

MILTON BARNES to RHODA BARNES

NOTE: Barnes again mentions the Confederate cavalry under Col. Turner Ashby, this time apparently driven off by Shields' artillery under Lt. Col. Phillip Daum. The surgeon of the 62nd Ohio, Dr. Charles H. Hood, later was invalided out. In early 1865 Dr. Hood asked Barnes' assistance in finding another army position and also described the 62nd as having deteriorated in quality since the Shenandoah Valley campaign. See DR. CHARLES H. HOOD to LT. COL. MILTON BARNES, March 25, 1865: (Barnes was then deputy commander of the 97th Ohio Volunteer Infantry Regiment.) The optimism Barnes expresses was shared officially by General Banks.

Camp Near New Market, Va.

April 19th, 1862

My ever dear wife,

My facilities for writing are poor as you will perceive, but I cannot longer refrain. I am enjoying most excellent health, which I know is a matter of the first interest to you, next to my personal safety - I have not yet received any letter from you dear and have heard from you nothing since I left except yesterday evening I received a letter from Stephens Ringer who said he had called to see you. The letter was done up in white envelope, and I hurried off to read it thinking it was from my loving wife. You can hardly realize my disappointment. But still it was some relief to hear from you indirectly - only he said nothing about your health, but I suppose you were all in health or he would have said something about it. You will see by the date of this that we have moved ¹ we have advanced some 18 or 20 miles since day before yesterday we left our camp Near Woodstock at 1 o'clock in the night - the weather was beautiful ¹ The order came the evening before, and of course as there was a new class of sensations on my mind I slept none - but got ready and at 12 took a cup of hot coffee and got ready with my company to march, intending if I found I

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could not stand it to fall back to the camp - I got on quite well indeed - we were on the turnpike. an excellent road as we progressed, and as the morning light broke upon us from over the mountains, it revealed to me at once, a full view of our gigantic army and the most beautiful country I ever beheld. about sunrise our advance which extended a mile ahead of us came upon Ashby's cavalry with a battery - they fired 5 or 6 shells at our men which did no damage. Daum's battery flew up the hill like lightning, planted their guns on a range with Ashby and let him have it as fast as they could load and fire for about 10 minutes when Ashby ceased, and as the boys say, "Skedadled" in double quick time, and we lost sight of him. for fear the enemy under Jackson might be concealed in the woods, the forces were sent out as skirmishers - passing along parallell with the road. after passing along about a mile, we saw our cavalry ahead start off in full gallop with a yell. they had discovered the enemy's camp, and a few minutes soon [er] would have captured the whole of them [.] one Lieut. was caught and brought back a prisoner. he had fallen from his horse. at Mount Jackson I began to get tired and Dr. Hood our Surgeon very kindly gave me his horse which rested me and I [got] on finely - here we took dinner, and took off to the right on another road some twelve miles in a circuit and at night came within three miles of the main road again. it was very warm. I rode most of the way. here we camped for the night, and next morning crossed over the river by fording it [.] this took

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nearly all the forenoon. I rode the Dr's horse over. to night I am staying at the hotel in town [.] it set in raining and I got permission to do so from Col. Pond. I still think there will be no fighting in this valley. Jackson is in full retreat, and only has about 7000 men and we have about 30,000. I hope I shall get a letter from you in a day or two, at farthast [sic], and hope you have been getting mine. This is all that troubles me. My trunk has not come up yet from camp though I got all safe from Winchester. and took several meals in my dishes. it was so nice. it is thought by some that when Jackson is kicked [?] out of the valley this division will be mustered out of service but it may be only a camp rumor - I have to write this in pencil having no pen with me, but you will be glad to get it in any shape, My dear wife if you are as eager to get it as I am to get yours - remember me to Mother and dear little Tirza - and write often. Our mail carrier is going out and I must close. I cant pretend to give you particulars now as we are all out of shape - we will probably remain here several days yet. Your ever faithful and loving husband

M Barnes