The Joy of Motherhood - and the Girl who did not want a Baby

Following an article published in the Daily Express in 1941 entitled 'Our Country Must have more Babies,' written by a Harley Street surgeon, thousands of letters from women were received at the newspaper office. All were read by the surgeon who sent one to the editor of the newspaper with this message:

"This is one of the most remarkable and intimate letters I have seen in our vast correspondence. To me, it puts the whole problem of childless women in sharp focus. I believe that every woman should read it and ponder on it deeply."

"I was married five years ago to the man I loved. We were blissfully happy. He loved me, if that is possible, too much; he spoiled me.

I grew conceited; every day I wanted something new, or more money to seek some new amusement.

Once or twice, he had whispered to me while I lay in his arms (after a hectic day of pleasure); 'Darling, let's have a baby, I am sure that is just what we need.'

But foolish me! I used to fly in a rage at the very thought of losing my figure and all my pleasure to have kids, as I so ignorantly called them.

Then crash! War was declared, my husband came in the first age group and was not in a reserved occupation.

What about me; what am I going to do on army pay? Starve? I flung at him. With tears in his eyes, he asked me to try and be brave.

I fretted for him, missed his attentions, grieved for him. I began to feel ill. We wrote to each other every day and he begged me to see a doctor. So, to ease his mind I went along with a friend to see what was wrong with me.

Imagine my horror when the doctor told me, 'You are three and a half months pregnant. A very unusual case but it does sometimes happen without the usual signs.'

I left the surgery with my friend, and when I got home, I wept bitterly as I told her the news. She tried to comfort me by saying that when I had my baby in my arms, I would be glad, but I could not believe her.

I asked her to help me to do something to get rid of it, but she flatly refused, and would not leave me until I promised not to do anything.

When she had gone, I thought of suicide, but I hadn't the nerve. So, I had a glass of hot milk, wrote to my husband and went to bed.

Next day I was in a much calmer frame of mind. I began to think of our baby. I went shopping, and on sudden impulse bought a tiny matinee coat.

When I got home, I unwrapped the little parcel, and was amazed to find myself quite thrilled by just looking at it and holding it in my arms. I could not understand this new and wonderful feeling.

When I got the next letter from my husband to say he was the happiest man in the army, and that he was coming home on four days' leave the next week, I began to think, it's going to be all right after all.

Then it arrived at last, the day of his first leave. He arrived home at 5 a.m. I lay awake waiting, then I heard his feet up the drive, his key in the door. I got up and we met half-way on the stairs. With tears of joy, we clung to each other.

During those wonderful days of leave we decided to leave the house and go into a small cottage for the duration. We were lucky enough to find one at 14s. per week.

The four days were up all too soon, and I was left to arrange the removal alone. I had to sell the expensive fittings in my lovely home so that I should have some money to pay for all the various expences. But I did not mind in the least.

I was now looking forward to my baby with a wonderful joy in my heart; I did not miss the amusements I thought were life.

I looked in the mirror and saw a calmness and a softness which were not there before. My time drew near and I went into hospital two days before my baby came.

I had a bad time. It was terrible. Then our son was born. I felt lifted up right to the gates of heaven.

It was wonderful, I was a mother! me! Imagine it! I had a son.



My husband was allowed twenty-four hours leave. When he came and the nurse brought our lovely little son, the image of his daddy, I then realised I had found what I had been seeking for so long – perfect happiness and the joy of life.

I shall never forget that moment as I looked at my husband and I put our son into his arms.

Oh! If only those hundreds of other foolish young wives would realise what they are missing by not having a family! I know, and my heart grieves for them.

My army pay is now £2 9s. 6d., less than I spent on pin money before the war. But I am happier than I have ever been in my life. I can't go to a beauty parlour now, so I put curling pins in my hair, and my husband thinks I am more lovely than I ever was.

And now for the vital question: shall I have any more babies?

Well, I want another. I would like one now, even though my baby son is only nine months old. I am not afraid of air raids or the pain of confinement.

If the government would raise the allowance for children and pay hospital fees I would have another baby as soon as possible.

I do not want my son to be an only child. I was an only daughter, and I should not like him to go through life without the love and companionship of brothers and sisters.

That is my story, to print or return, as you wish."