

reads a book through; he dips into it to find some particular fact or illustration, or to safeguard his own conclusions. The gradual abandonment of "family prayers" has unquestionably caused the English Bible to be less generally read; while the Sunday-school methods so much in vogue have exalted moral admonition and reproof above every other interest. And the proper remedy is not wholly clear. Our scholars work under the tyranny of the annotated text and the variorum edition. We have no leisure, and there is increasingly much to read. We are intensely self-centred, fervently bent on knowing ourselves and our surroundings as they are to-day; and the themes of literary masterpieces, limited in scope to no time or place, are, frankly, not exactly to our mind.

Yet the continuance of such a condition cannot fail, in the long run, to be of far-reaching detriment, not only to literature itself, but to our whole notion of culture as well. With only the exceptions that prove the rule, the great writers of the past have been themselves steeped in literature. At once well and widely read, they have possessed a

treasure of thought and phrase which has become part of their own intellectual habit, and guided and lightened the play of their own fancy. Upon the person of culture, too, there has worked the same chastening and restraining influence. For all save the genius, it is from the reading and re-reading of favorite authors, the unconscious appropriation of passages of special beauty or import, the continued contact with "the best that has been thought and said in the world," that there comes the sure literary sense, the ordered fancy, and the delicacy of perception which distinguish for ever the man of culture from the man of information. It will be a grave thing for us if, under a mistaken zeal for knowledge, we lose touch with our intellectual past and treat the literature of the world as though it were not. It is the power of reminiscence, the ability to command treasures of choice knowledge, which has added so much of grace to refined living, and it is the absence of it which, despite our greater learning, threatens to leave our culture cold and dead.—
The Evening Post, New York.

GENERAL CULTURE.

SOMERSET BATEMAN.

THE writings of Matthew Arnold have, perhaps, tended to throw some discredit on the general culture which that apostle of sweetness and light advocated so fervently. If there had been any fault in the boys that his father sent up to Oxford, it was a certain air of superiority almost akin to priggishness. Perhaps the same fault has been noticed in those who have worshipped at the shrine of the son. The possession of culture

may carry with it a certain feeling of superiority in inferior minds; and the world is most severe on anything that rebukes its own shortcomings. Whatever be the cause, the word "culture" is apt to raise a smile on many faces. But, surely, there is no true reason for this. Culture should be the quality of those who have carefully trained themselves; but in practice it is used in a somewhat more limited sense, and this we propose to adopt.