AIRMAIL

New York, New York
August 26, 1954

Miss Lillian Gish
6221 Sunset Boulevard
Hollywood 46, California

My dear Lillian:

Referring to letter from Eugene Exman of Harpers, August 25, to you, both Nell and I had a feeling that indicated Mr. Laughton was planning to use "Mother and Child" as what I might call, perhaps irrationally, a "theme song" or motif for some part of the picture on which you are working. This was, of course, confirmed by your request for some of the costumes that are pictured in the book. Nell had a feeling in connection with the publicity on the picture they might be planning some credit to "Mother and Child" which, in turn, would redound to the prosperity of the book and that in turn might add to the overall value of the motion picture. Please tell me if I am too ingenuous, because the motion picture field, to me, is an unknown and uncharted sea.

As Chairman of the Dorr Foundation, which is responsible for the publication of "Mother and Child", we have wide hopes as expressed by Mr. Victor Gollancz of Victor Gollancz Ltd. of London when he said:

> "This is too 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."

We hope within the next six months to get the assistance of foundations or otherwise to spread this gospel and I am sure the two things will work together very well.

My understanding is that you were going to see that a copy of the book got to "Mamie". If you would care to write her a letter, I would have Nell send a copy at once, dedicated to her as we did to another well-known personage.

Our mutual love to you.

Yours,

John V. N. Dorr

JVND/est

(Handwritten note by Mr. Dorr: "Talked to your friend Paul Hammond today -- going strong. Also, is there any chance for Dorr Foundation to acquire any interest in the motion picture? As owner and publisher of "Mother and Child" I think Charles Laughton should donate an interest to Dorr Foundation but we would not be too proud to pay for it. J.V.N.D.
P. S. Could Nell send Laughton a specially dedicated copy?")