

Columbus's Day.

NEARLY 400 years ago, on May 20, 1506, Spain permitted the world's most illustrious sailor to die in poverty and disgrace. Some 300 years later a Frenchman erected at Baltimore a neglected and almost forgotten monument to Columbus. In Roman Catholic circles there is now a serious proposition to honor the daring navigator by canonizing him into St. Christopher. Taking all together can any generous citizen of the three Americas think that the discoverer who suffered so much has yet been fitly rewarded?

The fair of 1892 will in itself be a magnificent but fleeting tribute. A monument would be lasting, but with so many unfinished monuments who would dare suggest another? Or by what right should the discoverer of a hemisphere be limited to a statue not visible a mile away, or by the merest fraction of the people to whose grateful memory he has a title? In this dilemma is not this a fitting time to urge the proposal that the day of the discovery should be dedicated to the discoverer? It is so fitly timed, by good fortune, with reference to other holidays of the year that it lends itself to the proposal as though so intended. Between the Fourth of July and Thanksgiving comes only Labor Day. And after Thanksgiving there is no break in the work-days until the two crowded holidays of the New Year season. The half-way holiday of Thanksgiving comes, when it does, in tardy, bleak November, too long after the Fourth and too shortly before Christmas, purely by accident. It is a holiday too firmly fixed in the people's affections for any one to wish or dare to propose its discontinuance. But surely a suggestion to shift it a little in the calendar, to a more genial season, at a time when a holiday is missing, and moreover to add to it a new and deeper meaning, is only to propose a most friendly purpose. It would be sheer caviling to object that already there is one holiday dedicated to honoring the birthday of the father of our country. No one would do him the less honor by honoring Columbus, not only in this great nation but throughout the American hemisphere. Putting religious festivals aside, there would be no holiday to compare with it, just as, since the world began, there has been no material event of greater significance to civilized mankind than the discovery of the New World.

Of course this could not be achieved all at once. Thanksgiving Day, like Topsy, "grewed." It was the result of coöperation by the sundry governors, growing out of the obvious fitness of things. Similarly, to create the new holiday only coöperation is necessary. Legislation would be useful, of course; but in New York at least, and probably elsewhere, the wording of the present statutes is sufficient. "Any day appointed or recommended by the governor of this State, or the President of the United States, as a day of thanksgiving" is a legal holiday in New York. What better day for Thanksgiving could be named than October 12, and what especial reason is there for retaining Thanksgiving in inconvenient November simply because chance and custom have placed it there? Let us by all means keep the honored feast-day, and better yet let us give it new worth and luster. Let New York's governor

set the example, let the President follow it in the great quadro-centennial year, and then poor Christopher will no longer be unhonored in the country upon whose grateful memory he has so especial a claim. Just as the Eiffel tower survives the Paris exposition, so let us hope a new and significant holiday may survive our fair of 1892. The daily press teems with elaborate suggestions for curious and costly structures of stone and metal. But none of them are so fit a memorial or would be so dear to the people as an annually recurring feast-day.

Edward A. Bradford.

"Shooting into Libby Prison."

I WAS surprised at the denial of shooting into Libby Prison, on page 153 of the November CENTURY, because I was so unfortunate as to be compelled to stay a short time at that notorious place and had a personal experience with the shooting. Our squad reached the prison one April night in 1863. Early next morning we new arrivals, anxious to become better acquainted with the rebel capital, filled the windows and with outstretched necks sniffed the fresh air. Three of my comrades were kneeling with elbows resting on the window-sill, quietly looking out. I stood with my hand on the top of a window-frame, looking out over their heads, when bang went a gun, and a bullet came whizzing close to my head and sunk deep into the casing within six inches of my hand. Nothing saved one of our number from death but the poor aim of the guard, who was nearly under us, and to whom we were paying no attention. We were told by those who had been there some time that it was the habit of the guard to shoot in that way to keep prisoners from leaning out of the windows.

Albert H. Hollister,

*Company F, 22d Wisconsin; 1st Lieutenant, Co. K,
30th United States Colored Troops.*

I ENTERED Libby a prisoner of war, October 10, 1863, much weakened by our long trip in box cars from Chattanooga, and having been forty-eight hours without rations. To escape the stifling air inside I seated myself in an open window on the second floor. One of my comrades, having more experience, made a grab for me and "yanked" me out, exclaiming, "My God, man, do you want to die?" "What 's up now?" I said. "Look there!" Peeping over the window-sill, I saw the guard just removing his gun from his shoulder. "What does this mean?" I said. "We had no orders about the windows." "That is the kind of orders we get here," he answered. I went through Richmond, Danville, "Camp Sumpter" (Andersonville), Charleston, and Florence, and during this experience, covering a period of fourteen months and thirteen days, I never heard instructions that we might do this or might not do that. Our first intimation of the violation of a rule was to see the guard raising his gun to his shoulder. They did not *always* fire, but often they did.

J. T. King,

UPPER ALTON, ILL.

115th Illinois Volunteers.