

men of the day. Their appearance and continuance in the political arena with all its hurly burly, can but be attributed to a desire to serve their country, and they bring with them the fame acquired in other realms. When a high ecclesiastical dignitary from San Francisco visited England three years ago he expressed the greatest surprise that members of the English nobility, men of wealth and the highest degree of culture, should undertake the onerous and thankless duties of public office. The road of national life must be deep and wide-

spread to ensure a beautiful bloom of national life. This does not come in a day, and there is hope yet that the national life of the United States may be more than dollar deep; but at present commercial instinct on the one hand and partyism on the other are sadly warping American patriotism.

*Franklin D. Roosevelt*

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## BOOK NOTICES.

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*Books and Culture.* By Hamilton Wright Mabie. New York: Dodd, Mead & Co.

The title of this delightful volume indicates subject matter of exhaustless interest, and the name of the author gives assurance of the profound thought, the original treatment, and the richly-suggestive phrase with which he rehabilitates world-known truths in novel and beautiful garb. Perhaps the greatest commendation of Mr. Mabie's work is to be found in the reader's half-defined consciousness of having known it all before, either in actual fact or in some state of preëxistence. So axiomatic are his truths, so tenable his premises, his thoughts appealing so directly to thoughts universal, that we feel ourselves part owner in the mine, although conceding that Mr. Mabie has surveyed the territory, sunk the shaft, known the skilled use of implements of labor, and is almost a necromancer in assaying.

In elucidating the relation of books to culture, the works of four great writers are used by way of illustration. Mr. Mabie says: "The man who would get the ripest culture from books ought to read many, but there are a few books which he must read; among them, first and foremost, are the Bible, and the works of Homer, Dante, Shakespeare and Goethe. These are the supreme

books of life as distinguished from the books of knowledge and skill. They hold their places because they combine in the highest degree vitality, truth, power and beauty. They are the central reservoirs into which the rivulets of individual experience over a vast surface have been gathered; they are the most complete revelations of what life has brought and has been to the leading races; they bring us into contact with the heart and soul of humanity. They not only convey information, and rightly used, impart discipline, but they transmit life. There is a vitality in them which passes on into the nature which is open to receive it. They are not to be read once and put on the upper shelves of the library among those classics which establish one's claim to good intellectual standing, but which silently gather the dust of isolation and solitude; they are to be always at hand. Whoever knows them in a real sense knows life, humanity, art and himself." And so we learn the source of Mr. Mabie's power as a writer. He has drunk deep of these books of life and made their secrets his own. The desire to quote from the volume in hand is most compelling. Each page has its gem of thought polished in utterance of crystal clarity, its inspiring word which, if space allowed, the reviewer would so gladly share with the reader.