be 'unfitted for the task'. His ideal interpreter of Bunyan would have been someone utterly at one with his religion and spiritual community, not dislocated from it. Catherine Furze, despite what was in her, 'stood by herself, affiliated to nothing, an individual; belonging to no species, so far as she knew'. (CF, p. 192) This was always a considerable problem for Hale White - how to best *remember* his intellectual hero when the actual histories and struggles which sustained him have vanished. In another letter, this time to Miss Partridge in 1906, Hale White wrote that a friend of his . . . :

> . . . told me gravely the other day that 'nobody now reads *The Pilgrim's Progress*' . . . nor do I see any reason why they should read it. It is true that the Oxford University Press publish an edition, but that is as literature. The *experience* which makes the *Pilgrim* so great, and to some few so precious, is rare and not now to be expected. (LTF, pp. 249-250)

To read The Pilgrim's Progress from a literary perspective undermined, for him, its urgency, the context of raw life-experience - like reading a swimming manual in a desert. And this was not so much a criticism of others - of the OUP - but a warning to himself not to reduce Bunyan's 'great' book. Hale White was always wary of any tendency to detach oneself - emotionally - from the great works. It is better *not* to read The Pilgrim's Progress than to diminish its message and turn it into an item of mere literary history, a spent-force, a museum-piece, without any inherent worth or vitality of its own. Such a detachment amounts to a betrayal of everything Bunyan stood for. 'It is peculiarly true of Bunyan' he wrote, 'that his great qualities are those of relationship which no one time or temperament can fully unfold.' (Bunyan, p. 1). Hale White's Bunyan not only speaks to lapsed Puritan Dissenters but has a lasting universal appeal:

> It is an inestimable gain that a religion should obtain presentation by genius such as this. We are now, however, beginning to see that he is not altogether the representative of Puritanism, but the historian of Mansoul, and that the qualification necessary in order to understand and properly value him is not theological learning, nor in fact any kind of learning or literary skill, but the experience of life, with its hopes and fears, bright day and black night. (Bunyan, p. 2)

The passage is forward looking, as if, at the beginning of the new century Bunyan stands a chance of being considered afresh in a less dogmatic, more refreshing light; 'We are now, however, *beginning to see* . . .' The phrase 'bright day and black night' also reminds us that Bunyan represented a distinct set of moods and emotional colours for Hale White, a spectrum of feeling, not just a blanket directive moralism. Hale White would continually draw attention to his sense of the man behind the writing.

Through his discussion of Bunyan's works there emerges a picture of Bunyan's character, his language, his resilience. In writing about Lord Byron 'strength' is the word which appears again and again in Hale White's essays, a word he also uses on several pages of the Bunyan book.[45] Hale White continually discusses Bunyan's personality in terms of his physical presence, his strength and power, as if he had personally known him. At the end of the first chapter he describes the portrait (by another White) which is also printed at the start of the book:

> He was not a clown, nor the poor creature whom Cowper dared

> not name, but an aristocrat in the proper sense of the word, a man of strength and dignity, who had an aptitude for ruling, and yet with gentleness. The portrait prefixed to the present volume confirms this estimate of him . . . The face is a poet's, and it is also the face of a man who would be obeyed. It is the face of the author of the *Pilgrim's Progress*, but it might be that of a great admiral or general. (Bunyan, p. 72-73)

This way of thinking about Bunyan is central to the book's argument, because Hale White wants to attribute a toughness and a reality to Bunyan's writings which he believes had previously been ignored. Physical effort and spiritual strength were compounded in Hale White's imagination. Thirty years before, Hale White had been to Bedford to witness the unveiling of the Bunyan statue, the statue which still stands today in the middle of a busy road. He reported on the event for the Norfolk News:

> I regret to say that the new statue of Bunyan at Bedford is a failure, so far at least as veracity goes. The sculptor has possessed himself with the idea of Bunyan as the 'immortal dreamer'. Bunyan was in no sense a dreamer. He calls himself such, but that is a figure of speech. In the statue he is represented in a kind of poetic trance, an utterly impossible mood for him. The true Bunyan is delineated in the picture now hanging in the Bunyan meeting vestry. In this picture he is delineated as a firmly built four square kind of person, with very precise and resolute lips well shut, just what a soldier in Cromwell's army might supposed to be. (NN, June 20, 1874)

Nothing had altered Hale White's conception of Bunyan in thirty years. In the same way that he defended 'the real Wordsworth', 'the real Byron', White's picture showed 'the true Bunyan'. Not a dreamer 'in a kind of poetic trance' but a soldier, a man who would be obeyed. Hale White's Bunyan is 'firmly built'.

In his short story 'Michael Trevanion', reflecting on another Puritan, he admits that 'the present time is disposed to over-rate the intellectual virtues' but argues that 'Centuries ago our standard was different, and it will have to be different again'. (MS, p. 181.) So, he claims in the Bunyan book:

> We read, even the best of us nowadays, in order that we may gain ideas, that we may 'cultivate the mind'. We do not read that we may strengthen the will or become more temperate, courageous or generous. The intellect undoubtedly has its claims, but notions have become idols. It is easier to get notions than to practice self-denial. (Bunyan, p. 237)

Hale White's criticism is not founded on close analysis, like Ruskin's, nor on a sense of the historical culture to which it witnesses - like Arnold - but on an encounter with the whole personality of the writer. Hale White especially admired Bunyan (as he also loved Byron) for his imperfections - his 'black day' - as well as his strengths; 'Up to the time of his first marriage he was a ringleader in all manner of vice and ungodliness'. He continues:

> We may say of men like Bunyan that it is not their strength taken by itself which makes them remarkable and precious, but rather the conflict of strength and weakness. When God adds He subtracts; when He subtracts He adds. He plunges them into despair and then provides them with faith whereby they may get the better of it. (Bunyan, p. 30)

Compare this to a passage on Byron:

> We want to know the whole of him, his weakness as well as his strength; for the one is not intelligible without the other. A human being is an indivisible unity, and his weakness *is* his strength, and his strength *is* his weakness. (PJ, pp. 144-145)

Bunyan then, in his personality, was not unique for Hale White but typical of a certain type of creative genius: 'We may say of men like Bunyan . . .' Typical even of men like Hale White. Of Grace Abounding he writes:

> It is a terrible story of the mental struggle of a man of genius of a particularly nervous and almost hypochondriacal temperament; whose sufferings, although they are entwined with Puritanism, have roots which lie deep in our common nature. (Bunyan, p. 9)

He writes about Bunyan in the same way that he writes about Rutherford; as a man struggling with himself as much as with God when he writes. We should 'early apprentice ourselves to the art of self-suppression . . .' wrote Hale White in Pages (PJ, p. 68), while Bunyan's 'genius by desperate effort and divine help was able to retain its supremacy, and yet it owed much to that which it strove to suppress'. (Bunyan, p. 29) Hale White admired Bunyan for struggling with his own passions and then turning these struggles into allegory.

In place of criticism, Hale White offers reflective summary. In the account of The Pilgrim's Progress he is, for example, arrested by Christian's final crossing of the River 'although he is within a stone's throw of heaven':

> Life is conflict to the last, and this fact ought to be once for all admitted and constantly before us. We shall not be so disheartened if we do not expect that which has never been promised. When we get up in the morning we must say to ourselves that today will be as yesterday; the old tormenting thoughts and images will beset us till we are at peace in death. (Bunyan, p. 145)

Hale White's Bunyan is characterised by that 'we'; '*We* shall not . . .', 'When *we* get up . . .', '*We* must say . . .' He most clearly demonstrates Bunyan's preacherly influence by involving the reader in the life-struggle of Bunyan's works. Beginning with Bunyan's text Hale White launches, almost without our noticing it, into a sermon. The allegory of the 'river of death' is shown in the light of an everyday but no less dramatic experience, such as getting up in the morning with a severe sense of futility, the sense of the old conflicts renewed. Hale White's Bunyan was, indeed, no mere dreamer, but someone resolutely bound to the stubborn realities of every day life; 'We shall not be so disheartened if we do not expect that which has never been promised.'

Bunyan, however, created an ideal in The Pilgrim's Progress; he allowed his Pilgrims to reach the Celestial City. In a Rutherford novel, Hopeful would wade out of the river either to work tirelessly on a provincial newspaper or suddenly die, unknown, in a foreign country, his life incomplete and without consolation. Hale White expresses a note of reticence on Bunyan's moral conclusiveness:

> Bunyan takes it for granted that the life of a man who is redeemed by the grace of God is a pilgrimage to a better world. This, of course, is the leading thought in his book, and it is one which we find most difficult to make our own. We can follow him through all the incidents of his journey; we know the Valley of Humiliation, the Valley of the Shadow, and Doubting Castle, but we are not sure, as he was sure, that the wayfarer will reach a celestial home at last. Upon this subject most of us will hesitate to speak. We may hope and we may even believe, but an unmistakable instinct warns us to be silent. Perhaps, however, without disobeying it, we may be permitted to say almost in a whisper, that a man who has passed from youth to age cannot naturally rest in the sad conviction that what he has learned has to go for nothing, and that in no sense is there any continuance for him. Our faith may have no demonstrable foundation, and yet may be a refuge for us. Our lives are shaped by so-called dreams. (Bunyan, pp. 169-170)

Some of the best parts of the book are when Hale White honestly confronts Bunyan with the very strands of secularism which initially warned him from accepting the task of writing it. So much of the book values Bunyan's 'strength', courage and determination yet here Hale White pauses to wonder at the ultimate fruits of this strength, the fragile vision of a 'better world' which might never come. Yet he is also daring himself to hope that 'perhaps' a good life, led conscientiously and in good faith, might not go without its rewards as it nears its end; this hope is spoken 'almost in a whisper', a tentative hope kept quietly in check.

Rather than a glorious after-life, Hale White's Celestial City is a place of *inner* knowledge, the long hoped-for assurance of the ultimate value of one's lived principles; he hopes that 'a man who has passed from youth to age cannot naturally rest in the sad conviction that what he has learned has to go for nothing'. Perhaps it was Bunyan who made him always think, instinctively, of life as a journey with a fitting end in sight. In not wanting to go out on a weak-willed note Michael Trevanion was, if only for his own final peace of mind, proving his ultimate worth.

As well as Bunyan's moral realism, Hale White has much to say about his language, his distinctive use of English. There is a sense of a basic, plain English coming from a divine source. The very qualities which Hale White admires in Bunyan's prose are exactly those qualities which he uses himself:

> If we take the first 300 words, not of one of his theological treatises, but of his *Relation of the Imprisonment*, excluding proper names, there are only five which are not in the Authorised Version, and these are 'aforesaid,' 'warrant,' 'Bibles,' 'constable,' 'coward' - all of them words in commonest use, and the first is biblical if we divide it. The language of our translation of the Bible is, in fact, sufficient for nearly everything, excluding science, that a human being need know or can feel.
> (Bunyan, pp. 7-8)

For Hale White a sophisticated vocabulary was not necessarily the sign of a sure intellect, in fact it invariably meant the opposite. He wrote of Catherine Furze that 'all that was in her would have found expression in the faith of her ancestors, large enough for any intellect or any heart at that time'. (CF, p. 189) Bunyan presented a constant linguistic challenge to Hale White, the challenge to communicate difficult, deep thoughts as clearly and simply as possible. Hale

White is careful, too, to make that distinction between 'intellect or any heart', between what a human being 'need know or can feel'. Bunyan's language was about instruction *and* feeling, both compounded together:

> He knew how to write his mother tongue with purity and force. This is an accomplishment which even a university does not always impart . . . Properly speaking he has no style, that is to say nothing comes between us and the thing which is in his mind; the glass is not coloured . . . we may learn from him to speak simply and not mechanically. (Bunyan, pp. 235-236)

It is important to see that, quite unconsciously Hale White drifts from 'he knew how to *write* . . .' to 'we may learn from him to *speak*'. It is that spoken quality of Bunyan's prose which Hale White most admired and in so doing he encourages the reader to try to reach his or her own voice, to learn not simply the ways of righteousness but ways of writing and speaking from the heart. Hale White admired any books which actually evoked the real presence of the author:

> This is his greatest service to us. He takes us by the hand and whispers to us, *Is it thus and thus with thee?* and then he tells us he has gone through it all. (Bunyan, p. 238)

Bunyan was spoken English written down. Hale White contrasts Bunyan's style, on the other hand, with a passage from Tillotson and comments upon it in the same way he would pick out bits of weak *journalese* in The Times:

> 'There is one Supreme Being, the author and cause of all things, whom the most ancient of the heathen poets commonly called the father of gods and man. And thus Aristotle in his metaphysicks defines God, the eternal and most excellent, or best of all living beings. And this notion of one Supreme Being agrees very well with that exact harmony which appears in the frame and government of the world, in which we see all things conspiring to one end,' etc. etc. (Bunyan, p. 223)

On the surface, Tillotson's sentence seems fine and yet it is completely forgettable and intellectually loose. Hale White says that; 'The sentences slip down like oil; we are not uncomfortably agitated, intellectually or emotionally . . .' Bunyan however:

> did not really proceed from texts. If texts had caused it, the *Grace Abounding* would not now be alive, pulsating with blood, but dead as a body of Divinity. (Bunyan, p. 18)

Tillotson's writing, is too removed from the person and too indefinite; while Bunyan, 'pulsating with blood' keeps to his own individual tone and rhythm - the heated Lawrentian blood. Hence Hale White's interest in the less familiar parts of Bunyan, his sermons, the transcripts of what was delivered as speech, what was *heard*. A whole chapter is devoted to Bunyan's vitality as a preacher - Hale White is effectively listening to Bunyan's transcribed prose, his voice recorded upon paper:

> The text is, *So run, that ye may obtain*, and of course the object to be obtained is salvation after death; but let us listen to the description of the kind of running which is necessary. It is to be a flying for life, a thrusting through everything that stands between heaven and the soul. (Bunyan, p. 94)

Hale White would often suggest that if the most severely theological doctrines were rephrased they would express the most recognisable truths. This thought surfaces in 'Michael Trevanion':

> [I]t is difficult to find in the strictest Calvinism anything which is not an obvious dogmatic reflection of a natural fact, a mere transference to theology of what had been pressed upon the mind of the creator of the creed as an everyday law of the world. (MS, p. 180)

So in Bunyan he argues that we need to rekindle some epic sense of our everyday lives without the dogmatism of traditional religion. A difficult task, given the power and resonance of the old myths and metaphors of the Bible:

> The Puritan feared God as the Judge of the transgressor. The dread, natural to man of forces superior to him was transformed into the dread of disobedience to a moral lawgiver, and the rules of life were held to be copies of the pattern on the sacred Mount. They were invested with awe, and to restore that awe is now the problem for us. (Bunyan, pp. 241-242)

In Bunyan then we find, most clearly, Hale White's own motivation as a moral writer in an increasingly secular age. Two-hundred years earlier 'life would have been easy' for Catherine Furze. In the twentieth-century the sense of life as an unfolding journey has to be rediscovered, rechiseled anew; 'that awe is now the problem for us'. Hale White concedes that Puritanism has had its day and yet adds, with clear pride in his roots, that 'whatever sweetness there may be in England at the present moment is largely due to it'. Hale White's final paragraph on Bunyan may seem like a refutation of all that has gone before it and yet it is one of the most important, forward looking statements in the book:

> One last word. Puritanism has done noble service, but we have seen enough of it even in Bunyan to show that it is not an entirely accurate version of God's message to man. It is the most distinct, energetic and salutary movement in our history, and no other religion has surpassed it in preaching the truths by which men and nations must exist. Nevertheless we need Shakespeare as well as Bunyan, and oscillate between the *Pilgrim's Progress* and *As You Like It*. We cannot bring ourselves into a unity. The time is yet to come when we shall live by a faith which is a harmony of all our faculties. A glimpse was caught of such a gospel nineteen centuries ago in Galilee, but it has vanished. (Bunyan, pp. 249-250)

Much of Hale White's faith expresses itself as a kind of patience, a way of waiting for something which will probably never happen in his own life time. Catherine Furze also found herself living in an age of transition, a time which was not suited to her, forcing her to become a kind of exile in her own country: '*the world as it is* is no place for people so framed'. Yet, despite the gloom that comes from staring into an unknown, uncertain future, the seeds of Hale White's Puritanism, still tempt him to speculate about a potentially moral universe; 'The time is yet to come . . .'

In dismissing Puritanism in his final sentence Hale White is inciting new ways of living. Puritanism - 'has done noble service', it was - 'the most distinct energetic and salutary movement' - but *not* a blueprint. Nevertheless, the need for an even more 'accurate' moral, imaginative order remained for Hale White, with some urgency, at both a personal and political level; 'the truths by which men and nations *must* exist'. This closing paragraph represents quite a bold weighing up of the vitality of Bunyan with the potential of the present. The passage is even written in the present tense as if he returns the reader, at the very instant of closing the book, to the struggle of life.

Notes

1. Hale White's Wordsworth Articles Published in Various Periodicals:

   1. 'Letter about *The Poetical Works of William Wordsworth* 1882-1889, edited by William Knight,' The Athenæum No. 2995 (March 21, 1885), p. 378.
   2. 'Letter about Knight's inaccuracies,' The Athenæum No. 3187 (Nov. 24, 1888) p. 700.
   3. 'A Good Edition of Wordsworth,' St James Gazette (Jan. 9, 1896), p. 12. This is a review of The Poetical Works of William Wordsworth, edited by Thomas Hutchinson.
   4. 'Review of *The Poetical Works of William Wordsworth* Vols. I-II [Eversley Edition] edited by William Knight,' The Athenæum No. 3575 (May 2, 1896), pp. 575-576.
   5. 'Further Criticisms of *The Poetical Works of William Wordsworth* Vols. I-II [Eversley Edition] edited by William Knight,' The Athenæum (May 23, 1896), pp. 681-682. *
   6. 'Wordsworth's *Convention of Cintra*,' The Athenæum No. 3591 (Aug. 22, 1896), pp. 258-259.
   7. 'Review of *The Poetical Works of William Wordsworth* Vols. III-VII [Eversley Edition] edited by William Knight,' The Athenæum No. 3609 (Dec. 26, 1896), pp. 893-894.
   8. 'Review of *The Poetical Works of William Wordsworth* Vol. VIII [Eversley Edition] edited by William Knight,' The Athenæum No. 3648 (Sept. 25, 1897), pp. 412-413.
   9. 'Review of *Poems in Two Volumes* (reprinted from the original edition of 1807), edited by Thomas Hutchinson,' The Athenæum No. 3655 (Nov. 13, 1897), p. 672.

10. 'Review of *Lyrical Ballads*, edited with Introduction and Notes by Thomas Hutchinson,' The Athenæum No. 3690 (July 16, 1898), pp. 87-88.

11. 'An Accomplished Scholar,' The Sketch, XXIII (Sept. 7, 1898), p. 290.

12. 'Godwin and Wordsworth,' The Pilot III (April 20, 1901), pp. 491-492. Reprinted in MP, pp. 205-218.

13. 'A Note or Two for Readers of Wordsworth,' The Bookman, XX (June 1901), pp. 83-85. Reprinted in LP, pp. 164-171,

14. 'Unpublished Letters from Dorothy Wordsworth to Mrs Clarkson together with an Unpublished Letter to Mrs Clarkson from William Wordsworth'. ed. W. Hale White.

    [1]. The Athenæum, No. 3978 (January 23, 1904), pp. 112-113.
    [2]. The Athenæum, No. 3979 (January 30, 1904), pp. 145-147.
    [3]. The Athenæum No. 3980 (February 6, 1904), pp. 176-177.
    [4]. The Athenæum No. 3981 (February 13, 1904), pp. 211-212.
    [5]. The Athenæum No. 3982 (February 20, 1904), p. 241.
    [6]. The Athenæum No. 3983 (February 27, 1904), pp. 270-271.

15. 'The Scottish Journal of Dorothy Wordsworth,' The Scottish Review XLIII (November 28, 1907), pp. 512-513. Reprinted in LP, pp. 234-243.

16. 'The Text of Wordsworth,' The Nation, X (Oct. 28, 1911), pp. 172-173. This is a review of A Concordance to the Poems of William Wordsworth edited by Lane Cooper.

* This is the only article which Wilfred Stone does not mention in his bibliography of Hale White's periodical contributions and which I have identified myself. It really amounts to another list of complaints regarding Knight's editorship. I identified this article from the original draft in Hale White's handwriting which is amongst the papers in the Brotherton Collection, copies of which were lent to me by Lorraine Davies. It is significant only in so far as it suggests that Stone's bibliography, although near faultless in every other respect, may not be complete and that a few, probably quite minor, articles remain to be discovered.

Hale White's Other Wordsworth Essays.

i. 'September 1798,' PJ, pp. 99-110.

ii. 'Extracts From a Diary in the Quantocks,' MP, pp. 186-205.

iii. 'Godwin and Wordsworth,' MP, pp. 205-219.

iv. 'Revolution,' LP, pp. 88-95.

v. 'A Note or Two for Readers of Wordsworth,' LP, pp. 164-172.

vi. 'The Scottish Journal of Dorothy Wordsworth,' LP, pp. 234-244.

2. The quotation is from 'Lines Composed a Few Miles Above Tintern Abbey,' lines 121-122. William Wordsworth, The Poetical Works of William Wordsworth ed. Thomas Hutchinson (London: OUP, 1895), p. 207; hereafter cited as Wordsworth.

3. Stephen Gill, Wordsworth and the Victorians (Oxford: OUP, 1998), pp. 15-16; hereafter cited as Gill.

4. Gill, p. 234; In the appendix of this book is the membership list of the society as it stood on its dissolution in 1884. Hale White's name can be found on this list. See Gill, p. 267.

5. Despite this complaint, Hale White himself was an avid collector of trivial information about his favourite writers. Once, writing in the Aberdeen Herald, he finds a small cobbler's advertisement, quoting a letter of recommendation for that particular make of shoe, by Carlyle. (AH, Sept. 16, 1871). And then in Last Pages comes the passage justifying such seemingly odd remembrances: 'So long as man is man, he will try to discover the minutest particulars about those whom he worships, and the colour of a lock of hair will often be of more importance to him than the fortunes of a kingdom'. (LP, p. 233)

6. William Hale White, 'An Accomplished Scholar,' The Sketch XXIII (Sept. 7, 1898), p. 290.

7. Letter to Thomas Hutchinson, May 30, 1896, Hutchinson-Hale White Correspondence The Brotherton Library.

8. Letter to Thomas Hutchinson, Dec. 18, 1895, Hutchinson-Hale White Correspondence The Brotherton Library.

9. Letter from Thomas Hutchinson to Hale White, Feb. 15, 1896, Hutchinson-Hale White Correspondence The Brotherton Library.

10. See Gill, pp. 222-223.

11. Letter to William Knight, Oct. 31, 1895, Hutchinson-Hale White Correspondence The Brotherton Library.

12. William Wordsworth, The Manuscript of William Wordsworth's Poems in Two Volumes. 1807, ed. W. H. Kelliher (London: The British Library, 1984), pp. 2-3. In his introduction W. H. Kelliher gives a brief history of

Hale White's Description.

13. Thomas Hutchinson, 'Preface,' in Wordsworth, p. ix.

14. In a footnote to his preface, Hutchinson writes: 'In this matter of chronology, be it observed, the poet himself is little better than a blind guide. Whenever he attempts to assign dates to his several compositions, he frequently errs, and not seldom contradicts himself. Nevertheless, in many instances, Wordsworth's testimony is all we at present have to go upon; and, wherever the date he gives is not discredited by evidence from another source, it has been thought best to adopt it in this Edition, as at least provisionally correct.' Wordsworth, p. ix.

15. Matthew Arnold, 'Wordsworth,' English Literature and Irish Politics ed. R. H. Super (Michigan: Michigan University Press, 1973), pp. 42-43; hereafter cited as Arnold Vol. IX.

16. Hale White quotes Knight in; W. Hale White, 'Review of *The Poetical Works of William Wordsworth* Vol. I & II [Eversley Edition] edited by William Knight,' The Athenæum, No. 3575 (May 2, 1996), pp. 575-576.

17. Gill, p. 30.

18. A. S. Byatt, Unruly Times (London: The Hogarth Press, 1989), p. 97; hereafter cited as Byatt. Byatt quotes Mary Shelley's blunt dismissal of Wordsworth on reading The Excursion in 1815: 'He is a slave'.
See also Percy Shelley's poem 'To Wordsworth' written in 1816:

> 'In honoured liberty thy voice did weave
> Songs consecrate to truth and liberty, -
> Deserting these, thou leavest me to grieve,
> Thus having been, that thou shouldst cease to be'.

Percy Shelley, The Complete Poetical Works of Percy Bysshe Shelley ed. Thomas Hutchinson (London: OUP, 1907), p. 522.

19. After discovering that Wordsworth had been electioneering on behalf on Lowther, against his friend and political ally, Brougham, Leigh Hunt denounced the poet as 'government property'; 'A man's liberty has gone the moment he becomes an official'. Byatt, p. 98.

20. Keats was similarly disillusioned by Wordsworth's political allegiances and wrote to his brother in 1818: 'What think you of that - Wordsworth versus Brougham!! Sad - sad - sad and yet the family has been his friend always'. See: Andrew Motion, Keats (London: Faber, 1997), p. 268.

21. Robert Browning, 'The Lost Leader,' Poetical Works Vol. I, ed. Augustine Birrell (London: Smith and Elder, 1901), p. 249.

22. For the contemporary reception of The Prelude see Gill, p. 31.

23. Gill, p. 32.

24. Quoted in Gill, p. 208.

25. Quoted in Gill, p. 209.

26. John Stuart Campbell Shairp, 'Wordsworth: The Man and the Poet,' North British Review, No. 41 (Aug. 1864), p. 146.

27. Compare this to Watson's more consolatory poem on the same subject 'Wordsworth's Grave', composed between 1884 - 1887:

    'Rest! 'twas the gift *he* gave; and peace! the shade
    He spread, for spirits fevered with the sun.
    To him his bounties are come back - here laid
    In rest, in peace, his labour done.'

    William Watson, 'Wordsworth's Grave,' Collected Poems (London: John Lane, 1898), pp. 1-12. In Hale White's essays there is no sense of Wordsworth's work being completed - if anything, he wants to resurrect him.

28. Hale White ends this article with a bit of local colour; 'The people about here do not think, or do not profess to think much of . . . Wordsworth, and affect astonishment if a person is curious to know anything about him. 'No, sir' exclaimed one man to us, 'we never used to think much of him. He used to go about here in green spectacles, but he never did anything as we know of'. (AH, Sept. 10, 1864)

29. Arnold Vol. IX, p. 40.

30. Arnold, Vol. IX, p. 55.

31. William Knight, The Life of William Wordsworth Vol. II (Edinburgh: Paterson, 1889), p. xv.

32. Hale White's analysis of Wordsworth's politics comes very close to E. P. Thompson's, another radical writer and devout Wordsworthian who felt he had to square the contradictions without betraying the essence of the poetry.

    E. P. Thompson, 'Wordsworth's Crises,' London Review of Books (Dec. 8, 1988), pp. 3-6; E. P. Thompson, 'Disenchantment or Default? A Lay Sermon,' Power and Consciousness ed. Conor Cruise O'Brien and William Dean Vanech (London: London University Press, 1969), pp. 148-181.

33. Letter to Mabel Marsh, July 14, 1898, Letters to Mabel Marsh and Lady Robert Cecil [Typescript] Bedford Public Library.

34. Catherine Macdonald Maclean, Mark Rutherford. A Biography of William Hale White (London: Macdonald, 1955), p. 354; hereafter cited as

Maclean

35. While Hale White's John Bunyan was published in 1904, the actual date printed in the book (1905) is a misprint. Another strange characteristic of this book is its semi-anonymous authorship. Instead of identifying William Hale White as the author, both the spine and the title page only state 'By the Author of Mark Rutherford etc'. Printed inside the book, however, is an acknowledgement: 'I am indebted to Dr. Brown's *John Bunyan* for my knowledge of many facts of Bunyan's life. W. H. W.' The initials 'W. H. W.' immediately gives a strong hint as to who Mark Rutherford is, but without giving his full name.

36. When William White died, John Brown gave a sermon in the Bunyan Meeting stating that his best days had been spent with the church. Hale White refuted this claim in a newspaper letter: 'The Late Mr White,' The Bedfordshire Mercury (March 18, 1882). See Maclean, p. 227.

37. Quoted in W. Robertson Nicholl A Bookman's Letters (London: Hodder, 1915), p. 377; hereafter cited as Nicholl.

38. Nicholl, pp. 377-378.

39. Claudius Clear, [W. Robertson Nicholl] 'Mark Rutherford,' The British Weekly XX (July 9, 1896), p. 185. Hale White's reply to this charge of immorality can be found in: 'Mark Rutherford,' The British Weekly XX (July 30, 1896), p. 232. Letter signed 'Reuben Shapcott'.

40. Nicholl's extended essay 'Memories of Mark Rutherford' was published separately after its inclusion in A Bookman's Letters.

41. Nicholl, p. 377.

42. Hale White was generally frustrated by a lot of literary criticism. When, for example, he wrote to Philip Webb about J. M. Synge, he affirmed his gut enthusiasm above any formally developed literary critique: 'I have been reading Synge's *Aran* (not Arran) *Islands* . . . I have read the book twice and I must read it again. It holds me, clutches me, I may say. It will not let me go. *I am no critic*, but for me it has rare qualities such as I have not found for many a day. Sorrow, sorrow that the man died so young. Perhaps, however, it was as well. He was saved from *becoming literary*.' [*my italics*] (LTF, p. 393) This unconventional and yet utterly sincere attitude may go some way to explain the academic disregard of his work. Hale White wrote without a trace of competition, or even ambition. He was one of those writers who often expressed a deep suspicion of 'the literary establishment,' without being clear as to exactly whom this 'establishment' involved. Bunyan, like Synge, had to be 'saved' from the 'literary' enemy within.

43. Hale White's father, the bookseller, also discovered Bunyan's copy of the Foxe's Book of Martyrs in the shop of a London bookseller named Bohn and managed to buy it for Bedford Library in 1841 for £40. In 1911, looking for money, Bedford sold the book to an American dealer. Hale White, saddened, but not surprised, wrote to The Times on May 29, 1911:

> Sir,
>
> I am the eldest son of Mr. White, the bookseller of Bedford, who bought *Foxe's Book of Martyrs* from Mr. Bohn, and although I was only ten years old when the purchase was made, I remember it perfectly well and the talk about it afterwards. My father obtained the subscriptions. I can declare that it never entered his head that the book would leave the town. It was presented to the Library because it was considered it would be regarded as an heirloom. But in 1841, Bedford was a very different place from what it is in 1911. Most of the inhabitants were native and acquainted with the associations of their birthplace. The majority of the people who live there now come only for the sake of the schools and are gone in three or four years. Bunyan to them is nothing.
>
> Yours faithfully,
> W. Hale White.

'Letter on Foxe's *Book of Martyrs*,' The Times (May 29, 1911).
This is another item which is not is Stone's bibliography having only just come to light and I am grateful to Vera Camden for pointing it out to me. See: Vera J. Camden ' "Thus I Parted With the Immortal Book". Bunyan*'s Book of Martyrs*.' A paper given at the 1999 Foxe Conference, Kent State University Forthcoming.

44. See: John Bunyan The Pilgrim's Progress 1678, ed. Roger Sharrock (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1987), p. 137.

45. For Hale White's thoughts on Byron see PJ, pp. 125-148.
'He was a mass of living energy, and therefore he is sanative. Energy, power, is the one thing after which we pine in this sickly age. We do not want carefully and consciously constructed poems of mosaic. Strength is what we need and what will heal us. Strength is true morality and true beauty'. (PJ, p. 147)

Conclusion

The list of authors who have written about their intense appreciation of Hale White's writing is significant. They are all novelists with intellectual interests beyond the writing of their fictions. This study has already mentioned Orwell but there were several others. Writing to A. W. McLeod in 1912 D. H. Lawrence acknowledges some books sent to him:

> I must thank you for the books. I think Crosland's *Sonnets* are objectionable - he is a nasty person. I think Hilaire Belloc is conceited. Full of that French showing-off which goes down so well in England, and is so smartly shallow. And I have always a greater respect for Mark Rutherford: I *do* think he is jolly good - so thorough, so sound, and so beautiful.[1]

In 1904 Joseph Conrad wrote to Edward Garnett about a review in which Garnett had championed Rutherford's The Revolution in Tanner's Lane as opposed to E. F. Benson's The Challoners:

> It has made me take down from the shelf the *Revolution in Tanner's Lane*. Your stick my dear boy has a queer aspect of a medieval staff already. But it's good and more than good. It's precious wood of straight fibre and with a faint delicate scent.[2]

Arnold Bennett also noted down his reactions to Rutherford in his journals. To the point, yet perceptive, his comments show that he was reading Hale White through a writer's eyes, picking out the chief points of his style. Bennett was especially interested in Hale White's unconventional relationship to his plots and found that he was 'chiefly spiritual and intellectual' rather than a more structured writer; 'I think that he must have constructed as he went along':

> He is fond of sudden deaths, generally caused by chills following on getting wet through. Also he seems to get tired of a story and compresses the important part towards the end into a page or two. He can be slyly amusing . . . He is always getting new, original wisdom, observations on life, character, manners . . . His best contributions to literature are his spiritual stimulation, and his singular wisdom about the conduct of life. All his books are full of both.[3]

It was Arnold Bennett who, in turn, recommended Rutherford to André Gide. The Autobiography found its ideal reader in Gide whose enthusiasm sparked off a brief vogue for Hale White's work in French intellectual circles:[4]

Cuverville, 7 October 1915.

> This evening I finish *The Autobiography of Mark Rutherford*. Wonderful integrity of the book. I do not know any literary work that is more specifically Protestant. How does it happen that the book is not better known? How grateful I am to Bennett for having told me about it! The exquisite qualities of Hale White's style (this is the author's real name) are the very ones I should like to have.[5]

Gide's question - 'How does it happen that the book is not better known?' - is an important and familiar question to anyone who has spent some time investigating Hale White's work while reminding others of his presence. Over the years his name has all but vanished from the literary canon and yet, as this study suggests, he was a key figure, one of those writers who recast the Victorian novel into a more modern, succinct yet no less heartfelt form.

It may be possible, however, to suggest a few reasons why Rutherford is not better known and why the drive to place him at the heart of the Victorian canon is always going to be an uphill battle. The novels certainly are unconventional; what many critics see as their faults - the lack of any solid plot construction, their brevity, their inconclusiveness and their morality, unconventional yet strict - others, like Bennett, argue are their positive strengths. Most studies of Rutherford suggest that the novels were simply ahead of their time and too unusual, too short, to be recognised as great literature. Eventually, however, such a claim wears thin. The survival of literature has always depended upon the work of a few innovative, original artists writing against the odds, eventually making it to the forefront, disrupting the conventional taste. Only the truly mediocre ever complain of being misunderstood.

If Hale White has been overlooked by a myopic literary establishment, then this explanation, however true it may be, still has to be compounded with one other important factor explaining his low key presence on the literary map. It is as if Hale White's very anonymity, his instinctive reserve, always ensured that only a few people with literary contacts (or with a shrewd eye on the periodicals) ever knew *who* Mark Rutherford actually was, thus confirming his reputation as a *writer's* writer. By the time the first biography came to be published (in 1955) The Autobiography was already over seventy years old. In being so secretive about his writing and choosing never to talk about his books Hale White purposefully kept his literary life in the background. As the opening sentence of The Autobiography suggests, he was a passionate and driven writer who, for whatever reasons, presented Mark Rutherford as a reluctant late-comer:

> Now that I have completed my autobiography up to the present year, I sometimes doubt whether it is right to publish it . . .
> (AD, p. 9)

That 'sometimes' is typical of Hale White, making even the 'doubt' an infrequent, unpredictable visitant. The doubt, in fact, *inhabitants* the greater resolve to publish (as the book's existence proves) and yet it still has to be registered, as if the book itself inhabits the doubt. This is one of the most mischievous opening sentences in English literature.

The fact that Hale White only published six Rutherford novels much later in his life may also give the impression that his writing was more of an afterthought rather than a central, lifelong passion - a claim which I hope this study has in some way sought to redress. Had his contemporary readers been able to make the connections between the Wordsworth articles, the Spinoza translations and over twenty years of engaged journalism it would have been more obvious that the Rutherford novels were the fruits of a lifelong commitment which held together so many vital strands of belief, thought and feeling. When Hale White is also seen as a prolific essayist, a man who was continually commenting on his times, his fiction assumes a different shape. All of the novels are, essentially, the work of an imaginative essayist in search of extra space.

Notes

1. D. H. Lawrence, The Letters of D. H. Lawrence ed. Aldous Huxley (London: Heinemann, 1932), pp. 178-179.

2. Joseph Conrad, The Collected Letters of Joseph Conrad Vol. III, ed. Frederick Robert Karl and Laurence Davies (Cambridge: CUP, 1988), p. 162.

3. Arnold Bennett, The Journals of Arnold Bennett Vol. II, ed. Newman Flower (London: Cassell, 1933), pp. 14-17.

4. The edition of More Pages kept in the British Library bears an old trade sticker, on the inside cover, of a Parisian bookdealer.

5. André Gide The Journals of André Gide. 1914-1927 Vol. II, trans. Justin O'Brien (London: Secker and Warburg, 1948), pp. 101-102. André Maurois also noted Gide's admiration of Rutherford while adding a perceptive comment of his own:

   > Puritanism is false, but contains the very essence of something true. It can produce two types of men: the Byron-Gide type, exasperated by the constraints they have undergone and avenging themselves by liberty of action while still remaining deeply imprinted with awareness of the devil; and the Rutherford-Gosse type, men who pass judgement, but still admire, without active revolt.

   André Maurois A Private Universe trans. Hamish Miles (London: Cassells, 1932), p. 27. I am grateful to Nick Jacobs for pointing out this connection with Maurois.

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Primary Texts

1. Works by William Hale White
2. Works Edited, Translated, Introduced or Containing Extra Material by W. Hale White.
3. Hale White's Periodical Writings
4. Hale White's Journalism
5. Original Manuscripts and Special Collections of Papers Relating to W. Hale White
6. Other Primary Texts

Secondary Texts

7. Books About Hale White
8. Selected Criticism and Articles about Hale White in Books and Periodicals.
9. Other Secondary Texts.

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Listed in chronological order. Works originally published under the pseudonym 'Mark Rutherford' are marked with an asterisk.

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An Examination of the Charge of Apostasy Against Wordsworth (London: Longmans, Green and Co, 1898).

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1. Benjamin Franklin	Vol. II, pp. 478-480.
2. Publius Sulpicius Maximus Galba	Vol. III, p. 532.
3. Servius Sulpicius Galba	"
4. Servius Sulpicius Galba	"
5. Aelius Gallus	Vol. III, p. 544.
6. C. Aquilius Gallus	"
7. C. Sulpicius Gallus	"
8. David Garrick	" pp. 562-563.
9. Eva Maria Garrick	" p. 563.
10. Theodore Gaza	Vol. IV, p. 577.
11. Saint Genevieve	" p. 585.
12. M. Antoninus Africanus Gordianus	" p. 677.
13. Marcus Antoninus Pius Felix Gordianus	" pp. 677-678.
14. Gorgias	" p. 681.

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Spinoza, Ethic trans. with a revised preface by W. Hale White, 4th edition (London: Duckworth, 1899).

Selections from Dr. Johnson's 'Rambler' ed. with preface by W. Hale White (Oxford: OUP, 1907).

Thomas Carlyle, The Life of John Sterling with an introduction by W. Hale White (London: OUP, 1907).

Spinoza, Ethic trans. with a revised preface by W. Hale White, 4th edition (London: OUP, 1910).

3. Hale White's Periodical Writings

The two articles marked ✱ have turned up recently in the course of my research.

Hale White preserved many of his own published essays by cutting them out and pasting them, carefully, into his scrap-books. If some of these articles are without page numbers, it is because they were read in these old scrap-books now held in Bedford Library. Fortunately, Hale White always recorded the date and place of publication. There are 107 separate articles listed here and there are probably still more to be found.

'Letter from Robert M. Theobold, Frederick M. White and William Hale White on the expulsion from New College,' The Nonconformist (March

31, 1852), pp. 7-8.

'Birth's, Deaths and Marriages,' Chamber's Journal IX (March 6, 1858), pp. 155-157.

'The Priesthood Versus the Human Mind and Science,' The Exeter and Plymouth Gazette (January 6, 1864). Letter.

'Modern Houses,' The Daily Telegraph (Oct. 16, 1865). Letter.

'Walks Out of London. Caterham,' The Working Man No. 13 (Sept. 29, 1866), pp. 152-153.

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'What Mr. Emerson Owed to Bedfordshire,' The Athenæum No. 2846 (May 13, 1882), pp. 602-603.

'Letter on the use of the term "affect" in his translation of Spinoza's *Ethic*,' The Athenæum No. 2922 (Oct. 27, 1883), p. 534.

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'Stray Dogs,' The Herald (Nov. 3, 1885). Letter.

'Letter on the subject of George Eliot's Respectability,' The Athenæum No. 3031 (Nov. 28, 1885), p. 702.

'A Victory on the Downs,' The Pall Mall Gazette (Aug. 16, 1886).

'Letter about Knight's inaccuracies,' The Athenæum No. 3187 (Nov. 24, 1888), p. 700.

'War Office Reform,' The Times (April 21, 1890). Letter.

'Notes on Turner's Painting, 'The Téméraire,' The Athenæum No. 3336 (Oct. 3, 1891), p. 459. Letter.

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'Dr. John Chapman,' The Athenæum No. 3502 (Dec. 8, 1894), pp. 790-791.

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Association V (Feb. 23, 1895), p. 218.

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'Admiralty Contracts,' The Times (April 2, 1896). Letter.

'Review of *The Poetical Works of William Wordsworth* Vols. I-II [Eversley Edition] edited by William Knight,' The Athenæum No. 3575 (May 2, 1896), pp. 575-576.

'Further Criticisms of *The Poetical Works of William Wordsworth* Vols. I-II [Eversley Edition] edited by William Knight,' The Athenæum (May 23, 1896), pp. 681-682. ✱

'Spinoza's Doctrine of the Relationship Between Mind and Body,' International Journal of Ethics Vol. VI (July 4, 1896), pp. 515-518.

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'Review of *The Poetical Works of William Wordsworth* Vol. VIII [Eversley Edition] edited by William Knight,' The Athenæum No. 3648 (Sept. 25, 1897), pp. 412-413.

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'William Gilbert,' The Athenæum No. 3676 (April 9, 1898), pp. 468-469.

'Review of *Lyrical Ballads* edited with Introduction and Notes by Thomas Hutchinson,' The Athenæum No. 3690 (July 16, 1898), pp. 87-88.

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  [3] The Athenæum No. 3980 (February 6, 1904), pp. 176-177.
  [4] The Athenæum No. 3981 (February 13, 1904), pp. 211-212.
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  [6].The Athenæum No. 3983 (February 27, 1904), pp. 270-271.

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'An Afternoon Walk in October,' The Nation XI (May 18, 1912), pp. 247-248. Reprinted in LP, pp. 32-36.

'Notes on Shelley's Birthplace,' The Bookman XLII (June 1912), pp. 62-71. Reprinted in LP, pp. 219-233.

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'The Love of Woman,' The Nation XIII (June 21, 1913), pp. 453-455. Reprinted in LP, pp. 81-87.

'Revolution,' The Nation XIII (Aug. 9, 1913), pp. 708-709. Reprinted in LP, pp. 88-94.

4. Hale White's Journalism.

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'Below the Gangway,' The Morning Star (weekly column) from February 12, 1865 to July 1866.

'Sketches in Parliament,' The Birmingham Journal, Birmingham Daily Post and Journal, The Birmingham Daily Post (weekly column. Three changes in name occurred while Hale White wrote for this newspaper) from February 3, 1866, to January 31, 1880.

'Letters by a Radical,' (weekly column) The Rochdale Observer January 19, 1867, to March 30, 1872.

'Sketches in Parliament' and 'How It Strikes a Stranger,' (weekly column) The Nonconformist from February 14, 1872 to August 6, 1873.

'Our London Letter,' (weekly column) The Norfolk News from March 2, 1872 to March 17, 1883.

5. Original Manuscripts and Special Collections of Papers Relating to William Hale White.

Bedford Public Library

Bedford has acquired a large collection of papers relating to Hale White which have recently been collated by Nick Wilde. Some of the papers have accession numbers while others, more recently acquired, do not. They are kept, aptly enough, on the shelves opposite the Bunyan Collection. There are several boxes which contain pamphlets, letters and cuttings which once belonged to Hale White as well as a box of letters sent to his son, William, after his death. The most important items in this collection are:

1. Hale White's Four Scrap Books. These contain most of his own periodical articles, each carefully labelled and dated by Hale White (as if he had future scholars in mind), as well as many important snippets of news, intellectual debates and opinion which he saw fit to preserve and which relate, very closely, to his main concerns. Ref. nos. MR37, MR38, MR39, MR40.

2. Letters to Ernest. 1886-1911. A collection of handwritten letters, bound in dark blue, mostly trying to cure his youngest son of homesickness and giving

some advice on the need to build a life outside of work.

3. Letters to Holyoake. This bound volume of manuscripts includes letters relating to the years 1870-80. Ref. nos. MR6/1 - MR6/17.

4. Letters to Jack. As well as many letters sent to his second eldest son (who lived and worked in Spain) this bound collection includes a several letters, (and an unpublished poem which Hale White sent to his daughter-in-law Agnes, the daughter of the painter Arthur Hughes. These letters, more natural than those included in LTF, give a vivid portrait of Hale White's life and family relations at the time he was writing his novels.

5. Letters from Philip Webb. This is the other half of the correspondence included in LTF. It includes many architectural photographs and drawings which Webb sent to Hale White from his travels abroad. Of special interest to those interested in Pre-Raphaelite design and Ruskin's influence upon Webb. Ref. nos. MR10/4 - MR10/37.

6. A Copy of the Catalogue for the Auction of Hale White's Books. This document gives us a very clear idea of some of the things Hale White kept on his own shelves. Amongst the listed treasures is a first edition of the Brontës' Poems. This document can be found in one of two boxes containing several papers and letters relating to Hale White's death.

7. Copies of Material from the Colbeck Collection. A lot of the material held in Canada is held, in copies, in Bedford. It includes typescripts of letters sent to Dorothy White.

8. Photographs. There are a few small photographs which I found amongst the boxes. One of Hale White standing outside his house in Groombridge flanked by his suitcases, waiting to go somewhere; another of him in his study; one of the young Molly White with a portrait of Tennyson hanging on the wall behind her.

9. Two Pamphlets by William White. A published lecture on The Boundaries of Man's Knowledge, and To Think or Not to Think.

10. Notes made by Hale White upon Sir James Fitzjames Stephen's book Liberty, Equality, Fraternity. Annotated by Jack White [Typescript]. This unpublished manuscript is thiry-two pages in length. Ref. no. MR15/2.

11. Letters to Mabel Marsh and Lady Robert Cecil. [typescript]. One volume bound in burgendy.

12. Private Notes on Mark Rutherford by his Eldest Son [Sir William Hale White] This is really another document which hopes to supercede Dorothy Vernon's White's books. It includes a few of Hale White's letters copied out by his eldest son. Ref. no. MR14/1.

Letters in Bedford specifically referred to in this thesis.

Letter to William White, May 3, 1853. (This can be found in Private Notes on Mark Rutherford by his Eldest Son [Sir William Hale White]) MR14/1

Letter to George Jacob Holyoake, July 10, 1865. MR 1/13.

Letter to George Jacob Holyoake, Jan. 20, 1882. MR 1/17.

Letter to Jack, Dec. 9, 1892.

Letter to Mabel Marsh, July 14, 1898.

Letter to Mabel Marsh, Sept. 27, 1903.

Letter to Ernest about Socialism. Undated, but probably written in the 1880s.

Letter from Molly White to Cecily White, Oct. 3, 1924. This can be found in one of the boxes containing several loose papers.

The Bodleian Library, Oxford.

This collection includes two separate volumes of typed notes about their father written by Jack White and Dr. William Hale White after his death. These notes, filed together, were probably intended as a corrective to The Groombridge Diary. The Bodleian also has as typescript copy of Hale White's letters to Thomas Hutchinson. Perhaps most important, however, are 79 letters and postcards sent to the Charing Cross Bookseller, Bertram Dobell, from Hale White. These are mostly requests for books which also include many comments and a few personal notes. This collection, more than any other, tells us about Hale White's knowledge and love of collecting books.

Jack Hale White, William Hale White 'Mark Rutherford' 1831-1913 [sic]. Notes by his second son. [Typescript] Geneva - 1931.
Ref. no. MSS. Eng. mis. c. 443-447.

William Hale White, 'Mark Rutherford' 1831-1913, Extracts From Letters Written To His Second Son and His Second Son's Wife [Typescript];
Ref. no. MSS. Eng. mis. c. 443-447.

Willam Hale White, Correspondence with Thomas Hutchinson.
Ref. no. MS. Eng. lett. e. 123 fols. 173-184.

William Hale White, Letters to Bertram Dobell - 1886-1911.
Ref. no. MS Dobell c. 52. fols. 56-135.

Also held in Oxford are 7 Letters from Molly White to F. W. Challis.
Ref. no. MS. Eng. Lett. e. 123. fols. 173-184.

British Columbia University, Vancouver. The Colbeck Collection.

This collection includes Dorothy White's original manuscript journal entitled 'Hale's Book,' Vols. I-IV; subsequently edited down and published as The Groombridge Diary. Incorporated into this journal are approximately 120 items in Hale White's hand comprising some 27 complete letters to Dorothy and her preserved extracts from his other letters and notes to her. Charles Swann lent me his own copy of these volumes for this thesis.

The Colbeck Collection also holds typescripts of several unpublished stories and poems by Hale White, copies of a few of which can be read in Bedford. These include:

1. 'Courage,' A short story written Oct. 23, 1908 for Dorothy White's Bible Class.
2. 'Romney Marsh: Mozart,' Written between 1907 and 1912 (Revised version in MP, pp. 154-155.
3. 'The End,' A story about an old tree. Written between 1907 and 1912.
4. 'A Waking Dream,' Written about 1910.
5. 'History,' Written sometime between 1907 and 1912.
6. An Untitled short story about a serving man stealing food.

Unpublished items which *cannot* be read in Bedford include:

1. Draft translation of a poem by Goethe, 'To The Moon'. With a prefatory note initialled and dated May 15, 1857.
2. Draft translation of Goethe's 'The Erl King.' With notes concerning the hiring of Sunday meetings. Signed 1851.
3. Poem beginning 'By a spring a boy was sitting'. Probably dating from around 1857.
4. Essay, transcribed in Molly's hand about Scott's Monastery, cast in the form of a letter to 'Tom'.
5. Review of Viola Meynell's novel Martha Vine. 1911.

Hatfield House. The Papers of Lord Cecil.

During his Groombridge years Hale White began a friendship with Lady Eleanor Lambton (known affectionately as 'Nelly') who had been drawn to him through his book on Bunyan. Hale White frequently stayed at the Cecil's house, 'Gale' in Sussex. In Hatfield House there are 89 letters from Hale White to Lady Robert Cecil covering the period 1909-1913.
Ref. no. CHE 34, 35. Typescripts of most of these letters are also kept in Bedford Public Library.

Leeds University. The Brotherton Library.

The Brotherton holds the correspondence which relates to Hale White's

study of Wordsworth. There are 150 Letters from Hutchinson to Hale White, 50 from T. N. Longman to Hale White, 10 letters from Hale White to Hutchinson as well as one letter sent to William Knight. All of the Hale White material in the Brotherton is subsumed under a general reference title: Hutchinson - Hale White Correspondence.

Letters from The Brotherton specifically referred to in this thesis.

Letter to William Knight, Oct. 31, 1895.

Letter to Thomas Hutchinson, Dec. 18, 1895.

Letter to Thomas Hutchinson, May 30, 1896.

Letter from Thomas Hutchinson to Hale White, Feb. 15, 1896.

Manchester Cooperative Library.

A few letters written by Hale White to Holyoake can be found in The George Jacob Holyoake Collection. The collection of papers can also be found, in microfilm, in Liverpool University Library. It includes six letters from Hale White to Holyoake. Ref. nos. 1647, 3517, 3600, 4021, 4125, 4128.

Letters From Manchester referred to in this thesis

Letter to George Jacob Holyoake, Feb. 10, 1866. Ref. no. 1647.

Sussex University

43 Letters from William Hale White to E. and F. Storr

This collection comprises of 45 items of correspondence to Erica Storr, a young poet, and 1 to her mother Francis. They all refer to the later Groombridge years. Ref. no. Sx. Ms 6. 1/45.

Letters from Sussex specifically referred to in this thesis

Letter to Erica Storr, Feb. 23, 1906. Sx Ms. 6. no. 10.

Letter to Erica Storr, June 24, 1908. Sx Ms. 6. no. 21.

Letter to Erica Storr, April 28, 1912. Sx Ms. 6. no. 37.

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