

RHODA BARNES to MILTON BARNES

NOTE: All the letters written by Rhoda to Milton Barnes between that of November 7, 1864, and this one of December 5 are missing from this collection. She mentions having read that Silas A. Strickland, commander of the 50th Ohio Volunteer Infantry Regiment, commanded a brigade in the Battle of Franklin. He headed a brigade improvised by Schofield from miscellaneous units collected after the retreat from Columbia to Franklin, according to General Cox's book.

Home Dec 5th '64

[No Salutation]

Oh! my own precious dear one - safe again -! how more than thankful we must be - just a few minutes ago Jim brought up your thrice welcome letter written on Thursday [December 1] after that fierce & bloody battle [at Franklin] - I hardly hoped for a letter [and] was just looking over Thomsons Commercial - seeing for the third or fourth time that Wagner's Div[ision] was in the hottest place - that it bore "the brunt of the assault" &c but that it fought bravely & heroically even while falling back - I had hoped there would be some list or something definite - I felt that it would be almost miraculous if you were safe - Oh! what a weary crushing load the familiar handwriting and recent date & first sentence took from my poor anxious burdened heart - I felt like dropping on my knees & almost shouting for very joyousness & gratitude - our minds have been on a wearisome strain of anxiety since this time last week - we dreamed such hideous dreams about you & the Rebels with their guns - that I was superstitious enough to almost [be] sure that you were suffering in some way. Poor darling[,] how I pity you - ["] poor tired sleepy worn out sing" - if I only felt sure that you would get to rest awhile - but the correspondents all predict a heavy battle near Nashville or a chase after that hateful Hood - As you say we may assuredly see that

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God can preserve those who trust in Him and that he has very signally spared you my love in so much peril - let us renew our trust and faith in such a God of mercy, love & kindness -

Col[onel] Lane has had to come to it - what has become of Gen[eral] Newton? I see Col[onel] Strickland's name mentioned as commanding a Brigade - Charlies Mother was hoping she'd get a letter tonight, I suppose she did - Randal Ross was in town yesterday and got up quite an excitement about getting mittens for the 15th. - There was a called meeting of the Society this evening at President Thomsons - Is [sic] your poor hands freezing?- I do hope you are still safe & resting[.] You have no idea how I feel when I am anxiously counting the hours till mail time & then afraid to look in a paper for fear I ~~get~~ find your name in some dread list -

Poor little Tirza[,] she seems to think and talk about you so often & miss you, will be say[ing] what Pa will say & do when he comes home. She seems so well & merry, [I] hope it may continue - Little Ida Hoge was taken away so suddenly last week it rendered our own ewe lamb so much more precious - poor ["[^]Dorc"[,] how my heart ached for her, & [I] thought how should I bear it - if my poor darling was called away from [me] - Oh may God in his love spare me so dreadful a sacrifice, Ida was'nt sick over thirty hours - some say it was a kind of Scarlet fever - Dunbar says it was from eating an overload of Chestnuts - Hoge united with the church yesterday & was baptized - twould seem very solemn - but I was'nt there - Rebel Dr. Wilson from Concord was there to assist with Communion [so] Lindsays[,*] Loflands & us stayed away - I am so glad you get some letters, to comfort you some -

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all are abed but me so I'll quit too - but will write again in a day or two - I could'nt compose myself to write to you when I was uncertain as to your fate - I hope to sleep sweeter tonight - poor Mother has neuralgia again - Jim looked as ^[s.c.]glad when I told him you were safe - ~~said~~ - "I'm glad" - ["] May God ever protect thee ["] is ever the prayer of your Rhoda[.]