99 Park Avenue
New York 16, N. Y.
January 18, 1955

Dr. Lyman Bryson, Chairman
Committee on Literature
The Century Association
7 West 43rd Street
New York 36, New York

My dear Dr. Bryson:

A month or two ago I had the pleasure of transmitting to the Club a book, largely photographic, by my wife Nell Dorr, which book has been sponsored by a small catalytic organization, The Dorr Foundation. So many of the people who had seen it were enthusiastic about it that I visualized the Centurians who I knew anyway, would also be at least mildly enthusiastic. I received no acknowledgment of the gift and on making inquiry, your librarian told me it had been received and a slip put in for its acknowledgment to come to me, I think by yourself but it had evidently been "lost in the shuffle."

It is obviously a very embarrassing thing for a man to speak of the work of his wife, but you might be interested in knowing that the exhibit entitled, "The Family of Man, an Exhibition of Creative Photography Dedicated to the Dignity of Man, conceived by Edward Steichen", opening next week at the Museum of Modern Art, contains some pictures made by Mrs. Dorr. The 400 pictures in the exhibition were chosen from some 50,000.

I am also enclosing a brochure and some comment by other people, although the last thing I would impugn a Centurian for is that his own opinion would be swayed by the opinions of others. To any of the clubs to which I belong, except the Century, I would not dare to make the comment that I am making to you. As Arthur Rushmore states, many very marvelous people only regard it as "another book."

I am sure if you have taken the time to read through this letter, I owe you a drink.

Sincerely,

John V. N. Dorr

Enclosures

JVND/est

COMMENTS REGARDING "MOTHER AND CHILD"

Arthur Rushmore, The Golden Hind Press -- "I must have a longer perspective before I talk much about it. At the moment -- under this first impact, it leaves me dumb and breathless -- like death and birth -- I must sit under the sky a bit and try to think. Your text and the pictures evoke by suggestion what lies deep hidden in the reader's mind -- that quality of the masterpieces of art. It is just paint or printer's ink -- OR, it is the strong solvent that cuts through the coating of commonplace life to the shy heart beneath. It is very timely. I should like to put McCarthy in solitary confinement with a copy of this book and refuse him food until he knew it by heart!"

Dr. D'Ailly, Burgomeister of Amsterdam, Holland -- "These are not photographs, they belong with the great masterpieces -- But this is Vermeer..... These are to live with, not to look at."

Victor Gollancz, Victor Gòlancz, Ltd., London -- "This is so beautiful.... words are not necessary. This can never be a money making venture. It cannot possibly be sold without subsidizing, but have you been to the State Department? This is more valuable than their Voice of America. I should think they would realize its value and help to publish it in Europe where it really belongs. Once it is published in America, I believe far seeing Americans will realize its value and help make possible its publication in Europe. It will not be easy financially but I feel it must be done. What seems impossible is a challenge and a way to publish it in Europe will be found."

Carl Sandburg -- "It is a sacred and beautiful book. Nell has in an extraordinary degree the qualities and lights of a mother and a child. With the camera she is both poet and philosopher; her finest personal gleams come through. This latest work of hers shall stand among the books I keep and love. Her life gives richer than ever with affirmations and blossoms."

H. V. Kaltenborn, commentator. -- "Her hauntingly beautiful photographs have caught the very essence of motherhood and the true spirit of childhood. Nell has shown once again that in the hands of an artist the photographic lens can capture the inner spirit as well as the painter's brush."

Claire McCardel, Cleveland Plain Dealer -- "It is a great book, I think--truly great. I showed it proudly to my friends at the Plain Dealer, and was particularly interested in the reaction of the news photographers. They're a bold and hardy lot--not easily impressed by other peoples' photographs....isn't it interesting that your work spoke to both of them of God! The 'yes' in your pictures rings out loud and clear. 'Mother and Child' is not a book--it's God in a graphic form.' Eddie Solotko. 'This book will eliminate a lot of athiests in this world.' Dudley Braumbaugh."

Mr. M. Craeybeckx, Manager Editorial Department, Gevaert Photo-Producten N. V. Antwerp, Belgium -- "Since I started my career as Editor of Gevaert Photo-Producten N. V. more than 30 years ago, I have never been moved so deeply by a photographic publication as by your sublime 'Mother and Child'. I

haven't the slightest hesitation calling it the finest book of photographs I have ever come across. Yours is really a new style and compels us, much to our delight, to revise some of our conceptions about artistic photography. From beginning to end you have succeeded by means of the purest photography to make every page of 'Mother and Child' pulsate with life and poetry."

Sir Harold Hartley, England -- "Your lines are most beautiful in their biblical simplicity. I should have liked to read them back to you myself. They grow on me. Their English is so pure and liminous, there is a feeling of inspiration in every line. And the more I look at the pictures, the more I enjoy them. They are such exquisite subjects they touch the pictures of an old master-- especially one in which you are holding a tiny baby in your long delicate expressive hands. I love to look at them."