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Catholic Maternity Guilds Need In War

By Rev. J. J. Schagermann, C.S.S.R.
 Under the caption, "Babies, Mothers and War," an editorial in the New York Times, June 2, stated the problems confronting young married people:
 "War is the great enemy of the home. For the home is inseparable from the family. The preservation of both is essential in the maintenance of morale. Now that we are organizing an army of millions, home and family are called upon to make sacrifices. Young married men must leave the fire-side to fight for what they hold most precious, and, often enough, wives whose plight is pathetic, partly because they are too inexperienced and too poor to care for themselves, partly because from one-third to one-half of our doctors must join the colors, partly because the maternity wards of hospitals are already overcrowded. A problem which was acute even in peace is accentuated by the exigencies of war."
Guilds Threatened
 Friends of the Catholic Maternity Guild Movement fear that the war will hamper the beneficent work of the guilds. As the problem set forth by the editor is precisely the one which the Catholic maternity guilds, now operating or in process of formation in twenty-seven States, are solving, the work of this apostolate calls for renewed activity and intensive zeal.
 The propagandists of so-called planned parenthood will urge that their birth control clinics be linked with maternity centers of the type commended by the editorial. For the advocates of contraception expressly declared that they would try to make their birth control clinics part of the public health programs of the States. But the determination to continue the Guild Apostolate was voiced recently by the Rev. Patrick L. Barrett, C.S.S.R., the founder of a flourishing maternity guild in Holy Redeemer Parish in Detroit. "The daily increasing number of marriages due to the war will draw heavily on our resources, but we are preparing to care for all who come within the class of our guild beneficiaries. Nothing can stop our onward march for God and country."
 The Times editor praised the work of the Children's Bureau of the Department of Labor, but stated that the sum allotted for the fiscal year is far too small. "The Maternity Center Association has stepped into the breach. For ten years it has done its best to make the entrance of infants into this world a safe and happy event. Though its budget cannot stand the strain, it has now taken over the Berwind Free Maternity Clinic. . . . So insistent are the demands of mothers-to-be in these critical times that financial considerations had to be abandoned in the hope that the public would make good a budgetary deficiency and thus endorse an expansion which is indispensable."
 The Catholic Maternity Guild Plan fits into the picture. Besides the main feature of this apostolate, cultural activity of lectures and discussions on the encyclical on Christian Marriage, the guilds sponsor lectures by competent members of the medical and nursing professions, distribute the pamphlet literature of the Children's Bureau, give financial aid on the self-help and mutual-help plan to moderate-income and poor families to be applied to hospital or home care of the expectant mother, prepare layettes and care for the household until the mother is able to resume her duties. The charity of the guilds counteracts contraception and instills reverence for parenthood.
 The appeal of the editor of the Times may be applied to the apostolate of the Catholic Maternity Guilds. "Hard as it is to pay taxes, buy defense bonds and support charities that have a legitimate claim on our purses and our hearts, there is no task more urgent than that which confronts the Maternity Center Association. Every dollar contributed to its fund is a dollar that will help to safeguard mothers and babies in the most trying times of their lives."

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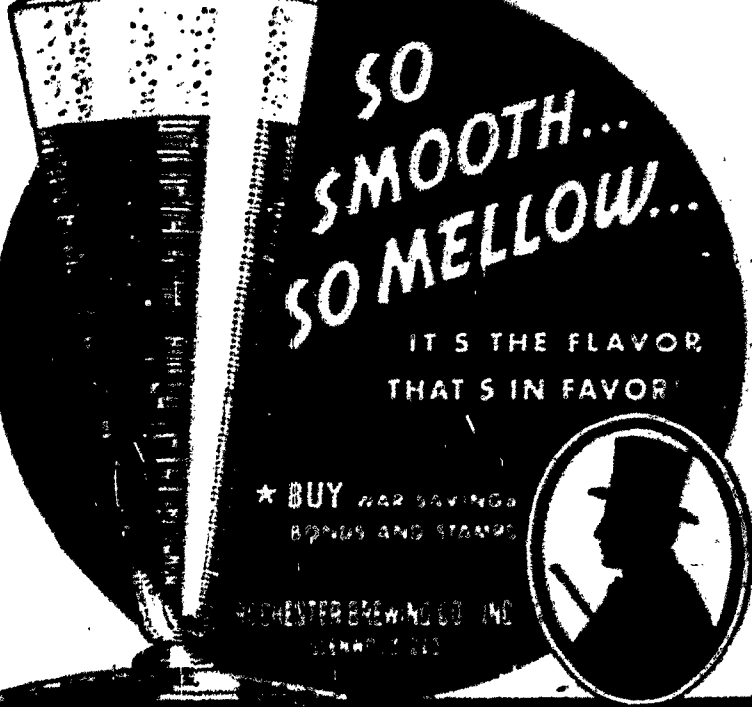
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