One year ago—how long the time doth seem to us!—
We laid thee in the silent tomb and heard read “dust to dust.”
We know thy spirit in the land of bright celestial day
Doth join the angels ’round God’s throne and chant the heavenly lay.
United there with children dear and loved ones gone before,
Oh! the rapture of the meeting there to separate no more.
We’ll try to meet thee, father dear, in the land where thou art gone,
With loved ones and the heavenly host we’ll sing redemption’s song.

One year ago death’s angel came and touched thy fevered brow,
Sickness and sorrow, pain and death have no terrors for thee now.
A few more fleeting years of woe and we, too, shall be there,
And with the hosts o’er Zion’s hill will palms of victory bear.
In the beautiful streets of that blest house, the city of our God,
Christ smiles and whispers, These are they, the purchase of my blood.
In robes of light, on sea of glass, with wings of love we’ll stand,
In realms of bliss, fore’er with God, we’ll dwell at His right hand.

_Columbia, S. C., ]une 4, 1892._

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**X.**

**AFRO-AMERICANs AND AFRICA.**

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**BY I. B. WELLS.**

The April number of _The Review_, which had Bishop H. M. Turner’s letters on his recent visit to Africa, contained also a paper, “Will the Afro-American Return to Africa?” by that brilliant and forceful journalist, T. Thos. Fortune.

Mr. Fortune seems to think it is the white man only who wishes our race variety to return in a body to the home of its ancestors, whether the Afro-American himself will or no. Viewing the question from that standpoint the editor of the _Age_ would not be the faithful watchman on the walls he is credited with being, if he had given any other reply than the emphatic and decided, “He will not!”

The Afro-American, as a race, would not return to Africa if he could, and could not if he would. We would not be true to the race if we conceded for a moment that any other race, the Anglo-Saxon not excepted, had more right to claim this country as home than the Afro-American race. The blood he has shed for liberty’s sake, the toil he has given for improvement’s sake, and the sacrifices he has made for the cause of progress, give him the supreme right of American citizenship. There will always be to the end of the chapter Afro-Americans here to enforce this claim and wrest from this government its tardy acknowledgment and concession of the same. Afro-Americans have no desire and cannot be forced to go to Africa.

But the entire race is not sanguine over our possessions in this
country, and the object of this paper is to maintain that the right of those who wish to go to Africa should be as inviolate as that of those who wish to stay. That there are Afro-Americans who would return to Africa is proved by the presence in New York City last winter of three hundred who had managed to get that far on their journey. Somebody had told them they would be carried free if they got to New York. They were of course disappointed and returned to the South. The mistake these people made was not in wanting to go to Africa, but in being so poorly prepared in intelligence and finance. There are hundreds of others besides these poverty-stricken and ignorant people, all over the country, who chafe under the knowledge that what is the opportunity for the European and Chinese emigrant in this country is his disadvantage. In no other country but the vaunted "land of the free and home of the brave" is a man despised because of his color. As the Irish, Swede, Dutch, Italian and other foreigners find this the "sweet land of liberty," the Afro-American finds it the land of oppression, outrage and persecution. In the freest and most unprejudiced sections, in every walk of life, no matter how well dressed, courteous or intellectual, he never knows when he may not meet with and be humiliated by this distinctively American prejudice. He is becoming restless and discontented. He wishes to enjoy the full freedom of manhood and aspiration. Where shall he go?

Why should not they turn to Africa, the land of their forefathers, the most fertile of its kind, and the only one which the rapacious and ubiquitous Anglo-Saxon has not entirely gobbled—where they would be welcomed by their race, and given opportunities to assist in the development of Africa, such as are not possessed by any other nation waiting for a foothold?

That more Afro-Americans do not go to Africa is because the objectors say Africa is a death-trap, that we are not Africans, and that it is a country "without organized government, accepted religion or uniform language."

Everybody who goes to Africa does not die. Everybody knows of the African or acclimating fevers, and all travelers or explorers agree that with care and attention to diet, changes of weather and care of the system, the African fever is no more deadly than our Southern malaria; yet nobody thinks of staying away from the South because of it. The cause of death-rate is carelessness rather than the fever. All writers again agree that it is only along the low, marshy coast that this prevails. Back in the interior it is more healthy.

The recent contributions to African literature are instructive as to the obstacles to be met, the dangers to be overcome, and the way to accomplish it. No man who does not inform himself on any undertaking, and decide on the steps he will take, is a fit contribution to the citizenship of any country. He is not only liable, but will fall a victim to his own ignorance in any country.
The argument that Afro-Americans should not go to Africa because "it is a country without organized government, accepted religion or uniform language," is the very weakest that could be offered. No better reinforcement of the position of southern whites could be deduced than to concede the Afro-American incapable of self-government or the government of others. Children, or inherently weak persons, wait for the path to be blazed out in which they should walk. The Romans who invaded Britain, nor yet the Puritans who came over in the "Mayflower," waited for "organized government, uniform language or established religion." They brought their own customs, language and religion with them, few in number though they were, and engrafted them into the warp and woof of the body politic. Is the Afro-American incapable of doing this?

It may be argued that it is not the intelligent class who wish to go to Africa. If this is true it is discreditable alike to their intelligence and desire for gain that they do not. The resources of Africa are boundless. White men of every nationality are braving "the white man's grave," and growing rich off the simple natives. They go home every three years to recover health, then go back to the work of making a fortune. They endure all things in their young manhood for the hope of affluence in their declining years. And if they die, as die they do, will not their children reap the benefit?

The Afro-American can better stand the climate than the European, because of his kinship with the natives; his opportunities would be better, because the Republic of Liberia is already a threshold from whence the enterprising and intelligent Afro-American could enter and possess the land. The need of Liberia is the development of her resources; for this it takes capital, skilled labor, and intelligent direction. Bishop Turner says, "A man with three hundred dollars could make a fortune in a few years." The captain of the ship which took him over to Africa, and which only made ten miles an hour, made this significant remark: "The colored people of the United States throw away enough money for whisky every year to build fifty ships that could run twenty miles an hour," and that he (Bishop Turner) "had better get them to save their money and build a faster ship. The United States had no steamers at all, fast or slow." A native African also said to him: "If our brethren will not come from America and make themselves immensely rich by traffic, as they might do in a few years, we natives will do it ourselves; white men shall not always be getting rich off us." Again, "If our rich colored men in the States would come here and open up the coal mines at Carrysburg they would be worth millions in a few years."

What a grand opportunity for the many wealthy colored men in our country! They could build ships and grow wealthy off the trade, or they could form a syndicate and transport and maintain those who will go, and whose brawn and muscle will