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SCIENCE RECORDS WITH REGRET the death by consumption of Mr. Z. L. White, who for some months has served as its Washington correspondent. It occurred in Nassau, N.P., to which balmy island Mr. White fled a month ago for his health. He was one of the best-equipped and best-known of Washington correspondents. For years he had charge of the *Tribune* bureau, and later represented the interests of the *Philadelphia Press*. He became much talked about in connection with the publishing of the treaty of Washington before it was officially given out, and was imprisoned by the Senate for refusing to betray the gentleman from whom he obtained it. In addition to the meed of praise which the press of the country will accord to Mr. White for unusual enterprise and intelligent industry, we gladly bear witness that he was a careful observer and an accurate compiler of scientific news. E. J. Gibson, the *Philadelphia* representative of the *Press* in Washington, said to our correspondent, "I first became acquainted with Mr. White while he was the Washington correspondent of the *Tribune*, eleven years ago. I was then employed in the editorial rooms of the paper in New York, and during the time Mr. White remained connected with it I had opportunity to become well acquainted with him, and

always found him a most agreeable associate and a man of the highest honor. He worked his way up in the *Tribune* office in a comparatively short time, promotion coming as a result of his energy and ability, and in that respect he was often referred to in the office as an example for new-comers. His acquaintance with public men gave him a great advantage in the collection of news, and at a convention he was able to get at the bottom facts in a very short time. His newspaper work was so well known, both on the *Tribune* and the *Philadelphia Press*, that there is no need to speak of it. He was a studious, unassuming man, and a gentleman in every sense of the word. Few newspaper men had the confidence of so many public men, and he was never accused of betraying a confidence. His kindly manner made him friends wherever he went, and he was always cheerful and hopeful."

WE HAVE FREQUENTLY had occasion to comment upon the condition of the New York City schools during the past year. This condition, and the influences that are at work in them, have far more than local interest. At the organization of the Board of Education for 1889, which took place last week, the controlling influence of the political machines was again made manifest, and those who had hoped for some improvement in this respect were bitterly disappointed. Two members of the board, who had expressed themselves publicly as in favor of a change, deserted their colleagues at the critical moment. The most contemptible and discreditable political methods had been used to bring this result about, and it again places in the president's chair the man whose previous course we so thoroughly disapproved of in our comments at the time of the contest of last spring. It is a serious matter, also, that the great city newspapers either keep their readers in ignorance of what is going on, or else endeavor to have them sympathize with it. It is the simple fact that the New York City schools to-day are in the hands of the political spoilsman, and they use them to provide places for themselves and their friends, and to perpetuate abuses from which they derive personal benefit. From the president of the Board of Education and the superintendent of schools, down to the very janitors, there is a mass of intrigue and chicanery which is a disgrace not only to the city of New York, but to the country.

AFRICA, ITS PAST AND FUTURE.¹

AFRICA, the oldest of the continents, containing the earliest remains of man, and the birthplace of European civilization, is the last to be explored. Long before the temples of India or the palaces of Nineveh were built, before the hanging garden of Babylon was planted, the pyramids of Cheops and Cephren had been constructed, the temples of Palmyra and Thebes filled with worshippers.

Greece owes its civilization to Egypt: its beautiful orders of architecture came from the land of the Nile. The civilization of Egypt had grown old, and was in its decay, when Rome was born. Think what a vast abyss of time separates us from the days of Romulus and Remus! And yet the pyramids of Egypt were then older by a thousand years than all the centuries that have passed since then.

For ages upon ages, Africa has refused to reveal its secrets to civilized man, and, though explorers have penetrated it from every side, it remains to-day the dark continent. This isolation of Africa is due to its position and formation. It is a vast, ill-formed triangle, with few good harbors, without navigable rivers for ocean-vessels, lying mainly in the torrid zone. A fringe of low scorched land, reeking with malaria, extends in unbroken monotony all along the coast, threatening death to the adventurous explorer. We wonder that we know so much, rather than so little, of Africa. Our ignorance of Africa is not in consequence of its situation under the equa-

¹ Annual address of Hon. Gardiner G. Hubbard, president of the National Geographic Society, at its meeting, December, 1888.