



Christmas Eve, 1862, from "Harper's Weekly"

Date

published January 3, 1863

Primary Maker

Thomas Nast

Medium

Wood engraving on newsprint

Description

American Civil War. "Nast's depiction expresses pathos by emphasizing the separated family during Christmas, a sentimental time. Two large vignettes show a soldier and his wife, physically separated but thinking of and praying for one another. Below, scenes of an army marching through snow and a row of frozen graves remind the viewer of the gravity of their reality. The woman, portrayed within their home, serves as a pillar for emotional stability for her husband but also to her sleeping children, as she expresses her fears whilst they dream. Additionally, her submissive, kneeling posture evokes a sense of piety and moral aptitude that middle-class women were expected to possess and maintain. As a prototype, she is able to convey the feelings of every woman in her situation and affect viewers who are also impacted by the war." (SOURCE: Mary Bei Prince, "Thomas Nast's Conception of Nineteenth Century Women", 2019)

Dimensions

Composition: 13 5/16 × 20 3/16 in. (33.8 × 51.3 cm) Sheet: 15 3/4 × 21 3/8 in. (40 × 54.3 cm)