

RHODA BARNES to MILTON BARNES

NOTE: Rhoda mentions a letter from Milton dated November 11, 1863, which is missing from this collection.

Home Nov 21st 1863

My darling -

Yours of the 11th came Saturday night [-] I had been looking very anxiously every evening - & would have been sadly disappointed indeed if none had come - I was surprised to hear you talking about Charlie staying at home all winter, he has been gone from here two weeks - I dont think it any wonder that the Major is out of patience about getting home -(I am just so bothered & pestered I dont know what I am writing - Mother seemed to hardly think I was sane when I told her the other day that "I'd give so much if I had a nice little room where I could go & write or read - all alone - without fear of being interrupted["] - Oh then I could write down just exactly what I think and what I feel - I'd almost make you think I was talking to you[,] my love. But instead of having such a darling little retreat from vexation and annoyance - I must sit right down by the fire in the family, reception, sewing & nursery room with my portfolio & work on my knee (having no convenient table or stand in the room)[,] folks dropping in occasionally, Mother talking whenever the notion takes her - Tirza teasing, questioning, pulling, & picking at me, wanting a drink, or a pickle[?] or something else, every five minutes - I cannot think - I cannot feel as if I was talking to you - especially if I feel a little nervous as I do today I am still more easily interrupted - There now [-] ["I feel better"<sup>D]</sup> - I told you my darling my troubles in this line & you can sympathize with me with a vengeance cant you? "poor Sing - never mind just wait until we get to Peoria

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Ill. or Oshkosh City or Fondulac Wis" [-] then I'll have a nice cozy room above stairs - a perfect little nest, all to my two selves - with a nice shining wood stove - where I can just revel amid books, papers, pen & ink, &c - this is my very beau ideal of happiness here - I wonder if to me unattainable - I had such an appropriate bit of poetry - about the horrors of dishwashing &c, &c - I intended to send it to you, but forget where I put it. -- But Milton another thing [that] is worrying me more just now than any thing else is "where's the money gone?[" - I count and recount what has passed through my hands to be sure that I've lost none, or none <sup>[has]</sup> been stolen [-] I am sure I am not extravagant & yet it slips away - I've had but two new dresses since you ~~went~~ into the 97th & they were only gingham - I gave Dr Clark \$400. 1st of October on interest for six months - the remainder I reserved to pay off some old scores - the coal bill, lumber bill - an old bill at Rainey's & one to Billy Smith & some others - when we started to Penn <sup>[sylvania]</sup> - I had about \$65 - it cost us \$4.50 to get to the Stacey House in Wheeling - it being Fair Time at Washington the train went up [at] 7 AM - so we were detained until the next morning, costing us [\$]2.50 - I got some stockings & a pair of mittens for Tirza - making \$1.00 - Train bill to Washington \$3.00 - to Hickory in a hind [sic] carriage \$4.00 - my doctors bill was \$10.50 - I presented Aunty for her loss of sleep & trouble with me \$5.00 & a pair of gloves, I had to force the money on her because I thought it was just -- [\$]11.75 brought us home, \$2.00 to Dr. Hildreth on his prescription, & 40 cts to have it filled which I think has been a benefit to me[.] But do not scold me my darling - nor dont think hard of me (which is worse, for I [will] try to be a better money agent in future if you'll trust me)- This thing of visiting when you my poor husband are away in the wars I dont believe in - other ladies seem to enjoy it but I dont - if poor old Grandmother is living next summer I shall try to get Mother to go in, & if you are not at home,

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I can get some girl to stay with me - -

I had intended to get Tirza & I a nice winter dress apiece - but [when] <sup>[sic]</sup>  
I found the way the money was going I gave it up - will try to make what I have  
do me - if my throat dont get well I cant go out much in bad weather. Cousin  
Ham gave me his Carte de Visite album, so that will release you - a nicely bound  
bible would please me more - when you have an opportunity - I've not seen Farrar  
since I came home, think he might call <sup>(-)</sup> Poor Rosy McCulley was in today - she  
seems better, but I fear her days are few - Mother has been so unwell ever since  
we came home that I've not commenced my bathing yet, you'd better take care writing  
me about Brandy appetite - what would you think of a lady going into the Depot  
Saloon in Bridgeport calling for a glass of ale -?

Write me always my love just as you feel - it make[s] me feel better to do  
so - & I am sure it does you - I dont want you to make an effort to write cheer-  
fully when you feel otherwise - the boys are writing home from the thl5 [sic]  
about being on half rations - & so on - it sounds hard & we pity & wish we could  
do much more <sup>[.]</sup> I could write more, but if the society start their box this week I  
shall write again - God guard thee my Milton your own Rhoda -

[At top of page 1:]

I sent to Pittsburg while there for a victorine & muff that cost me \$20.00 - &  
now I am at home & a bankrupt - nothing for my trip except improved health - and  
as that was my errand I suppose I ought to be content - but I really had no  
pleasure - - your kind letters with wishes for my enjoyment seemed to be in  
vain - I was'nt there three days untill [sic] I wished myself at home every day -  
I wont go again - Now I'll have to retrench all winter for spending so much [.]

[At side of page 2:]

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I was to hear Mr Sankey preach yesterday - thought he preached so good & solemn,  
prayed so fervently for "our noble patriot soldiers"  
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