



ROY DAVIS

(C) Punch

forbid their rejoicing in the knowledge of his torments.

So far so bad. But he adds that he agreed with himself next morning, thus damning Birkenhead deliberately in the presence of two or three hundred thousand readers.

It was violent, and it was vulgar, since there are Birkenheads (or Smiths) still living, and one of them was not long in protesting. But how did he protest? Not in the language most of us would have used in such circumstances, but with this headlong rush into anticlimax:

"Critic's" indecently expressed wish that my father is now frying in Hell, gives to my mind an ominous glimpse into his own peculiar character. I can only say that if I had written such vindictive words about a distinguished man, whose wife and children were still alive, I should be deeply ashamed.

That is almost as feeble as "Critic's" defence—that no sane person now believes in hell-fire, and that what he said could not therefore have hurt anyone's feelings. Though the children of the famous must accept the comments of posterity, they are under no obligation to accept them sweetly, or even meekly. I should have liked to hear what Dr Johnson would have said (and/or done) to anyone who attacked his father in such a fashion. (My trouble in the meantime is that I admire the editor of the *New Statesman* and have never admired the first Lord Birkenhead.)

I WAS embarrassed recently by a request for an opinion on a private anthology. It was not one of those cases where it was difficult to be honest and kind, since the compiler's range of reading had been wider than my own, and the high note was sustained all the way. What embarrassed me was the thought that whatever I said must,

JULY 24 in the nature of things, be impertinent or useless. If I called it a good anthology (as I did) I could mean no more than that it was good for me. If I hesitated to praise it that could mean no more than that it left me cold, or unstimulated, or unedified.

An anthology, I told myself, is a collection of flowers—a gathering together of all the wise or witty or moving things one has read, and marked, and preserved. It can be, and in this case was, a spiritual pilgrimage, which put it beyond the reach of criticism or praise. It cannot be a path to be followed by a second person, or, beyond a certain point, left hopefully in the way of a second person. I mean, it can't be that kind of thing ideally. It may turn out to be that in practice; may light, or level, or smooth another person's path; but in general it can be no more than a sharing of good things; and those who know them to be good are not likely to be in need of them.

But I no sooner express such opinions than I know them to be nonsense. They could be supported if we were all intelligent, all cultivated, all born with good

taste and reared within reach of the printed sources of wisdom. In practice we are starved and stumbling in nine cases out of ten. We neither possess nor are likely to find even the crumbs that fall from wisdom's table unless someone guides us to them; and when we are fortunate enough to find a whole slice or a whole loaf we look round for someone to eat with us.

An anthology compiled with an improving or propagandist purpose remains an abomination. One that compiles itself, grows as the compiler grows, and turns, and twists, and rises, and falls as he does, is as valuable as fellowship with a richly endowed friend; and in my experience quite as rare.

(To be continued)

## LIKE WALKING ON PILLOWS!

The most delightful walking ease imaginable—all-day foot ease, freshness and vitality. Made from Scho-tex, the new, extra-soft Latex foam rubber (millions of tiny air cells). Washable, odourless. Fit any boot or shoe.

4/9 pr.

### Scholl Foot Comfort Service:

HAM. 3a Colwood St. LR. HUTT 291 High St.  
HAST. 402 H'launga St. BLEN. 4 George St.  
NEW PLY. 52 Queen St. NELSON 247 Hardy St.  
WANG. 192 Vic. Ave. CHCH. 123 Cashel St.  
PALM. N. 136 B'dway. TIM. Cnr. George & Sophia  
WGTN. 9 Willis St. DUNEDIN 20 Moray Place

## Dr. Scholl's AIR-PILLO INSOLES

From Chemists and Shoe Stores Everywhere



CADBURY'S DAIRY MILK CHOCOLATE BISCUITS — DAIRY MILK CHOCOLATE FINGERS — DAIRY MILK SNAPS

Made by Cadbury's — that's the difference!