

**ESSAYS
AT LARGE**

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Essays at large by Solomon Eagle

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SOLOMON EAGLE

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By Solomon Eagle



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TO
JAMES MURRAY ALLISON

PREFATORY NOTE

MOST of these papers are reprinted from the *Outlook*; a few, which seemed akin to the others, appeared in *Land and Water*, which died under the burden.

S. E.

1922.

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READING IN BED

DISCUSSION amongst human beings is very difficult. There were three of us, and we talked about reading in bed. At the end of a quarter of an hour it dawned on us—we had had faint glimmerings of this before—that we had been talking about different things.

“What is the best thing to read in bed?” It sounds a sufficiently concrete item in the agenda. But we had overlooked the fact that men might read in bed with different motives. “If you were staying in a country house for the night, and found one of those little sliding bookcases on the table beside your bed, what would you like to find in it?” That also looked definite enough. But neither was really sufficiently precise. No allowance was made for temperament.

Of course, we all know what we *should* find in it. Granted a cultivated household, where the furniture was good, the walls tastefully hung, and the host and hostess *au fait* with modern literature and the latest political thought, very little latitude is conceivable. Either the small bookcase would contain two volumes of Mr. Shaw's plays, a volume of Mr. Granville Barker's, some Tchekov short stories, a book of sketches by Mr. Galsworthy, and a faded Ibsen volume published by the firm of Walter Scott; or else it would contain Mr. Chesterton's “The Defendant” and “A Miscellany of Men,” Mr. Belloc's “On Anything” and “Hills and the Sea,” a volume of essays by Mr. Lucas, and “Idlehurst.”