

MILTON BARNES to RHODA BARNES

NOTE: Milton Barnes expresses anger at the bad news from the East re Lee's movement to invade Pennsylvania, which had begun early in June. Major General Robert H. Milroy and a small Union force in the Shenandoah Valley had been routed by the advancing Confederates on June 15. Barnes' irritation was compounded by worry concerning his brother Clark whose latest letter to Rhoda had been written from Winchester, Va., and his brother Frank, last reported at Romney, some 30 miles west of Winchester. (See CLARK BARNES to RHODA BARNES, May 13, 2863 and RHODA BARNES to MILTON BARNES, February 13, 1863.)

Murfreesboro Tenn.

June 18th 1863

My love.

I am all "out o' sorts" today. The news from the east is enough to sicken the heart of any soldier. More bad generalship! wonder if Hooker is "removed" yet? The whole business ~~is~~^{is} out o' joint. The war set back again. I am getting out of all patience with "old Abe" - [he has] been dallying with the draft all spring and let the "rebs" into Pennsylvania, where to us poor short sighted mortals down here, it looks as though he might have had his conscription act carried out, and enough troops in the field to have checked Lee's movements at Winchester. Instead of that however Old [General] Milroy is driven out and forced to cut his way through and retire with heavy loss! when will the government officials learn any -----O, pshaw! [sic] I feel quite uneasy about [my] brother Clark and [brother] Frank. As soon as you hear anything of them let me know dearest! I hope for the best but fear the worst. Poor Ma Ma [Barnes] will be in great trouble till she hears, wont she? poor old creature! I neglected to answer your inquiry about Mrs. Foster. her father is an old man by the name of Johnston. he was with us all last winter clerking for Foster. that is all I know of him. it was kind of her to speak to my darling thus feelingly, and of the rest also to be kind and not intrude their sympathies upon you by becoming an annoyance to you when your mind was

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troubled and wished to be left to its own reflections! I have not yet been able to get you the book I promised you, [in June 10 letter] ^[I] was up today but they were all sold, ^[there] will be another supply soon. I got photographs of Genls. Crittenden, Wood and Garfield. I will send you one at a time, Crittenden's first, it has his autograph. I called in at his head.qrs. on purpose to get it, he intimated that he would like to have [one of] all his field officers, so I just gave him mine that I brought with me, he wants [photographs of] all his field officers that fought with him at Stone river. this is the first acquaintance I had had with him. he looks just as you see him in this picture. very much like an Indian - a very dusky hue - almost dingy, low narrow forehead with long straight black hair combed behind his ears. When I called today however his wife had cut his locks off, and they were talking and laughing about it. She had evidently come Delilah over him, his wife is a good wholesome looking lady[,] very talkative, not very handsome. In [the] field Genl. Crittenden is as straight as an arrow, slender, about my height, reserved in his manner, has'nt much to say generally, but speaks to the point and is a perfect gentleman. his eyes [are] dark and penetrating, with an expression very difficult to describe. When [anyone is] in his presence he is as mild and gentle as a lady. He is a very fine horseman - sits perfectly erect. In battle is quick to decide and cool to endure and execute! It is getting to be better understood now that his [wing] - the "left-wing", saved the day at Stone River. They tell a story about him occasionally - one is that after the battle was over, he was sitting down on a rail musing to himself, after [a] while he turned to one of his staff and said "Suppose you were going to eat a chicken now, what part would you take. I should prefer the "left wing"[.] He was ordered to Washington city soon after the battle, when he arrived there he was asked

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what command he would like to have? He very coolly remarked "I dont want any except the one I now have. I can take my little left wing and whip any equal number of rebels that can be brought to bear against me." As I rode past Gen. Garfield's head quarters this morning, and sat on my horse talking to Farrar[,] Garfield stepped out to the door and looked at me through his field glasses, and remarked "you look pretty well." He gave me his photograph upon my solicitation, the others, I have to buy at 50cts apiece. Farrar showed me an escrutoir made of cedar taken from the battlefield, it is very nice. - it will cost some seven, or eight dollars to get it made, but - would you like to have one? It is becoming distressingly warm down here - drilling is getting to be heavy work. ^[Colonel] ~~Colonel~~ Lane is trying to learn to drill some. Our regiment is about the best drilled in our brigade.

I have been killing time a little playing chess latterly. I have'nt found anybody yet that can beat me.

The Major and Chaplain are over their little brash.

Now my dear wife, it is so hot I must quit writing for today. I hope you are receiving my letters regularly. hope Tirza is well by this time. My love to all, Much love to your own dear self

from your own Milton