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HERMITAGE.

Ah! ask me not why I am sad!
'Tis vain to ask, and vain to know,
'Tis nothing, something I once had,
Now lost, so soon, so long ago.

I could not tell thee if I would
The pain that dwells with memory;
I would not tell thee if I could
Life's large lost possibility.

For this fair world that seemed afar
A fertile reach of flowery meads,
Is full of desolate paths that are
Barren and choked with poisonous weeds.

The desolate paths of life that meet
And pass and never meet again,
Where fall the fret of feverish feet,
Complainings of neglected men.

A land of divers tongues, where few
Agree, and fewer understand
The struggle of the false and true,
Blindly withholding hand from hand.

'Tis not thy fault that I am sad,
In those large eyes there lies no sin,
For thou hast still what once I had,
No sorrow for what might have been.

Only one life and one career
Out of the years, only one choice
Of being; God, if we should hear
And follow a delusive voice!

If we should miss the narrow way
Of love, of beauty, and of truth,
Into the barren reaches stray
And harvest no large thoughts for growth.

'Twere vain to dream, to deify,
As others do, to feel the same,
When old thoughts do not satisfy,
Old altars smoulder with dead flame.

The many seek a dimmer flame,
Low let us unto nature turn,
And follow no brief creed or fame,
How low the lights of nature burn!

My spirit burns when sunset fills
The golden west with dreams of light,
The purple cloisters of the hills
With flowery angels of delight.

This hermitage is not our choice.
Cast far adrift in loneliness,
'To want a sympathetic voice
'Midst echoes of a wilderness.

PHILLIPS STEWART.

THE POLITICS OF LABOUR.

A book under the above title, by Mr. Phillips Thompson, of Toronto, has been published, and is on sale in our book stores. It is a small volume of over two hundred pages, and is printed in clear, large type, on good paper. This of itself says a good deal for a book. The use of small type should be rendered punishable by Act of Parliament. We give life-long penitentiary to the man who blinds another with vitriol, and I do not see why the publisher should escape, who, that his profits may be greater, uses a type likely to occasion blindness in hundreds. Mr. Thompson's book states the case of labour against capital in well written language, and with a clearness which leaves us no doubt as to what he means. He agrees in many respects with the ideas of Mr. Henry George, and with the programme of the more moderate of the Socialist party. He is strongly in favour of what is called land nationalization. The idea is that the Government should take charge of all land, rent it to everybody, and by drawing this rent, do away with the necessity of any other taxation. He wishes the Government to do much more than this. He desires that it take charge of railroads, telegraphs, banks and insurance companies; that it settle the question of wages and of hours of labour, and that, if it be not to enter for itself into every department of business, it is at all events to exercise a very close supervision over them all.

All grain elevators, wharves, warehouses, express companies, steamboat lines, mines, steel and iron works, locomotive factories, and the like, he would absorb and nationalize. He would do away with the gold standard, and allow Governments to issue paper money sufficient for all the needs of commerce, and all this and much more he would do, on what are supposed to be purely Democratic principles, that is to say, all men in authority—the men who are to manage this new world on this new basis—are to be elected by manhood suffrage; in other words, the people at large.

To any person who has, with any depth, studied the question, there is no necessity for pointing out in what these doctrines would result. We have had full opportunity in our municipal corporations, elected by the popular vote, of observing the result where the delegates of the masses attempt to manage business affairs. In Toronto alone we have found such incompetency and such waste to occur as has rendered it necessary to take important powers out of the hands of the corporation, and place them in those of commissioners, and it is now proposed to take others from them still more important. When these commissioners in one case, that of the Water works, were elected by the people, the greatest waste of all—the worthless filtering basin, and other losses—resulted. A committee of the popularly elected corporation have since tried their hands, and Judge McDougall's investigation shows the result.

Throughout America civic management by the popular vote has proved an utter failure. It is impossible to imagine any business involving large expenditure so managed where the same result would not occur. Even if the results were otherwise, the experiment on a large scale would be impossible. The plan of a government managing everything, and appointing everybody to manage