RHODA BARNES to MILTON BARNES

Home May 1st 1865

My darling -

I do so much wonder where you are, and how you are this first day of May - tis a cold, cloudy day - not very suitable for a great May-day in the woods as used to be so customary in my young days. I got three letters from your dear self last week - wasn't I blessed? - The last one came Wednesday night & you expected them to move the next day - whither you know not - I would it were nearer home - it seems to take so long for our letters to go and come - I almost forget what I have written to you - before I hear anything from it - I was so anxious to hear from you after you'd hear[ed] of our President's death, [and] at last it came - I hope by the next one I get you will be feeling better and more hopeful as I do now - I feel like giving old Andy [Johnson] my hand - if he only acts out what he has spoken, I was sorry that I was unable to get the Commercial during this great excitement - they would have been so interesting and valuable to file - the carrier has all his papers engaged - we get the reading of Thomson's sometimes - & now the details of Booth's capture, death &c but I suppose all these things will be published in a more suitable form - but things are more interesting just as they are transpiring - I am sorry that you have been without papers too - you must feel almost as if you were buried alive - away up there in that heathenish country - not knowing what the world is doing - except by a few letters - & sometimes an official despatch.
Will it not wet [sic] your appetite for daily's [?] - I wonder -- I am so selfish that when I have you safe at home with me, I lose almost all my relish for such reading, but I don't think it is right - I don't want ever to live for self & one or two others alone - as much as I did for a year or two after I was married. The doctrine is to me very repulsive - that woman was created to cook dinners and nurse babies alone. I don't enjoy doing either for my part -- Oh fudge I forgot I was writing a letter to my dear old soldier husband, [but] yesterday was Sabbath day, & having a cold I was in the house all day. I felt so lonesome & thought so much about you and wished you were here, Oh! wont it be nice [!] we have been separated so much of the time since we were married that it will seem quite mad[?] to have you home as a fixture and not as a mere guest - wont it darling? I cant realize it - I wish I was more buoyant & jubilant. I can't get to feel that this doleful war will soon be over. It's amusing to read the letter to the Commercial from Sherman's Army about the time Sherman thought he was immortalizing himself making peace on his own responsibility[;] after describing the appearance of officers & every surrounding circumstance very particularly, & talking about what a relic the old house in which the august assembly met, & telling of the hopes & plans of the men in a homeward march[,] he winds up by changing this line of the song "What shall we do when the war breaks the country up?" to What shall we do when peace knocks the army up?" - Poor souls[,] they were a little too fast - when Gen[eral] Grant stepped in, he came brought with the "war club" instead of the "olive branch".
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so ye correspondents may throw away his withered strawberry leaves &c -
I suppose I ought/not [sic] to laugh at the fellows['] poor disappointment,
but they are such a set of braggadocios down there & think they have done
it all so grandly - I am just hateful enough to feel glad that they & Sherman
[Leggett]
have been snubbed a little - what's your think? - Douglass is home on ill
health leave & they say it riles him considerably when the men censure Sherman
in his presence - he wont have a word said - by the way I must go down and see
them & hear about General Leggett & Mrs General Leggett - you know. Yes,
[Adair]
my darling[,] I got Capt Carlisle Adair's & Adjt Adair's pictures - I showed
them to the Major [and] he gave Adair quite a puff for smartness & information -
I should think[,] from his picture, he was a very foxey [sic] little dandy fellow -
& that would be all - Carlisle is not as good looking as I supposed he was - as you
[Adair] say my wee album is quite overstocked by almost a dozen but Albums are so common I
doent much want one[.] I've been trying to he invent some place to have our soldier
pictures framed under glass - then they would not suffer so much from handling as
in albums - I wish you could find me some pine cones in your travels - but dont
worry about mementoes, [sic] I guess you folks dont pick up secesh pictures, books,
or drinking cups, [at top of page 1:] or are you in a place where they dont have
such things? but my love dont throw yourself in the way of guerillas to get cones[.]
I had much rather you would make no effort to get them if you have to make run any
risk - be oh! so careful[,] my darling [-] dont for my sake wander outside your
lines - you know how many have fallen just before their time was out - Mrs. Neeland
says Peter Sines [?] is going to start back Wednesday - maybe I'll write by him
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if I see him in time - We have 17 young chickens - they will be good in four months - & we will have lots of peaches too I hope - dont your mouth water? -

Mother came in just now with a letter from Aunt Ann - telling us of poor Smith Grahams death in the battle before Richmond - that is the third brother - so they go - never mind the cones[,] love - nor mementoes [sic] either, be careful of your own dear self & oh trust in God who alone can bring you home to me in safety - Good night love [-] Tirza is well [and] sends kisses to Pa - your own loving Rhoda