Primary Maker: Unidentified artist
Title: News from the Front
Date: ca. 1863-1864
Medium: Oil on canvas
Dimensions: Overall: 20 x 24 1/16 x 7/8 in. (50.8 x 61.1 x 2.2 cm)
Credit Line: New-York Historical Society
Object Number: X.725

Object Name: Genre
Classification: PAINTINGS

Curatorial Remarks:
During the Civil War, northern women’s organized efforts included knitting and sewing items for troops. Homefront and battlefield converge in this genre painting, which portrays women taking active interest in wartime developments within the domestic realm. With her knitting project in the immediate foreground, a fashionable young woman sits in the parlor of her middle class home reading a front-page article in The New York Times on General Ulysses S. Grant’s movements. Her husband, a wounded Union infantry captain on leave, sits beside her. His bandages, and his grave and anxious expression, are reminders of the war’s physical and emotional consequences. Though an imaginary scene, the newspaper’s specificity lends realism; the legible volume number notionally depicts an everyday moment taking place in 1863 or 1864.

Markings: Verso stenciled: “20 X 24 / Prepared / By Edwd Dechaux / New York.”