

Richmond Va.,
December 9, 1922.

Mrs. Jane Ewing Speed,
2228 Hanover Ave.,
Richmond Va.

Dear Mrs. Speed:

I cannot, either offhand or by meditation, conceive of anything that could instill the feeling of resignation and contentment as much as much as your letters have. I find myself incapable of expressing the sincere appreciation that is in my heart, for I do not possess a sufficient command of the English language. May I say, though, in deepest sincerity, for your last chronicle I am most grateful and appreciative. The picturization of the events of 'your Thanksgiving day' were so clear I could, without difficulty, see, as with magic glasses, the picturesque "settings".

And now I must tell you something of how I spent 'my Thanksgiving day'. To begin: we were awakened later than usual, that in itself is a rare occasion. I am not naturally lazy, but I do enjoy, with the enjoyment that an epicurean feels when he has discovered some choice viand, a little additional rest. When I have this opportunity I can exercise my imagination and ponder the future; I envisage it with glamour, for it means liberty, and liberty--well, it means so many things. But I must get back to my subject. The morning was quite 'tame'; with the exception of motion pictures it passed without untoward happenings. At-dinner--"Ah" (may I indulge) that was indeed a most delightful occasion. Each member of the Industrial Department contributed two-and-one-half dollars towardstbuying a 'real' dinner, and, if you will pardon my slangy attempt at wit, it was 'some dinner'. After our sumptuous repast we witnessed a foot-ball game between two team composed of inmates. That comprises our, to outsiders a tame affair, but to us a most eventful day. While I am on the subject of holidays, perhaps it might be well to say that we have great expectations for Christmas. Several of us are trying to find ways and means of giving a dinner for the entire body of men here. Each man will contribute as much as he can afford--those who are unable to give anything will fare the same as those that do. There are, as you perhaps know, a large number of men here who have no friends or relatives from whom they may expect a remembrance, and it would be very nice if we can in some way, make the Christmas holiday, for them, something more than dull monotony.

I often times wonder, Mrs. Speed, just what the attitude of the public at large is, towards the unfortunates confined within our little world within the walls. Is it one of apathy or one of interest? It strikes me, and I am sure that you have thought of it in the same light, that, if the society would help the ex-convict more, after a sentence is served, there would be a great deal less of crime. Don't you think, if philanthropists, who are giving so much to aid foreign causes, could gain greater returns and help his country and fellow-man more, if they would

direct some of their gifts towards assisting the ex-convict who has to go out and fight a losing battle against a world that is inclined towards ex-communication, where the criminal is concerned? I am inclined to think that 'cleaning one's own house' is more nearly the right thing to do and in keeping with the teaching of the Master.

The Atlantic monthlies which you sent me have served to quicken my desire for worth while reading. I find them not only very entertaining but instructive as well. The article in the July issue, entitled, "Flapper Americana Novissima", is a very astute observation, don't you think? The author, apparently, advocates Flapperism as a means of inculcating wholesomeness and purity in the young girls of to-day. Do you agree with them? In the November issue "The New Heredity" is an excellent scientific adventure in conjecture. I gather, from the article, that heredity has more to do with crime than does early environment. I am inclined to believe that the impressions we get in early youth are the most lasting, and they influence our subsequent life more than does heredity. Balzac somewhere says, "a young man who lives an upright and honest life until he is twenty five can never become thoroughly vicious." There are so many conflicting theories that one hardly knows which to believe, unless one becomes a student and selects one that is most in accord with the inward dictates of that still small voice which either favors or shuns any given belief. I have something of an investigating turn of mind and like to delve into such things.

The Sunday New York Times was greatly appreciated. It is indeed a most wonderful paper, and it justly merits the appellation 'the fifth estate of estates'.

May I not hope for another one of your motherly letters very soon? May I not characterize them as "rays of sunshine"?

Yours very sincerely,

Giuseppe Odde.