M & C

AIRMAIL March 3, 1955

Sir Harold Hartley
The Manor House
Middleton-on-Sea
Bognor Regis
Sussex, England

Dear Harold:

First, I want to say how much we enjoyed having your brother-in-law, Bullard, at lunch Sunday at Westport. I had met him at the Council of Foreign Relations. Although I was nearly out with a mean cold and the weather bad on Sunday, he seemed to enjoy seeing a bit of West Branch.

Nell has shown me the ballots for The Royal Photographic Society and told me that she hesitated to continue her membership because from her contact with it, the Society seemed to be changing its character. Last summer she sent them a copy of "Mother and Child" and later we both called there and met, I think, the Secretary. It was quite evident the book was just another book to him and it looked as if it would be buried in the library without comment. The book was never even opened at that time, let alone being commented on. Nell has been a member of this Society, she tells me, for thirty years and it has been a kind of bond between our two countries as well as between lovers of the photographic world.

Curiously enough, I had the same experience with the Century Club and because it is my club, took the liberty of writing an outrageous letter to the chairman of the Library Committee as to the apparent lack of appreciation of a work of real art. He took my letter happily.

I had thought of writing the President of The Royal Photographic Society referring to the book and sending them the enclosed comments on it, one at least of which you will recognize, and also telling him that Nell's work was represented in Colonel Steichen's collection of photographs, "The Family of Man," by four pictures out of the 400 selected from a great many thousand.

I realize, however, that she is only one member out of probably thousands and everybody's opinions are bound to differ so that any such action might be regarded as the height of impudence. You are an adviser to very important people and if you can extend your advice to an extremely unimportant but affectionate friend, I would appreciate it.

We are still busy with a variety of things. The "Mother and Child" has been accepted by the United States Information Agency and we hope to have them distribute a number of copies from a second edition which will be out within a few weeks. Dorr-Oliver is functioning well. We have disposed of our animals at the West Branch and find much of interest around here.

I am bringing over from England as a speculation in human relations, a young Oxford graduate who, with her husband, has dedicated herself to the outdoor life to see what contribution they can make toward the improvement of our place and developing scientific research on it.

Some friends, the Pepperidge Farm people, have bought an estate in Ireland and left for a few months there yesterday. They invited us to visit them. If Nell would fly as readily as myself, I would try very hard to get over for a month, including a few days there. Nell's comment on this is that if she is able to go at all, it is to meet Gertrude in Bamburgh, her favorite haunt.

I gather from Sir Reader that you are busy and having a most interesting time with the organization with whom you are associated. Our best to Gertrude and yourself.

Yours,

John V. N. Dorr

Enclosure (comments from various people on "Mother and Child")

JVND/est