THE very newest thing in literature which aims at being light is "The Yellow Book" (Lane and Matthews). I do not pretend to understand the literary aims of "The Yellow Book," if it has any in particular. To some extent it is an advertisement, or manifesto, of several ingenious young men. The decorations are by Mr. Beardsley, so are some of the designs. What do they aim at? Clearly they desire épater le bourgeois: it is an ambition that may lead far, in the wrong direction. For the letter-press, Mr. Henry James contributes an amusing tale of a literary lion who died of luncheon parties; Mr. Saintsbury has a piece of humor, à son devis, on the historical and sentimental associations of wines; Mr. Gosse and Mr. Davidson contribute very agreeable verses; and some of the young men try desperately hard to be clever and startling. But we now know every move in the game of startling the steady citizen, and oh, I cannot say how weary I am of cheap literary audacities at second hand. Mr. Pennell's design of Puy en Velay has much pleasingly fantastic perspective; but Sir Frederick Leighton's little study in chalk is in odd company. The whole serial, which is to appear quarterly, is a kind of book of beauty, the other way about, and nobody knows the end thereof.

Would that one liked Miss Rhoda Broughton's new novel, "A Beginner," better than one does. However, beginners may find pleasure in the misfortunes of the heroine with her first novel: moreover, one can read "Belinda" over again. Mr. George Morris' "Esther Waters" is "the most artistic, the most complete, and the most inevitable work of fiction that has been written in England for at least two years." So A. T. Q. C. says in The Speaker. "Inevitable" as it may be I have successfully avoided it, and hope to persevere in that course. Of "Marcella" it is too late to offer an opinion, beyond saying that, of all Mrs. Ward's novels, it is most like a novel. As to "The Rubicon," again, by Mr. Benson, it is too early for me to say anything, as I have not read it. The newspaper critics abuse it so violently that they are likely to defeat their object. It is sure to be popular, because people are sure to think that it contains personal allusions. Though the book has not yet appeared, I can take time by the forelock with Lord Wolseley's "Life of John Churchill, Duke of Marlborough" (Bentley). May it please other readers as much as myself, and its fortune is made. My ardent Jacobite opinions and love of religious toleration, separates me from Lord Wolseley's theory of James II., the first king who was tolerant, as you may read warmly stated by Cotton Mather. For Marlborough, his biographer makes perhaps as good excuses as can be made; but how meanly treasonable is the hero compared with the great Viscount Dundee! The military glories of Churchill are not yet reached, but he already, in these volumes, gives promise of his unsurpassed genius, in the Irish wars. Lord Wolseley's loyalty to his commander is sorely tried by his commander's lack of honesty; but then he had almost all other great qualities, and his manners were the noblest in the world, while, in person, "Handsome Jack Churchill" rivalled "Bony Dundee."