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EDITORIAL

## METZ AND TILLMAN.

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**T** WAS only the other day when the Socialist was regularly met with the objection that, whatever poverty, whatever suffering existed, was due to ignorance, and that none had anyone to blame for being ignorant but himself. With a Pecksniffian wafture of the hand towards the public institutions of learning—from the grammar school grade up to High Schools and Colleges—the Socialist used to be told: “Behold every man’s opportunity! Is a man poor, ’tis his own fault: he was too indolent to avail himself of the facilities to acquire a wealth-insuring education. Was he active, industrious and virile enough to acquire such education, then he is wealthy. Wealth is the fruit of education—all educated people are wealthy, all wealthy people are educated.”

So did the theory run at one time. It has now been abandoned. Addressing the annual meeting of {the} East Tremont Taxpayers’ Association, Comptroller Metz expressed himself against high schools. He said: “We are raising a generation of ladies and gentlemen who don’t want to work.”

What is it that is “biting” the Metzses? It is the identical problem that Southern capitalists are facing.

A time was when the language held in the South with regard to the Negro was: “He is ignorant. Let him educate himself, and then we shall not object to him.” The Negro took these people at their word. He sailed in and educated himself. How well he did it appears from Senator Tillman’s declaration that the barrier of “illiteracy” will no longer protect the whites in the South. The cat leaped out of the bag. The Rev. Quincy Ewing, himself a Southerner, really sums up the situation in the *Atlantic Monthly* when he says: “the race problem is the problem {of} how to keep the Negro in focus with the traditional standpoint.” All the former talk regarding the Negro’s ignorance and other “vices” was but pretences. The “traditional

standpoint” was that the Negro’s mission on earth is to toil without enjoying for his masters to enjoy without toil. It was thought the point could be concealed by speaking of his ignorance. He having removed his ignorance the truth comes out.

In the South the thing is called “race problem.” Comptroller Metz, whose language means exactly what Tillman means, reveals the fact that the problem, North and South, is the Labor Problem: and that that problem is summed up in how to keep Labor in focus with the traditional standpoint.

Seeing that ever more members of the middle class drop into the ranks of the proletariat, the Metzses and Tillmans are seen to be actually engaged in the impossible task of how to keep the bulk, an ever increasing bulk, of society in focus with the traditional standpoint of toiling without enjoyment, for others to enjoy without toil.

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