

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.

BRIC-À-BRAC.

Thoughts on the Late War.

I WAS for Union — you, agin it,—
'Pears like, to me, each side was winner,
Lookin' at Now and all 'at 's in it.
Le' 's go to dinner.

Le' 's kind o' jes set down together
And do some pardnership forgittin'—
Talk, say, for instunce, 'bout the weather,
Er somepin' fittin'.

The War, you know, 's all done and ended,
And ain't changed no p'int o' the compass;
Both North and South the health 's jes splendid
As 'fore the rumpus.

The old farms and the old plantations
Still occipies the'r old positions.—
Le' 's git back to old situations
And old ambitions.

Le' 's let up on this blame', infernal,
Tongue-lashin' and lap-jacket vauntin',
And git back home to the eternal
Ca'm we 're a-wantin'.

Peace kind o' sort o' suits my diet—
When *women* does my cookin' for me.—
Ther' was n't overly much pie et
Durin' the Army.

James Whitcomb Riley.

Of a Lady.

HER house is nearly in the town,
Yet shady branches round it lower,
Her tea is always on the board
At half-past four.

Her fireside has a friendly look,
There 's something happy in the air,
Her cream is such you rarely now
Meet anywhere.

She likes this shaded corner best,
The rosy lamp, the Dresden set,
A friend,—or two, perhaps,—a waft
Of mignonette.

And some one touches, in the gloom,
The harp's mysterious wailing strings,
And thoughts that never rose in words
Take music's wings.

Dear friend, though tired and far away,
I still can seek your door,—in Spain,—
Still sit beside your fire, and drink
That tea again!

Annie G. Wilson.

A Letter.

SHE wrote a letter with her eyes,
Well filled with words of bliss;
Then, like a prudent maid and wise,
She sealed it with a kiss.

Meredith Nicholson.

An Arab Saying.

REMEMBER, three things come not back:
The arrow sent upon its track —
It will not swerve, it will not stay
Its speed; it flies to wound or slay.

The spoken word, so soon forgot
By thee; but it has perished not:
In other hearts 't is living still,
And doing work for good or ill.

And the lost opportunity,
That cometh back no more to thee.
In vain thou weepest, in vain dost yearn,
Those three will nevermore return.

Constantina E. Brooks.

Negro Plowman's Song.

DE springtime am er-comin' en dis darky's heart am
light,
W'en de sap hit gits ter runnin' in de trees,
En I wants ter be er-laughin' f'om de mornin' tell de
night,
En er-playin' lak de green leabes in de breeze.
I feel so monstrous lazy dat I does n't want ter work,
En dis mule o' mine, he foolin' in de row,
'Ca'se he feels jis like he marster, en he 's tryin' fer
ter shirk,
En I has ter larrup him ter meck him go.

[*G' up dar, sah! Doan you see my ole 'ooman er-comin'
roun' dar er-s'archin' fer sallil [salad] in de corners
ob de fence!]*

En now I feels lak hummin' on some ole-time darky
song,
W'ile de mockin'-bird am singin' f'om de hedge.
De medder-larks en robins am er-fussin' all day long,
As de cotton-tail goes dartin' frough de sedge;
W'ile up de crick de turkle-dove am courtin' ob its mate,
En de bumblebee is buzzin' all erroun',
W'ile de martins am er-twitt'r'in' at er most amazin'
rate,
En de hoss-fly am er-friskin' up en down.

[*What ails dis hyah ole critter, er-snortin' en er-kickin'
dat er way! Huh! ef hit hain't one er dem ornary
insects erready!]*

I laks ter smell de clover as hit tangles in mer toes,
En ter see de purty blossoms hyah en dar,
W'ile dogwood buds is bustin' in de low-ground whar
dey grows,
En de honeysuckle sweeten all de a'r.
En soon de juicy peaches will be drappin' ter de groun',
En de red-streaked apples tumble too;
Den de curl on de melon vine will turn er golden brown,
Er-layin' in de sunshine en de dew.

[*Golly ding! Doan dis hyah darky's mouf water fer
one on em dis hyah bressed minute! Yas, Dinah, ole
'ooman, I'se gwine ter move erlong peart now; I
was jis er-feelin' in mer pockets fer er string ter splice
dis hyah line wid. Git up dar, sah!]*

Edward A. Oldham.