of Barry Lyndon.” Then there’s that strange man, Browning, whose crabbed jingle no one understands; and that wild enthusiast, Ruskin, of Christ Church, who has gone congenially mad over that equally mad landscape-painter, Turner. But, of course, nobody would ever dream of comparing amiable and estimable youths like these with Byron, and Scott, and Southey!"

Well, it’s just so now, only it’s a great deal more so. “I, myself,” says our author, “who have the courage of my opinions, am afraid to say openly what I feel and know about Austin Dobson and Robert Louis Stevenson (can these be the young genius with a stoop, and the young genius in the light overcoat?), and about half-a-dozen real geniuses of our time.” Isn’t there Herbert Spencer, “who, even twenty years ago, was the greatest thinker the world contained,” and George Meredith, who, even then, was by far “the greatest artist of situation and character in the English language”? To be sure, they have been “boomed”: let us, then, turn to, and boom the others; and he proceeds to give a solid page of the names of them, including Samuel Butler, “the greatest master of caustic irony in the English language”—not old Sam Butler of Hudibras, who is dead, but S. B. the author of “Erewhon”—a title which the reader will please read backwards, and which he probably never heard of.

Then what a vast, new field has been opened to the aspirations of all this genius by the expansion of the English-speaking world! “England has carried her landmarks to the ends of the earth; Atlantic Cables, Pacific Railways, Suez Canals, have brought us nearer by five thousand miles to everybody everywhere; . . . our Edwins are cowboys on American plains; our Angelinas Red-Cross Sisters in Bulgarian villages; our Norvals feed their flocks among New Zealand sheepwalks; . . . we have seen space ‘swell visibly,’ as it swelled for De Quincy in his ecstatic trances”; and, he might have added, as the spouse of the elder Mr. Weller swelled at the Temperance Tea Party, “She’s swellin’ visibly, Sammy!”

Under which singular circumstances, as old Carlyle would have said, what is a bewildered young reader to do? We advise the bewildered young reader not to be discouraged, but to pitch in among all these geniuses and try to appreciate them. We never could reckon among Mr. Emerson’s wise sayings his direction never to read any book that is not a year old. The very excellence of many books lies in their freshness, and they pass into oblivion, not for want of merit, but because there are too many, and the world cannot remember them all. But the books of the day are the intellectual food of the day; and whether our author is serious or not, his statement is true that there never was a time when there were so many good ones. Nor, though Herbert Spencer neither was, is, nor ever will be the greatest of philosophers, or even so much as a great philosopher at all, do we think that any of the many able writers in our author’s long list require any sort of “booming” to secure a genuine recognition of their merits. But though we quite believe in the reading of new books, there is one precaution which every good reader will take, and that is to make himself thoroughly familiar with some of the great old masterpieces in every kind of writing; for otherwise he will have no standard to judge the new ones by, and Lowell’s lines will come true that

“Reading new books is like eating new bread:
One can bear it at first, but by gradual steps he
Is brought to death’s door of a mental dyspepsy.”

W. P. A.

She’s a very little creature, and the figure she possesses
Is most petite and charming, yet she still is in short dresses.
She dances, sings, and flirts with the utmost naivete;
In fine, she is end rusher in the Erminie Ballet.
—Williams Fortnight.

To THE EDITORS OF THE TECH:

The editorial which appeared in your last issue upon the Athletic Club Dinner, seems to us to be written from an unfair point of view. Its sentiment is, that the club has been expending a large sum of money in a way which is not in accordance with its conservative principles and the athletic interests of the Institute. In the first place, it is by the departure from the former conservatism that the club has been so prosperous this year. In the second place, the