

Letter From a War Bride

These are the words of a war bride—not wishful words of what life might have been but a brave acceptance of what life is. Surely there is hope for the world in the realization that the same chaotic conditions which provoke youthful delinquency may also inspire valiancy of the sort reflected here. This letter is published through the courtesy of Mary S. Fisher, Vassar College, Poughkeepsie, N. Y.

"THIS IS WHAT THE WAR has done to *our* lives—to us, the young, soon after a carefree childhood—some of us almost too young yet—but women—not the men, who plunge into the battle's active strife, and fight for honor, country, and their very lives—

"We must learn to wait. To endure the slow trickle of time from hour to hour, from day to day, for weeks in anguish and suspense. And this for some message, a letter sent from far off—small scrap that tells something of how he was—some time ago, when it was sent. We must live a life that's endless fear and doubt. The war work we can do is more than welcome—we work too hard, to put off the next returning cycle of thought—is he safe, is he well, will I hear from him soon?

"We learn to crowd a lifetime of living into a week—or a few days—or hours. War brides, married while he was on furlough, we wait for the next leave, when he can get back. In those brief days the joy is desperate, underlain by the knowledge of certain separation again—the clock ticks off numbered moments gone. And the train takes him off again—off to unknown places where our love cannot follow, cannot know how he is. And we return to the uniform, the long hours of work, and fear and waiting.

"Does he fly now in alien skies where death lies in wait behind a cloud, above a strange land to which he may fall flaming?

"If we bear children, they may never know their father.

"Not for us the calm certainty of long courtship—the wedding to which all our friends and our parents' friends are invited—the holiday wedding trip—the new house for the new bride. Not for us the peaceful life of mother and housewife—the sun through kitchen curtains, the quiet evenings, the sure knowledge that the evening train will bring a husband home to supper.

"This is our life—but we accept it. We are young, and strong, and can see it through. We acknowledge this life our own, in the faith that the work we do will help—to make the future peace—to secure the life we have not now for our old age perhaps, for our children and for theirs.

"We live and fight that our daughters may have the life that war has taken from us."

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