ume of one of their numerous series of useful books, entitled, "The Dawn of European Literature: French Literature," by Gustave Masson, the venerable teacher of French at Harrow, who died this summer. Anyone who chances to pass down the stately new Northumberland Avenue in London, on his way to the magnificent Hotel Métropole, can hardly help noticing the handsome shop of this wealthy society, which by no means confines its publications to religious books technically so called. The student of history and literature is much beholden to it for the publication in cheap form of many useful aids to study; as, for instance, the series of little volumes entitled, "Early England," including "Celtic England," "Roman England," etc. The Anglo-Saxon volume, by Grant Allen, is particularly readable. Then there is a series entitled, "Early Chronicles of Europe," giving a popular account of the original documents on which the history of France, England, and Italy is based; and their long catalogue contains many other useful titles.

In history and political science the most important announcement is that of a work on American institutions, by Prof. James Bryce, the well-known author of "The Holy Roman Empire," one of the best historical monographs that has been written in this generation, a book indispensable to every student of medieval times. Apparently Professor Bryce's work is to be as elaborate as the famous, and perhaps a little overrated, book of De Tocqueville, now half a century old.

There is also announced a new edition of Mr. Justice Stephen's "History of Criminal Law in England"; a work as valuable to the students of history and sociology as to the lawyer.

In the Contemporary for September, Professor Seeley has an interesting discussion on the subject of "Literary Immortality," wherein he takes a view of the writers of past times which is none the less true for being somewhat novel. "Do not writers," he asks, "seem to live on from century to century, and to hold the rank of classics, who have little resemblance to Shakespeare or Dante, and a good deal of resemblance to the ordinary successful writer of the season?" Even of such writers as Addison, Johnson, and Pope, he ventures to say, "Classics of this kind, after having discharged a useful function for perhaps a century, are allowed to retain a conventional rank ever afterward. They keep their title after they have retired from active work. There is such a thing as a classic emeritus. The present generation does not really use Addison as a model for prose, nor Pope for poetry. Their reign is over long since, like the reigns of the Stuart dynasty. Yet they are still called classics, but the title is honorary or conventional; and from the habit of using the term in this secondary sense we gradually lose all clear perception of its meaning. On our long list of national classics we allow to appear, by the side of the two or three names which are truly immortal, not only a number of such retired classics, but also a good many who never had any real right to the title."

This is excellent good sense. Any one who looks at the crowd of names which fill a history of English literature, is in much the state of mind in which he finds himself on examining the names on the monuments of so many of the illustrious obscure which crowd the aisles of Westminster Abbey; the state of mind in which good George the Third found himself, according to Peter Pindar, while contemplating the apple dumpling. Or let the reader try the experiment of turning, in the huge collections of the British poets of Anderson or Chalmers, to the works of some of the worthies commemorated in Dr. Johnson's still racy and entertaining "Lives of the Poets." Yet these lives were expressly written to accompany a similar collection of poets whose works were current in Dr. Johnson's day. Is not much of Addison's Spectator exceedingly commonplace? Is it half so well worth reading as, say, Sir James, now Mr. Justice, Stephen's "Essays from the Saturday Review?" "As the demands of contemporary literature grow more importunate, and less time can be allowed to the so-called classics, we shall begin to call in question these honorary and complimentary titles. Literary immortality will begin to be defined more strictly. We might indeed almost fear that in the growing abundance of new books we may be driven to a sort of literary statute of limitations."

Of course these strictures do not touch the historical value of older books. From that point of view the leading writers of every age will still continue valuable, and even the most worthless may become interesting. The unrivaled brilliancy of some of Macaulay's pictures of the past comes from the untiring diligence with which he turned over the very literary garbage of the times he was describing.

W. P. A.