MARTHA SCHOFIELD AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF A WOMAN'S AUTONOMOUS LIFE: 1858-1870

by

MELANIE ROSEANNE PAVICH

(Under the Direction of Ronald E. Butchart)

ABSTRACT

Martha Schofield was a Quaker, a teacher, and a woman who came of age at the beginning of the Civil War. She began teaching in 1858 both to contribute to her family's income and in answer to what she came to believe was her life's calling. Along with abolitionism, women's rights, and temperance were among the causes she and her family supported. In addition, her mother was a Quaker minister, often travelling from home to preach as well as to lecture. During the war Martha taught in a school for free blacks in Philadelphia and volunteered as a hospital worker and nurse. Her influences were many for women's contributions in a reforming and expanded post-war world, including Lucretia Mott, Anna Dickinson, and Susan B. Anthony.

At the same time, Martha hoped to become a wife and mother but that was not to be. Instead, with failing health she ventured south, first to coastal South Carolina and eventually to the town of Aiken, to dedicate her life to the uplift of former slaves. By 1871, she established what would become the Schofield Normal and Industrial School in Aiken, living and working there until her death in 1916.

Through choice and circumstances, Martha Schofield became a freedmen's teacher, established a school, and secured its success through her business and fundraising skills. For most of her adult life, she worked tirelessly for the rights of African Americans and women. Hers is a fascinating story of a nineteenth-century woman striving to change, some would say radically, the world in which she lived while struggling to find love and support outside the traditional roles most often associated with women of her time. Her attempt to find a balance between the expectations placed upon her by the culture at large and the reality of the life she ultimately came to lead, gives added insight into the range of American women's experiences in the nineteenth century.

INDEX WORDS: Freedmen's teachers, Freedmen's education, Teacher's lives, Nineteenth-century northern women, Northern women in the post-bellum south, Nineteenth-century women's diaries

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MELANIE ROSEANNE PAVICH

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MELANIE ROSEANNE PAVICH

Major Professor: Ronald E. Butchart

Committee: Derrick P. Alridge
Patricia Bell-Scott
John C. Inscoe
Louis A. Ruprecht, Jr.

Electronic Version Approved:

Maureen Grasso
Dean of the Graduate School
The University of Georgia
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DEDICATION

For my mother and father

Mildred Blitva Pavich and Milan Pavich

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INTRODUCTION

On March 31, 1862, Martha Schofield wrote in her diary, "I can bear much when I feel that I am doing right, for that is the great end of, or rather the beginning of true life."[1] Her entry exemplifies the independence she had come to desire and the means by which to justify it. As long as she was convinced of the rightness of her actions, Martha would tolerate the disapproval or even censure of others. She was a young woman who pushed the boundaries of a woman's place at a time when those boundaries were in flux and less clear than they had been in the past. The necessities of war brought new opportunities for work and service. However, when the war ended she did not return, as others did, to more traditional female roles. Instead, as a freedmen's teacher, Martha Schofield joined the ranks of the more than eleven thousand women and men who chose to aid former slaves in their transition from bondage to freedom.[2]

For twelve years, beginning on January 1, 1858, and ending on January 1, 1870, Martha wrote in her diary nearly every day. Yet, her ritual of writing came to serve as much more than an account of daily events or as an emotional outlet, though it served as both of these. It became a foundation from which to build a life of accomplishment and independence. In her diaries she narrated, and we can follow, the path she took in defining and then claiming a life of her own design – an autonomous life. Central to the unfolding of that life was the world of her emotions.

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[1] Martha Schofield Diary (Diary 3), 31 March 1862, 24, Martha Schofield Papers, Friends Historical Library, Swarthmore College [hereafter cited as Diary, with the date of entry].

[2] Ronald E. Butchart, *Schooling the Free People: Teaching, Learning, and the Struggle for Black Freedom, 1861-1876* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, forthcoming).

Martha Fell Schofield was born on February 1, 1839, into a family of Hicksite Quakers in Bucks County, Pennsylvania. Her parents, Oliver and Mary Jackson Schofield, were among the most radical reformers of the time, supporting abolition, temperance, and the expansion of the rights of women. Their circle of friends included Lucretia and James Mott, William Lloyd Garrison, and Susan B. Anthony, among other notable women and men. The Schofield children were, in birth order: twins, Sarah Jane (Sallie) and Lydia, born in 1835; Benjamin, born in 1837; Martha; and Eliza, born in 1840. They were, overall, a close-knit and affectionate family. Martha and her siblings seemed to especially relish their father's open and easy temperament, and it was a particularly severe emotional blow when Oliver Schofield died in 1852. Moreover, Benjamin was, then, separated from the family, choosing to live with an aunt and uncle rather than leave the family farm with his mother and sisters.[3]

The Schofield children also grew up among a large extended family of Schofields and Jacksons, and within several Quaker communities. Martha received her education at home with a tutor, in public school, and, for a short time, at the Sharon Female Institute established by her uncle John Jackson. He was an educator and minister, as well as a scientist of some renown. Martha and her sisters all worked as teachers, though her youngest sister, Eliza, concentrated her efforts more steadily on her artistic talents. The only one of the four sisters to marry was Sallie. Lydia, her twin, often lived with Sallie and her husband to assist with housekeeping and,

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[3] The Hicksites were a progressive faction of Quakerism named after Elias Hicks who was a staunch abolitionist and whose preaching generated controversy as well as a large following. "The focal point of Hick's doctrine was his emphasis on the Inner Light. The Light alone was sufficient for salvation. Nothing outward was necessary. If the Light was allowed to express itself, it would lead man toward God." Conflict between Hicks and more conservative Quakers, particularly early evangelical Quakers from Britain, led to growing tension in a number of meetings. Philadelphia Yearly meeting separated in 1820, and many other meetings followed. For an in-depth analysis of the Hicksite separation see Robert W. Doherty's *The Hicksite Separation: A Sociological Analysis of Religious Schism in Early Nineteenth Century America* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1967), 26.

eventually, childcare. Martha was twenty-two years old when the first shots were fired on Fort Sumter and had by then spent four years teaching in New York and Pennsylvania. She was, of all the Schofield sisters, the one who felt a real calling to teach, and during the war taught in a school for free blacks in Philadelphia. Like many other young women of the time, she also took up hospital work and nursing.[4]

Mary Jackson Schofield was a role model for her daughters and revered by them. A Quaker minister, she often traveled to preach or to speak in support of abolition. Consequently, she understood well the difficulty of managing a life of service with that of marriage and motherhood. In 1850, after having been away from home for more than a week, Mary Schofield "felt a personal need to leave her family" still longer in order to have time, alone, to rest. She left her husband in charge of the house and children – they agreed she was doing what was best for her and, therefore, for their family.[5] Theirs was a marriage not unlike that of Lucretia and James Mott. Anna M. Speicher has written of the Mott's marriage that James Mott, "seemed to view his role as primarily one of support for his wife's activism" and she was able to remain "extraordinarily active" because of the "support she received from [him]."[6]

Martha wrote of feeling misunderstood by her mother and was at times conflicted because of the intensity of her desire for a life of action. She struggled with how far she was willing to push the boundaries of obedience and even propriety to achieve her goals. Her mother always agreed to her plans whether to teach or to nurse, though often reluctantly, or was preempted from any input when Martha went ahead secretly. Her mother's life, though radical

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[4] Katherine Smedley, *Martha Schofield and the Re-Education of the South, 1839-1916* (Lewiston, New York: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1987), 21-24, 49-50, 62. This volume is the only other study of Martha Schofield's life and work.

[5] Smedley, *Martha Schofield and the Re-Education of the South,* 8.

[6] Anna M. Speicher, *The Religious World of Antislavery Women* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2000), 34-35.

in terms of politics and religion, fell within the more traditional sphere of marriage and motherhood. What is clear in Martha's writing during this period is her desire for a life outside the bonds of marriage. Yet, in her diaries she wrote often of love, romantic and platonic, and continued to wonder at the possibilities of marriage and motherhood.

Martha Schofield's choice of a life as a teacher of freedmen and women in South Carolina was, in part, a result of the expansion of opportunities afforded women during the Civil War. However, women of Martha's region and class were already laying claim to lives of labor and service that did not include marriage and dependence. Lee Virginia Chambers-Schiller indentified an ante-bellum "cult of single blessedness" in which

> women began to think of themselves as individuals with their own identities, goals, rights, and callings separate from those of kin, church, or community and defined by personal need and desires, not the prescriptions of gender. Women began to express the very human desire to grow, to accomplish, to succeed – they acknowledged ambition, valued independence, and sought autonomy. They wanted to make their own choices, to be responsible for their own achievements
> and failures, to establish their own priorities, and to enact them.[7]

Chambers-Schiller studied more than one hundred women in New England between 1780 and 1840. But, women in the South also sought alternatives to marriage.

In *Southern Single Blessedness: Unmarried Women in the Urban South, 1800-1865,* Christine Jacobson Carter defined a similar ideology that held that it was better to remain single and devote one's life to service to others, especially within one's own family, than to marry "the wrong man for the wrong reason." There were few vocational or professional opportunities for women of standing in the South. However, in the North single blessedness allowed

> new avenues for education, vocation, autonomy, and intimacy outside marriage as it elevated the unmarried state as one of purity, disinterest, and service. Seeking liberty, which was to them a 'better husband,' unmarried northern women struggled against the

[7] Lee Virginia Chambers-Schiller, *Liberty a Better Husband: Single Women in America: The Generations of 1780-1840* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984), 205.

> constraints and obligations family members made of them, looking instead for economic security, rooms of their own, and expanded intellectual horizons.[8]

This is an apt description of the trajectory of Martha Schofield's life to the point of her departure for the South in 1865. Though she had not dismissed the idea that she would someday marry, she postponed that decision seeking the liberty of a vocation that would provide her with a sense of accomplishment and an opportunity to serve her country. As she wrote to Oliver Johnson of the Anti-Slavery Association of New York City, "the spirit within me will not rest while there is so much need to work … I frequently see how much teachers are needed and I am willing to give time, labor, life, if need be, in the cause and only ask from our government enough to meet the necessaries of life and not even that if my own purse would meet the demand."[9]

Martha's role models were drawn not just from her generation but from the generation of her mother, from women she knew, and those she read about or heard speak. Lucretia Mott was not only a close friend of Martha's mother but a mentor to Martha as well. She wrote in 1863, after hearing Mott speak at Quarterly Meeting, "I love her so much … she is so meek and yet moves steadily on speaking for the right and shirking the wrong."[10] Angelina and Sarah Grimke, while not personal friends, were among the older women who set an example of lives dedicated to the cause of freedom, but also of lives lived on their own terms. The Grimkes renounced their slave-owning past, became Quakers, and joined a small group of women who became abolitionist lecturers. They not only "advocate[ed] a controversial and generally unpopular

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[8] Christine Jacobson Carter, *Southern Single Blessedness: Unmarried Women in the Urban South, 1800-1865* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2006), 3-4.

[9] Martha Schofield to Oliver Johnson, 5 September 1863, Martha Schofield Papers (MSP), Friends Historical Library, Swarthmore College.

[10] Martha Schofield to Oliver Johnson, 5 September 1863, Martha Schofield Papers (MSP), Friends Historical Library, Swarthmore College.

political cause, but elected to do so in an unconventional, 'unfeminine' way, speaking in public to mixed or 'promiscuous' audiences."[11] While Lucretia Mott spoke most often to groups of Quakers, she too, endured opposition to her preaching ministry.[12]

During the war other women, closer to Martha's age, were serving as nurses in hospitals and at the front, including Clara Barton and Louisa May Alcott, both of whom Martha mentioned in her diaries.[13] However, the woman whose influence on her seemed the greatest was Anna E. Dickinson. From a Philadelphia Quaker family, Dickinson began her speaking career in 1860 after attending the Annual Meeting of the Pennsylvania Anti-Slavery Society and delivering an impromptu but stirring speech. She was encouraged by Lucretia Mott, and others, to begin a career as a public lecturer and drew large crowds, speaking against slavery and in support of women's rights, as well as equal rights for all citizens. She was one of the greatest celebrities of her time. Martha first heard Dickinson in November 1860 and wrote with great enthusiasm that her "earnest words fell from her lips as though she was inspired by God – she is working in a noble cause and never can the impression of that young being pleading so beautifully for one half of the human race be driven from my memory."[14]

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[11] Speicher, *The Religious World of Antislavery Women*, 1.

[12] Blanche Glassman Hersh refers to these women, and others, as "Feminist-Abolitionists." They called for the emancipation of slaves and women while at the same time rejected the idea that in doing so they violated the nineteenth-century ideal of "true womanhood." Blanche Glassman Hersh, "The 'True Woman' and the 'New Woman' in Nineteenth-Century America: Feminist-Abolitinists and a New Concept of True Womanhood," in Mary Kelley, ed., *Woman's Being, Woman's Place: Female Identity and Vocation in American History* (Boston: G.K. Hall & Co., 1979), 271-282.

[13] It is interesting to note that Clara Barton had not only been a teacher prior to her career as a nurse but established schools in Massachusetts and New Jersey. For a compelling biography of Barton's service during the Civil War see Stephen Oates, *A Woman of Valor: Clara Barton and the Civil War* (New York: The Free Press, 1994).

[14] Diary 2, 22 November 1860, 6; J. Matthew Gallman has written the first full-length biography of Anna Dickson titled, *America's Joan of Arc: The Life of Anna Elizabeth Dickinson* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006).

Four years later, in the summer of 1864, Martha heard Dickinson speak again. She wrote, "Only once in a century or more is woman called to so great a work, and never in the history of our nation has a young woman had such a mission." She continued,

> We must remember that times like these demand of each of us every effort in the great cause – and because her powers and responsibilities lead her out of the common path, we have no right to condemn so long as they only produce good …. There is something sublime and heroic in a young woman thus stepping out of her supposed sphere and bearing the criticism of the nation for the good of her country.[15]

Given the work that Martha was about to enter into, she was surely speaking of herself as much as she was of Anna Dickinson.

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Over the past thirty years, historians have taken on the world of emotions in their studies, especially as they explored the private lives of women. Works such as Carroll Smith-Rosenberg's, "The Female World of Love and Ritual: Relations Between Women in Nineteenth-Century America," argued that women derived their greatest sense of love and understanding from their relationships with other women rather than from their relationships with men.[16] Though rooted in the "ideology of separate spheres," introduced by Barbara Welter in her article, "The Cult of True Womanhood," Smith-Rosenberg moved the discussion of women's lives from the realm of victimization in an oppressive social system, to one that emphasized distinctly female values such as mutuality and nurture.[17]

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[15] Martha Schofield to Sadie Brouwer, July 1864, MSP.

[16] Carroll Smith-Rosenbergl, "The Female World of Love and Ritual: Relations Between Women in Nineteenth-Century America," *Signs*, 1-29.

[17] As Christine Anne Farnham argues, "By the mid-seventies, amidst a conservative reaction in the nation and unable to achieve equality, historians of women began to question the notion of equality itself, arguing that it privileged a male standard – that is, aggression, competitiveness, and individuality – while denying those characteristics formerly associated with women, like nurturance and community. The publication of Smith-Rosenberg's essay in the premier issue of *Signs* marked a watershed in women's history, demarcating a paradigm shift to interpreting women's history in terms of women's culture by valorizing the characteristics of the 'true

Both Ellen K. Rothman, in *Hands and Hearts: A History of Courtship in America,* and Karen Lystra, in *Searching the Heart: Women, Men and Romantic Love in Nineteenth-Century America,* challenged the belief that gendered spheres made real intimacy between the sexes all but impossible or were the only means by which women experienced "intimate sharing" and their "fullest emotional expression." On the contrary, both found ample evidence in primary sources of surprisingly open discussions among couples about love, and in a few cases about sex, and a blurring of "sex role distinctions." As Karen Lystra writes, "while nineteenth-century American culture has been characterized by the extreme separation of masculine and feminine spheres, it should also be described as a century in which sex-role distinctions were beginning to blur. A fully drawn history of Victorian sex roles demands paradoxical recognition of both the rigidity and fluidity, the division and overlap, of gender lines."[18]

Others, too, have challenged the extent to which the ideology of separate spheres reflected the reality of middle and upper class women's lives. Lori Ginzberg argues that "the reality of women's lives was quite different from the ideology which they themselves used."[19] Such was the case for Martha. She wrote with approval of Anna Dickinson, of the heroism of a

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woman.'" Christie Anne Farnham, *The Education of the Southern Belle: Higher Education and Student Socialization in the Antebellum South* (New York: New York University Press, 1994), 223. In addition, for an in-depth historiography of women's history through the lens of separate spheres see Linda K. Kerber, "Separate Spheres, Female Worlds, Woman's Place: The Rhetoric of Women's History," *Journal of American History* 75 (June 1988), 9-39.

[18] Ellen K. Rothman, *Hands and Hearts: A History of Courtship in America* (New York: Basic Books, 1984); Karen Lystra, *Searching the Heart: Women, Men, and Romantic Love in Nineteenth-Century America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 124, 156.

[19] Lori Ginzberg, *Women and the Work of Benevolence: Morality, Politics, and Class in the Nineteenth-Century United State* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990), 3, n.5; In her introduction Anna Speicher, too, states that, "contemporary scholarship … has convincingly challenged the perception that there was a rigid line drawn between the spheres of nineteenth-century men and women. Historians have cogently demonstrated that the boundaries between public and private were far more fluid in practice than in theory." Speicher, *The Religious World of Anti-Slavery Women,* 3; See also Nancy Hewitt, *Women's Activism and Social Change: Rochester, New York, 1822-1872* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1984); Laura McCall and Donald Yacovone, eds., *A Shared Experience: Men, Women, and the History of Gender* (New York: New York University Press, 1998).

young woman "stepping outside her sphere" to serve a great cause, and at the same time that she would not want her sister or a close friend to "appear in public." Yet, she did not include herself in that stricture. Martha wrote that God intended women for marriage and motherhood while living a life that tested the limits of a woman's sphere.

Martha Schofield was a deeply passionate and sensitive woman. Throughout her diaries is evidence of her attachment to friends and her search for love. Her relationships with women were close and affectionate, and she enjoyed a sense that she often served them as both advisor and confidante. Her bonds with women were essential to her happiness and well-being. However, her relationships with men were far more complicated. In all her closest friendships, Martha's desire was for a deep emotional connection and intimacy. While the intimacy of women was not only sanctioned but expected, with the exception of siblings and engaged couples (or soon to be engaged), women and men were expected to maintain a proper emotional and physical distance. More than once, Martha pushed this boundary almost to the point of breaking. In addition, she was romantically linked with two men and both were married. Like most women of her time, she did not write openly of her relationships with men in terms of their physical aspects. Moreover, she deliberately excised portions of her diaries and burned or otherwise disposed of many letters. Two entire diaries are missing for this period and were likely destroyed by her. Yet, enough evidence remains to offer clues to these vital relationships.

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As a "hidden transcript," Martha's diaries functioned as one of the few places where she could "get in touch with and develop hidden parts of herself – often those aspects for which little support [was] given by others – and establish emotional stability and independence."[20] They

[20] Martha Tomhave Blauvelt explains that, "in political scientist James C. Scott's terms, journals (like gossip) were 'hidden transcripts,' discourse [by subordinate groups] that takes place 'offstage,' beyond direct observation by

were a place of safety where new roles and ideas could be tested, "a sounding board for ideas or emotions that may not be acceptable to friends or family."[21] Not only was Martha subject to the power of the patriarchal social structure in which she lived, but also the power of her family, who often questioned or openly opposed the decisions she made about her work as well as her personal life.[22] Unlike other nineteenth century diarists, her personal writing was not meant to be shared. Along with keeping a diary she wrote many letters and those to her closest friends she kept private as well. Like other diarists, Martha was involved in "complex literary as well as psychological processes." They included issues of what to put in and leave out of her journals. They had to do with who she was writing for and to. They entailed a "'double consciousness,' as the self stands apart to view the self."[23]

At the point when Martha declared herself finished with keeping a diary, she wrote that her intended audience had been her children and grandchildren. She reasoned that, given the realization she would never marry, there was little point in continuing with daily writing. Yet, for twelve years her writing had been much more than a means of sharing her life experiences with future generations. It had been a site of the construction of self. Through the process of

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power holders.' Such oral or written transcripts 'confirm, contradict, or inflect what appears in the public transcript' of the powerful, which defines and controls them." Martha Tomhave Blauvelt, *The Work of the Heart: Young Women and Emotion, 1780-1830* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2007), 189.

[21] Penelope Franklin Editor, *Private Pages: Diaries of American Women, 1830s-1970s* (New York: Ballentine Books, 1986), xix.

[22] Even late in Martha's life, when her niece Mary, Sallie's daughter, came to Aiken to be her assistant for a short time, there was much concern on the part of Mary's parents that she might want to take over the administration of the Schofield school permanently. Sallie wrote to her husband that she could not stand the thought that Mary might choose the life that Martha had, and felt through Martha, the family had given enough to the cause of African Americans in the South.

[23] Margo Culley, Editor, *A Day at a Time: The Diary Literature of American Women from 1764 to the Present* (New York: The Feminist Press at the City University of New York, 1985), 10.

writing she explored an inner world necessary to sustain the independent course she pursued. Her experience adds to the evidence that "the diary shapes the life lived as well as the reverse."[24]

The life Martha Schofield lived required great strength and courage. Her health was poor for more than half her life and at times seemed to portend a premature death. It fueled her desire to be useful, to make her life count for something larger than herself. However, while it may have been a reason to avoid or even postpone marriage, it was not a basis for her to reject it altogether. Her faith in God aided her in accepting whatever might come. Her belief in her ability to discern God's will through the inner light often served to justify her actions when they were at odds with her family or with custom. In that way, as long as she was certain of knowing God's will, she felt justified in her choices.[25] She sought a balance between the love and freedom she needed to pursue the life she desired. She was a woman whose life was centered in the struggle for the emancipation of women and African Americans. That life and that struggle were both constructed and revealed in the pages of her diaries.

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[24] Margo Culley, *A Day at a Time,* 14. For a discussion of diaries as a means of construction of self see pp. 10-14.

[25]Anna Speicher explains that the abolitionist lecturers in her study attributed their work to divine mandate and, "other historians have noted how women who overtly accepted the limitations placed on their sex nonetheless justified various autonomous or public actions by claiming to be 'passive' vessels of God's will." Further, she writes in detail of the ways in which all of the women she included in her study – Sarah Moore Grimke, Angelina Grimke, Lucretia Mott, Abbey Kelley Foster, and Sallie Holley – all "re-visioned" Christianity to serve the purposes of their work as anti-slavery lecturers. Speicher, *The Religious World of Anti-Slavery Women*, 87; See for example Chapter 4, "'Let Our Daily Life Be a Prayer': Christianity Re-Visioned," 74-88.

CHAPTER 1

I HAVE LEFT THERE A TEACHER

In February 1857, Martha Schofield took her place teaching her young cousins at her aunt Eliza's school on Long Island, New York. However, eleven months later, on January 1, 1858, as she began to keep her diary, her entries focused on her hectic social life and very little on her time in the classroom. At eighteen, soon to be nineteen, Martha made friends easily, and while not beautiful, attracted attention wherever she went. On that New Years day in 1858, she helped her aunt prepare for a party and in her journal described in detail the dinner served and said boastfully there were "14 kinds of deserts." On the same day she received callers including two young men, Richard and Fred Smart, who returned later in the afternoon and suggested a wagon ride to which she agreed. Accompanied by a Mrs. Hannah Lawrence, Martha said, "we had a most splendid time such real fun, we laughed and cut up as much as we wanted to." In the evening, her Cousin Robert with Ed Lawrence made a call and her diary closed that night with "so ends the first day."[1]

On January 3, Martha attended Quaker Meeting and afterward John and Hannah Bourne, brother and sister, stopped at Aunt Eliza's, "as usual." She noted, in a tone both impatient and unaffected, that John" acted like a perfect loon – would try and kiss me and set with his hand in my lap, talked the greatest nonsense all the time so I thought the time was wasted while he was here – splendid weather." Two weeks later and much to the dismay of her aunt, she arranged to attend a Catholic mass with a friend, Carrie Willet, and only gained her Aunt's permission when

[1] Martha Schofield Diary (Diary 1), 1 January 1858, 1, Martha Schofield Papers, Friends Historical Library, Swarthmore College.

another of Martha's cousins, Richard, called to accompany them.[2] Martha wrote of the experience:

> it was really worth going for the house was crowded, music good, choir excellent – there were three Priests all dressed and there were fifty eight children, girls, all dressed in white with long white veils and wreaths of white roses on their head, they were led by a young girl carrying a picture of the 'Virgin Mary' there were about twenty small boys – it was very interesting, held about two hours – a missionary priest was there – who almost starves himself to save the souls of others – poor creatures how devoted they are to their religion, crossed themselves many times during service – all ages were there, old men with heads bowed down with age would solemny bow down in prayer – all seemed so sincere and yet the next day many would not hesitate to commit a crime still I must not judge – I never attended Church before, but something unusual happening today I could see no harm in going, I don't expect to be converted.[3]

That afternoon she arranged with cousin Richard to go visiting and later they went on a wagon ride with a group of young people, to tea at another house, and returned home to find Will Titus waiting with an invitation to a lecture the following evening. She said, "he staid some time after I got home – was quite pleasant."[4]

The next day Martha was in New York City with her Aunt, Uncle and three cousins to hear the famous Fannie Kemble read Richard II. Of Kemble, Martha declared, "she is not a handsome woman but O! such a voice, in a moment it changes from quick & loud to the soft and mild…."[5] The group returned to Long Island that day "in the five o'clock cars" and arriving at

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[2] Both cousin Richard and his sister cousin Carrie were mentioned often during Martha's time on Long Island but never identified further.

[3] Though Martha's attitude was decidedly anti-Catholic, she was nevertheless open-minded enough to experience, first-hand, a Catholic mass and first communion. Anti-Catholic sentiment was wide-spread throughout the country. Moreover, in 1844 Philadelphia had been the site of violence between Protestants and Catholics leaving twenty people dead and one hundred injured. Diary 1, 17 January 1858, 3-4.

[4] Diary 1, 17 January 1858, 4.

[5] Diary 1, 18 January 1858, 5. Fannie Kemble, from one of the most celebrated acting families in England, was one of the most famous actresses of her day. In 1834, she married Pierce Mease Butler, a Philadelphian whose fortune derived from his family's rice and cotton plantations on the coast of Georgia. Kemble is best known for her *Journal of a Residence on a Georgian Plantation in 1838-1839,* first published in 1863. It was a vivid account of her experiences traveling south and on her husband's Georgia plantations. Kemble's deplored the treatment of the Butler slaves and wrote openly about their lives. Her book was widely read on both sides of the Atlantic and was

home found a package addressed to her from Andrew I. Todd. In it were wax dolls for her young cousins, a bottle of cologne for her Aunt, and "a pair of handsome kid gloves" for her. In the note he wished her a Happy New Year and said the gloves were a "Philopena."[6] Then, as Martha explained, "I had not been here for 10 min before William came so I then went with him to the Institute had a splendid ride and most splendid lecture." She did not return home until almost eleven o'clock, and said by then, everyone else in the house was in bed.[7]

For the following five days, she wrote of visits made and received. On January 21, Martha and her friend, Carrie Willet, paid a call on her cousins, Carrie and Richard. On arriving, she explained that the reason they did not visit more often was her worry that people would gossip if she were there only to see Richard. As was often the case, Martha was concerned with being linked romantically with young men she considered only friends. However, a misunderstanding the very next day with her cousins over who would accompany her to a dinner party caused her much inner turmoil and she confided in her diary, "I am blamed for not keeping my word" and added in a rare moment of homesickness, "if I was only home where I could talk to Mother and sisters…."[8] On the twenty-fourth, Martha was still feeling "miserable" and chose to spend the day reading rather than attending Meeting with her Aunt and Uncle. Tucked away in her bedroom she read *The Prisoner of the Border* in its entirety, "about 380 pages," along with

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said to have played a role in England's refusal to support the Confederacy. For a recent biography of Kemble, see Catherine Clinton, *Fanny Kemble's Civil Wars* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2000).

[6] The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines a Philopena as: "A game or custom, originating in Germany, in which a gift or forfeit may be claimed by the first of two people who have shared a nut with two kernels to say 'philopena' at their next meeting; an occasion on which this is done; a gift or forfeit claimed in this way. Though the game is said to have originated in Germany, there are also claims of its originating in France and it is noted as being played elsewhere with fruit rather than nuts. However, it came to represent gifts between friends."

[7] Diary 1, 18 January 1858, 5-6.

[8] Diary 1, 22 and 23 January 1858, 6-7.

"some on other things."[9] In the flyleaf of her journal, Martha compiled a list she titled, "things I have read commencing Jan. 1st 1858." This book by P. Hamilton Myers was second on the list.

It is clear that Martha's time on Long Island was filled with parties, lectures, and trips to New York. She had a wide circle of female friends with whom she spent evenings talking and reading. They, with a host of young men, went for wagon and sleigh rides, long walks, and visits to nearby towns. She was young, exuberant, and joyful. She recorded in her diary games they played such as "consequences, cross questions crooked answers, Bagatelle, and kissing," but she also loved being the instigator of practical jokes. On Sunday, January 31, Martha described, in some length, one of her afternoons of "some fun," writing:

> In the afternoon John Bourne and Hannah, Cousin R & C – Ed & William Lawrence & Sarah Willetts were here to tea – after that Carrie, Em & Fred came, we staid out a while then went in but soon thought of some fun – we knew S.N.C. had company & we wanted to frighten him – we slipped out; I put on Aunts wedding bonnet & Carrie another old thing – took Tim and away we went, in about ten minutes we were there, looked in the window, saw W. Titus & Lillie in the Parlor – now we were in a fix. Lillie would tell; we put round to the kitchen and after much work, running fixing &c we got into the bedroom. Bill & Dick locking the parlor door, when we got in O' such fun!

Yet with all the fun, just the day before Aunt Eliza had suggested it was time for Martha to return home to Darby to be replaced by one of her sisters. Her aunt appeared to have run out of patience with her young and popular niece. Martha wrote, "I was quite surprized, but very glad – it will be quite a change."[10]

As the time approached for Martha to leave Long Island, her social commitments neither decreased nor the time she spent writing about them. Two exceptions were on her birthday, February 1, and on the anniversary of her father's death, February 4. She said of her birthday

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[9] Diary 1, 24 January 1858, 7.

[10] Diary 1, 30 January 1858, 9.

that it was a day "of deep thought and silent prayer." She wrote of the transience of life – that by her next birthday she might be "an angel in the Spirit land."[11] Of her father she said:

> This day six years ago our precious father bid farewell to all on earth, his spirit ascended to that blessed throne where angels dwell and purified spirits ever hover round the footstool of Omnipotence: what happiness, what joy must be there and O! such a blessed thought to feel when on earth, as he did that he was prepared to meet his maker his life was so pure, so good, so full of love and peace and although persecuted by unchristian men, he forgave them all, well knowing he had endeavored always to act well his part.[12]

In her passages on both these days there is the sense of her awareness of time passing, of the seriousness of life even in the midst of all the fun she was having. There is also the sense that Martha hoped to emulate her father, to endeavor always to act well her part, if she could only discover what that part would be.

As the weeks passed, the weather remained cold and snowy. On Sunday, February 14, Martha noted finishing another book – this time *Queechy*. She wrote exuberantly of her opinion of the novel:

> it is so splendid, what a creature Fleda was and Mr. Carlton so noble and generous, with all so pure and good – such a mind as his well stored with knowledge and trusting so fully to a Higher Power – such a heart as his would be worth striving for – so different from the young men we meet now – how few there are that I would trust my happiness too – I hope I may learn to put my trust in One who will not forsake me, who has promised to be a "father to the fatherless."[13]

Queechy, published in two volumes in 1852, was the second novel by Susan Warner whose pen name was Elizabeth Wetherell. Her first novel, *The Wide, Wide World*, was said to have rivaled *Uncle Tom's Cabin* in popularity. Both Warner works followed a storyline often employed by antebellum writers of an orphaned or abandoned girl who overcomes life's adversity through her independence, assertiveness, and reliance on God. Yet, she manages, in the process, to win and

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[11] Diary 1, 1 February 1858, 10.

[12] Diary 1, 4 February 1858, 11.

[13] Diary 1, 14 February 1858, 12-13.

marry the noblest man in the story. In the case of Fleda Ringgan, however, she not only marries Guy Carleton, but beforehand converts him to Christianity. Martha's attraction to the character of Fleda was certainly multi-layered – Fleda was a young woman forced (or one might argue, permitted) to develop her talents to the fullest, supporting herself and an aunt and uncle by successfully running a farm in Vermont. Fleda had lost both her parents, Martha only one, but each suffered an emotional orphanhood overcome most fully in the love and guidance of their "heavenly Father." In Fleda's life, young and idealistic Martha found a prototype for her own and in Guy, the model of an ideal man.[14]

Within the week, Martha's sister, Lydia, arrived as Martha's replacement and Aunt Eliza hosted a going-away party. With about twenty of her friends in attendance, Martha reported the evening as delightful with many games played and a lovely supper served. By mid-March she was on her way back to Darby but while stopping in Philadelphia at the home of another aunt and uncle she became quite ill. Among her symptoms were a fever and a bad cough. Her aunt pronounced it "bilious fever" and treated her with "Thomsonian Medicine" which Martha credited with saving her from "a long spell of sickness and a heavy Doctors bill."[15] As quickly

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[14] Mary Kelley has written of Warner's novel *Queechy* that "the assertive and independent adolescent crafted by Susan Warner meets life's most demanding challenges, depending on no one but God. Then at novel's end, she marries Guy Carleton, the hero she has converted to a benevolent Christianity." In Laura McCall's analysis of one hundred and four popular novels written between 1820 and 1860 she describes "the strategy favored by antebellum writers" whose work "tested the gendered boundaries that twentieth-century scholars have ascribed to them" saying they "portrayed impoverished and abandoned girls who, as they grew to maturity, gained strength by overcoming adversity and by engaging in traditionally male pursuits. Typically they were rewarded with the noblest man in the tale, thus intimating that novels paid homage to marriage as woman's ultimate goal. However, these narratives also suggested alternatives to marriage and depicted women who were capable of achieving far more than domestic triumphs." Mary Kelley, "Beyond the Boundaries," *Journal of the Early Republic*, Vol. 21, No. 1, (Spring, 2001), 76; Laura McCall, "Shall I Fetter Her Will?": Literary American Confront Feminine Submission, 1820-1860," *Journal of the Early Republic*, Vol. 21, No. 1, (Spring, 2001), 100.

[15] Diary 1, 18 & 19 March, 18. Bilious fever was a term loosely applied to everything from malaria to typhus. However, it was often associated with fever accompanied by intestinal complaints of diarrhea and vomiting. Thomsonian Medicine, developed by a New Hampshire farmer, Samuel Thomson, did not differ greatly in methods from traditional medicine of the time in terms of its reliance on emetics and other forms of purging. However, Thomson used "only natural herbal substances to produce his pharmaceuticals" and "learned much of his botanic lore from a local female herbalist." In addition, "he became convinced that the cause of all disease was cold and

as she had become sick, Martha recovered and was able by the third day of her visit to go out with her uncle for a ride. Once home in Darby and her strength regained, she began a round of visits, parties, and trips into Philadelphia along with an occasional day of teaching. Of greater significance, however, was her noting on April 27 that, "to day is Q[uarterly] M[eeting] … one subject was before the Mtg. yesterday – it concerned our dear Mother, all united and now she is a 'recommended minister.'"[16]

Throughout the remainder of that spring and into the summer, life went on much as usual. When Lydia returned from Aunt Eliza's at the end of May, Martha wrote, "Lyd tells me for certain I'm not going back to New York, really I am glad; it will be so delightful to be at home a summer."[17] She also began to mention a young man, Oldden Ridgeway, who was a distant cousin and near neighbor. There was no indication on her part that her feelings for him were more than platonic, but their behavior eventually brought censure from both their families. Earlier in the month she had written, "Oldden and I had such a nice long talk, just as brother and

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that restoring the body's natural heat was the only cure. This he accomplished by steaming, peppering, and puking his patients, relying heavily on lobelia, a botanical emetic long used by American Indians." Martha wrote that her pulse was 120 and that her cold had "settled on [her] liver." Also, that she "took medicine, an emetic" and her aunt and uncle were "so kind, do every thing, put onions to my feet, give pills, &cc." Martin S. Pernick, "The Calculus of Suffering in 19th Century Surgery," *Sickness & Health in America: Readings in the History of Medicine and Public Health*, Judith Walzer Leavitt and Ronald L. Numbers, Eds., (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985), 100; Ronald L. Numbers, "The Fall and Rise of the American Medical Profession," *Sickness & Health in America*, 186-187.

[16] Diary 1, 27 April 1858, 23. While, in general, Quakers believed in a ministry of the laiety, they did acknowledge individuals, both male and female, as called by God to preach. By the early part of the eighteenth century, they began to recognize a gift for speaking or preaching "by making a record of it" and by so doing also instituted a credentialing that was associated with admittance to business meetings. Being designated as recorded or recommended minister brought some status though not the kind of leadership or power of priests or ministers in other denominations. "However, Quaker ministers, both men and women, often achieved great influence and were at the forefront of all of the major developments in American Quakersim in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, from the development of humanitarian movements like abolition (John Woolman) and women's rights (Lucretia Mott) to the separations (Elias Hicks, John Wilbut, Joseph John Gurney) and the revivial movement among the Gurneyites after the Civil War." Thomas D. Hamm, *The Quakers in America*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003), 86-87.

[17] Diary 1, 21 May 1858, 27.

sister, we are now stronger friends than ever."[18] She seems to have been both his advisor and confidante, and he was a constant source of attention for her. She began a pattern with him that would repeat itself throughout her life of believing that she could see deep into a man's soul, as few others could. As she said of Oldden, "Ah, few know him."[19]

Martha also suffered from another bout of illness in late spring, saying she was "racked with that horrid disease chills and fever." She again tried Thomsonian methods but "not having the medicines and no Physician being near," resorted to a local doctor who she said was "using all his efforts to stop them by the use of Quinine." She also recorded that it would be some trouble to regulate the dose so that her symptoms did not reappear and she did not use "too much of that article."[20] The state of her health would continue to be a subject of her diary entries and a contributing factor in her decisions about the future.

On Sunday, August 1, the family at home consisted of Martha's mother and sister Eliza, along with a cousin Mattie, and visitors Charley Humphreys and Edward Roberts. Martha noted that while Charley and her mother attended Meeting, she and the rest of the group "had a good one at home with the dear spirits."[21] By 1858, Spiritualism had caught the imagination of

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[18] Diary 1, 5 May 1858, 23.

[19] Diary 1, 23 June 1858, 30. In Martha's relationship with Oldden, and with other men to follow, there was on the one hand, a friendship that seemed to border on the romantic (if not in fact, then certainly in appearances) and on the other, deep satisfaction in her role as his advisor and spiritual guide. It is easy to begin to see parallels between life and fiction – between Martha and Fleda Ringgan in *Queechy*, for instance.

[20] Diary 1, 23 June 1858, 29-30. Both because Martha described her illness as chills and fever and because her doctor prescribed Quinine, it could be concluded that she was suffering from malaria. However, Charles E. Rosenberg explains that in the nineteenth century, "drugs were not ordinarily viewed as specifics for particular disease entities; materia medica texts were generally arranged not by drug or disease, but in categories reflecting the drug's physiological effects: diuretics, cathartics, narcotics, emetics, diaphoretics. Quinine, for example, was ordinarily categorized as a tonic and prescribed for numerous conditions other than malaria." Moreover, "the advocacy of a specific drug in treating a specific ill was ordinarily viewed by regular physicians as a symptom of quackery." Charles E. Rosenberg, "The Therapeutic Revolution: Medicine, Meaning, and Social Change in 19th-Century America," in *Sickness & Health in America*, 41; John Duffy, "Social Impact of Disease in the late 19th Century," in *Sickness & Health in America*, 415.

[21] Diary 1, 1 August 1858, 31.

Americans everywhere, becoming for some a parlor game and for others a form of religion. The possibility that the spirits of the dead were in contact with the living and willing to act as their advisors was as seductive to the mighty as to the lowly.[22] In a world of high infant mortality and shortened life spans, Spiritualism was heralded by some as proof of an afterlife and denounced by others as everything from the worst kind of chicanery to the work of the devil."[23]

In séances both private and public, spirits were said to communicate through rapping or knocking on floors, walls and ceilings in answer to questions, as well as spelling out longer messages by knocking as letters of the alphabet were called out. Mediums were reported to have levitated with the aid of spirits, furniture was seen moving across floors, tables levitating, and

[22] That Spiritualism appealed to a broad cross-section of Americans is well documented. As Ann Braude writes, "early converts included individuals whose prominence made the manifestations difficult to dismiss as frauds perpetrated on the credulous. Every notable progressive family of the nineteenth century had its advocate of Spiritualism, some of them more than one." They included members of the Beecher family, William Lloyd Garrison, and the Grimke sisters. In addition, "in thirteen thousand people signed a petition asking the U.S. Senate to appoint a scientific committee to investigate spirit communication." And spirits were being summoned in the White House by Mary Todd Lincoln. Among plainer folk Spiritualism appealed to the "rural poor" as well as "urban laborers." Ann Braude, *Radical Spirits: Spiritualism and Women's Rights in Nineteenth-Century America,* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1989), 27-30.

[23] Modern Spiritualism (so named by a journalist) is believed to have had its roots in Hydesville, New York where in 1848 the Fox family heard knocks and raps in the house they rented and came to recognize the nocturnal noises as communication from a murdered peddler and other spirits. The two youngest Fox daughters, Maggie and Katie, became the chief recipients of these messages and became world famous "delivering otherworldly messages to friends, then strangers, then large public audiences." Ann Braude argues that had it not been for Isaac and Amy Post and "other indefatigable reformers who made up their circle of friends" the Fox sisters and their mysterious messages from the spirits would have been largely forgotten or ignored. Moreover, as members of the most radical and revisionist wing of Quakerism, the Posts "found themselves unable to participate in the Society of Friends because they believed it had strayed from its original purposes" and "obedience to conscience clashed with obedience to Quaker elders and to the authority of meetings." By 1858 many others discovered the ability to "serve as intermediaries between this world and the next" and soon "tens of thousands of Americans --- the curious, the skeptical, and the converted alike – were flocking to séances to contact the departed." At a time of technological and scientific advances, Spiritualism could also be understood as a response that bolstered religious beliefs – that is, "Spiritualism was a religious response to the faith crisis of nineteenth-century America. In the face of new science, it provided 'evidence' for belief." Barbara Weisberg, *Talking to the Dead: Katie and Maggie Fox and the Rise of Spiritualism,* (New York: HarperCollins, 2004), 3, 89-91; Braude, *Radical Spirits,* 12-13; Barbara Brown Zikmund, Review of *Radical Spirits: Spiritualism and Women's Rights in Nineteenth Century America* by Ann Braude, in *The Journal of Religion,* Vol 71, No. 4, (Oct., 1991), 577; For Spiritualisms development as a religious ideology see for instance Bret E. Carroll, *Spiritualism in Antebellum America,* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997).

ghostly figures passing through rooms.[24] It is unclear how the spirits were contacted that day or how seriously Martha took the idea of messages from the beyond (or any of the others gathered there on that Sunday) but she wrote, "received a communication which to me was very satisfactory."[25] There is the possibility that she hoped to receive a message from her father. Whatever the message and whomever she believed had sent it to her, Martha held it close and seems to have drawn strength from it.[26] Yet, she did not linger long in the world of the spirits but reverted to the pleasures, and even the concerns, of the moment. Later that same day, along with her guests and a group of friends, she went for a long walk and afterward they gathered on the "Portico" and sang. She said, "I had on a low neck but a shawl covered it."[27]

On August 18, 1858, having been home in Darby for only four months, Martha wrote to Edward Willets applying for a teaching position at Willets Female Seminary in Harrison, New

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[24] In *Talking to the Dead*, Barbara Weisberg writes of Harriet Beecher Stowe's description of a séance: "'phosphorescent lights arose and floated about among us – They were like the dear light of a glow worm. They touched me on my arm and I felt that they had a strong resistant force – one of them struck the table with a loud report like the firing of a pistol…,'" among other things. As to what produced the manifestations, Harriet Beecher Stowe could offer no answers, although the demonstrations seemed to her to be 'matters quite beyond doubt as facts.' Adopting a line of reasoning that went back to Spiritualism's earliest days, she suggested that a scientific explanation would one day be discovered, and in this she compared the manifestations to the aurora borealis and Darwin's studies on natural selection." Weisberg, *Talking to the Dead*, 212-213, 216.

[25] Diary 1, 1 August 1858, 31.

[26]Though Martha does not make clear her reasons for seeking a message from the spirits, it does seem clear from the fact that she found the message "very satisfactory" that it was more than a mere game to her. She was a young woman in the process of finding herself, of building an identity, of "constructing the self." In her introduction to *A Day at a Time: The Diary Literature of American Women from 1764 to the Present*, Margo Culley imagines the pages of a woman's diary "as a kind of mirror before which [she] stands assuming this posture or that" and argues that because "the pages of a diary are fixed in place and time" their value lies, in part, in a woman's ability to return to them. As she says, "evidence abounds in all periods that women read and reread their diaries, a reality that renders the self-construction and reconstruction even more complex." In addition, Ann Braude maintains that, "more women stepped beyond conventional female roles because of Spiritualism than they would have without it. In mediumship and in its inherent individualism, Spiritualism held up a model of women's unlimited capacity for autonomous action to the men and women of nineteenth-century America." While there is no evidence in Martha's diary entry that she took on the role of medium on that Sunday morning, I would argue that one of the sources from which she constructed her identity – one that increasingly provided her a sense of confidence and autonomy – was her foray into the realm of guidance from unseen spirits. Another was novels like *Queechy*. Margo Culley, *A Day At a Time: The Diary Literature of American Women from 1764 to the Present*, (New York: The Feminist Press, 1985), 12-14; Braude, *Radical Spirits*, 62.

[27] Diary 1, 1 August 1858, 31.

York. On the nineteenth, she received a reply in which he explained "the terms &c" and to which she answered in her journal, "so I suppose I am engaged."[28] It is unclear what motivated her to leave again so soon, especially given her remark that, "it will be quite a trial for me to leave home this winter – there are many chains that bind me to this place, strong ones too, which may hold my thoughts though my body may be far away."[29] It may well have been out of economic necessity, evidenced by the fact that neither she nor her mother made reference to any negotiation or even discussion about her going. In addition, it seems she had a very different attitude toward this new position and its responsibilities. On August 29, she reported having read two hundred pages in *Theory of Teaching* by David Perkins Page in an afternoon.[30] Even so, there is the possibility that at least part of her decision was based on a desire for more of the kind of freedom she experienced while at Aunt Eliza's on Long Island as well as a desire for a new set of people and places to experience.

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[28] Diary 1, 19 August, 1858, 33.

[29] Diary 1, 19 August, 1858, 33.

[30] *The Theory and Practice of Teaching, Or The Motives of Good School-Keeping* was written by David Perkins Page and first published in 1847. Largely self-taught, at eighteen he opened a school in Newbury, Massachusetts and within three years was appointed as the principal of the English department at Newburyport High School. In 1844, in part on the recommendation of Horace Mann, he became principal of the Albany Normal School, the first normal school in the state of New York. His book was drawn largely from his lectures at Albany where "he developed a rigourous curriculum that demanded a high level of knowledge from prospective teachers." In addition, Page developed the "Normal Chart of Elementary Sounds" used in the district schools of New York and referenced in *Theory and Practice of Teaching.* "Designed to be hung in a classroom and used for the pronunciation of sounds, syllables, and words, it included not only material for practice but also instructions to the teachers as to how and why to conduct it." Though he died of pneumonia in 1848, his book was reissued and republished (in an edited version in some cases), eight times between 1851 and 1899. In the last chapter titled, "The Rewards of the Teacher," David Page wrote, "Let every teacher, then, study to improve himself intellectually and morally; let him strive to advance in the art of teaching; let him watch the growth of mind under his culture and take the encouragement which that affords; let him consider the usefulness he may effect and the circumstances which make his calling honorable; let him prize the gratitude of his pupils and of their parents and friends; and above all, let him value the approval of Heaven and set a proper estimate upon the rewards which another world will unfold to him, -- and thus be encouraged to toil on in faithfulness and in hope, -- till, having finished his course, and being gathered to the home of the righteous, he shall meet multitudes, instructed by his wise precept, and profited by his pure example, who 'shall rise up and call him blessed.'" Rose-Marie Weber, "Page's 1845 Normal Chart as a Foundation for Reading." *History of Reading News*, Vol. XVIII, No. 1, 1994:Fall; Editorial by R.H.E. in *Educational Research Bullletin*, Vol. 34, No. 8, (Nov. 9, 1955), 217.

On October 1, Martha left Darby with her sister Eliza, who was next in line to teach at Aunt Eliza's. They were met in New York City by relatives who then put Martha on a train for Rye to travel the last twenty-seven miles alone "through a rocky country and long deep tunnels" of which she said, "[they] were as dark as Egypt except when a ray of light would come through an opening in the top." And though traveling unaccompanied she wrote, "I did not feel very bad for I felt I would find friends." Arriving in Rye and while attending to her bags, Edward Willets introduced himself "in a kind voice" saying, "I suppose thee is the person I am looking for." When Martha turned to face him, she said, I "beheld a rather young looking man, but very pleasant." With sons, Samuel and John, they made their way in a wagon the final four miles to Harrison, and were greeted by Edward's wife and daughter, Anna and Hannah. Martha liked the family immediately, saying, "I soon felt that all they could do would be done to make me feel at home." She was quickly shown to her room – a "dear little one" with a door that opened into her schoolroom, all of which she reported was "new & pleasant." Though she could not have known it at that moment, Martha was about to embark on a journey from adolescence to adulthood.[31]

She began with eleven students in her class, most boarding at the school and after the first day wrote, "this is my first at school teaching at least my own school of so large scholars – some of the girls are larger than I am."[32] While with some nervousness and insecurity she prayed to be successful at "her own school," Martha also found the work exhilarating. From the beginning, both Anna and Edward supported her inside the classroom as well as outside. They often came to observe her teaching, staying to hear her student's compositions and talking to her afterward. In addition, students and teachers participated together in a local Reading Circle, and within a few months Martha noted reading not only "an address on Human Happiness by J.H. Bazly" but

[31] Diary 1, 2 October 1858, 39-40.

[32] Diary 1, 4 October 1858, 40.

also "an original essay."[33] She also noted it was the only original essay presented and said of the group, "they do not all do enough to sustain it." Soon, her writing for the Circle became a collaborative effort between herself and the Willets. On January 29, 1859, three months after her arrival and on a day when Edward and Anna were in her classroom to hear compositions, she explained that "afterwards we had a long talk, I showed an Essay I had commenced for our Circle, he wrote some too – first rate," and in the margin of her diary, "Anna showed me some interesting books – Love, &c &c &c." [34]

With her students, Martha became a figure of authority and even wisdom, though they were close in age. She was mentored by the Willets who were older – Anna thirty-four and Edward thirty-six – but befriended by them, too. With their help, she gained confidence in her abilities as a teacher and began to more clearly identify herself as a teacher. Additionally, through the Reading Circle, she gained confidence in her writing and in reading and speaking in public. In this way, she served as a role model for her students, especially in terms of a woman's intellectual development extending beyond the walls of a classroom and the years devoted to

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[33] Diary 1, 26 January 1859, 58.

[34] Diary 1, 29 January 1859, 58. Of female Reading Circles and Literary Societies Mary Kelley explains that the first of these was established in Boston, Massachusetts in 1805 by eighteen women. Called the "Gleaning Circle" it was "the first of hundreds of female literary societies that were neither sponsored by nor attached to a female academy or seminary." Not only "extra-institutional" in their expansion of educational opportunities for women, "as women moved beyond a model of womanhood that restricted their influence to husbands and children, these voluntary associations helped them 'redefine "woman's place" by giving the concept a public dimension,' as Anne Firor Scott has remarked. Indeed, members of these literary societies, mutual improvement associations, and reading circles and their counterparts at academies and seminaries looked on their associations as civil societies writ small. In addition to the institutional records members kept and the library catalogs they assembled, scores of memoirs, journals, diaries, and letters document the existence of hundreds of extra-institutional organizations that flourished in post-Revolutionary and antebellum America." And as Kelley points out, most of these literary societies "drew their members from among the daughters and wives of merchants, skilled artisans, professionals and prosperous farmers." However, there was the notable exception of young women working at the Lowell Mills in Massachusetts who, "having come to the Lowell Mills from families who were eking out a living on the rocky farms of New England, … met as all the other societies did – for 'reading and conversation.'" So too, African American women in northern cities were, by the 1820s and 1830s, founding literary societies both as "'school[s] for the encouragement and promotion of polite literature'" and as "ideal vehicles for developing arguments for, and strategies of, resistance" to racism. Mary Kelley, *Learning to Stand and Speak: Women, Education, and Public Life in America's Republic*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 133, 136-137, 140-141.

formal education. And Edward Willets seemed particularly impressed with the talents of his young teacher, whether in her classroom or in her literary pursuits. In fact, a few weeks after his additions to the essay she had shared with him, she said, "I wrote a little more to the essay & Edward copied it put my name on it to read – I hope I can do it justice – how they will look."[35]

Martha's relationship with Anna Willets was also one of support and mutual admiration. She had been homesick initially, even with the warmth of her welcome and the demands of the work. She particularly disliked attending Meeting in Harrison because it was so different from Darby. She missed the comfort she derived from sitting among her extended family and childhood friends. She missed hearing her mother's voice and inspiring words. As she said, "my heart was really sad to see so many strange faces & none that I cared to see, so different from my own place of worship where looking up I behold the serene and peaceful countenance of my mother to whose voice I often listen with deep feeling."[36]

In early November, Edward had become quite ill and within two days "broke out with the Erysipelas." At the end of another two days he was improving but Anna was so ill Martha had to take over management of the household. She confessed in her journal, "it is quite a responsibility for so many," but because Anna had been so kind to her, she quickly added, "it is a pleasure to wait on her."[37]

Within a week, however, Martha found herself crying in Anna's lap, in part, she said, out of homesickness, but also having her feet "very much frosted" for the first time that fall. She wrote, "O! what comfort I felt while my head rested there, it is not often I give way to my

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[35] Diary 1, 8 February 1859, 60.

[36] Diary 1, 10 October 1858, 41-42.

[37] Diary 1, 6 & 10 November 1858, 45-46. Erysipelas is "an acute infectious disease of the skin or mucous membranes caused by a streptococcus and characterized by local inflammation and fever."

feelings."[38] As the months past, Anna provided the guidance and companionship of an older sister, as well as the generosity of a mother. She often gave Martha gifts of clothing including dresses, collars, a pair of gold sleeve buttons, and undersleeves. They slept together when Edward was away, and of those times, Martha again spoke of the "comfort" derived from the intimacy.

She also recorded sleeping with a number of her students over the months in Harrison, of "staying abed" on cold mornings and reading to each other. This kind of physical intimacy was common among women of the time, both within families and among close friends at home or away at school. It was likely that at boarding school and especially at those in the colder climates of the North, young women would sleep two or three to a bed to benefit by the closeness of warm bodies in poorly heated or drafty rooms. But added to that was the fact that in bed, together, women could relax – to talk, to share secrets, to comfort each other emotionally and physically. As Martha said, they were "nice times indeed."[39]

While her friendships with women formed the basis of much of Martha's happiness in Harrison, she did not want for male attention. Some of the men who came with invitations to ride, or to accompany her to the Reading Circle, or to escort her to parties were clearly just friends – at least as far as she was concerned. Still, their regard for her was flattering. In March, Robert Barnes called for her and they "had a jolly ride down to Vails" and then went on to the Reading Circle together. She noted that this was the first meeting she attended without

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[38] Diary 1, 14 November 1858, 47.

[39] Diary 1, 13 January 1859, 55; 21 March 1859, 65; 17 April 1859, 69; 19 June 1859, 77. As Virginia Chambers-Schiller explains, relationships between women "existed in a culture that discounted female sexuality. Women might express their devotion through physical expressions of caring – kissing, hugging, holding hands, cuddling in bed – all with a serene lack of self-consciousness." Lee Virginia Chambers-Schiller, *Liberty a Better Husband: Single Women in America: The Generations of 1780 – 1840,* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984), 43; Also see Christine Anne Farnham, *The Education of the Southern Belle: Higher Education and Student Socialization in the Antebellum South,* (New York: New York University Press, 1994), 163.

contributing an essay, feeling she had done her share and would write no more. A few young men, however, seemed, if only briefly, to be potentially more than friends.[40]

As a northern, urban, middle class young woman, Martha had access to and participated in a variety of activities – social as well as educational – outside her home and away from parental eyes.[41] In addition, teaching allowed her to travel from home and enjoy an autonomy that would have been more difficult to attain at home. And, she was both outgoing and popular. At twenty years old, she was at an age to be looking for a husband, and the young men of her circle to be looking for wives. On March 20, she wrote, "Willie Tilton came – remained to tea & till half past ten – had a very pleasant time – he wanted me to let him take my pen & get it fixed but I would not. He is very attentive."[42]

Between March and May he was mentioned in her journal coming to tea, spending evenings, and among groups with whom she attended the Reading Circle, parties, and picnics. On May 20, she wrote more provocatively, "Willie Tilton here, he spent the evening &c &c &c &c wanted my apples."[43] It is unclear what she may have meant by this statement, and easy to hear it in overtly sexual terms. Given that Martha was most likely at the height of her physical attractiveness, it is certainly possible that she was referring to Willie's desires, stated or unstated,

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[40] Diary 1, 23 March 1859, 65-66.

[41] In addition, Quaker children had many opportunities to socialize through participation in Monthly, Quarterly and Yearly Meetings, in co-educational schools, and at weddings and funerals. Moreover, "adolescent boys and girls in colonial Pennsylvania had considerable freedom playing games, skating and taking walks together." There were also many other opportunities for young women and men to meet through visiting by relatives and friends, and activities as simple as walking to market. Hugh Barbour and J. William Frost, *The Quakers*,(New York: Greenwood Press, 1988), 113.

[42] Diary 1, 20 March 1859, 65.

[43] Diary 1, 20 May 1859, 73.

or her own.[44] However, as her time at the Willet's school came to a close, Martha would experience a passion both surprising and forbidden – and difficult for her to bear. But first came two other events of great importance to her young life – her mother's marriage and the close of the school year.

Seven years after her husband Oliver's death, Mary Schofield became engaged to John Child, a family friend and widower with six children. John Child was ten years older than Mary Schofield and a watchmaker by trade.[45] Though his children were all grown and married, hers were, with the exception of Ben, still at home – or in the case of Martha and Eliza, only temporarily away from home working. Martha said of their engagement in April, "this day My Mother's proposal of marriage will go to the Mo. Meeting, how I would love to be there but it cannot be."[46] Among Hicksite Quakers, the necessity to obtain permission of their Monthly Meeting in order to marry continued until the end of the nineteenth century. In general, the couple appeared before the men's and women's Monthly Meetings stating their intention to marry at which point committees were formed to assure that neither one had prior commitments or romantic entanglements. If all was well, permission was granted at the following Monthly Meeting with the ceremony to take place within a month's time.[47] The band of Schofield women

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[44] In the colonial period it was generally believed that men's and women's sexual drive was equal. Moreover, it was not uncommon for women to be pregnant on their wedding day. But, by the first quarter of the nineteenth century the world had changed, and "women who failed to repress or disguise sexual urges were subjected to severe reprisals within American society." Still, historians have debated the extent to which this female ideal comported with the reality of women's lives in the Victorian era. Catherine Clinton and Christine Lunardini, *The Colimbia Guide to American Women in the Nineteenth Century* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), 101-102.

[45] In the 1860 census John Child was listed as seventy years old and a watchmaker. The value of his real estate was listed as $20,500 and his personal estate $10,000. In 1870 the value of his real estate was roughly the same listed at $23,000 and his personal estate reduced to $7.000. However, Martha's mother Mary Child is listed owning $18.000 in real estate and with a personal estate of $9,300.

[46] Diary 1, 19 April 1859, 69.

[47] Though Barbour and Frost write that in order to marry "the approval of parents was essential, no matter what the age of the applicants," this could hardly be the case for Mary Schofield and John Child given their parents were long

would soon be broken by the addition of a husband and father. On the surface Martha appeared, if not happy, then accepting of her mother's choice. But just beneath the surface was a hint of uncertainty, even fear, at what this alteration in her family circle would, in actuality, bring.

On May 21, Martha traveled home for the wedding and on her arrival said both that, "it seems so nice to be home after an absence of eight months" and "found many changes."[48] For the following four days she was "very busy making preparations" and entertaining arriving aunts, uncles and cousins. The wedding day, May 26, dawned "a most beautiful day" with "company coming all day" and by 4:00 p.m. nearly seventy guests were assembled in the Schofield home to witness the couple's vows.[49] Late in the evening Martha recorded a brief description of the ceremony writing:

> Mothers children sat next to her & his on his side, Rachel Moore, Eliza Newport & Dr. Child spoke, the ceremony was said & we had a mother & Father. Lyd kissed them and we all followed – We had tea and the table looked beautiful three splendid bouquets, oranges, ice cream, peaches, &c &c – the cake was iced beautifully – after the first table was through they had the silver cake basket taken to the parlor & the note read,it was a present from Mothers four daughters marked L M S E.[50]

Of her feelings she said only, "I need not write more every circumstance is impressed too deeply in my heart."[51] Whether "every circumstance" brought her heart happiness or sorrow,

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deceased. However, their children's approval might, in such a case, be an essential element. Martha did not voice any disapproval of Child or his impending marriage to her mother, but neither did she write of her happiness at the prospect. Hamm, *The Quakers in America,* 195; Barbour and Frost, *The Quakers*, 112-113.

[48] Diary 1, 21 May 1859, 73.

[49] Diary 1, 24 & 26 May 1859, 74. Of eighteenth and nineteenth century Quaker marriage vows Thomas Hamm writes, "the Quaker marriage ceremony was simple. The man and woman stood before the meeting and recited certain vows: 'Friends, in the presence of the Lord, and before this assembly, I take this my Friend _____ to be my wife, promising with divine assistance, to be unto her a loving and faithful husband, until death shall separate us.' The woman repeated the same vows to her husband; in contrast to the norm in other churches, she said nothing about 'obeying' him. All those present were then invited to sign the marriage certificate." Hamm, *The Quakers in America,* 195.

[50] Diary 1, 26 May 1859, 74.

[51] Diary 1, 26 May 1859, 74.

comfort or uneasiness she did not say. But a new Father meant a new life, and surely marked the distance she had traveled from her childhood to standing at the threshold of adulthood. It may have been a time of gaining a father's love and guidance, but it may also have been a time of vulnerability and even loss.

Martha returned to Harrison and spent much of June preparing for what she called a May party that included recitations by her students and a dinner outdoors for one hundred and forty guests. The Willets hosted the last Reading Circle of the season with seventy in attendance and a day later Martha traveled to Tarrytown visiting the home of Washington Irving and "a great many handsome places."[52] Martha was also busy preparing for the close of school on July 8 when she and her students would be expected to perform. On that morning she said I "reviewed my pupils in all their lessons" and wrote that

> after dinner Edward and Anna came up in the school rooms, also Anna Barnes and the parents of most of the children, they recited the Painter of Seville, then each spoke a piece afterwards – I read the compositions, some of which were beautiful, Lizzie W's was poetry, Sadie's was a Farewell address. Several others also, all of which were beautiful, then Sadie came up and read a note at the same time presenting me with a most Splendid Napkin Ring with M.S. on the outside and 'Martha Schofield from the pupils' inside, it was a very heavy one and will be valued much for the sake of the dear ones that gave it to me, I was so surprised that I could scarcely express my thanks though I told them words had not the power to express them.[53]

Afterwards in a seventeen-page address Martha delivered to her students, she spoke of their time together as mutually beneficial and said, "you have improved more almost than I had hoped." She wrote that the hours they spent together had not only been pleasurable, but instructive "to both you and me," and I "gained what I prize most more than aught else, the <u>love</u> and affection of my pupils." These young women had been her friends as well as her students.

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[52] Diary 1, 11 June 1859, 76.

[53] Diary 1, 8 July 1859, 81. This was not the only gift Martha received that day. She said that "as school closed" she received a box from Edward Willets brother, Stephen, "in which was a beautiful Fruit knife, silver with my name on it" and from Anna Willets a "pretty Fan."

She wrote to herself as much as to them, "think not your education is finished – The great end of education is moral and intellectual development, and this is the work of a life time and cannot be accomplished in the few brief months or years devoted to early training, you can go on getting knowledge and improving yourself."[54]

She advised them to be loving, virtuous and truthful. She wrote of their duty to their parents, younger siblings, older brothers, and to themselves. But, the advice she offered them about their older brothers is especially interesting given her brother Ben's profligate ways. In a tone both moralizing and grounded in the idealism of a twenty-year-old she said

> even your older brothers may feel the effects of your love – your interest in their welfare, your considerate care for them – and your respect for their feelings may counteract the evil influences that surround them. I would encourage you to endeavor to interest them in intellectual and scientific pursuits – in a taste for the arts, which would fill up, most refreshingly, many a weary moment and would draw them away from the temptations and amusements which too often lead to the chambers of death. Let your company, be their company, your pleasures their pleasures, do all in your power to make them happy; use your influence to show them the wrong in taking the first fatal glass – show them by your example, that you believe in the language "touch not, taste not, handle not." Have these principles yourselves and you may convince them … it is by your love and constant watchfulness that they may become, noble, upright, men, and the time will come when they will bless you for what you have done.[55]

While this could be read as the language of "true womanhood," of a limited scope of womens' power within the sphere of home and family, it can also be understood as an outgrowth of Martha's newly formed sense of self as a teacher and a writer – a young woman of accomplishment. Her confidence flowed, too, from her popularity within her broader circle of friends and the attention she received from the young men she knew in Harrison. Martha closed her talk that afternoon invoking a model of Willets Female Seminary as the best of families saying directly to her "dear friends" Anna and Edward:

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[54] Martha Schofield, "A Farewell Address to my Pupils At the close of School, 8 July 1859," 1-4.

[55] Schofield, "A Farewell Address," 10-11.

> you into whose keeping, for a little while, has been entrusted the care of this little band – I think we can all sincerely thank you, for the parental care which you have extended towards us – we have had a pleasant home beneath your roof – you have used every means to make us happy, and truly we have been so.[56]

As the time for her departure from the Willets' and their school grew near, Martha poured out her feelings in her journal saying, "I know my health needs rest, and would give out, if I did not quit, still I will miss the pleasant smiles and kind words of those who have not only been my pupils in school but my friends and companions out, they have been to me like sisters."[57] Yet, as their numbers dwindled, as students one-by-one returned home for their summer break, Martha continued a rather hectic social calendar of rides, teas, picnics, and parties. She also had another brush with romance when introduced to Sadie Brouwer's cousin, Jacob Amerman.

Beginning on July 10, Martha, Sadie, and Jacob spent time in Harrison calling on friends, and by the twelfth, traveled to Tarrytown "visiting with people going to Meeting." On the fourteenth, she was in Yorktown for the day with Jacob, Sadie, and two other young men walking around Croton Lake. Martha described their evening together saying, we "enjoyed the beautiful scenery &c – it was about sunset and every thing looked so pretty…." Then with characteristic reticence to speak openly of romance she wrote, "but the walk here will be remembered without being put on paper." By the end of her diary entry that day she became even more cryptic and suggestive adding, "afterwards we went to a Hotel had lemonade &c – then rode home, Jacob sat back a little of the way, my shawl cover --------"[58]

These small encounters with young men of her circle would pale in comparison, however, with events that took place just a few short days before her departure for home. On

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[56] Schofield, "A Farewell Address," 15.

[57] Diary 1, 8 July 1859, 82.

[58] Diary 1, 10-14 July 1859, 84-86.

July 29, Martha began a series of entries in her journal that she would hearken back to for many years. Though we cannot know for certain who she was referring to or exactly what took place, given the evidence that does exist in her writing, it seems clear that her relationship with Edward Willets had turned from one of friendship to something very much more. As she wrote on the twenty-ninth:

> my thoughts were so busy last night, that I could not sleep just lay thinking – got up at 5 – and finished a letter, sitting at my room window – went down to get some pills received a paper &c &c &c – the contents must be forgotten, or cannot be recorded here – nothing but unnatural strength keeps me able to appear well & happy… He who reads all hearts knows the cause of my anguish, may he give me strength to bear it, is my hourly prayer … H[annah], C[harlotte] cut my duster and tried it on – handed reply – Oh God, what agitation, of mind, what anguish of soul I have known in the last three days, I never knew so much mental suffering in so short a time, made still more hard to bear, by my having to <u>appear</u> as I always felt pleasant and agreeable; it seemed almost too much for me, such constant exercise of mind, caused my health to fail, I could eat nothing, a relish for food gone entirely -- I see too another suffers deeply; It is my earnest prayer we may be restored to our old cheer-fullness and ease – I hope I may forget & let it be buried with the past – there are times when my brain is dizzy and I feel as if I must give up, but no, I must seem to others what I always have – I keep my promises.[59]

Within the next two weeks, as Martha prepared to leave, much of her journal writing was taken up with Edward and her struggle to control her emotions. On July 30, she said, "I am better in body and mind, than I have been for several days still, when I see the one who has known all, who suffers too, I feel heavy hearted." On August 1, she went for a walk with Bill (which could have been Willie Tilton), and after tea went for another walk and returned in a hay wagon. After reaching home she wrote, "E gave me some splendid apples." By August 2, however, she was in bed and Anna was dosing her with medicine, worried because she had not been eating for a week. Martha confessed, "when I sit down to the table thoughts come quick and fast, and food will not go down." That evening a gift arrived in her room of "seven elegant

[59] Diary 1, 29 July 1859, 88-89.

pears" with a note, "thee dident eat anything" to which she responded in her diary, "how kind in every little act, my wishes scarcely dare be expressed."[60]

This was but one of the gifts Edward had bestowed on her during her year of teaching – gift giving and other attentions shown Martha point to his growing esteem for her over the months – as hers do for him. Just a few short weeks after her arrival in October she noted that he was making a trip to New York to purchase books and said, "he is kind, will get anything I want for the school." By mid-January he not only gave her "a nice pocket knife for a Christmas gift," but on January 25 returned from a trip to New York and along with school books she said, "he also bought me a very handsome present – a large book entitled "Dictionary of Poetical Quotations" – the book above all others I would want – it is a large volume, splendid engravings – and I shall value it most highly, both for the gift & the giver – so kind in him and so unexpected to me."[61]

It was in January and February that Edward contributed to Martha's essay for the Reading Circle, and then copied it for her. In March, she wrote she was "working on a pair of slippers for him – Floss silk – orange colored – shaded – real beautiful." On March 27 she said, "I copied some Essays in the book which belongs to the Circle – let Edward read two of mine." In April, when Martha was returning home for her mother's wedding, Willie Tilton offered to accompany her to Darby but she explained, "I told him – no – Edward would see me to the boat &c." Whatever Edward's feelings were for Martha up to that point, she, too, seemed to be

[60] Diary 1, 30 July – 2 August 1859, 89-90.

[61] Diary 1, 7 October 1858, 41; 24 and 25 January 1859, 57.

claiming time with him, especially time when they could be alone. Martha reached Darby on May 25 and recorded in her diary she had written to Edward the following day.[62]

In June, knowing that Martha would not be returning to his school, Edward traveled to Pennsylvania to interview teachers and she arranged for him to stay with her family for part of his time there. On July 9, she recorded that at a picnic at Rye Beach organized by the Reading Circle, "there was quite a report about me but I contradicted it & Sadie helped me …." Rather than any gossip about her and Edward, it was most likely a "report" linking her with one of the young men then pursuing her – possibly Willie Tilton – and Martha contradicted it not just because it was untrue, but she very likely did not want Edward to hear of it.

In the days following Edward's profession to her, Martha struggled to reach an emotional equilibrium. She helped Anna prepare for Quarterly Meeting "baking &c" and wrote, "I do begin to feel happier & I trust all will be well – if I could forget." It is easy to imagine the strain she felt, especially given the fact that she and Anna were so close. It is easy to imagine that Anna suspected there was more to the relationship between her husband and Martha than friendship. On August 10 Anna was ill, and so Martha and Edward traveled alone to Mamaronek, ten miles from Harrison, for Monthly Meeting. Martha reported it was a lovely ride. They returned to Harrison for dinner but afterward Edward took her to a friend's for tea while he went to visit his brother. She wrote, "he called for me on his return – it was splendid moonlit evening & one long to be remembered although there was but little conversation – I almost." Again, Martha leaves much to the imagination.[63]

The next day, August 11, Martha left the Willets to return to her family and home in Darby. She was to go as far as Aunt Eliza's on Long Island, and make the rest of the journey

[62] Diary 1, 22 March 1859, 65; 27 March 1859, 66; 18 May 1859, 72; 26 May 1859, 74.

[63] Diary 1, 2 August 1859, 90; 10 August 1859, 91.

about ten days later. Her journal entry for that day clearly reveals her reluctance to leave, and the pain she suffered in separating herself from the school and her friends. She framed her feelings in terms of family and home – that "she was leaving one of the dearest homes on earth" – but also betrayed the depth of her feelings for her one "dearest friend." Martha recorded in her journal:

> the time had come that we must separate & we know not how soon we would meet again, it was sad parting & I feel that I was leaving one of the dearest homes on earth, till the last tearful farewell was felt, words could not be spoken and then I took my last look at the dear ones – Edward was with me and we had a pleasant though silent ride to the city – excepting when we went through the tunnels, then I was very sick and he gave me some lozenges & I was better soon. [64]

Both on her way to Harrison and on her way home, Martha wrote of these tunnels – of passing from darkness to light on her arrival, and traveling in or through them and becoming sick on her departure. Her sickness, however, was relieved by Edward ministering to her by giving her lozenges, which she said, ultimately, made her feel better. As such, the tunnels serve to frame, in a very interesting way, her external as well as internal journey over the ten months she spent at the Willets' school. Her experience teaching at the school marked her real entry into the profession. Her relationship with Edward Willets marked her transition to womanhood through their strong attraction for each other and its expression. Martha's relationship with Edward marked the first love and passion she had ever experienced heightened by its being both secretive and forbidden. And just as it had been revealed and was reciprocated, she was leaving. It comes, then, as little surprise that she became physically ill on the first leg of her journey home. She readily admitted the emotional stress she was under – that she could not eat or sleep. What a swirl of emotions Martha must have been feeling at leaving Harrison and returning to Darby to what would be a new life with a new father. She would be without Edward and both the

[64] Diary 1, 11 August 1859, 91-92.

excitement and strain of their relationship. She would be without the satisfaction and sense of accomplishment derived from her position as a teacher. She would be without the friendship of Sadie Brouwer and the other girls she taught. She would be without the friendship and guidance of Anna Willets.

Arriving in New York, it was discovered she would have a number of hours to wait before the boat left for Flushing, so her bags were checked and they roamed the city. In Martha's description of the afternoon, there was both sadness and longing. She said:

> Went to Broadway … then we walked down to the Custom House &c he wanted very much to take me in and get some dinner but I could not eat and so we did not go … he bought me Godey's Ladies book wrote my name in it, also crackers, cakes, fruit &c which we ate on deck of the Enoch Dean as we were there an hour or so before it started – he remained with me till the last moment, and <u>then we parted</u>, we who had become <u>true friends</u>, for he is one I look too [sic] for advice, he stood & watched till the boat moved out of sight & then how weary and desolate I felt, utterly alone ….[65]

Yet, Edward might have been loneliest of all, watching as the boat and Martha disappeared from view. They seemed to have awakened a passion in each other that could not be denied or ignored. How much more than a declaration had passed between them is impossible to know. Edward Willets may, at that moment, have been thinking of his first words to Martha upon her arrival less than a year earlier. He had said then, "I suppose thee is the person I am looking for."

When Martha arrived on Long Island she found her aunt and uncle were away and spent the first few hours "unburdening her heart in a letter" to her older sister Sallie. Within the week she wrote alternately of her social calendar and feelings of loneliness, "a longing for something," of "feeling that there was a vacuum." Relief came when she received letters from home and from Edward. He told her he was not well and of the trip he had taken to Providence to pick-up

[65] Diary 1, 11 August 1859, 92. On August 11, 1861 Martha wrote in her journal, "this day of the month two years ago I left Harrison, how well I remember that ride, when I was sick going through the tunnels, and the parting on the boat. Oh! oh! tis gone now…." Diary 2, 11 August 1861, 64.

the teacher who would replace her. He said they missed her in Harrison. She wrote, "but oh how much more I miss their pleasant words and kind attention, & their parental care over me."[66]

To invoke parental care in her relationship with Edward and Anna may have been Martha's antidote for guilt or even fear – for what had happened between them or what might have happened. In her young mind and heart, Edward represented the kind of man she could imagine marrying and the first and strongest sexual attraction she had experienced. He was old enough to seem manly when compared with the young men her own age who pursued her. In addition, he was an authority figure and someone she respected. As she wrote, she "looked to him for advice."

As young women her age contemplated marriage partners, they could not ignore the real power a potential husband would gain over them. While there were many dangers in falling in love with a married man, one of the advantages was the limit it set on the relationship. There is no indication that Edward thought of leaving his wife and family, nor that Martha wanted him to. Rather, Martha was exploring life's possibilities as young women had done before and since. Without doubt, she was pushing the boundaries of propriety, even "playing with fire," but in the process she was learning about herself and beginning to define for herself the kind of man she believed was worth marrying. In *The Ladies Counsellor; or, Outlines and Illustrations of the Sphere, Duties and the Dangers of Young Women*, Rev. Daniel Wise suggested a suitor should be

> pure-minded, sincere and spotless in his moral character … a *self denying* man; rejecting the wine cup, tobacco, and all other forms of intemperance…. He should be an *energetic* man…. He should possess a *cultivated intellect*…. He should be industrious…. He must be *economical*…. He must be *benevolent*…. He must not be a proud man…. He

[66] Diary 1, 11 August 1859, 92; 16 August 1859, 93.

> should not be *clownish* on the one hand, nor *foppish* on the other…. He should not be deformed or badly disfigured…. [And] above all things, he ought to be *religious*.[67]

Edward Willets seems to have come closest in Martha's then limited experience to embodying the nineteenth century ideal of manhood and matching in her mind the fantasy created by her novel reading. As she had said of Mr. Carlton in *Queechy*, "such a heart as his would be worth striving for."

On August 26 back home in Darby, Martha recorded spending part of the day washing and fixing her dresser drawers. In addition she wrote, "consumed to the flames some papers that were precious to me, although they were connected with some of the greatest sorrows, well I can hardly say sorrow, agony, agitation &c," and then added, "how can I ever forget it – it is only by constant prayer that I am enabled to bear it so well." And so it would be for months and even years to come. She would revisit the day of her departure from Harrison. She would write of the time she spent there as some of the happiest of her life. She would struggle to forget. She would pray for forgiveness. She would write, "those five days were more agonizing to me than many years of my life, my brain was on fire & the weight of agony almost drove reason from her throne…." Even so, Martha would remain close friends with both Anna and Edward Willets.[68]

In October, she wrote of the previous year's work at the Willets school that "I have left there as a teacher," and she would continue to teach, as her health permitted, for the next five years. Initially she returned to Aunt Eliza's school on Long Island, but was unhappy, in part, because her relationship with her aunt had become more difficult and strained. Martha looked to her mother's sister for a similar nurture and care as she received at home but was sorely

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[67]Chambers-Schiller points out, "the emergence of romanticism with its emphasis on romantic love led to the development of a cultural 'beau ideal' whose character was as clearly defined as that of the 'true woman.'" Chambers-Schiller, 37; and, Rev. Daniel Wise as quoted in Chambers-Schiller, 37, 227.

[68] Diary 1, 26 August 1859, 96.

disappointed.[69] Her sisters seemed to fare better there, yet it was unclear why. However by 1861, her most challenging and rewarding teaching experience would come in a school in Philadelphia for free blacks. With this work Martha would begin to make a series of decisions about her life that would lead her to an October day bound for Wadmalaw Island, South Carolina and work among the freedpeople there.

[69] Martha not only compared Aunt Eliza to her mother but also to Anna Willets who had shown her so much motherly care. She wrote, "Aunt E does not see my need as well as dear Anna used to – it's not her nature, she does not understand me…." Diary 1, 28 February 1860, 117.

CHAPTER 2

THE FIERY FURNACE OF AFFLICTION

On October 1, 1859 Martha wrote in her diary

> another beautiful day and just one year ago I went to Harrison there a stranger to all but now I feel that I know them all well and love them too – yes although I have left there a teacher the friendship formed in that beloved spot, and my intimate acquaintance with that family have made the very name dear to me, it is with pleasure I look over the time spent there, and although I saw some sad and agonizing hours, I will ever remember them & with deep affection and hope that they may receive the blessing of our Heavenly Father.[1]

Her words here, a delicate balance between her pleasurable memories of the Willet family and her students, and the agonizing hours of her last days with Edward Willets, formed the foundation from which her future life would be built. Whether or not Martha and Edward Willet's relationship crossed the line of physical expression is unclear from her writing. Yet, its emotional power and influence were acute and pivotal to all that came afterward. As her writing makes clear, in the nearly one and a half year period between the fall of 1859 and the spring of 1861, Martha was keenly attuned to the changes that were taking place within her – changes that fostered independence but also uncertainty and even fear. Without anyone to talk with about her deepest feelings, she wrote and she wrote. At moments confessional, at others plaintive, at still others imploring, she searched for understanding, equilibrium, and guidance.

Back at home in Darby, Martha did not confide in her mother or her sisters Lydia and Eliza and made no mention of her stepfather, John Child, in her journals. She had written to her sister Sallie on that August night when she left the Willets and said of the letter, I "unburdened

[1] Martha Schofield Diary (Diary 1), 1 October 1859, 97, Martha Schofield Papers, Friends Historical Library, Swarthmore College.

my heart." But Sallie was married and living in Philadelphia and consequently not readily available for comfort or counsel, so Martha turned inward. She had crossed the threshold from adolescence to adulthood, and at least part of the difference lay in an experience that would remain the closest and deepest of secrets.[2] If unburdening her heart to Sallie had, in fact, included the details of her relationship with Edward, her sister's was the closest and safest bond she knew. However, her life was now, to a greater extent than before, a more solitary journey.

Martha strove to place her trust in God and to hone her ability to discern God's will for her. She went over and over again in her mind and in her diary her relationship with Edward Willets. She could neither deny the power of her feelings for him nor the pleasure she felt in having them reciprocated. Yet she felt agony over the boundary she had crossed in falling in love with a married man and in the depth of her feelings. In addition, it was a time in Martha's life when she would have expected to be building a deep intimacy with a fiancé or husband but no one had stirred her as Edward had. No other man would attract her romantically for the near future.

For Martha, the early days of the fall of 1859 seem to have passed slowly. With no one to confide in, she turned to her room and her diary for comfort and release.[3] As she observed

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[2] There is a shift in the tone of Martha's writing in the wake of her experience with Edward Willets and a sense that her passion for him and the taboo nature of their relationship, after his declaration, moved her toward womanhood. She was no longer the carefree young woman who wrote so often of parties and sleigh rides. Instead, she was emotionally burdened and her journal entries became far more introspective. For example, she confided in her diary after her return from Harrison, "there are moments when my weary soul seems sinking beneath the sorrows that sometimes encompass it then after a prayer for strength my heart resumes its once joyful elasticity – I have often much happiness & grateful for it, then again, often the merry laugh is a mockery of the burning heart within – yet I strive to be always cheerful believing that such a disposition will contribute much to the pleasure of those around me." Diary 1, 6 October 1859, 99.

[3] For women like Martha, diaries served not only as an emotional outlet, but a means of exploring an inner world. Between the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, women's diaries became less focused on chronicling events and more on a narration of self. Moreover, a sustained probing of self and its expression in a journal, outside religious terms, did not carry the same cultural favor for men as for women. Margo Culley, ed., *A Day at a Time* (New York: The Feminist Press at the City University of New York, 1985), 3-4. For the place and function of personal writing in the lives of nineteenth century women, see Penelope Franklin, ed., *Private Pages: Diaries of American Women,*

> the saying that every heart knoweth its own bitterness is a true saying how little do we know by the outward appearance that the heart beneath is sometimes growing under a weight of agony, that the sorrow stricken soul longs to burst the bonds and be free, deeply do I sympathize with those whom I know have drunk deeply of lifes bitter draught for my only consolation to such is to pray and have faith and trust in God, we know not what may be His aim in leading us through the fiery furnace of affliction, perhaps that the soul may come forth purified and redeemed.[4]

At the age of twenty to have fallen in love with a married man while his employee and living with his family was, at first glance, Martha's "fiery furnace of affliction." Yet the struggle she faced with herself had even deeper roots. Martha was a young woman of spirit and intelligence coming of age and coming to terms with her place in a world where progressive women were taking on ever more visible roles in reform work and a small number in the professions. In the months to come, Martha would meet and hear lectures by two women, Anna Dickinson, a talented speaker and ardent supporter of the rights of women and abolition, and Ann Preston, a physician and advocate for the expansion of women's educational opportunities, both of whom would serve her as role models. Like many other young women, she and her sisters taught and would continue to teach in their aunt's school on Long Island and in the local school in Darby. Yet also like many young women, Martha hoped to marry and have children, fulfilling the roles she believed were ordained for women by God.[5]

1830s to 1970s (New York: Ballantine Books, 1986), xix-xxv; Culley, *A Day at a Time*, xi, 3-26; Martha Tomhave Blauvelt, *The Work of the Heart: Young Women and Emotion, 1780-1830* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2007), 7-10, 15-16, 107, 185, 189-190; Amy L. Wink, *She Left Nothing in Particular: The Autobiographical Legacy of Nineteenth-Century Women's Diaries* (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 2001), xi-xxxvi; Marilyn Ferrus Motz, "The Private Alibi: Literacy and Community in the Diaries of Two Nineteenth-Century American Women," in *Inscribing the Daily: Critical Essays on Women's Diaries*, ed. Suzanne L. Bunkers and Cynthia A. Huff (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1996), 189-206; Elizabeth Baer, "Ambivalence, Anger, and Silence: The Civil War Diary of Lucy Buck, in *Inscribing the Daily*, 207-219; for English women of an earlier period see Judy Simons, "Invented Lives: Textuality and Power in Earlier Women's Diaries, in *Inscribing the Daily*, 252-263.

[4]Diary 1, 16 October 1859, 101.

[5] Diary 2, 6 February 1861, 19; Diary 2, 22 November 1861, 6; Diary 2, 28 December 1860, 12-13; Katherine Smedley, *Martha Scholfield and the Re-Education of the South, 1839-1916* (New York: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1987), 65-67.

Martha had close at hand the examples of women who combined marriage and motherhood with reform work and preaching, her own mother among them. Her parent's marriage had been based on an equality of the sexes far greater than most outside the Quaker community. But the basis of the struggle that began for Martha in the wake of Edward Willets was the issue of her freedom. Though her feelings for Edward were certainly a trial, she would not renounce them outright. Nevertheless, by the standards of her family, her community, and the broader culture, falling in love with a married man and acting on that love was wrong. Martha's close relationship with Edward's wife, Anna, made it all the more complicated and painful. The love Martha discovered for Edward Willets was illicit and necessarily secretive. However, with it came a connection and a freedom of expression she had not experienced before. It brought to the fore her desire for deep connection with someone, a hint of the pleasures of physical attraction, and the power that romantic love could wield in the life of a woman.

Martha's internal battle in these days, weeks, and months was fought on a number of fronts. One was in coming to terms with the truth of her feelings for Edward and the guilt they produced. Another was the extent to which she felt misunderstood by her mother and sisters and consequently alone and often lonely, making her connection with Edward all the more powerful. With her family, Martha wrestled with a difficult balance between autonomy and connection.[6] She was plagued by a chronic and, at times, debilitating lung disease that caused her fever, coughing, hoarseness, and weight loss. Her illness placed in relief a gnawing uncertainty about whether she would be able to marry and have children. Yet along with this was the central question of what she would do with her life – what was God's purpose for her? She wrote that

[6] In her 1984 study of single women in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, Lee Virginia Chambers-Schiller draws a comparison between her study and the work of contemporary scholars of women studies who continue to explore the "twin issues of affiliation and autonomy" in the lives of American women. Lee Virginia Chambers-Schiller, *Liberty, A Better Husband: Single Women in America: The Generations of 1780-1840* (New Haven: Yale University Press), 1984, 9.

every woman longed for marriage and motherhood but was drawn to independence rather than union. All around her were young women and men who became engaged and married, but Martha's focus during this period rarely strayed far from her search for understanding and release and a role worthy of her energy and devotion.

Martha was engaged in many of the most critical social and political issues of the day through her participation in anti-slavery fairs, attendance at lectures, reading newspapers, and following the presidential campaign of 1860. But her decision in April 1861 to teach in a school for blacks in Philadelphia, coinciding as it did with the bombardment of Fort Sumter, was an act of independence that would carry her further from her family and closer to the work she would come to do in the South. Her family had a rich history of standing against slavery and working for its end. Martha saw the war as that battle finally come and she would play her part. As war began, she stood with those of her male friends who chose to fight rather than heed the call for pacifism among Quakers. While they prepared to fight on the battlefield, she worked toward the uplift of the very people at the center of the conflict.[7]

By the end of this nearly three year period, Martha emerged, if not transformed, then strengthened in her determination to find her way in life, trusting in her ability to discern God's will for her, and willing to sustain the displeasure of her family for her choices. Hers was a precarious balance between a femininity more broadly imagined than her mother's or her sister's, an independence that would neither mark her as unattractive or unmarriageable, and a burning need to define for herself what it meant to be a woman. As she looked to heaven for guidance, she seemed also to have found solace in books she read and through them a means to reconcile

[7] Diary 2, December 1859, 12-16; Diary 2, 20 April 1861, 31, 32-33; Smedley, *Martha Schofield and the Re-Education of the South*, 9-10, 48-50.

her past, face the realities of the present, and anchor the redemption she longed for in her life as a teacher.

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On the sixth of October, 1859, just a few short months after returning home from the Willet's school, Martha remained emotionally vulnerable and struggled to fit in. One of her many aunts arrived for a visit but Martha stayed in her room most of the day "deep in thought." When she finally emerged to join the family for the evening it was only to further deepen her sense of isolation by unintentionally angering her younger sister Eliza. A young man arrived to pay a call but as Martha later lamented,

> it never seems as if I can do just right – because I carried on a conversation with Ned, they said I was a flirt & [Eliza] will scarcely speak to me – oh! if she knew, if she would believe it was done without any intention of robbing her of his company, if she knew that I would not, or he would not do anything like that intentionally to sadden her young heart no no I am no coquette – I care for him only as a friend & always try to act accordingly…."[8]

Consequently, when Ned returned to pay another call a little more than a week later, Martha set her boundaries clearly, if a little grudgingly, writing, "surely they could not call me a flirt now, for I moved when he sat next to me, and carried on no conversation with him." "They," her family at home did not know that her thoughts and her heart were elsewhere. As she would confide in her journal later, "my thoughts were of another sorrow and grief which I cannot forget."[9]

In early November, while in Philadelphia with her sister, Lydia, Martha went to a barber and had her hair cut "all off." She said, "it [was] cut close just like a boy," and "it was so short

[8] Diary 1, 6 October 1859, 99.

[9] Diary 1, 17 October 1859, 104.

and uneven – I could do nothing with it."[10] Though she never offers an explanation as to why she cut her hair, it could well have been done out of financial necessity. Fashionable hairstyles of the day could be quite elaborate and required the addition of various kinds of hairpieces. However, beyond a practical explanation for cutting her hair are a number of interconnected possibilities. Short haircuts for women, even young women of twenty, were unusual for the time. Rather, it was a style more common among children and adolescents and, given Martha's emotional turmoil over Edward Willets, it may be an indication of a desire to return to the relative surety and comfort of an adolescent identity. Yet it could be too that the motivation to cut her hair was centered in the benefit of having little to do beyond brushing and pulling it back from her face with a ribbon. Whereas prior to taking the position at the Willet's school and during the time she was there Martha showed a marked interest in the latest fashions, during this period she wrote almost nothing of what she was wearing or making or purchasing to wear. In fact, she was critical of what she saw as too much emphasis on fashion among members of one of the literary societies she attended.

Martha's life had taken a more serious turn and that was reflected in her outward appearance. Cutting her hair could well have been a statement of that change but also an indication of the extent to which she stood apart from the mainstream. Her concerns were not those of the average urban, middle-class American young woman. Despite the hopes she expressed for marriage, she was not focused on perfecting a brand of femininity suited to attracting eligible young men from which to choose a husband. For the time being she could not move past or shake-off her feelings for Edward and so continually harkened back to him in her journal. On the sixteenth of November, just five days after visiting the barber in Philadelphia, Martha was, once again, in her room battling her demons. She confessed,

[10] Diary 1, 11 November 1859, 105.

> I have been suffering bodily all day, have tried to bear it patiently it is nothing compared to the mental anguish – I sometimes wonder how it was that I was able to bear so much – those few days were more agonizing to me than many years of my life, my brain was on fire & the weight of agony almost drove reason from her throne. I would have given much to have been unconscious for a while.[11]

The passage of three months had done little to lessen the power Edward Willets had over her or ease her sense of guilt.

Still, Martha struggled on. Of Sundays and the duty of church attendance she concluded, "to me the best time for sober thoughts and serious reflection is when alone in my chamber not when surrounded by a gay crowd – I know we should go to meeting but there we find much to lead the thoughts away – much that is calculated to draw our minds from searching into our hearts and finding not our own feelings."[12] Martha not only wanted to make peace with her recent past but on her own terms – terms that neither negated the truth of her feelings nor branded her as a social pariah. She was a young woman who, though willing to stretch boundaries, was rightfully fearful of breaking them entirely. Nevertheless, rather than her reputation, it was her identity that was at stake. She was insistent on finding her own way and what she required most was time alone to read, to think, and to pray.[13]

Yet events taking place in Philadelphia and beyond occupied Martha's thoughts and drew her back into the world. On the second of December she made note that it was a "warm and lovely day" and one "too beautiful for the accomplishment of such a deed as the hanging of

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[11] Diary 1, 16 November 1859, 106.

[12] Diary 1, 2 October 1859, 98.

[13] Chambers-Schiller describes the changes women faced in the antebellum era as stemming in part from their greater access to education and work outside the home in "manufacturing towns and commercial centers." Women took jobs in factories, in domestic service and in teaching, weakening parental control and promoting a sense of economic independence. Moreover, "women began to think of themselves as individuals with their own identities, goals, rights, and callings separate from those of kin, church or community and defined by personal needs and desires, not the prescriptions of gender. Women began to express the very human desire to grow, to accomplish, to succeed – they acknowledged ambition, valued independence, and sought autonomy. They wanted to make their own choices, to be responsible for their own achievements and failures, to establish their own priorities, and to enact them." Chambers-Schiller, *Liberty, A Better Husband,* 205-206.

Poor Old John Brown." Brown's raid on Harpers Ferry in October had galvanized the country, not only heightening regional tensions over slavery but exposing a fault line among abolitionists over the use of violence to bring it to an end. Though Martha did not say how anyone else in her immediate family felt about Brown, his war on slavery, or his execution, she was clearly among his supporters. As she stated, "a man so noble and heroic should not meet with such a death – the whole country seems agitated."[14]

On December 12, 1859 the Anti-Slavery Fair began in Concert Hall in Philadelphia, and Martha and her sister Eliza attended for all four days.[15] On the thirteenth, Martha said she was a "waiter at the provision table" and on the fourteenth she heard Theodore Tilton speak. On December fifteenth, she again waited tables but most of her diary entry for that day was filled with the storm brewing outside Concert Hall. Without a hint of fear or apprehension she explained that

> to day the Hall was s[e]ized by the Sheriff – they said for rent from the lessee but they did not mean for us to have it – we had a very great excitement a number locked in – I slipped passed an officer and got in – The Sheriff and his men behaved very orderly and gentlemanly – there was a clause in the lease, that the owners could seize it if there was any danger of property being injured, some threatened to burn the hall if we remained in it – we moved to the Assembly Buildings – house crowded.

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[14] Diary 1, 2 December 1859, 107. While Martha's comment does not indicate misgivings on her part in terms of the violence of Brown's raid on Harper's Ferry, or the further violence of the slave uprising he hoped to insight, other Quakers held firm to the belief that slavery should be defeated through moral suasion, Lucretia Mott among them. She believed violence would only beget more violence. However, at the same time, Mott argued that given the violence of slave owners and of the state in upholding the institution, it was understandable that slaves themselves might turn to bloodshed. In addition, in answer to the criticism lodged against abolitionists who supported Brown, Lucretia Mott argued that anyone who supported a President willing to use military force "to keep slaves in chains" had little room to talk. Robert Purvis called Mott a belligerent non-resistant. Margaret Hope Bacon, *Valiant Friend: The Life of Lucretia Mott* (New York: Walker and Company, 1980), 171-173.

[15] The Philadelphia Female Anti-Slavery Society was organized by Lucretia Mott in December, 1833, as an outgrowth of the first meeting of the New England Anti-Slavery Society held in Philadelphia just a few days before. Among its first members were Abba Alcott, Louisa May Alcott's mother, and members of Philadelphia's black middle class including Charlotte and Margaretta Forten, Hattie Forten Purvis, Sarah McCrummel, and Grace Bustill Douglass. The fact that black and white women met together on equal terms was one of the causes, over the years, of violence against the group. In 1836, when a week-long meeting was held at the newly built Pennsylvania Hall (the money for which, in part, had been raised by the Motts) an angry mob of seventeen thousand burned the building to the ground and threatened the lives of the Motts and others. They attacked a black church, Mother Bethel Church, and the Shelter for Colored Orphans. Bacon, *Valiant Friend*, 58-60, 75-78.

Her desire to remain at the center of events was in no way diminished by the very real threat of violence. Later that evening she wrote, "we went to hear G.W. Curtis on the Present aspect of the Slavery question – the house was well filled – thousands on the outside to break it up but the Mayor and 600 policemen kept them from setting fire to it – though windows were broken and vitriol thrown in &c several disorderly ones taken out, and locked up." On the last day of the Anti-Slavery Fair, Martha noted that her pocket had been picked. In a voice both tempered and tinged with satisfaction she proclaimed the week would "long be remembered by those who attended the Fair."[16]

Martha's bravery extended into the new year. On January 29, 1860, she made her way back to Harrison and to the Willet's school. However, her reasons for this trip are not revealed in her journal. It could be that the pull of her heart was too great for her to resist any longer. After all, along with Edward, her dear friend Sadie was there, as was Anna Willets on whose friendship and nurture she had so often relied. But a question Martha may well have wanted to face sooner rather than later, one critical to her future, was whether or not she could overcome her romantic feelings for Edward. During the year she had spent with them, both Anna and Edward played crucial roles in her development as a teacher and Edward in her transition from adolescence to adulthood. Could she, then, find within the tangled web of their affections the seeds of the soul's purification and redemption she had written of in October? In the five months after leaving Harrison, Martha had turned inward but also shown a determination to meet life head-on. She was a young woman who placed herself at the center of events, as she had just a few weeks earlier in Philadelphia, even as rioters and fires raged just outside the doors. There in Harrison, with Edward so close and Anna watching, the danger was in many ways no less great or imminent.

[16] Diary 1, 12-16 December 1859, 108.

Martha recorded in her journal that Edward, alone, met her at the station in Rye, New York, but said nothing of their ride to Harrison. She wrote that Sadie and the Willets' daughter, Hannah, were happy to see her and "I was warmly welcomed by dear, dear Anna."[17] However, her longest and most probing diary entry while there came two days later on the first of February, her twenty-first birthday. Sitting alone in her room before the rest of the household had awakened, pen in hand and braced against the cold morning air, Martha took stock of herself:

> to day is my <u>birthday</u> twenty one years of my life have fled, and I wonder if the recording angel has written "worthless" if so oh Father show me a path which will lead me to be all that thou willest, let me not be a drone in society, let me meet the trials of the world with a Christian spirit, and if some cherished hopes be not fulfilled, give me strength to bear the burden, and I would this day ask one boon, that I may receive thy forgiveness and that the past may be obliterated, Thee knows how I suffered those few days of fiery trial, how I longed to leave the earth but it was not thy will and now all is well – [18]

Over the course of the next week, Martha noted time alone talking with Anna Willets and time in the classroom with her former students. She also noted, and with a tone of disgust, not attending Meeting because she heard "W.T." would be there – no doubt her past suitor, Willie Tilton. But on the day before her departure from Harrison, she noted something of a reverse of her declaration that all was now well. Martha confessed that "once, only once did I lose my self command, and then I would have given worlds to have been alone, no word was spoken, but my cheeks betrayed my thoughts, and each felt the gaze must be elsewhere. But I will succeed at last, I feel."[19] Yet success over the power of her emotions would have to be fought and won elsewhere. On the seventh of February, Martha was, once again, alone with Edward in a carriage, this time on route to Long Island to begin teaching for the second time at her Aunt Eliza's

[17] Diary 1, 29 January 1860, 111.

[18] Diary 1, 1 February 1860, 112.

[19] Diary 1, 6 February 1860, 113.

school. She wrote nothing of their ride together beyond, "I left them all, all those dear ones not knowing when we should meet again."[20]

Yet, for all her strength and determination, and all her seeking, Martha was still a young woman in need of love and affection. But as she complained over and over again, Aunt Eliza supplied none of it. Their relationship was often a test of wills and their reactions to each other could be harsh. Whereas, during her earlier stint teaching and living in her household, Martha could ignore her aunt's lack of affection, even her censure, this time was different. Martha was older and less caught up in the social whirl of Bayside. She was emotionally vulnerable. She said, "never from her do I receive any evidence of affection, no caress, no kiss is ever given unless I make the first advances and these are what my heart needs, what I desire above all things." On a chilly afternoon, her aunt, after returning from a short trip, greeted her with a nod and instructions to one of the students to hand out the tea before it got cold. Emblematic of all that was lacking in their relationship, Martha pleaded, "Oh God let not my heart ever become accustomed to such coldness – though she knows not how I long for love – I mean love that shares itself by actions of affections – All costly presents never can fill the place of true loving & feeling."[21]

Though older and more mature than during her former stint as teacher in her aunt's school, Martha fared no better the second time. She spent more time teaching and less time socializing, but struggles with her aunt Eliza's coldness toward her and her sometimes unruly emotions wore her down and affected her health. Still, there were moments of calm, even restoration in her writing, especially when outside, walking or riding alone. On a cold afternoon, she rode on a pony to visit a nearby cousin and confessed, "nothing so soon brings the elasticity

[20] Diary 1, 7 February 1860, 113.

[21] Diary 1, 20 February 1860, 115.

to my heart as a ride or walk, where I can more fully see the beauties of glorious Nature – it soothes my troubled mind – elevates my thoughts and raises me above all worldly trouble and vexations…."[22]

During this period, Martha worked to find and trust her own judgment – to rely on an "inner compass" to aid in navigating her life not only through the treacherous waters of love and desire, but in any situation where her emotions might drive "reason from her throne."[23] Moreover, in her journal she returned to the issue of the harm she might incur by attending Meeting. On her first Sunday back on Long Island and at Meeting, when John D. Wright spoke "a long while," she explained, "although I try to be profited by such things and reflect at such times, the snake charms the bird to destroy, so my thoughts dwell on that…."[24] It is easy to imagine that her strong reaction to Wright, coming as it did after her time with Edward, may have stemmed from a fear of her vulnerability in the presence of a man who spoke from the heart with eloquence and authority.

On the twenty-fifth of February, just a little more than two weeks after she left Harrison, letters arrived from Edward and his daughter Hannah, but none from Anna Willets, or at least none that Martha mentioned. Included in these letters was an essay by Edward Barnes on "Human Rights" to which father and daughter asked that Martha give an answer – most likely to be delivered at their own literary society. She did so quickly, and said, "I guess some of them will open their eyes for it was pretty spicy – showing a little what <u>men</u> were."[25] It is difficult to know from Martha's writing what Edward's feelings were in the wake of her most recent stay

[22] Diary 1, 17 February 1860, 114.

[23] Diary 1, 16 November 1859, 106.

[24] Diary 1, 19 February 1860, 114.

[25] Diary 1, 25 February 1860, 116.

with him and his family. Clearly, he was in no way severing his relationship with her and it is likely that, along with her, he strove to place their feelings for each other on a track of friendship, even deep friendship, rather than one of romantic love. What is also clear is the extent to which he admired her intellect and capacity to express herself in writing, especially on such a significant topic as human rights. In addition, the request for her answer to Barnes' essay may have seemed less suspect coming as it did from Edward and his daughter. At any rate, Martha was eager to reply.

With her work as a teacher and the emotional battles she waged, Martha's health declined. She had been battling a chronic cough for more than a year and said, "I sometimes think it originates in that one spot on my left lung – so dry and hard." Her other symptoms – by evening a "scarlet spot" on her cheek and fever – were common to both the first and second stages of consumption, though Martha never named her disease as such. Nor did she ever write that the doctors she visited suggested that diagnosis. Consumption was the leading cause of death in the nineteenth century and was most often chronic in its course. Sufferers could experience periods of debilitating, even life-threatening symptoms with surprising, sometimes miraculous recovery. The disease could go into remission for years at a time or symptoms become so minimal that patients and doctors alike declared a cure. Moreover, each case was so varied in its development and duration that physicians were reluctant to give a conclusive diagnosis of consumption until a patient was near death. Martha's health had failed over the time she was at the Willets school and now, again, her physical strength was slowly being drained by a soreness in her chest, a cough, an intermittent fever, and an inability to eat.[26]

[26] The symptoms of the first stage of the disease included "a dry persistent cough, an irritation in the throat, pains in the chest and shoulders, slightly elevated pulse, and some difficulty breathing." The second stage was marked by a cough that was "'severe, frequent and harassing'" and "produced mucous materials and pus." A fever developed that spiked twice a day and the pulse became accelerated. "The fever often lent a ruddiness to the complexion of

Yet in the midst of illness and her ongoing struggles with Aunt Eliza, Martha continued to teach and to participate in the local Reading Circle. On the fifteenth of March, she attended the Reading Circle at Bayside and said not only that there were thirty members present, but they had "a little dance" before recitations began. Martha presented two pieces, a poem by Myra Townsend titled, "Capital Punishment," and an essay of her own.[27] However she remarked of the evening, "I was very tired after all was over, felt all evening as if something was wanted, that the longing of my soul was not obtained."[28]

By the end of March, notwithstanding Martha's insistence that Aunt Eliza neither noticed her cough nor her inability to eat, her aunt took her to New York City to see a Dr. Wilkes who prescribed a tonic and "some dreadful pills" but also suggested "iodyne" and "thick cork sole

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consumptives, giving them a deceptive appearance of good health." In addition, ulcers developed in the throat causing hoarseness and making eating and talking painful. In the third and final stage, patients became emaciated, literally "consumed" by the disease. They developed a cough that was distinctive and called both the "graveyard cough" and "death rattle." "The pain in the joints was constant, the pulse accelerated and then became weaker, diarrhea broke out and became uncontrollable, and the legs swelled. All these changes gave a ghostly and cadaverous appearance, indicating that the person had gone into a consumption." Hemorrhaging could occur to the point of suffocation. Sheila Rothman, *Living in the Shadow of Death: Tuberculosis and the Social Experience of Illness in American History* (New York: BasicBooks, 1994), 16-17.

[27] "Capital Punishment" was one of the many poems Martha copied into a "Piece Book" she kept between 1859 and 1864. The first two stanzas of the poem by Myra Townsend read:

> What! Would ye swing your Brother's form,
> High up in Heaven's free air?
> And place the image of your God,
> A dangling victim there?
>
> Who gave you power to read his heart,
> Or know how deep his guilt?
> Or judge what provocation came
> Ere blood by him was spilt?

Myra Townsend was a Quaker and reformer who was about the same age as Martha's mother, Mary Schofield Child, and who founded an organization devoted to aiding unwed mothers and other "fallen women," or as an obituary in the *Friends' Intelligencer* stated, "she was the moving spirit in initiating a plan and effecting an organization in Philadelphia, in 1847, for rescuing from infamy females who had been seduced from the path of virtue." She also worked for other worthy causes including abolition of the death penalty, the abolition of slavery, and temperance. Although Martha never said so in her journal, it is likely that she knew or had met her. *Friend's Intelligencer* XVII (Philadelphia: Published by William W. Moore, 1861), 119-120.

[28] Diary 1, 15 March 1860, 119.

walking boots" for her "frosted feet."[29] As the weeks past, though her diary entries were largely taken up with the state of her health, she continued to explore the state of her heart and to follow the increasingly embittered debate over slavery. She read Charles Van Wyck's speech to Congress delivered on March 7, 1860 in which he denounced southern members for, among other things, continuing to fan the flames of outrage over "the Harper's Ferry riot." He, himself, added fuel to the fire, saying,

> you, gentlemen, and not John Brown, have unchained the whirlwind of angry passion and bitter invective; you have unbarred the thunder and loosened the lightning shaft, whereby you sought to rend asunder the people of a great nation, so that, in your own language on this floor, the 'Union might be wrecked from turret to foundation stone,' and 'the constitution torn in tatters.' Then from the ruins of one, and the dismembered body of the other, you might erect a confederacy cemented by the blood, watered by the tears, and strengthened by the groans of your bondmen; which would fill the measure of your avarice and feed the cravings of your ambition.[30]

Martha's opinion was that the speech was "very good indeed."[31]

She wrote at some length of her growing affection for her student and young cousin, Aby, saying of him, "I see something more in that dear boy, I feel drawn towards him by an invisible chain – and if it be my lot to help polish such a priceless gem, I hope I may be given strength to do it aright – we are very good friends."[32] Though Martha never wrote at length of her cousin Aby, her relationship with him was indicative of her need for connection and an acceptable outlet for her love and even her passion. The possibility that she could control and direct her emotional energy in order to "polish such a priceless gem" would repeat itself again and again in her

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[29] Diary 1, 24 March 1860, 120.

[30] Charles Henry Van Wyck was a Republican member of congress elected from New York from 1859 to 1863. He then entered the Union army as a colonel and was mustered out at the end of the war as a brigadier general. He then returned to Congress between 1867 and 1869. The speech he delivered to the House of Representatives on March 7, 1860 was titled, "True Democracy – History Vindicated." Biographical Directory of the United States Senate; American Libraries, Internet Archive, http://www.archive.org, (accessed November 9, 2008).

[31] Diary 1, 21 March 1860, 120.

[32] Diary 1, 25 March 1860, 121.

relationships with both women and men in the years to come. It would be predicated on her ability to see in people qualities and possibilities that no one else could see which, in turn, played a part in her choosing to teach at the Bethany School. It would serve in some cases as a justification for behavior that wavered on the boundary of impropriety.

In the meantime, Martha's life continued an emotional rollercoaster and gaining control of her emotions a serious struggle. She was sensitive to the moods of others and critical of her inability to rise above her reactions, whether positive or negative. She prayed to accept her life as given to her by God and to be good. Central to her need to surrender to God's will remained her feelings for Edward and her increasing physical weakness. The medicines prescribed by Dr. Wilkes were giving her little relief and she was finding it difficult to meet the daily demands of teaching. As she confessed, "I search my heart often to see if I am fit to die and sometimes think if it were His will I am now most prepared, I have passed through the fire of affliction and have put my faith in Him who never forsakes those who ask for help and strength."[33] For guidance not found in prayer, or through the beauty of nature, or in deep contemplation, she would begin to turn to books and time alone reading.

On April 14, 1860, Martha traveled to New York City with her uncle and spent the evening with her brother, Ben, and his friend, a Spanish doctor and phrenologist. The purpose of the trip may well have been to see the doctor as much as Ben, and she said he was both "most interesting" and a "smart man." Moreover, Ben may have arranged the meeting in hope of providing his sister with some relief concerning her health. The doctor, whom she does not name, described her character, she said, "just as if he had known me always." He also announced that her "lungs were large and sound" but that she "would use them too much" – that everything she "undertook" she did with "all [her] heart &c &c &c." And Martha added, "I

[33] Diary 1, 26 March, 1 April, and 7 April 1860, 121, 122, 123.

believe I do overtax my brain with too deep thought for I am often hard at thinking even when carrying on light conversation."[34]

Martha returned to Dr. Wilkes at the end of April but other than continuing with the tonic and pills he had prescribed earlier, he could only add that she rub Croton oil on her chest.[35] With little hope of improvement she wrote that she intended leaving her Aunt's within a few weeks to return home. In the interim, Martha attended a "Dramatic Reading Circle" with her cousin Aby and said though the entertainment was splendid, there was "much dressing &c" and she "would not like to attend very often."[36] On the eighth of May she was back in New York City attending a program to commemorate the anniversary of the Anti-Slavery Society at the Cooper Union where she heard speeches by "William Lloyd Garrison, R. Purvis, Wendell Phillips, Dr. Cheever, Elizabeth Cady Stanton &c" and in the evening met Sadie, who was home from school, and spent the night with her.[37] Martha not only had the chance to be with her dear friend but also to catch-up on the news from Harrison and the Willets. Sadie's friendship was one that sustained her through many years. As Martha explained, "dear creature, I love her so much."[38] By the third of June, Martha was once again in Darby and declared that the sea voyage home had restored her health. Yet, though she said her nightly fever had dissipated and her "chest too

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[34] Diary 1, 14 April 1860, 125.

[35] Diary 1, 21 April 1860, 127. Given the widespread belief that consumption originated with an irritant and reliance on the efficacy of counterirritants to effect healing, croton oil was "a drastic purgative and counterirritant." Brownish-yellow and foul smelling, it was derived from the seeds of an Asian shrub and not only caused severe skin irritation, but was later found to be a "potent tumor promoter." On-line Medical Dictionary and Dictionary of Cell and Molecular Biology. Martha makes no mention of whether she followed the doctor's advice and used croton oil.

[36] Diary 1, 4 May 1860, 128.

[37] Diary 1, 8 May 1860, 129.

[38] Diary 1, 29 April 1860, 128.

[was] so much better," she continued complaining of pain in her chest and confessed, "[it] often hurts me much."[39]

By August, Martha was feeling well enough to travel to Concord, Massachusetts, spending nearly a month with family and friends. While there she heard a sermon by Lucretia Mott and encountered a runaway slave of whom she said, "this morning my heart was made deeply sad by the sight of a poor human soul seeking to find the free soil of the North."[40] In early October, she noted as significant a Republican rally with more than a thousand in attendance and a "grand torch light procession" and concluded it was "very beautiful indeed."[41] But of greatest significance that month to her and the rest of the family was the birth of her nephew, Howard Ash. Yet, in her diary entry for the day, rather than joy, there was a striking note of weariness. Martha marked the event writing, "Sallie had a fine son, after 8 hours suffering … another immortal soul to live and care for – I do hope the mother will be strengthened to bear the burden, my most sincere prayers are offered up for her – my angel sister.[42]

Given what she revealed in her journal about her feelings that day, Martha must have felt ever more alone in the world. Her older sister, the one she was closest to, would focus the bulk of her attention and affections elsewhere. Her nephew's birth seems to have brought into stark relief the fact that she had no one in the world to rely upon emotionally. Martha's mother remained a distant figure in her journal, though it could be that the very constancy of her love and affection required no mention in her daily writing. Still, it comes as little surprise that there

[39] Diary 1, 3 June 1860, 133.

[40] Diary 1, 5 August 1860, 138.

[41] Diary 1, 3 October 1860, 155.

[42] Diary 1, 8 October 1860, 155.

would be a distance between them. There were parts of her life that Martha would not want to share with her parent. Martha's sisters, Lydia and Eliza, one older, one younger, also remained at a distance. Her brother, Ben, battled his own demons and Aunt Eliza continued more foe than friend. Sadie, her dearest friend, was younger and still a student at the Willet's school. In addition, Martha's delicate health surely must have caused her to wonder if her desire for love and companionship would ever be realized. However, she found, for the moment, a diversion from her private struggles in the very public contest over who would be the next President.

On the sixth of November, in a long entry written from her sister Sallie's home in Philadelphia, Martha followed the election results and declared,

> this day thousands and thousands of hearts beat with anxious feeling, it will be the end of a great campaign – a day to be remembered in the history of the nine-teenth century … the Republican party are gaining the victory, yes before to-morrows dawn we know that Abraham Lincoln is chosen president of these United States and Hannibal Hamlin vice president – this is a great victory, the south will no longer rule – and tho he may not be an abolitionist, he is better far better than a Democrat, and his being elected is an evidence that the people have been roused from their lethargy, and have seen that their freedom will be taken from them & they made to submit to Southerners laws – but a good time has come and now we may hope for better things.[43]

Though buoyed by the result of the election, by the end of the week Martha was thrust back into the private world of her heart, and with pen and paper recorded her travels down a well-worn path, confiding:

> many many times to day memory has carried me back to the past, the past! How much is meant in that one word – my thoughts have been very very busy with words and actions that were long ago – I know not why but some things have come before my minds eye that I thought were blotted out long ago – … so much comes plainly before me – sometimes causing pain sometimes pleasure – two great dramas of my life never to be forgotten, and known only to me – [44]

[43] Diary 2, 6 November 1860, 3.

[44] Diary 2, 11 November 1860, 4.

The two great dramas of Martha's life were arguably both centered in her relationship with Edward Willets. Separate pieces of the same cloth, one was the relationship and the other its aftermath. And given the chasm she felt between herself and everyone she loved – mother, sisters, brother, aunt, friends, Edward – her deepest feelings were known only to herself. It was as though by falling in love with Edward, Martha found herself in a deep and unfamiliar forest with little light to see her way through. Nonetheless, she had struggled for more than a year to find a way out. She would soon meet a young woman who would stir her imagination and fuel her desire for meaningful work – a woman who would serve as one of the guiding lights through the darkness.

On November 22, 1860, Anna Dickinson, came to Darby to speak at the local schoolhouse. At seventeen years old, she was on the threshold of a successful and lucrative career as an orator and lecturer. Her first foray into public speaking had occurred earlier in the year when she participated in a public debate in Philadelphia titled, "Women's Rights and Wrongs." Outraged by one of the male speakers, Dickinson not only challenged him but "launched a furious attack," driving him from the hall. The satisfaction she derived from the experience, along with the notoriety and praise, resulted in a series of appearances in and around the city. In October, she had been invited to share the platform with Lucretia and James Mott, and Robert Purvis, among others, at the annual meeting of the Pennsylvania Anti-Slavery Society. She had argued "that constitutional change must be at the heart of the abolitionist movement."[45] However, on that Thursday evening in November in Darby, Anna Dickinson returned to the subject of women and their place in society.

[45] J. Matthew Gallman, *America's Joan of Arc: The Life of Anna Elizabeth Dickinson: The Story of a Remarkable Woman, the Civil War, and the Struggle for Women's Rights* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 16.

Martha had much to say about the evening and the young woman she was all but mesmerized by. She wrote that the lecture was both eloquent and instructive, and only those who were "very dull," indeed, "were not the better for hearing that young and noble creature so feelingly and truthfully portray the true position of women." It was as though a window had been opened in a dark room and light flooded in. Martha encountered in Anna Dickinson an example of a young, single woman following the dictates of her heart and the best uses of her talents. Like Martha, she was a Quaker whose role models and influences were among the most liberal and reforming of the time in which she lived. Yet she pushed further still. Anna Dickinson spoke in public to "mixed" audiences to plead for the full equality of women and African Americans. Though Martha's path forward was not then, nor would be for some time, clear, she had before her a young woman defying the broader culture and its dictates for women's lives and one who received acclaim for her efforts. In a long passage Martha proclaimed,

> she is working in a noble cause, and never can the impression of that being pleading so beautifully for one half of the human race be driven from memory, you would not call her handsome, though she stood there with her soul beaming from her eyes and purity stamped on every feature, and over all [a] shining and a holy light, I thought her beautiful, she is very modest, and so young looking dressed in plain good taste – and short hair which waves over a noble forehead, and covers a head which one glance at shows to be well proportioned and evenly developed, but, I can give but a small tribute to the name of Annie Dickinson, if her life is spared, she will have a great work to do, and ere many years a crown of honor will be laid at her feet, I feel proud, feel the better for having had the grasp of her hand and received a kiss from those pure and unsullied lips – We spent an hour with her afterwards, and she would have remained with us all night had she not had an engagement for the next evening and had to return home – Oh! the noble hearted girl, may she be strengthened to fulfill her mission.[46]

Martha began praying for a way to be opened to her to realize her truest and highest calling.

Two books of great significance were mentioned in her journal at the end of November. The first, *Euthanasy; or Happy Talk Toward the End of Life* was written in 1850 by William

[46] Diary 2, 22 November 1860, 6.

Mountford. a Unitarian minister and Spiritualist.[47] For Martha, reconciling herself to the possibility of an early death was no small part of her overall struggle to determine the contours of her present life and future course.[48] But Mountford's book was about more than meeting death with faith and courage. In the form of a conversation between a young man, Oliver Aubin, and his uncle, Stephen Marham, *Euthanasy* explored the relationship between science and faith, the clash between the worldly and the religious. As Mountford wrote in his preface,

> the purpose of this book is to aid persons to discern the religiousness of life, and to suggest to them that Christian faith cannot only live, but strengthen, in the world as it now is, though it is becoming light with science, and is altered in many a domain of thought, and has sounding in it voices which ought to be religious, but which unfortunately are not.[49]

Martha's quest in these months was certainly to find mooring in God's love and forgiveness, but strictly on her own terms. Her resistance to regular attendance at Meeting lay in the potential for other voices to drown out her own thoughts and prayers. Martha was listening intently for the voice of God to lead her from the confusion and guilt of her experience with Edward Willets to a higher understanding and deeper purpose. In Mountford's story, young Aubin, assured of a premature death, speaks with his uncle of the lessons life has taught him, and while his uncle laments the burdens his nephew bears, Aubin insists he is better for them. As he makes clear, "when I remember what I was, I am sure of my misfortunes having been messengers to me from God; for they were so exactly suited to do for my character what it

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[47] Of *Euthanasy* Lucretia Mott wrote soon after its publication, "we are now reading Euthanasy – by a Unitn. Minister near Birmingham, Eng. – or Happy Thoughts near the close of Life. It is a fanciful – beautiful work containing many good philosophical views." James Grant Wilson and John Fiske, *Appletons' Cyclopedia of American Biography* (D. Appleton Company, 1898).

[48] As Sheila Rothman points out in her discussion of nineteenth century attitudes in light of both the fear of or diagnosis of consumption, "in effect, one had to live *with* the disease and make life plans without knowing whether they would ever come to fruition." Rothman, *Living in the Shadow of Death*, 17.

[49] William Mountford, *Euthanasy: or Happy Talk Toward the End of Life* (Riverside, Cambridge: H.O. Houghton and Company**,** 1860), vi.

wanted."[50] Aubin goes on to explain the allure worldly things once had for him in "medals and stars and crowns, and in such character as gets itself talked of and appareled in purple and fine linen."[51] However, that was all swept away. The world had changed for him as it had for Martha. William Mountford's words written for Marham in reply to Aubin may have struck Martha as she read them as equally true for her. Marham replied to his nephew, "you have been afflicted, and it is a happy thing for you to feel that it has been good for you. As human creatures, we have all of us to suffer, and to have some of our dearest plans spoiled."[52]

While *Euthanasy's* appeal for Martha may have centered on the theme of life's trials as blessings in disguise – the "fiery affliction" of falling in love with Edward and her delicate health serving the purpose of refining her character – *Hyperion, A Romance* held the added attraction of being a story of unrequited love. It was a story of "rejection and redemption" based on Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's own rejection by Boston heiress Fanny Appleton.[53] Written between 1838 and 1839, it followed the life of an American, Paul Flemming, wandering throughout Europe with a "carefree young Baron" until his meeting with an Englishwoman, Mary Ashburton. Life imitated art for Martha in that the fictional couple's "aesthetic discussions, poetry readings, and literary musings [were] the soil necessary for romantic love to take root." In the novel, Flemming and Ashburton spent time along together collaborating on a translation of a ballad. Like Longfellow's characters, Martha and Edward shared books – he brought her a book of "Poetical Quotations" from New York City for instance – and they collaborated on

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[50] Mountford, *Euthanasy*, 7.

[51] Mountford, *Euthanasy*, 9.

[52] Mountford, *Euthanasy*, 9.

[53] As Matthew Gartner explains, not only did *Hyperion* sell well, but it scandalized Boston in airing Longfellow's pursuit of Fanny Appleton. Moreover, "Longfellows devotees have long cherished *Hyperion* as a highly personal document that tells of a period of great upheaval and disappointment in the poet's private life…." Matthew Gartner, "Becoming Longfellow: Work, Manhood, and Poetry," *American Literature*, Vol. 72, No. 1, (March 2000), 68-69.

essays for the Reading Circle. She wrote of inviting him to read portions of her Piece Book and of his copying her essays. She relied on him to guide her in her classroom and there is no doubt that he admired her mind as well as her spirit. After all, he had, but a few weeks after her departure in February, asked that she respond to an essay by Edward Barnes on human rights.

When, in *Hyperion* Flemming is rejected by Ashburton, he is emotionally crushed and "prematurely aged." Eventually, however, he experiences an epiphany "in the form of a stern message [he] finds inscribed on a tablet on a chapel wall after hours spent moping unhappily in a graveyard." It provides both an epigraph for the book and "a motto and moral for the romance as a whole." Flemming reads on the tablet, "'Look not mournfully into the Past. It comes not back again. Wisely improve the Present. It is thine. Go Forth to meet the shadowy Future, without fear, and with a manly heart.'"[54] This message, like the one she may have taken from *Euthanasy*, could well have served Martha as a release from guilt and a much firmer basis from which to move forward. Though she had, in fact, spent time looking "mournfully into the Past," she had also been working diligently to "wisely improve the present." Moreover, the wisdom in claiming the present as hers and within her power to shape, may have provided one more light on the path to the redemption she so earnestly sought. However, the lesson Flemming ultimately drew from his failed romance added yet another and maybe the strongest light by which to see. He announced, "'Henceforth be mine a life of action and reality! I will work in my own sphere, nor wish it other than it is. This alone is health and happiness. This alone is Life.'"[55] In this story and with these words, Martha seemed to have reached a turning point.

As the year came to an end, Martha continued to note dates and events of significance to her such as the anniversary of the hanging of John Brown on the second of December and her

[54] Gartner, "Becoming Longfellow," 71.

[55] Gartner, "Becoming Longfellow," 71.

attendance at the Anti-Slavery Fair in Philadelphia from the eleventh to the fourteenth.[56] Held in the Assembly Buildings she was, once again, "waiter at the eating table" and witness to the threat of violence that caused the cancellation of a lecture by G.S. Curtis. Later in December she went to hear Charles Sumner and Anna Dickinson speak. Of Dickinson she remarked, "this eve we heard Anna E. Dickinson deliver a most eloquent and impressive lecture on Temperance – the room was full and it was splendid … it does my soul good to listen to such powerful arguments."[57] And in the wake of Dickinson's lecture and as testament to Martha's receptiveness to the message, while attending a party, she was moved to speak to her hostesses about serving wine. Though she admitted it was awkward to "censure" friends in their own home, she nevertheless "spoke her mind" and "warned … of the wrong of setting such temptations before others."[58]

Writing in her journal on New Year's Eve, Martha listed the year's events that stood out to her as most significant – "the Japanese Embassy, the visit of the Prince of Wales, the election of Abraham Lincoln and the secession of South Carolina."[59] In addition, that evening she wrote a long letter to "E.W." – no doubt Edward Willets – that she said kept her up until nearly

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[56] Of this anniversary Martha quoted from the poem "Capital Punishment" saying, "one year ago John Brown was hung 'high up in Heavens free air' and the 'image of our God was placed a dangling victim there.' When will the dark spot of capital punishment be blotted from our country, when will the law be such that no life can be taken. I hope may not be long before all are enlightened…." Diary 2, 2 December 1860, 12.

[57] Diary 2, 28 December 1860, 12-13.

[58] Diary 2, 29 December 1860, 13.

[59] Diary 2, 31 December 1860, 13. Of the Japanese and the Prince of Wales Katherine Smedley writes that the "Japanese Embassy" visited in June and "it had been seven years since Admiral Perry had sailed into Tokyo Bat thus forcibly opening Japan and its trade to the Western world. These were the first Japanese ever to visit the United States and in Philadelphia it was estimated that a half million people caught 'Japanese fever.' The delegations stayed at the new Continental Hotel, spent $100,000 in the shops and gave $3,000 to the police when they left." Of the visit of the Prince of Wales she said it "paled in comparison in spite of the fact that the occasion was celebrated by the appearance of the famous opera star, Adelina Patti, at the recently opened Academy of Music." Katherine Smedley, *Martha Schofield and the Re-Education of the South, 1839-1916* (Lewiston, New York: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1987), 44-45.

midnight. Given the evening, a time for looking back, Edward remained a person of great significance in her life. It was to him she was writing on New Year's Eve and not any of her other friends, including Sadie. With the dawn came thoughts of the many changes she had experienced in the year just past, along with "broken resolutions and good desires unfulfilled." But also the morning brought with it the remembrance of vows she believed were "registered in heaven" and "trusted [would] never be broken."[60] These vows, surely, one way or another, concerned Edward and her determination to control her feelings where he was concerned.

Martha made new resolutions that morning and "hoped they would be adhered to." What they were she did not say, but given a diary entry written later in the month, they may have included a new-found determination to avoid the power and distraction any romantic entanglements might present. On the twentieth of January while at tea at the home of friends, she met a young man identified only as J.A.W. who she said was "very attentive to me." Martha made note later in the day, "I thought afterwards many a young girl would have taken those softly spoken words, and deep looks all for earnest, <u>but I have</u> steeled my heart so that it can not be impressed very easily. I hope he does not act so to many or he may do harm and yet I can truly say he was gentlemanly and there was <u>nothing soft</u> about him…."[61] Here was a clear choice on Martha's part to resist the charms of a young man she could have been attracted to and one obviously interested in her. Steeling her heart had at this point as much to do with her growing sense of self-confidence and independence as it did with Edward Willets.

By her birthday on the first of February, 1861, there was a noticeable shift in the tone of her writing. Unlike the year before, she was not emotionally distraught and pleading God to show her the way forward. Like Paul Flemming in *Hyperion,* Martha was no longer "looking

[60] Diary 2, 1 January 1861, 14.

[61] Diary 2, 20 January 1861, 16-17.

mournfully into the past" or prowling the well-worn path of her passion and guilt. Rather, she began the new year with feet planted squarely in the present and eyes focused on what would come next. There was still much work to be done, still a sorting of her will and God's will – many questions still to be answered about whom she would be but Martha had passed through the worst of her "fiery furnace of affliction." She emerged refined, if yet unsteady, though not in terms of the force of her spirit or her determination to lay claim to an identity equal to the challenges she had so recently met and others that were to come. As she stated on February 1, 1861,

> to day I am 22 and oh! how earnestly I have desired to live as He directs to be faithful over small things, to do right, act justly and think only pure thoughts, there are moments when I feel as though my love for higher and holier things is so great, that I would willingly give my life for God, but soon worldly things occupy my attention and I become too much interested in earthly pleasures, and sometimes forget that they are all gifts from above. I am getting old and yet feel that there is much to do, and me so feeble to fulfill my part which can only be received through earnest prayer.[62]

In the months to come, events crowded in that not only pushed her to decide to take up teaching once again, but to think and act more independently than ever before.

On the sixth of February, Martha noted walking to nearby Sharon to hear a lecture by Dr. Ann Preston. Martha wrote, "she spoke most beautifully to the girls and her advice was excellent."[63] Ann Preston was not only a Quaker, a former teacher, and reformer, but also a physician who had graduated from the Female Medical College of Pennsylvania in 1851 when she was thirty-eight years old. In 1853 she was appointed professor of physiology and hygiene, and by 1861 was instrumental in the founding of a woman's hospital in order that female medical

[62] Diary 2, 1 February 1861, 18-19.

[63] Diary 2, 6 February 1861, 19.

students could gain the necessary clinical experience refused them elsewhere.[64] It is easy to imagine that her advice, in part, was for young women to aspire to educations and even professions on par with their male counterparts. The timing of Martha's encounter with Dr. Preston was significant, coming as it did in the wake of her finding an emotional equilibrium, and, like Paul Flemming, searching for and working in her own sphere. Ann Preston's life offered Martha yet another example of a single woman on the border – pushing the boundaries of the sphere deemed appropriate for a woman while answering the call from deep within to develop and put to use the talents given to her by God.

On the twentieth of February, Martha's friend, Oldden Ridgeway, was invited to dinner along with Major James Wilkerson, a former slave whose experiences before and after he purchased his freedom were soon to be published in his autobiography, *Wilkerson's History of his Travels & Labors in the United States as a Missionary, in Particular, That of Union Seminary, in Franklin Co. Ohio Since he Purchased his Liberty in New Orleans, La, &c.* Of the evening, Martha recorded that Major Wilkerson, "entertained us with an account of his troubles in Slavery and buying himself, he is writing an autobiography and we subscribed."[65]

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[64] Ann Preston was the second of the nine children of Amos and Margaret Smith Preston and the only one of their three daughters to survive to adulthood. Their home was in West Grove, Pennsylvania, near Philadelphia, and she was educated both at a local Quaker school and a Friends boarding school in Chester. When her mother became ill she was forced to return home and continued her education by attending a literary society and a lyceum. Preston became a teacher and by the early 1840s began "teaching physiology and hygiene to all-female classes, with a view to educating women about their own bodies." In 1850, the Female Medical College of Pennsylvania (later the Women's Medical College of Pennsylvania) was founded by a group of Quakers and she enrolled in the first class. Preston graduated in 1851 when she was 38 years old. In 1853, Dr. Preston became a professor of physiology and then in 1866, the first woman dean. From *Changing the Face of Medicine*, "Dr. Ann Preston," www.nlm.nih.gov/changingthefaceofmedicine/physicians/bio, (accessed November 11, 2008).

[65] Diary 2, 20 February 1861, 21. Receiving someone of African descent much less hosting them for dinner was a testament of the extent to which the Schofield/Child household was among the most reform-minded as well as progressive within their community much less the country.

On the twenty-second, Lincoln was making his way to Washington, D.C. from Illinois and Martha prayed that he would "bring Peace to this distracted country."[66] Peace, of course, did not come and Martha's diary entries increasingly focused on the war soon to be waged and its progress. She would also concern herself with her male friends who made the choice to join the army and fight – a difficult decision to make among the pacifist Quakers. As she said, "everything is swallowed up in War – that most terrible scourge to any nation. The time has come when open battle has commenced, many of my friends are volunteering & it makes my heart and soul ache to think of the ruin and misery that will be caused."[67]

However, with the onset of war came an additional change to Martha's life and one that helped lay the groundwork for her later work. In secret, she applied to teach at the Bethany School in Philadelphia, one of a handful of schools for blacks in the city and one sponsored by Quakers. Clearly, she was worried that her mother, stepfather, and sisters would disapprove – why else keep her plans a secret? But the reasons for their disapproval are less clear. Certainly her health was an issue and the long daily commute into Philadelphia by train. To her family, possibly with the exception of Sallie, who knew somewhat more of Martha's recent history, she must have seemed intermittently withdrawn and often moody since returning from Harrison twenty months earlier. No longer a child, she was no closer to finding a husband and unable to sustain long-term work as a teacher due to her health. There was a tension between her pursuing the kind of reform work teaching at Bethany represented – work that, after all, was no more than an extension of her family's long held beliefs and commitments – and her growing independence in thoughts and actions. To have made this decision without discussing it at home must have seemed to them rash and even hurtful. They too may have wondered if Martha's life would be

[66] Diary 2, 22 February 1861, 22.

[67] Diary, 2, 20 April 1861, 31.

cut short by the disease in her lungs. Just one day before she would visit Bethany for the first time and four days before she would begin teaching, Martha had yet to tell them of her decision. On the twenty-fifth of April she wrote, "busy all day, but my thoughts were sad, for they dwelt on the sad tidings that must be told to the dear and cherished ones … would that I could ward off the blow, for how can I bear to see the silent suffering which I know will be felt."[68]

The news must have been broken to them some time that evening, because early the next morning Martha and Sallie were on their way to Bethany. It was the departing teacher's last day and Martha said of her, "she does not keep very good order is not firm enough."[69] The following Monday Martha began teaching and said both that the school house was pleasant and well ventilated and that she "spoke to them pleasantly." After ringing the bell she "talked to them about being good and keeping order," and then read "a piece in 'Kiss for a Blow.'" Little did she know at that moment how appropriate that particular message was and how sorely needed. Of her new students Martha wrote that there were nineteen present and though some "were pretty good" there were "some great specimens of ill bred and neglected children." Two days later her brief journal entry was about teaching – that her school kept her busy – but she also struck a hopeful note saying, "it seems they had never been taught anything in the way of good behavior, but I think I can manage them."[70]

Teaching at the Bethany School would prove to be challenging but Martha thrived. Though not on the scale of Anna Dickinson's growing influence and notoriety as a lecturer or Ann Preston's work as a physician and teacher, it was, nevertheless, a chance to lay claim to a sphere in which she could contribute substantively to the uplift of blacks, many of whom had

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[68] Diary 2, 25 April 1861, 32-33.

[69] Diary 2, 26 April 1861, 33.

[70] Diary 2, 29 and 31 April 1861, 33-34.

been born into slavery. As the weeks passed, along with her teaching and the onset of war, many of her diary entries were taken up with her friend Oldden Ridgeway and his decision to join the Union forces. Here she attempted to negotiate a tricky path between her sense of the responsibilities of friendship and the propriety expected, if not demanded, of a single, middle-class woman. What appeared from the outside as the intimacy of romance was to her nothing more than evidence of true friendship. Oldden was one of the priceless gems Martha hoped to polish.

By early May, Oldden was training with a local Darby company and Martha felt sure his departure was imminent. She wrote that they had long talks and that his confidences to her would be kept "sacred." While she would miss him, her main concern was that army life would be a potentially corrupting force. As she said, "my most earnest prayer is if he returns, it will be unharmed in character & untainted in heart & soul, he will have to receive strength from above to withstand the many temptations that will surround him."[71] In a relatively short period of time, their friendship had been both renewed and intensified. They needed each other. Oldden had no mother or older sister from whom to receive love and guidance.[72] Martha had no one to whom

[71] Diary 2, 5 May 1861, 35. Within a week, on a Sunday when Oldden and Martha attended Yearly Meeting together in Philadelphia, she said, "we dined at Sallies then drove out to West Philadelphia which was beautiful from there we went to Suffolk Park, where over two thousand Ohio Soldiers were encamped nearly all looked like sturdy, stout men and yet I felt for them the deepest sympathy, so far away from home and not one familiar face to look upon. They had church and two ministers from the city spoke very well, some poor fellows wept, they sleep on straw under sheds with blankets thrown around them – We walked around for an hour or two, saw them boiling coffee which they drink without cream or sugar, some were off under trees reading the Bible, and two make me feel sad playing cards, I heard but one or two oaths, and they were generally well behaved, there were about four thousand people there, I never saw such a crowd, carriages were in a string for miles just like a funeral, I saw a great many I knew, we reach home about seven, Oldden spent the eve with us." Diary 2, 12 May 1861, 36-37.

[72] In the 1850 Census Oldden Ridgeway, who was then twelve years old, was listed as living with his older brother, Ephraim (seventeen years old), and young brother and sister, George and Mary (six years old and two years old), in the household of Ephraim and Mary Inskip. Whether the Inskip's were relatives or not is unknown. In 1860, Oldden was still living with the Inskip's, along with his siblings, and his occupation recorded as "farmer." 1850 Census, Pennsylvania, Delaware County, Darby, 303; 1860 Census, Pennsylvania, Delaware County, Darby, 338.

she felt deeply connected enough to share her innermost self with. As she explained in her diary on the nineteenth of May,

> Oldden came, and after all had retired we had a long talk, my sympathies are with him in these great life trials, he is very sad and many serious thoughts fill his mind; he thanked me for my friendship and my heart was almost too full for utterance, I scarcely know why we are so intimate, and yet we are just like brother and sister, he has no female friends he places so much confidence in, and I have none I would sooner trust. I can use freedom with him I could not with others. I cannot yet realize he is going away – My sincere prayer will be for his happiness & good.[73]

In the meantime, much of each day teaching was spent struggling to instill and maintain order and discipline. Martha also began to visit her students at home when they were absent or she felt it necessary to seek parental support and influence. Of the neighborhoods she visited she noted, "[I] saw many children surrounded with poverty and dirt, and felt sad that they could not enjoy the free country air & cleanliness." On one morning she called on the family of one of female students and was received politely.[74] What these families may have thought of a young white woman arriving on their doorstep, Martha makes no mention, nor does she hint at any apprehension in traveling alone into or out of poor neighborhoods. As new students arrived at Bethany, others were expelled or made to stay after school to sit in silence in order, she said, to reflect on their bad behavior.[75] It was not unusual for her students to strike her but Martha "kept cool" and simply "put them out of the house."[76] Yet, regardless of her dedication to them and the school, there is a note of what can be clearly heard as racism in her comments about her

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[73] Diary 2, 19 May 1861, 39.

[74] Diary 2, 7 May and 24 May 1861, 35, 39.

[75] Martha mentions two students in particular, brothers Daniel and Taylor Brown. Daniel she "turned out" saying, "he was so bad he spoiled the others, "and Taylor she kept "a long while" after school for bringing her "an insulting note." Who the note was from she does not say. In the 1860 Census both boys lived with their mother, Eliza S. Brown, and five other siblings ranging in age from twenty-nine to eighteen. Taylor was then thirteen and Daniel nine. All of the Browns, with the exception of Daniel, were born in Virginia suggesting that the family moved to Pennsylvania as free blacks or became free some time after Taylor was born in 1847.

[76] Diary 2, 24 May 1861, 39.

students, but can also be understood in the context of class structure and cultural identity. She wrote that, "it does seem as though some of them were savages, but I hope to reclaim them, and will do my best," and "my scholars do not attend regularly, no one knows how much patience is needed and yet I hope to succeed in making them mind and also in teaching them to be more than brutes and savages."[77] Many of the most ardent and active abolitionists of the time did not support the equality of the races while average citizens in the North could be as rabidly racist as whites in the deepest South. Moreover, immigrants, especially the Irish, were believed to need as much "civilizing" as any African or their descendents.

Finally, Oldden joined a rifle company at Chester, Pennsylvania and prepared to leave for the war. However, her time with him was now restricted because of censure from both their families but especially from Martha's mother. Couples who were not engaged could not expect to sit together late into the night without a chaperone. On one such evening, after taking a ride together, Martha confided in her journal that Oldden had not stayed so late as usual and, in fact, she had asked him to go. She said, "our folks cannot understand how we can be such intimate friends without being lovers, but they do not know everything, we always will be friends like brother & sister. I told him what mother said & he thought she did right but I could explain &c."[78] It seems Oldden was willing to accede more readily to social norms and familial pressure than Martha, even though it was her reputation that was at greater risk than his.

To the extent that Martha opened her heart to Oldden and even her students, she continued to work hard at pushing down those other more problematic feelings of old. Yet they would not always be controlled, especially as events crowded in to strain her heart and her mind. Sallie may well have suffered a miscarriage, though this was not something Martha would have

[77] Diary 2, 14 May and 5 June 1861, 38, 42.

[78] Diary 2, 26 May 1861, 40.

written openly about. Still, in her journal she recorded having gone to Meeting where she prayed earnestly for her sister whose "very soul [was] bowed down in grief" and whose confidence and trust must be placed in God.[79] And Oldden would soon be going off to war, along with other young men she knew, possibly never to return. On a rainy June afternoon, as she sat in her room, Martha gave in to her feelings and confessed,

> I have been very quiet lately partly on account of Sallie's absence and partly because I have had very sober things to think of, sometimes the past will come up and I go over again the two great eras of my life, strange how much one mind can pass through and still move on without outward sign of all the conflict within. I am quiet and happy now for I have learned more of heavenly things; though sometimes the deep feelings will push open the lid of the casket which I strive so earnestly to keep down and burst forth in one wild longing, but I overcome them, and try hard to be cheerful & feel contented.[80]

So, though the war within was not yet over, might never be entirely won, she had, nevertheless, found solid ground to stand on and to build her present life on. She was a teacher and one dedicated to a progressive social good of education and uplift of blacks, many of whom had recently sought and found freedom in the North. She was a young woman negotiating a sometimes treacherous path between the love she desired and the independence she craved. She had used an experience that was at once thrilling and terrifying, freeing and oppressive, to define a sphere and a role for herself that was large enough to satisfy her need to offer her talents to the greater good of the world, but not so divergent as to break all bonds with family or community. Martha had become a tightrope walker who, having stepped from the safety of the ledge she had been standing on, was beginning to find her balance and her courage to move still further from solid ground.

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[79] Diary 2, 26 May 1861, 40.

[80] Diary 2, 5 June 1861, 42.

CHAPTER 3

LIFE'S GREAT MISSION

In July of 1861, the twenty-one year old Martha had passed through the worst of her "fiery furnace of affliction" and emerged a young woman not merely determined but driven to find a higher purpose for her life. Among the influences that both molded and guided her, Edward Willets had been central. There was power in the mere fact of his attraction and love for her but even greater power in what she experienced as his recognition of her true self. She believed he had seen her as no one else had. Not since her father had there been a man in her life to whom she felt so deeply connected. However, the power of Edward's love and the power of their attraction had their limits. Their relationship, for a woman not willing to cross the bounds of propriety, was restrained by the fact of his marriage. And no matter the depth of Martha's desire for marriage and motherhood, there burned within her a desire of equal, if not greater, force. She was passionate and sensitive to the suffering of others. She was idealistic, ambitious, and tended toward independence rather than submission.

Between the summer of 1861 and the fall of 1865 when she would leave home, friends, and family for work in war-torn South Carolina, the core of Martha's time and energy were taken up with teaching, hospital work, and her relationship with John Bunting, a young man she had known since childhood.[1] All three appear prominently in her journal writing during this period.

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[1] John Bunting was born in Darby, Pennsylvania on August 13, 1839. His father, Jesse Bunting, supported his wife and four children by keeping a small store in the house they shared with his mother and five siblings. The house was owned by his mother and she shared in running the store. Jesse Bunting's first love was art and, if money had permitted, would have gone to Europe to study painting. He was also a self-taught and accomplished musician. In a memoir of his childhood, John Bunting recalled the many pictures that adorned the walls of the house he grew up in, but especially two prints that hung over his bed. One was "Aurora" by Guido and the other "The ransfiguration" by Raphael. He also wrote that he shared with his father an anxious nature that made them prefer the society of family

Yet along with these, books continued to influence and guide her. In addition, the fluctuating condition of her health was almost always a concern and, at moments, a threat. She could not help but be distressed by the restrictions the disease in her lungs placed on her energy and strength or to worry at the possibility that her life would be cut short. Each winter brought the pain and suffering of her feet, the wet and cold aggravating the impairment sustained from earlier frostbite. Teaching offered both personal fulfillment and a modicum of financial independence, but given her commitment and zeal, inevitably resulted in having to rest for a number of months between appointments.

While the influence of her socially progressive and reformist family had its place in determining her outlook and direction, so did the war. Her commitment to the defeat of the Confederacy and the scourge of slavery grew more intense as she read of the dead and injured and walked among the wounded in the Summit House hospital in Philadelphia.[2] As men's bodies and their suffering multiplied in her imagination and before her very eyes, she also agonized over the death of a Schofield cousin on the battlefield and the enlistment of some of her closest friends. Martha believed their sacrifice called for her own and she answered through hospital work and through continuing to teach at the Bethany school.

Neither of these choices sat well with her family. It was not volunteering at the Summit House or teaching black students that in and of themselves concerned them. Her sisters, after all, worked for the hospital by sewing and collecting food, and in the hospital serving the wounded by reading to them, writing home on their behalf, and preparing and serving meals.[3] Rather, it

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and close friends. John Bunting in *In Memorium: John Bunting,* Compiled by his family, (Philadelphia: Friends Book Association, 1916), 5-15.

[2] Summit House General Hospital was a 522 bed hospital on the Darby Road in West Phildelphia, near Pascalville.

[3] Diary 3, 20 June 1862, 52; Diary 2, 8 July 1862, 59; Diary 3, 13 November 1862, 97; Katherine Smedley, *Martha Schofield and the Re-Education of the South, 1839-1916* (New York: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1987), 61-62.

was the way she did what she did. In all her pursuits, Martha did not merely serve others, but she sacrificed for them. She sacrificed her time and her energy to the point of exhaustion and to the detriment of her already fragile health. However, to her family circle the worst of it was her increasing independence of thought and action. She neither consulted nor confided in them, and rarely took the advice they often felt compelled to offer.

Central to this period of her life was her relationship with John Bunting. Though childhood acquaintances, it was not until the summer of 1861 that their friendship was established and within a year deepened into one of major significance to them both. In this, too, her family was perplexed and largely excluded. As earlier with Oldden Ridgeway, though now to an even greater extent, to the outside world Martha and John acted like and looked like a couple on the verge of engagement and marriage. For more than a year they wrote to each other nearly every day. In the four years that followed they continued to exchange notes and letters regularly. They spent many evenings together reading to each other and talking late into the night. John escorted her to lectures, concerts, and parties. They took carriage rides and sleigh rides together. They walked in the woods and sat on the porch watching the stars and drinking in the moonlight. Martha trusted John and confided in him. He trusted and confided in her, though he seemed to have wanted even more.[4]

To a greater extent in the North than the South, by the middle of the nineteenth century middle and upper middle class couples desired and were permitted time together un-chaperoned and often late into the night.[5] While a woman's reputation, especially her claim to purity, was

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[4] Smedley, *Martha Schofield and the Re-Education of the South,* 50-54, 59, 63, 64, 72.

[5] While there is debate concerning the extent to which courtship differed between the North and the South, by the late antebellum period, there was some similarity both in selection of marriage partners, and in leniency when it came to a couple's access to un-chaperoned time together. See for example Jane Turner Censer, *North Carolina Planters and Their Children, 1800-1860* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1984), 65-95; Karen Lystra, *Searching the Heart: Women, Men, and Romantic Love in Nineteenth-Century America* (New York: Oxford

paramount, the private, intimate world of couples was often less restrictive and prudish than is often associated with the Victorian era. The goal of courtship was marriage, and companionate marriage required a world unto itself. For young couples, "love became defined as the sharing of an essential self which was autonomous, private, and beyond the social conventions of everyday roles."[6] Moreover, the role of parents in choosing a life-partner for a daughter or son became increasingly limited. Attraction was not something that could be planned or orchestrated – that which drew individual men and women to each other was shrouded in mystery. While parents "could objectively measure duty and judge domestic, business, and other performance skills, … they could not evaluate the privatized experience of emotional openness and personal satisfaction with another."[7] In her relationship with John, Martha, once again, stretched the boundaries of propriety. She pursued and sustained an intimacy sanctioned as a precursor to marriage but not between friends, no matter how deep their attachment.

Her mother lectured, but Martha followed her heart and her unshakable belief in John's need for her attention, love, and guidance. Her need for these was as great as his, but her need for control was even greater. She loved what he came to represent more than the man himself. Her reputation might be opened to tarnish, but she believed her ability to contribute to John's growth into true manhood was provided to her by God. Their bond was undeniable and her responsibility clear. Yet, while she could sacrifice for him, fulfill a womanly duty to love and

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University Press, 1989), 158-166; and Christie Anne Farnham, *The Education of the Southern Belle; Higher Education and Student Socialization in the Antebellum South* (New York: New York University Press, 1994), 132-33.

[6] Lystra, *Searching the Heart*, 158**.** Jane Turner Censer says that "… wealthy North Carolinians saw marriage as the most important relationship and firmly approved what Lawrence Stone has called the companionate marriage. Spouses should be loving partners, not two people unwillingly chained together for life. Husbands and wives should be linked by mutual attraction and should provide affectionate support for each other while rearing a family." Censer, *North Carolina Planters and Their Children*, 72.

[7] Lystra, *Searching the Heart*, 158.

serve, she need not succumb to physical passion and the potential bonds of marriage. Martha's dance was one in the pursuit of freedom as much as one in the pursuit of love. John Bunting represented the possibility of having both.

From February 1, 1863 to June 30, 1864, Martha is silent except for letters she wrote to family and a few friends. It is unlikely that she discontinued writing in a journal for that period, particularly because in the journal that begins July 1, 1864, she makes no mention of discontinuing writing for sixteen months. Moreover, it is clear that writing in her journal was an essential aspect of her life during this period. As she said, "I spend many moments in my dear little room, here I come to think seriously & here I come to pen my thoughts in my diary, it is a relief to write here, though the most sacred feelings cannot be known by words therefore remain unexpressed perhaps it is best so."[8] A journal may have been lost or she might have destroyed one. It could well be that some of her most sacred feelings nevertheless made their way on to the pages of her diary. At one or more times later in her life she not only re-read and made comments in the margins of her journals, but censored them by cutting out pages and portions of pages. Surely a diary written during this period would have been full of John Bunting and the course of their relationship. It may be that later there were details of her young life she preferred known only to herself and to him. Of the events recorded in her journal begun July 1, 1864, John, the war, and teaching were major themes. However, the assassination of Abraham Lincoln could rightly be pointed to as the final turning point in her decision to go south to teach. With her family, her community, and her nation, Martha deeply mourned the death of the President who had seen them through the war and had become, for many, a beloved figure. She wore a

[8] Martha Schofield Diary (Diary 2), 15 July 1861, 54, Martha Schofield Papers, Friends Historical Library, Swarthmore College.

badge of mourning for ninety days following Lincoln's death. The loss of the men who fought to end slavery, and the sacrifice of Lincoln to the cause of liberty, remained rooted in her heart.

Martha drew strength from John's love for her, and the equality on which their relationship was based. It was an equality that could well have been in jeopardy had they been more than friends. She drew strength from the fact that she stayed true to herself and to him in spite of the objections and ridicule of her family. In addition she found direction and reassurance in her search for God's will for her life. She continued to find role models in the women she read about and through them found further justification for the independence she claimed.

It might be argued that Martha's first step toward becoming a freedmen's teacher came the day she acknowledged her love for Edward Willets and out of a deep sense of guilt and shame began to search for redemption in work and self-sacrifice. She did write often of the sublimation of her own needs and desires in the act of making others around her happy. However, her relationships with Edward and John might also be seen as necessary stages in her development into a woman, one among relatively few, willing to leave home and country, to teach former slaves and participate in the re-ordering of Southern society and culture. During much of 1865 and before her trip south, she would say more than once and in so many words, "I have been not for myself but those in need."[9] These words, both declaration and precept, were not, however, all she hoped for or dreamed of. Martha still held close the desire for romantic love and eventual marriage, though she chose to postpone that dream to pursue another path she felt certain God had laid out before her. That she could have and do both appeared at that moment to be within her reach

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[9] Diary 3, 8 September 1862, 77.

On July 1, 1861, Martha noted in her journal visiting the "Home for Colored Children" in Maylandville where, after touring the house and grounds, she heard a lecture on object teaching. At home in the evening she read a popular novel by the English writer Wilkie Collins and said of two of the main characters, "he was a true man and she was a true woman."[10] In the complicated plot of *The Woman in White,* a beautiful young woman, Laura Fairlie, keeps a promise to her dead father by marrying Sir Percival Glyde. However, before the marriage can take place, she falls in love with a drawing master, Walter Hartright, who has been brought from London by her uncle to be her teacher at Limmeridge House, her uncles' estate. However, on the night before he leaves London, Hartright meets a strange, disoriented woman in the street dressed in white, only to learn later she was an escapee from an asylum. When Hartright meets Laura for the first time, he sees a strong resemblance between his new pupil and the mysterious woman in white. He soon meets among the occupants at Limmeridge Laura's half–sister, Marian Holcolmbe, who while not beautiful is strong-minded, resourceful, and devoted to Laura.[11]

After her marriage to Sir Glyde, Laura takes her place at his estate, Blackwater Park, living there with his Italian friend, Count Fosco, and her sister, Marian. Glyde reveals himself to be a dangerous man with a dark and secretive past who, with the aid of Count Fosco, is determined to take control of his young wife's dowry of 20,000 pounds. The mysterious woman in white, whose name is Anne Catherick, not only has a past association with Limmeridge

[10] This novel, *The Woman in White,* was not only one of the most popular of its time, but prompted an array of Woman in White merchandise including, "perfumes, cosmetics, cloaks and bonnets," as well as theatrical productions, one written by Wilkie himself. It is considered one of the first mystery novels and has never been out of print since its first printing in book form in 1860 (between 1859 and 1860 it had been serialized in *All the Year Round).* The first film version was produced in 1912 and the most recent in 1997 by the BBC. As a testament to its staying power Collins' book was adapted as a musical by Andrew Lloyd Webber in 2004. *Literature Online Biography,* Published in Cambridge, 2000, by Chadwuck-Healey; Diary 2, 1 July 1861, 50.

[11] In a biography of Wilkie Collins from Literature Online, the character of Marian Holcombe is described as "a heroine who not only ran contrary to literary convention by being ugly, but who, in contrast to the beautiful, passive Laura Fairlie, was strong-minded, resourceful, and determined." *Literature Online Biography*.

House, but is later revealed to be the illegitimate daughter of Laura's father (another half-sister), and hence the resemblance between the two. While Anne appears at Blackwater Park and promises to tell Laura a secret about her husband, Marian discovers that Fosco and Glyde are plotting against Laura but not the details of their plans. Marian becomes ill with typhus and cannot stop Glyde from tricking Laura into a trip to London and to the asylum where Anne Catherick is being held (at least when she has not escaped). He drugs Laura and switches their identities, leaving Laura a delusional patient claiming to be Lady Glyde, and burying Anne as his wife after a weakened heart finally causes her death. Marian later visits the asylum in an attempt to discover the secret concerning Glyde that Anne Catherick had hinted of, but discovers her sister and rescues her by bribing an attendant. For the rest of the novel Walter Hartright and Marian Holcombe work tirelessly to solve the mystery of Glyde and to restore Laura's identity. The three live together in poverty until Lord Glyde dies in an accidental fire as he is trying to destroy evidence of his illegitimate birth. Walter and Laura are finally married and with Marian return to Limmeridge House to live happily and in comfort.[12]

A gothic novel, a sensation novel, and one of the first mystery novels, *The Woman in White* can be seen as having a number of layered and influential meanings for Martha. For nearly two years she had been on a journey of self-discovery set against a backdrop of personal turmoil and increasing political and social unrest that culminated in civil war. Throughout she had walked a narrow path of resistance and submission to the power of her emotions and the control of her family. In this book she encountered one woman who was overpowered by a man (psychologically as well as physically), and one who in equal partnership with a man battled against evil forces and won. One woman was saved from ruin and eventually found happiness

[12] This plot summary was taken in part from *Wilkie Collins Information Pages* by Andrew Gasson at www.wilkie-collins.info.

with the man she loved. The other woman emerged the heroine of the story, earning a sense of personal power and autonomy. The hero of the tale, a man dedicated to the woman he loved even though she was married to another, did not triumph alone but with a woman's aid.

Novels like Collins' "present[ed] crime and its solution as an intrinsically personal event … the detection process [as] a necessary quest, which must be undertaken to find truth, meaning, and stability in an increasingly uncertain world. However, these investigations [were] not merely concerned with finding out the truth about others, but more crucially about oneself and one's place in the world."[13] Martha continued not only to pride herself on her ability to see the truth about others, but increasingly to trust and act on her judgment. She continued to search for her place in the world even when the past would intrude and the war changed everything.

On a hot summer day less than two weeks later, as Martha worked outside "among the flowers," John arrived with an envelope containing a note, a poem he had written for her, and his photograph. There is a sense in what she wrote of a young, somewhat shy man reaching out on the basis of their initial conversations but especially on one that began on the afternoon of July fourth after a chance meeting that lasted late into the evening (in part because Martha was spending a night alone – her mother, stepfather, and sisters all being away for the night). Within a week, on July nineteenth, Martha and John spent a day at Castle Rock walking on and around huge rocks that offered a splendid view of the valley below. They sang together and they sketched the scenery To protect her from the sun, John held an umbrella over her for much of the afternoon. They took tea at the home of one of John's uncles, remaining there until 8:00 p.m. Of the four hours it took to reach Darby she said, "enjoyed the ride home in the moonlight" and of their time together, "we will not soon forget this day." They did not reach home until

[13] Anne-Marie Beller, "Detecting the Self in the Sensation Fiction of Wilkie Collins and Mary Elizabeth Braddon, *CLUES, 26,* 1, 50.

midnight. Here was one of the first of many examples of both the quantity and quality of time they spent together appearing to herald romantic attachment.[14]

Not only would the anniversary of their trip to Castle Rock be marked in her journal for the next four years, but the date also marked the beginning of a fervent correspondence between them.[15] On July 21, Martha rose at 4:30 a.m. to write a long letter to John about which she noted in her diary rather mysteriously, "granted the request."[16] A week later, on a trip to New York, traveling between Flushing and Brooklyn, she found a quiet corner on the boat to read and re-read an eight-page letter from John who, from this time forward, she would refer to as "mon chere ami" or "mon ami." Not only would she report the back and forth of their letter writing – "after dinner I wrote three sheets," "at noon I received such a nice long letter of 8 pages from mon ami," "after all had retired I finished my letter a real long one," "I had a nice long letter from mon ami" – but she would begin to worry about the appropriateness of their attentions.[17] Of his letter on the thirtieth of July she said, "it really did me so much good – there cannot be any harm in our corresponding, where there is such perfect understanding." On the fourth of August she wrote, "surely there can be no misunderstanding when such are written." On August 6, Martha noted the kindness of his letters to her and wrote, "such messages do me so much good, and I am sure no harm."[18] As Martha began to sort through the push and pull of her

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[14] Diary 2, 21 July, 1861, 55.

[15] Nearly a year after their close friendship began, Martha wrote, "I counted 64 letters and nearly 30 notes, which are very dear and precious to me, have done so much to make me happy though all received in less than a year, some would think this foolish but we do not, for we are better and happier for the close intimacy it is a blessing given by our Father and we are thankful to him for it. He knows the deepest feelings of our hearts." Diary 2, 18 May 1862, 41.

[16] Diary 2, 18 May 1862, 41.

[17] Diary 2, 29 July 1861, 60; 30 July 1861, 60; 4 August 1861, 62; 6 August 1861, 62.

[18] Diary 2, 30 July 1861, 60; 4 August 1861, 62; 6 August 1861, 62.

feelings and desires at the start of this new relationship, she was drawn back to that older one, and to its power and potential to engulf her. On August 11 she whispered into the pages of her journal, "this day of the month two years ago I left Harrison, how well I remember that ride, when I was sick going through the tunnels, and the parting on the boat. Oh! oh! tis gone now."[19]

For most of the month of August, Martha visited with her aunt Eliza but as before wrote of the many difficulties of being in that household and with that family. No matter the passage of time, again and again a variation on the theme of their inability to live in peace with each other was reflected in Martha's lament: "how I wish I was not so sensitive about small family affairs though I say nothing, I cannot help feeling."[20]

However, one antidote was the steady stream of letters from John. On the twenty-third of August there were three letters awaiting her at the post office, one of twenty-two pages, and so she all but sang, "how glad I was and how much good they did me, few are made as happy as I am by receiving letters."[21] Four days later she wrote of his starting out to travel to her in New York but also of his most recent letters saying, "he writes to me so kindly and speaks so feelingly of the many instructive talks we have had together and most sincerely do I hope my interest and love for him may be a benefit and for his good."[22] In addition, as their intimacy grew she would say, "if his home had been pleasant & congenial, if his nature had not so much needed my love,

[19] Diary 2, 11 August 1861, 64.

[20] Diary 2, 19 August 1861, 67.

[21] Diary 2, 23 August 1861, 69.

[22] Diary 2, 27 August,1861, 70.

the Great Giver who has given him to me for a true friend would never have awakened so strong, deep & watchful love as fills my heart …."[23]

But even at this early juncture in their relationship, Martha would draw on John's interest and love for her in revisiting the past. On August 29, Martha met John at the depot at New Haven, Connecticut, and reported, "soon we were on our way to Rye where we found my kind friend Edward waiting for us."[24] Always in her visits to the Willets' there was something of the quality of a test – that she could remain friends with Edward and Anna and control her emotions – that she and Edward could meet the demands of public scrutiny and appear as they had always been, close friends and colleagues, in spite of their private passions.[25] Whether John knew the secrets of her relationship with Edward or not, on this trip she had both his support and his protection. John Bunting was her comforter and her shield.

Soon, however, would come one of a number of tests of her loyalty to John and her ability to steer a course independent of the criticism or even demands of her family. In September, back at home in Darby, their communing continued. Even early mornings before breakfast they could be found walking to the post office, Tennyson in hand. By the middle of the month Martha's mother seems to have had enough of the couple's doings and asked for some clarification and made a request . Martha retreated to her room and her journal and complained, "Mother and I had quite a talk how I do wish she better understood my motives, surely I do what

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[23] Diary 3, 20 September 1862, 82. Martha may well have been referring to John's shyness, his self-confessed social anxiety, as well as the fact that his mother spent much of her life as an invalid in a household dominated by her mother-in-law. In his short memoir, included in the booklet compiled and published by his family after his death, John wrote little of his mother. In John's telling, while his father was loving toward his children, he was a shy man who had wished to be an artist rather than a storekeeper. John Bunting in *In Memoriam,* 8-15.

[24] Diary 3, 20 September 1862, 82; John Bunting in *In Memoriam*, 8-15.

[25] Martha remained friends with Edward and Anna for many years, and mentioned both visiting and exchanging letters with them. In January 1862 she wrote, "I had Edward & Anna's photographs framed a very pretty plain gilt one, how I love to look at them. My friends that I love so well, & who seem to think as much of me." Diary 2, 30 January 1862, 120.

seems to be right. Father and mother went out to tea and I spent the afternoon all alone, indeed it is a trial for me to decide which to do, but I cannot no I will not desert my ami."[26] Martha did not desert John nor substantively alter their relationship, and turned to him for the support she needed to do as her heart and conscious dictated. As she said, "dear good mon ami helps me so much, his feelings and sympathy make lighter many an hour and cheers me, when I have so many difficulties to encounter."[27] By the end of October one adjustment she made, however, was to begin to burn some of their correspondence. In a note she received from John on October 30 she said her request had been granted and that she burned the note immediately. Whatever her request, she wanted no chance that anyone else in the family would know of it.[28]

Aside from the pressures of pursuing her relationship with John on her own terms, Martha was doing battle in her classroom. One large boy, Jacob Bell, had to finally be expelled for hitting her repeatedly. By early December a group of factory boys attacked the school yelling in the windows and throwing rocks. They rushed the door and one of them struck her and cut her hand across the knuckles. Frightened as she was, Martha managed to keep her students in order during the melee while sending a child out to bring her sister Sallie to the rescue (though what another woman could do to stop the boys is unclear and Martha never said if Sallie arrived). The assault ended and instruction resumed. But the day's challenges were not over. Later that afternoon Martha was attacked again, this time by a girl who hit her and called

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[26] Diary 2, 14 September 1861, 78.

[27] Diary 2, 4 October 1861, 84.

[28] Karen Lystra writes, "Integration is at the heart of the problem of comprehending American Victorianism. One obvious integrative framework for understanding Victorian culture is the socially defined and enforced separation of public and private morality. What was acceptable, enjoyed, and commonly assumed in private life was shielded from the public realm. This is reflected in the evidence that much private correspondence was cut, clipped and burned. Serious efforts were made to keep personal letters out of the hands of strangers. This behavior by ordinary Americans reflected a culturally prescribed separation of life worlds. The public-private codes of nineteenth-century expression were not expected to coincide or be harmonious." Lystra, *Searching the Heart,* 88.

her names after being corrected.[29] The year ended with Martha defending herself at home and at work with an outward calm, weathering the battles that waged without and within.

Eighteen sixty-two began with cold weather and a visit from a Captain Price from Port Royal, South Carolina, who came north looking for recruits to teach in the schools being organized for newly emancipated slaves. He stayed the night with the Schofield-Child family.[30] Though she does not say so, this may have marked another step in Martha's thinking about the possibility of becoming one of the idealists and reformers going south.

Letters from John continued to cheer and sustain her but her health deteriorated. She sought out medicine from a doctor for her feet but even that suffering was not the whole of it. Martha began to record the mental as well as physical pain she endured. On January 23, with a clearly despairing tone, she said, "took some letters to the office, feet very miserable, hardly enough strength to stand, oh! this mental disturbance how it undermines my health, yet I cannot help it or drive it away."[31]

As the end of the month drew near and her twenty-third birthday approached, Martha soldiered on. On January 28, she lay in bed unable to sleep, staring at a "bright star." Her prayer in the deep night was "to be good, to grow better to take what my Father gives me without

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[29] Diary 2, 1 December 1861, 110.

[30] The capture of coastal South Carolina in 1861, as well as coastal Georgia and Florida brought Secretary of War Edwin Stanton "to designate Georgia, Florida and South Carolina as the Department of the South, a key milestone in the Union campaign to subdue and recapture rebel territory. … The U.S. Treasury Department, in combination with private enterprise – the New England Freedman's Aid Society, the National Freedman's Relief Association of New York, and the Pennsylvania Freedman's Relief Association – organized an important relief campaign to educate, train, and assist former slaves to become self-supporting. Christened the 'Port Royal Experiment' the campaign was intended to allow New England reformers to demonstrate that freed people would become industrious when given half a chance. Many young idealists heeded the call to become part of 'Gideon's Band,' the volunteer organization of teachers who would carry out the experiment." Catherine Clinton, Introduction to *Susie King Taylor, Reminiscences of my Life in Camp: An African American Woman's Civil War Memoir* (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 2006), xvi. Willie Lee Rose offers an in-depth study of the work at Port Royal: *Rehearsal for Reconstruction: The Port Royal Experiment* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1964; reprinted, Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1999).

[31] Diary 2, 23 January 1862, 118.

murmuring."[32] On the last day of January, and as before, on the last page of her journal, she performed a ritual of saying goodbye to the book itself and reflecting on what confiding in its pages had meant to her. In a voice still tinged with an adolescent sweetness but also displaying a growing surety of adulthood, Martha confided,

> A bright morning, and I begin the last page in this my diary, that contains so many of my worried thoughts and feelings, for the dear book, I love to talk too, thou never art fickle or false or unfaithful, always true, never deceiving me, but taking what I give. It has many many foolish and useless things in [it], much that had perhaps better been left out, but no eye but mine will see it and therefore none will laugh or scorn it. My thoughts as they were at the time, have been put here, my joys, and sorrows have been written upon these pages and I feel for them, a strong attachment, though they would be uninteresting and worthless to others, they are dear to me, and I love to look over & read them …. I had Edward & Anna's photographs framed a very pretty gilt one, how I love to look at them. My friends that I love so well, & who seem to think as much of me. But I am nearly to the end, and I will close this to begin another which I trust may be Better. Good Bye – Farewell.[33]

In just six months, John's love and friendship moved Martha closer to the independence that would sustain her throughout much of the rest of her adult life. Their relationship had also provided her the means to contain and recast, within a beautiful gilt frame, her relationship with Edward by emphasizing her attachment to the couple, Edward and Anna, and her deep love for them both.

Another ritual from year to year was her diary entry on the first of February, her birthday, and its dual purpose of examining the year past and making vows for the coming one. On her birthday and in a new journal Martha recorded

> I was awake very early this morning, for I remember well, that today I was twenty three, almost a quarter of a century, and the query arises, has my life been one worthy, of the immortal soul that now guides it. Every birthday, I make solemn resolves for good and yet I fear they are often broken. I try to do right, and have prayed very earnestly that I would be lead [sic] and guided by my Father's hand. I do receive strength from Him, and my gratitude is great; I desire that my heart may be filled with his love and goodness, and

[32] Diary 2, 28 January 1862, 119.

[33] Diary 2, 31 January 1862, 120.

> that my peace, will be such that no earthly power can disturb it. It was snowy and rainy all day, I had a sweet letter from my friend, expressing his good wishes for my happiness and welfare; referring to the 14[th], when upon the beautiful shores of the Bay, a note was written to him. This is the first page of another book, and I would that the record I place here, though it mar the beauty of these spotless pages, may only add to their worth & make them more valuable, because they show an improvement.[34]

In writing this diary entry Martha anchored the woman she was striving to be in God's love but in John's love also. For after God's help and guidance, there were notes between John and herself – assurances of an earthly and accessible love and intimacy. There were three relationships she had been pursuing – one with God, one with John, and one with herself. None stood alone. None, alone, was enough.

Soon there would be a fourth relationship that Martha would pursue and would prove essential to her navigation of the tricky waters of love with John and her sense of responsibility for him. In February, Martha began mentioning a young woman from Massachusetts who was teaching in the school in Darby. Anna Webster boarded with a family nearby, but was neglected and unhappy in their home. Her friendship with Anna proved beneficial in a number of ways. At the start of their friendship Martha said, "I know that by being her friend I am doing good, and though I may be subject to remarks, I can bear much when I feel that I am doing right, for that is the great end of, or rather the beginning of true life."[35] Why remarks would have been made because of their friendship or who was making them is unknown, but here was another chance to sacrifice and defy. Just as John needed her, she believed that Anna needed her. In April, Anna spent the night and Martha wrote, "I held her in my arms and heard the thoughts of

[34] Diary 3, 1 February 1862, 1.

[35] Diary 3, 31 March 1862, 24.

her young and innocent heart … she loves and trusts me & I will watch over & care for her."[36] First John and now Anna would serve Martha in finding her true life – her great mission.

During Martha's pursuit of a close relationship with Anna Webster, a transition began in her relationship with John. In a series of short entries in her journal, she mapped a delicate dance between them of change and continuity. Each seems to have asked for reassurance that their relationship remained an essential one. At the same time, Martha may have introduced the idea that John's relationship with Anna had the potential of being more than just friendship. On a February afternoon he spent a few hours with her and she noted asking him two questions and then said, "he was glad of my intimacy." He, in turn, wrote her a series of letters and notes, startling her she said, with his remembrances of their past and causing her to remark, "a wrong impression was given, and yet no breach violated."[37]

The pressure mounted, however. John delicately maneuvered for more than deep friendship with Martha. Martha gently began to turn his gaze elsewhere. Both were unsettled and even frightened. She struggled with the possibility of sharing John's affections. His friendship had made her stronger, better able to set aside and move past her feelings and vulnerabilities where Edward Willets was concerned. It allowed her to focus on finding that greater purpose for her life. But it could not continue long in its present form. Rather than having it end altogether, Martha was searching for a third way, one that allowed her to continue loving and relying on John without marrying him or losing him. Her emotions affected her physical health and she began to experience difficulty eating and keeping down what little she managed to eat. She had a throbbing in her head and began to lose weight. Thoughts would

[36] Diary 3, 27 April 1862, 32.

[37] Diary 3, 6 -10 February 1862, 3-5.

come, she said, "with a sharp deadening pain." Yet even though determined to prevail, there were moments of weakness when, turning to her journal, she confessed,

> I have a great deal of mental suffering, which I would not even write here, no, no, the burning thoughts, the sad, soul – sickening memories, must never be known – if it be the will of my Father, He can support me, and already by prayer I am growing less selfish, the agony of my trials can be better borne, and I am learning to work and be satisfied with what is best for me, and contributes the most for others happiness, at times my heart is almost bursting, but I have hope & faith and lay the burden at my Masters feet and then feel strengthened.[38]

Still the war, teaching, her health, and her heart would interfere, and her strength and resolve would continually be tested.

Martha made note in her diary of battles fought in the war and the number of casualties sustained. On February 17, she reported a "great victory gained by our troops, the capture of Fort Donaldson and 15,000 prisoners" as well as "great loss on both sides."[39] Battles continued in her classroom as well. She expelled a girl who, angered by a lesson, threw her slate, breaking it into pieces. Martha continued to attempt to establish relationships with the parents of her students, recording her late afternoon trips to their homes. On a rainy, cold afternoon she explained, "I visited the homes of some, and was saddened to see the wretchedness & misery, one place I went up three flights of dark stairs and there in an attic, lay a woman to ill to speak yet several visitors in the room, whose air was filled with odors of various dishes which were being cooked for the family, such scenes show us the dark side of life."[40]

Her battles continued within. She struggled to eat and complained of a sore throat and hoarseness. She worried about John but found relief in his letters and the evenings he still spent with her. But alone in her bedroom or her classroom the demons would come and on the pages

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[38] Diary 3, 8 and 20 February 1862, 4, 8.

[39] Diary 3, 17 February 1862, 7.

[40] Diary 3, 19 February 1862, 7-8.

of her journal she would wrestle with them and herself. At school on a very cold February day she sat alone and disclosed,

> I came to school, but was restless and unhappy, I am fully conscious that I have no right to these saddened thought[s] when I have a happy home and all outward comforts, these I do appreciate & do enjoy, but somehow they do not satisfy the souls need, just now, the memory of some fatal words is ever present with me, spoken thoughtlessly … but they had never occurred to me before and now I cannot efface them, for in the depth of my heart I feel their truth. I see as it were, that some love well, but get tired & turn to new friends forgetting the old ones; many things have combined to sadden me yet, I know I will get over it & soon the disease will be cured & I will be happy again.[41]

Whether or not Martha was writing of John turning away or her fear that he would, or another friend or friends, the needs of her soul were keen and as potentially threatening as the disease that attacked her lungs. But the inner war might be won, "the disease cured," as she said. There were days when she could report, "occasionally there comes into my soul a quiet peace that I am doing my duty."[42] Yet the questions remained, could doing her duty ever be enough?

Martha's reading between 1861 and 1865, showed the influence of John Bunting. While she continued to read novels (reading them with John at intervals), as well as inspirational books like *Drifted Snowflakes, Or Poetical Gatherings From Many Authors,* she was also tackling a three-part biography of Christopher Columbus and *The Miscellaneous Writings and Speeches of Lord Macaulay.*[43] Martha's education had been a patchwork of tutoring, a school in Newtown, a Friend's school in Byberry, and a year at her uncle's Sharon Female Institute to which she was unable to return because of her health. Not just her health, however, prevented her from receiving further formal education. Family circumstances required that Martha and her sisters contribute financially to the household through teaching and Aunt Eliza's small school on Long

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[41] Diary 3, 21 February 1862, 9.

[42] Diary 3, 25 February 1862, 10.

[43] Diary 3, 19 October 1862, 90; Diary 3, 7 December 1862, 105; Diary 3, 27 January 1863, 127; Diary 4, 18 August 1864, 13; Diary 4, 25 December 1864, 40; Diary 4, 5 January 1865, 43.

Island had been her first appointment. Martha continued to pursue learning through her participation in Reading Circles and Lyceum, on the job training such as she received with the Willets, attending teachers' institutes, hearing lectures, and reading.[44] John's formal education, on the other hand, had been more extensive and his tastes more sophisticated than hers. He not only influenced her taste in reading, but in music, taking her to concerts and sharing with her articles he wrote on music, some of which were published in Philadelphia newspapers and *Harper's Weekly*.[45]

Martha loved John Bunting's sensitive and artistic nature, and while she too was sensitive, she was also a seeker, an explorer, a trailblazer, and the lives of other women served as beacons. Between February and April of 1862, Martha read Elizabeth Gaskell's two volumes, *The Life of Charlotte Bronte,* and then Bronte's *The Professor* and *Jane Eyre*. A reviewer had named the biography "one of the best biographies of a woman by a woman."[46] Martha said of the first volume, "here was a sensitive, shrinking nature … am better for reading it, what a noble self-sacrificing creature she was," and of the second, "the noble manner & heroic fortitude with which she bore all the sad trials of her life, have been indelibly impressed upon my mind and <u>feelings</u> and are examples I do not wish to forget."[47] The parallels between Martha's life and Charlotte Bronte's were significant. Both lost a parent at a young age, Bronte's mother dying of cancer in 1821 when she was five years old. Both were teachers who fell in love with their

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[44] Smedley, *Martha Schofield and the Re-Education of the South,* 23-24.

[45] John Bunting traced his passion for music to the orchestral music he heard in 1854 at commencement ceremonies for the University of Pennsylvania. Thereafter, "he embraced every opportunity to hear all the best orchestra and chamber concerts, with opera and oratorio performances, reading, studying, and listening to the works of the great masters until he amassed a knowledge which ever after made him an authority on their compositions as well as on musical subjects in general." He wrote poetry and essays on music, as well as other topics, a number of which were published in *Harper's* and *Lippincott's*. He became the music critic for the *Philadelphia Inquirer* in 1868 and wrote for the paper for twenty years. Anna W. Bunting, *In Memorium,* 32-37.

[46] Review of *The Life of Charlotte Bronte,* by Elizabeth Gaskell, *The Antheneum*, April 4, 1857, 429.

[47] Diary 3, 26 February 1862, 12 & 7 March 1862, 14.

married employers, Bronte at a boarding school in Brussels where she had been a student and teacher. Both knew the pain of a profligate only brother. Branwell Bronte died before his sister of tuberculosis and was an alcoholic and laudanum addict. Their lives differed, however, in Charlotte Bronte's marriage in 1854 at the age of thirty-nine to her father's curate, and her death the following year in childbirth.[48]

Martha said little of *The Professor* beyond the fact that she was reading it, but wrote of *Jane Eyre*, "spent the evening alone, writing and reading, finished Jane Eyre but my mind wandered from the imaginary tale to the realities."[49] Here was the story of a love triangle between a young teacher, her employee, and his wife. Drawn, in part, from Bronte's experience in Brussels, it traces the life of Jane Eyre, orphaned at a young age and raised by an uncaring aunt until she is sent off to Lowood, a school under the directorship of a cruel and zealous minister who provides little physically or emotionally to sustain the lives of his pupils. Each winter brings numerous deaths to the school, among them Jane's only friend, Helen. Eventually, the minister's cruelties are exposed and he is removed, and Jane is befriended by a young teacher, a woman who becomes both a mentor and mother figure. She remains at Lowood, becoming a teacher herself, until taking a position as governess at Thornfield Hall to a young girl who is the ward of Edward Rochester. Rochester, a lonely, haunted man, finds solace in the company of his young employee and eventually the love he has been searching for since his misspent youth. Bronte created in Rochester a romantic figure of great appetites and deep passions.

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[48] Elizabeth Gaskell, *The Life of Charlotte Bronte*, Edited and with an Introduction by Angus Easson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), xxxv.

[49] Diary 3, 6 April 1862, 26.

The path to happiness in *Jane Eyre* is neither straightforward nor without its dangers. Jane is irresistibly drawn to Rochester and at the same time hampered by her lack of beauty and position, especially because she believes he is in love with a beautiful, vivacious heiress who comes to stay at Thornfield with a large party of Rochester's friends. But most threatening of all are the eerie sounds and strange occurrences Jane hears and witnesses. Rochester's bed clothes are set afire and he is saved from burning by Jane's having heard footsteps and laughter in the corridor before smelling smoke and waking him. A stranger arrives one evening only to be sent off in the early morning to the home of a local surgeon after being attacked – scratched and bitten in the chest by human teeth. A woman enters her bedroom and stands over Jane with a candle only to disappear before she is fully awake. All this and more Rochester explains away as the drunken doings of a woman who works at the estate as an assistant to the housekeeper, and though Jane pleads, he mysteriously refuses to discharge her. Soon enough, Rochester declares his love for Jane and she accepts his proposal of marriage.

A major climax of the novel comes on their wedding day when the stranger who had been so brutally attacked at Thornfield arrives at the wedding to announce the couple cannot be married because Rochester is already married to the man's sister. The truth then surfaces when Rochester takes the wedding party back to Thornfield Hall and to the locked rooms where his lunatic wife has been living for many years. In the aftermath of this revelation, Jane packs to leave Rochester forever and withstands his pleadings and then his demands that she stay. She leaves Thornfield to wander the moors with no destination and little hope. The novel concludes with Jane's rescue by strangers who, it turns out, are actually her cousins. And later she receives an inheritance that provides her independence and security for the future. Rochester, on the other hand, hires men to search for Jane, not to compel her return but that he might provide for

her financially, assuring for himself her comfort and safety. She is not found and he sinks into despair. Eventually his wife's condition worsens and she sets fire to Thornfield Hall, killing herself and mortally wounding Rochester. As Jane struggles to decide whether to accept a marriage proposal from her cousin, St. John Rivers, she hears Rochester calling her over the hundreds of miles that separate them, and realizes not only that she cannot marry a man she does not love, but she must return to him. She finds him blinded and maimed, living in a smaller country estate and they are reunited. Jane will be his eyes and his strength. They will find in each other the love they craved.

Jane Eyre was both widely read and highly praised.[50] Edward Rochester is a romantic figure of Byronic proportions who finds in his small, plain, obscure, nearly penniless governess his likeness, his intellectual and emotional equal. As Jane says to him on the night of their engagement, "it is my spirit that addresses your spirit; just as if both had passed through the grave, and we stood at God's feet, equal – as we are! He answers, "As we are!"[51] Bronte "sees the relation as one of mutual need in which the woman is not idealized but is recognized as an active contributor – fearless, unashamed of passionate feeling, and, while needing to serve, still determined to have her rights acknowledged."[52] As Martha said, her reading prompted her mind "to wander from the imaginary tale to the realities." For her, the realities included the mutual passion between her and her Edward, and his recognition of her character and talents, prized above her physical beauty. Jane Eyre suffers as an unloved orphan and victim of nineteenth

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[50] For instance, in a letter written after its publication from the critic J.G. Lockhart to a friend, Lockhart said, "I have finished the adventures of Miss Jane Eyre and think her far the cleverest that has written since Austen and Edgeworth were in their prime, worth fifty Trollopes and Martineaus rolled (??)into one counterpane, with fifty Dickens and Bulwers to keep them company." Introduction, *Jane Eyre,* by Q.D. Leavis, (New York: Penguin Books, 1985), 28-29.

[51] Charlotte Bronte, *Jane Eyre,* Edited and with an Introduction by Q.D. Leavis, (New York: Penguin Books, 1985), 281.

[52] Leavis, Introduction, *Jane Eyre,* 17.

century England's treatment of the poor, as well as for her moral courage in rejecting Rochester's plea to defy custom and convention and live with him without the sanction of marriage. She casts herself out of the only home she ever knew and into the wilds of nature, risking death, relying on God alone to rescue her and show her a way forward. Martha had cast herself out of Harrison, leaving not the only home she ever knew but a love and passion she had never known before and quite likely feared would never know again. She and Jane shared a similar moral courage in that way. They also shared a similar sense of personal power in making and sustaining their choices as well as the consequent pain. Both bore the burden of secrecy – the inability of finding solace in sharing their story with another living soul. Martha would have recognized in Bronte's novel an exploration of the inner life of a young woman of intellect and passion, "of life's springs and undercurrents,"[53] willing to sacrifice one kind of happiness for another. She may have found hope in the fact that Jane triumphed in the end, living up to her principles and still marrying the one man she truly loved. As Jane herself ends her tale,

> I have now been married ten years. I know what it is to live entirely for and with what I love best on earth. I hold myself supremely blest – blest beyond what language can express; because I am my husband's life as fully as he is mine. No woman was ever nearer to her mate than I am; ever more absolutely bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh. I know no weariness of my Edward's society: he knows none of mine, any more than we each do of the pulsation of the heart that beats in our separate bosoms; consequently, we are ever together. To be together is for us to be at once as free as in solitude, as gay as in company. We talk, I believe, all day long: to talk to each other is but a more animated and audible thinking. All my confidence is bestowed on him, all his confidence is devoted to me; we are precisely suited in character – perfect concord is the result.[54]

[53] Leavis, Introduction, Jane Eyre, 11.

[54] Bronte, *Jane Eyre*, 475-476.

This novel's appeal for Martha was not merely in its success in creating a romantic fantasy, but in its portrayal of "'a valiant woman made perfect by suffering.'"[55]

Throughout the spring of 1862, Martha toiled on in school, working to instill discipline in her students and meeting their resistance with as much calm as she could muster. On one afternoon she confessed to being worn out, after two and half hours of her "nerves hav[ing] stood the test of mental excitement," in part because she had detained everyone by a full hour, making them sit "in perfect silence." Earlier in the afternoon a boy had become so angry he kicked and bit her "till the blood came." Yet she strove to remain composed, wanting not only to return home "in a cheerful disposition" but never wanting to punish a child in anger.[56] She chastised and she expelled and when all else failed, she reached for the whip. On a sunny afternoon, alone in her classroom, Martha pondered the effects of the whipping of "those large boys" as she referred to them, saying, "it seems strange … they should have been so much better, it is not the kind of treatment I would like to subdue with, only as a last resort, I am interested in all, I talk and persuade a great deal, and often move their feelings, but their education is <u>so</u> bad at home, could I have them with me all the time, but six hours out of twenty four, is a little time to make a lasting impression, when the other 18 are bad."[57]

In addition, she continued to make visits to her students' homes, even when doing so put her own health at risk. On her way back to Darby on a May afternoon, already very tired and feeling sick, she went to the house of "one of my scholars" where she found "3 down with scarlet fever and one had died." Wisely, she concluded, "I say nothing about my visits to these

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[55] Though these words were written to Elizabeth Gaskell in reference to her biography of Charlotte Bronte, they seem equally appropriate for the person, Jane Eyre, especially given that Bronte's novel was semi-autobiographical. Leavis, Introduction, *Jane Eyre*, 8.

[56] Diary, 7 March 1862, 14.

[57] Diary 3, 21 March 1862, 20.

places for it might alarm our folks."[58] Less than a week later, Martha was again walking the streets where her student's lived but found more this time than the usual byproducts of poverty and ignorance. There was a significant shift in what she observed. As she recorded, "I had a full school afterward walked way out to Sybert St. visited the homes of vice and poverty, and only wonder there can be any good with such evil surroundings, but it is there. I was in several houses where there was scarcely the necessaries of life, and some children almost without clothing yet proud, and with some sense of respectability."[59]

Martha could not have known how foundational her experiences with these students and their families would be to the work she would do in the South. Given the biases of her race and class, as well as the emphasis she placed on denial of self and her need to sacrifice for others, it is significant that she not only recognized the humanity of the people she met but their potential to improve their lives, especially under the worst of circumstances. It was a potential she more readily saw in her black students than in the Irish students she would later teach in Darby.

John remained a constant in these days, showing up in her classroom to escort her home or arriving at home in the afternoon for tea. However, he rarely stayed more than an hour or two. She continued to receive notes and letters, one in March that may well have heralded his decision to pursue a more serious relationship with Anna Webster, and solicited the response from Martha that he had placed "the fullest and greatest confidence in her."[60] On March 16, Martha recorded that John had come to tea and then left but returned before nine and together they wrote a letter to Sadie. After that, she said, "he staid later than usual and in the quiet stillness of the Sabbath eve, we spoke of the hearts deepest feelings, and when we parted it was with renewed faith and

[58] Diary 3, 16 May 1862, 41.

[59] Diary 3, 21 May 1862, 42.

[60] Diary 3, 14 March 1862, 17.

trust in the closely intimate friendship, which binds us together and we did not forget to thank our Father for this happiness."[61] Thankful though she may have been, Martha noted a decline in her health, a waning of her strength to the point of affecting her ability to work as hard as she once had. She had a painful soreness in her bones and joints. Her chest ached. She began to cough. Even the touch of her clothing was hurtful. She told no one, fearing that her school would be blamed.

The evening of March 16 and her diary entry that night marked the beginning of a new chapter in Martha's relationship with John. From that time forward she would begin to be displaced from the center of his life by his growing affection for Anna. Yet, it was not so easy for their bond to be altered or broken. In her journal, she would most often frame her response to this shift in her world in terms of his continued need of her. As she said, "he needs me and I will be faithful, ever faithful."[62] But neither was it easy for John. From the outside, from the perspective of her mother and sisters, it may even have looked as if the relationship was stronger and more fervent than ever. As Martha explained

> I had a note, for he said he could "not help writing" – it made my heart ache, and I will not desert him now. People may think we have no right to be this intimate, but we have, neither get harm but good. I know I can soothe the sorrowing and I will, even if I overstep the bounds of custom. I lose none of my own purity, for I do all things in a trusting faith that my Father does not disapprove.[63]

Later on the same day she wrote, "was oppressed with the thought, the awful responsibility of my situation seems to come before me with appalling magnitude."[64] Exactly what she believed was her awful responsibility or why it would strike her in this way she does not say. On a

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[61] Diary 3, 16 March 1862, 18.

[62] Diary 3, 7 April 1862, 26.

[63] Diary 3, 8 April 1862, 27.

[64] Diary 3, 8 April 1862, 27.

practical level, her sense of responsibility to her students in the midst of the increasing disapproval of her family for putting her health at risk, literally risking her life, would have been pressure enough. But add to that the responsibility she felt to release John, to face the reality that he would no longer be hers alone, it is easier to imagine her feeling just such moments of panic. Soon, however, there would be ample opportunity to test her emotional and physical strength and prove the depth of her friendship.

At the beginning of May, Anna became gravely ill with scarlet fever, and against the strong objections of her family, Martha chose to become her nurse. Though Anna's father was sent for, there was no one in the interim to care for her, but more importantly, Martha felt it was her duty whether Mr. Webster arrived or not. Scarlet fever was highly contagious and often deadly. She not only placed herself in danger but ran the risk of infecting her family as well. Though they pressured her to stay away, she continued for more than a week to care for Anna, staying all night to administer medicine, bathe her, and change her fever-soaked nightgown and sheets, only to leave in the morning for Philadelphia and her classroom. As Martha confided in her journal, "my heart is almost breaking with the conflict, between my own sense of duty & the opposition I meet in trying to do it; I do go to my Father or I could not bear it, the family have no idea of the torture and misery I endure, or they would not speak as though I cared nothing for my own family."[65] Throughout, John stood by her side, staying nights with her and Anna, walking her back and forth from home to Anna and to the railway. Midway through the crisis she recorded

> J called for me and we went to [Anna] … she suffered much was very restless but we watched and attended with the greatest care, faithful and true and good and kind, oh, how I hope such may be rewarded. At 1/2 past 3 both took a nap & I was content to watch them, I was happy in the task, & did not feel sleepy though I had not slept more than an hour. I watched the Sabbath morn come upon the world, I don't think I can ever forget

[65] Diary 3, 2 May 1862, 34.

> this night thronged so full of thoughts and memories. Never have I had a fuller opportunity to prove I can be a true friend, through every opposition and in times of deep trial. [66]

This was a turning point for them all.

A "true life" had become a leitmotif for Martha, and how to be of service and to whom would soon become a central focus. On May 4, her step-father walked over to accompany her home from nursing Anna. She said of their conversation, "on our way back told me, that it was not his business to say any thing, but he had been much worried about me for he thought the great opposition to what I believed right was almost making me sick, he thought duty should begin at home, & many neglect it while they do for soldiers or those where it is popular or well known."[67] It would not be long before Martha would be among those caring for soldiers, and her only reply was silence. She said, "I thanked him in my heart."[68]

Here was, in part, a generational conflict, more starkly drawn because of war and the consequent expansion of women's roles. Broadly stated, "women in both the North and the South were drafted for labor that would have been unsuitable and unthinkable for them before the war."[69] Martha's nursing a friend was neither, but clearly it was an act of independence that caused concern on multiple levels and it would prove foundational for what was yet to come. There was a testing of the waters, so to speak. Martha was testing herself as well as her family to see just how far she and they could go before real damage was done to either one of them.

Anna, thanks in large part to Martha's care, recovered. She returned to work teaching in Darby, and no one in the Schofield-Childs household fell ill. Life went on – Martha continued

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[66] Diary 3, 3 May 1862, 34.

[67] Diary 3, 4 May 1862, 36.

[68] Diary 3, 4 May 1862, 36.

[69] Catherine Clinton and Christine Lunardini, *The Columbia Guide to American Women in the Nineteenth Century* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), 83.

teaching, but more and more she noted in her diary the work she was doing for the Summit House hospital and the wounded soldiers. It began with small entries such as, "I brought some butter to the hospital," and "took 33 dozen eggs, 12lbs. of butter, jellies &c which we had begged, so much is needed for the sick & suffering."[70] Soon after, she began staying longer to feed soldiers and read to them, and eventually to cook meals and tend to their wounds. Her increasing focus on hospital work was also related to the death of her cousin, Joe Schofield, who was killed in battle near Richmond, Virginia. He was shot in the head and a lieutenant who had seen him fall wrote to his family the details of his last moments. Martha wrote, "I can scarcely believe that his young life has been thus spent."[71] The subject of death would now, to a greater extent than before, permeate the pages of her journal, as would the war. In the days following battles, Martha, like so many others, would scan the lists of dead and wounded, looking for the names of friends and loved ones. She trembled most especially fearing to find the name of her friend Oldden Ridgeway among those harmed.[72]

However, it was not just battles and their aftermath that reminded Martha of the fragility of life. A female friend died in childbirth, a young woman's baby perished, an elderly neighbor sickened, and Martha herself grew weaker as the weeks passed. She lost weight – in late May she reported, "I weighed 108, never so little since I was grown up."[73] Certainly all her trials of the spring contributed to her physical decline, but she wrote of another symptom she had not experienced before that became more pronounced over the summer and increasingly debilitating.

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[70] Diary 3, 23 May and 31 May 1862, 43, 45.

[71] Diary 3, 12 June 1862, 50.

[72] Martha continually worried about Oldden and on July 3 wrote, "to day the news comes of the dreadful defeat at Richmond our troops having been driven back 17 miles, oh! how my heart aches for our poor wounded, and I am in great suspense knowing my dear friend Oldden is in the Regiment there." Diary 3, 3 July 1862, 57.

[73] Diary 3, 30 Mary 1862, 45.

Late in the evening on June 6 she confessed, "last night I had another spell of coughing which lasted nearly an hour without cessation. I feel a little weaker for it this morning, strange they should come when I am not aware of having taken cold, only a week since the last one, I have not said anything about it, for it would not be worth while to have any talk and my poor school would be blamed."[74] Ten days later she mentioned another bad coughing spell, noting that the aftermath made her chest sore, and in another five days she coughed so long and hard that she had to go upstairs to her room, commenting, "strange – these spells."[75] Certainly the weight loss and chronic cough indicated the slow and steady progression of consumption. But Martha's reaction was to focus on the work she would do and the support she continued to derive from her relationship with John. On June 20, she sat in her classroom and wrote an unusually long passage, saying in part,

> I was up by 5 & swept three rooms, consequently started to school quite tired, I have pain between the shoulders or in my breast nearly all the time. Mother does not know when she talks so much about our getting up early that I suffer for it in school where I have to keep it up, if I could rest about 11 – when I feel the effects of it, but I cannot. They blame my school so much, I seldom speak of my health <u>I know</u> it is not that entirely that has made me so thin & unable to bear much, if my body was only strong, the spirit would prompt it to do much more – I was quite tired and sitting here along about 3 when my dear friend came in & then how much we both enjoyed the quiet peaceful time we spent together such gentle loving tenderness, it is seldom found, I felt that Heaven had given us this unchangeable friendship, filling it with joy at times, & words are nothing to express the good & happiness I have known, his happiness is dearer to me than my own, yet it is an unselfish love I give him. I never want to be nearer than a friend, this close intimacy is pure & unsullied, blessing both, I am satisfied with his great kindness and deep brothers love, and I would have him receive the richest blessings Heaven can bestow; not worldly prosperity, but a realization of all those nobler aspirations and noble thoughts, which lie beneath. He came on purpose to see me.[76]

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[74] Diary 3, 6 June 1862, 47.

[75] Diary 3, 16 June and 21 June 1862, 51, 53.

[76] Diary 3, 20 June 1862, 52.

Life for Martha was in flux. John began to bring Anna on his evening visits in Darby, but also sought Martha out to spend time alone, both at home and in Philadelphia. They continued to need each other even in the wake of his romantic attachment to Anna. Martha's dedication to her relationship with John extended to a commitment to love and nurture Anna and served the dual purpose of allowing for Martha and John's continued involvement and providing, in some part, a justification for any who would criticize them. Yet Anna herself seems to have been a little confused or at least reluctant to make a commitment to John, not out of doubt of his sincerity in pursuing her, but out of fear that Martha might be hurt or her tie to one or both of them might be damaged or even severed. It was a plot as complicated as any one of the novels that Martha read. On July 4 Martha noted, "to day I celebrate quietly for it is the anniversary of the commencement of the sweetest friendship I ever knew,"[77] and the following day

> Anna staid with me all night and o! how much was said, the clock struck 2 before I slept and she had just gone to sleep. Surely this talk will long be remembered, we were both much affected, I wanted to prove my sincerity, & for the sake of my most precious friend, I forced myself to tell her what never before passed my lips, I never could have done it had I not felt so much interest & love for my darling one. I spoke plainly, though very careful not to wound clearly proving I hope that nothing closer could exist between us; how strange it seems that in one year so much should happen – so much.[78]

It seems that ,out of her great love for John Bunting and his future life, Martha told Anna the details of her relationship with Edward Willets, assuring her in the process that she and John had not been nor would they ever be lovers. It is significant that Martha claimed to have never told anyone else, not even John himself, and it marked the distance between her past and the present. That distance would continue to widen as the months past.

In mid-July Martha closed her school, knowing she would not return in the fall. Truly, her body could not continue to take the grind of the commute nor the weight of the work itself,

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[77] Diary 3, 4 July 1862, 57.

[78] Diary 3, 5 July 1862, 57.

no matter her commitment and dedication to her students. She knew that she needed a rest and that she might never teach again. With Sadie's help, she spent her last day at Bethany distributing gifts to all her students and cleaning and storing supplies. Her last words about the year were, "I shall always look back upon this year as one of usefulness, and having many trials and vexations there are some pleasant memories dear and sweet to me, making me revere the place."[79]

In August, on John's birthday, she gave him a gift of a volume of Lovell's poems and "breathed many prayers for the strength of Heaven to sustain and help him in the good resolutions formed." She relished the influence she perceived that she still had on him, on Anna, and on many of her friends. However, she never wrote of a similar dynamic between herself and her sisters or her brother Ben. Rather, she said on John's birthday and of her gift to him, "I say nothing about it to our folks, for I know a scornful laugh & perhaps words of ridicule which I could not bear for our friendship has been too dear and sacred – more precious to me than others, just as I wished and far more happiness than I imagined could be, though I craved it."[80]

With Anna back in Massachusetts for the summer, she and John took up their old pattern of frequent visits though not the volume of notes and letters of before. Again, he stayed for only a few hours rather than late into the night, but her attachment to him did not wane. Just a week before his birthday she had railed against not being permitted to care for him through a short illness saying, "I had a short note from my friend, his health is miserable and I am continually anxious, my own dear friend, I cannot bear to think of thee being ill & kept from me by customs

[79] Diary 3, 10 July 1862, 60.

[80] Diary 3, 14 August 1862, 70.

rules. It is my right, my privilege to guard & care for thee & thy happiness, no sister could desire thy blessedness more than I."[81]

Though her strength had failed during her year of teaching, her determination to aid in the war effort by serving the soldiers grew stronger. She sewed bedclothes, knitted socks and mittens, begged for food and supplies, cooked and served meals, sat by the dying, and cheered the living with special delicacies and letters from home. Letters from Oldden, when they arrived from the front, were gloomy. In August he offered the opinion that in order to succeed more men would be needed. Martha cried out in reply, "O! how I long to save our noble men, 100,000 have already perished many very many more by disease and suffering than on the battlefield, and yet the millions of loyal Slaves are standing ready to serve … when will they be allowed to fight for their own freedom, and thereby, doing us good and assisting to maintain the Government which must & shall be free."[82] The war and the dying were constantly in her thoughts. At Meeting her mind wandered "to that mysterious subject of Death" which had "grown familiar" to her. She came to the conclusion that she should dedicate all the time she could to the hospital, declaring, "my heart & life are in it now, and I will work hard – my country needs our endeavors & devotion."[83] Battle after battle she would think of the "sorrow & suffering" and long to do more.[84]

In September, Martha wrote, "after two months vacation, I look back upon the past 12 months as well employed, where I tried so hard to do right, and endeavored to waste no idle

[81] Diary 3, 7 August 1862, 67.

[82] Diary 3, 1 August 1862, 65.

[83] Diary 3, 21 August 1862, 72.

[84] Diary 3, 20 August 1862, 74.

time. Ever since I closed I have been busy not for myself but those in need."[85] Martha continued her hospital work and began helping her brother-in-law, Samuel Ash, as he worked on some kind of machinery in Darby, possibly a process for perforating stamps he helped to develop.[86] She continued to write of her longings – of "that irrepressible yearning" only dispelled, she said, through prayer, and wanting always to be of service. With the rebel invasion of Maryland and Pennsylvania the war drew nearer to home and a company was formed in Darby to defend the state, John among its members. Now her worries and determination to help grew even stronger. Her hospital work became exhausting and her family looked askance, but she would not let up. On the twenty-fourth of September, she noted, "yesterday the Prest issued a proclamation declaring that all slaves of Rebels are free after the 1st of January 1863. It seems a long way off but perhaps it will be best … I have the warmest interest in our loved country."[87] However, by the beginning of October there was trouble brewing within the hospital. A change in surgeons and the arrival of inspectors from Washington brought with them a reduction in the number of volunteers permitted in the hospital and on the wards. Martha began to be turned away from the work she longed to do.[88]

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[85] Diary 3, 8 September 1862, 77.

[86] Katherine Smedley writes of Samuel Ash that he not only became a "true elder brother," but that "Martha and the rest of the family grew to depend heavily on his sound advice. He was the son of a Philadelphia doctor, had been educated at private schools in and around Philadelphia and at the Franklin Institute. He seems to have had considerable inventive genius, for his name was associated with the development of machinery for the perforation of U.S. postage and revenue stamps. He was chiefly known, however, for his educational and philanthropic activities usually in connection with the Society of Friends." Smedley, *Martha Schofield and the Re-Education of the South,* 39.

[87] Diary 3. 24 September 1862, 84.

[88] In some cases, women were either not permitted at all or restricted in their ability to volunteer because of the prejudice of doctors against women in hospitals or jurisdictional wars among nurses like Dorothea Dix who wanted to professionalize nursing for women. See for example Jane E. Schultz, *Women at the Front: Hospital Workers in the Civil War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 4, 18, 114-16; Stephen B. Oates, *A Woman of Valor: Clara Barton and the Civil War* (New York: The Free Press, 1994), 23, 125,187,199.

Martha was so busy during these months that she found little time to read. She mentioned books her step-father was reading to the family at night and finished a novel or two along with one of the volumes of Columbus' biography but made little mention of them beyond the titles. She did, however, write of a concert she attended with John and Anna, now back from Massachusetts, to hear Louis Moreau Gottschalk. He was a famous piano virtuoso and she was clearly moved by his playing saying, "I thought I had heard good music before, but my ears never listened my heart never thrilled to such delightful sounds as came from the Piano when Gottschalk touched it … when listening to him I seemed not of earth."[89] Toward the end of the month Lucretia Mott not only spoke at Meeting but dined with her family along with close to forty other guests. Martha, inspired by her sermon, wrote, "I felt the holiest and purest nature within me awaken and rekindle with higher aspirations." She continued to work in the hospital, if sporadically, and when not there continued begging for food, supplies, and money on its and the soldiers' behalf. On Thanksgiving they served 430 men a dinner of turkey, chicken, apple sauce, coleslaw, and beets and said there was such an ample supply of food there were forty-two chickens and five turkeys left over. Yet surrounded by the wounded she felt "a dull dead pain pressing upon gayety."[90] At Christmas she was welcomed by one of the doctors who had worried that she, like others, might stay away during the holiday. She distributed apples and ginger cakes, and noted the sadness of many at being so far from home. For herself the happiness of the day and of the season rested in her efforts "to make others happy and comfortable."[91]

On January 1, 1863 Martha wrote in her journal, "early I awoke and beheld the quiet stars and clear moonlight coming in upon me. I remembered that it was the first day of 1863 and

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[89] Diary 3, 8 October 1862, 87.

[90] Diary 3, 27 November 1862, 99.

[91] Diary 3, 25 December 1862, 110.

while standing upon the threshold of the new year let me make firm resolve to, fight it through surmounting all difficulties, enduring all hardships ever strong for the right."[92] The strength in her voice was matched by the renewed strength in her body. For all her work in and for the Summit House hospital, her own health had improved. She no longer complained of coughing, though still of intermittent pain in her chest, and had managed to gain more than twenty pounds. In addition, she was, once again, finding inspiration in her reading, especially a biography of Emily C. Judson of which she said, "find it very interesting there are many traits in her character similar to my own."[93] Judson was a teacher and writer who married against the wishes of both her husband's and her own family in part because of the difference in their ages – the Reverend Adoniram Judson was nearly thirty years older than she, his third wife. In 1846 she traveled with him to Burma where he had been one of the earliest Baptist missionaries, working with him and raising her children and her stepchildren. After her husband's death in 1850, she returned to the United States, supporting herself as a writer, but died in 1854 from consumption.[94] No doubt Martha thought Judson's independence, pursuit of a professional life, service to the needy, and poor health were evidence of the traits of character they shared, but also said of the couple a few days later, "Emily Judson and her noble husband … gave up friends and home, that they might lead the heathen from idolatry."[95]

On the last day of January, on the last page of the journal Martha had begun on her previous birthday she said goodbye to the volume:

> the last page of my diary is without lines, yet I could write straight if it were not for my habit of hastily running on …. The true and better thoughts are not written here; there are

[92] Diary 3, 1 January 1863, 115.

[93] Diary 3, 27 January 1863, 127.

[94] *Portraits of American Women Writers That Appeared in Print Before 1861.*

[95] Diary 3, 30 January 1863, 128.

> many things I would wish to erase, many sentences, trifling and unimportant, but it has been and is a pleasure for me to put down my passing thoughts and though no one else may ever read them it may be a gratification to me in after years. This is the last of my 23rd year, for tomorrow I will be 24 and all the week past, I have suffered at times knowing that I should write and ask for what it may cause pain to give. I have thought of it so much lately – … I did not retire until late & then gazed long upon the beautiful scenery, without, the pure white snow and mild stars almost eclipsed by the moon which shone with unusual brilliancy. Good bye dear Diary thou has been my good friend for the past year, and I close with regrets, another will open and I trust be better, far better than this.[96]

For us, however, another journal does not open until July 1, 1864.

In the letters that exist for the following eighteen months, most of those between Martha and Sadie are filled with the more mundane details of their lives – of parties Sadie attended, and the work Martha did at home and in the hospital. They wrote lovingly to each other, planning and looking forward to being together in Brooklyn with Sadie's family or in Darby. Their times together were infrequent and sometimes brief, but the importance of their friendship begun at the Willett's school, as teacher and student, grew stronger over the years. The friendship with Sadie, in fact, was the only one that rivaled that with John in depth and intensity, John having the advantage of proximity. Again, as with John, Anna, and Oldden, Martha derived satisfaction from her role as advisor as well as confidant. While she could write "freely" to Sadie, she functioned much as an older sister. It made her no less dependent on Sadie, however, for love and understanding.

Martha often mentioned John in her letters to Sadie and on June 8, 1863, entered into a discussion about the religious differences between Anna and John. By then, they had become engaged, and Anna was preparing to return to Utica, New York, to teach and live with her family before being married. In answer to Sadie, Martha wrote

> thee knows my opinions, she belongs to church, he is not as much of a Friend as some & I hope will go with her, because I want them to <u>go together</u>. Sometimes it worries me

[96] Diary 3, 31 January 1863, 129.

> and yet I shall talk to him very plainly – O I have promised her to be his faithful friend when she is away, for they may not be married for two years, & I shall not withhold advice & counsel, certainly they have been acquainted long enough to know each other well. I know each of their hearts, the history of his life is in my keeping, sacred & in loving hands, and she opens her heart to me more than to any other.[97]

The following May, Martha was surprised to find Anna back in Darby with John, following a visit he made to her in Utica. She reported to Sadie on her role as friend and protector saying

> it gives me happiness to make these two happy, I shall keep and treasure John's love always, nothing can desecrate or spoil it, I shall watch over him & care for his constant welfare and happiness till, I resign him to hands that make him far happier. I know him better than any other human being unless it be Anna, & even she cannot know him much better.[98]

In July 1864, when her diary entries began again, one of Martha's first subjects was the Summit House hospital and the banning of volunteers from the premises. She and her sister Sallie had arrived at the hospital and were walking through the wards when an officer asked for her name and then told her she was no longer needed. She said not only was he "proud of his authority" but that she answered merrily, saying she "was glad Ladies could use their influence outside if not inside." She insisted on trying to deliver a tumbler of jelly to a patient before leaving and then talking with one of the male nurses both of which she was barred from doing. She and Sallie then walked over to the camp to pass out fans to the soldiers but were stopped from that, too, this time by an armed guard who escorted them to the gate. Martha described a scene of a hundred soldiers looking on and shouting at their expulsion and some coming to her house a few hours later threatening to burn the hospital down. All this seemed to her a result of a letter she had written to the Secretary of War about "the facts in regard to the Summit."[99]

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[97] Martha Schoefield to Sadie Brouwer, 8 June 1863, MSP.

[98] Martha Schoefield to Sadie Brouwer, 1 May 1864, MSP.

[99] Diary 4, 5 July 1864, 2.

Whatever the reasons for her being dismissed, Martha would no longer serve the soldiers or her country in the hospital.

That summer John remained ever present, talking to her about his "business affairs" and the job he had taken in Philadelphia. In the months that followed, he invested money for her and for her sister, Eliza, Martha's going, in part, toward paying a portion of their brother Ben's debts. There were also several occasions when they still engaged in long talks, one at the gate in the moonlight, and though she wrote none of the details, she emphasized how much she enjoyed "these pleasant free conversations," and added, "it is helping both of us I guess."[100] It is easy to imagine that John served as a sounding board for her plans – both to go South and more immediately to take a position teaching at the local school in Darby. Martha could not be idle for long. But in addition, as her confidence had grown and her independence increased, so had her ability to separate from her family and even from John. In her fears for Ben's future, and because part of his debts were owed to their brother-in-law, Sam Ash, she applied for the job in Darby without consulting her mother or sisters. Moreover, she secretly intended giving the bulk of her salary to Ben, with instructions to him on how to use the money to ease his financial burdens.

All those close to her were concerned that Martha was putting her health in danger by returning to the classroom. But, as before, she went ahead in spite of everyone's objections. Her sister Eliza called her selfish, the rebuke stinging all the more because of her plans for her salary. Martha took on yet another project in the name of Edward P. Wilson, a cousin who was a captain

[100] Diary 4, 22 July 1864, 6. There is little detail in Martha's diaries or letters about Ben's life. She does say that some of the money he owed was to Sam Ash, but nothing about when or why Sam lent the money. She also insinuates that Ben enjoyed the pleasures of Philadelphia and New York – possibly drinking, gambling, or perhaps visiting prostitutes. Whatever the particular circumstances of Ben's life, Martha worried increasingly about him, such as on July 24th when she wrote, "I am very tried to night & yet have not done much – but my mind, that aches with thoughts – all the time – I am silently pondering on my erring brother's life."

in the army and home on furlough for ten days. She said of him that their separation had strengthened their friendship and that "he had so much to tell." She saw him "greatly changed for the better" and proclaimed. "he loves me very much – I can never doubt it now – a pure friendly love & I treasure it."[101] She had earlier advised Edward on some personal matter and he continued to turn to her for advice. In early September, back with his unit, she received a letter from him of which she reported, "it is a sweet peace to know that I am his best friend still, that in all things he loves and trusts me, that my friendship has helped save him."[102]

Although there had been psychological and physical distance placed between Martha and John, in part as a consequence of his engagement, and there were others of her friends and family to benefit from her attentions, she never strayed far in her writing from the value she still placed in her love for him. She continued to believe she knew him better than anyone – understood him better – and in a novel she was reading, *Agatha's Husband,* recognized his likeness. She wrote of the book:

> it has satisfied me more than any work of fiction read for a long time. One character is so very much like my dear friend. Every little act just the same – O Nathanial Harper how plainly I have seen that beautiful expression which the author gives thee – on another face, sweet and dear to me, the same noble purposes, inflexible command of will, all, all, are the same. There are but few such – but I know the character is not over drawn.[103]

He might some day be married to another but because of the depth of her knowledge of him, there was a sense in which he would always be hers and that might, in the end, be enough to sustain her through her choice, for the time being, to live alone

When school began in September, she fell into much the same schedule as when she taught at the Bethany school, with the exception that now there was no long commute to and

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[101] Diary 4, 22 August 1864, 13.

[102] Diary 4, 3 September 1864, 7.

[103] Diary 4, 31 August 1864, 15-16.

from work. She rose early to do a little housework or gardening, then went to school, often staying late into the afternoon. Discipline was again an issue, and again, she worked to rule by love rather than by the ruler. However, only a few weeks after beginning teaching again she lamented, "oh school teachers spend much more time than from 9 till 12, & 1 to 4 -- many, many weary hours."[104] The troublesome boys in this school were Irish and one, John Boyle, she had arrested for, among other things, threatening to strike a girl and stealing. Martha's harshest criticism, however, was leveled at Boyle's father who refused to pay his son's bail. She recorded in her journal the father's exclamation of, "'let'em go awhile it will frighten'em!!!"' and replied, "Ah – Parents set the example." Of both the children and parents she concluded, "they are a naughty set – poor little sinners – their parents are not fit to take care of them."[105] Yet, by October she reported that things had, for the most part, settled down and the children were less troublesome. However, the extent to which her attitude toward her Irish students was colored by her anti-Catholicism is reinforced with a comment she made a few months later about the nearby town of Sharon. The sharpness of her tongue and an unusual lack of sympathy with others were clearly displayed when she said, "we walked into Sharon – my first time since the Catholics moved there – it brought back many memories and I felt it was now desecrated by a bigoted, narrow minded set."

In November, among other things, Martha noted attending a Teacher Institute in the nearby town of Media, and reported on the interesting lectures she heard, as well as the camaraderie of the other teachers and that she especially enjoyed the instruction on teaching Geography and Chemistry. She also wrote of having "two young men in school one Henry Clay – Col[ored] – Contraband – the other William Doughterty been 3 years in the War – both good &

[104] Diary 4, 30 September 1864, 24.

[105] Diary 4, 28 September 1864, 23.

studious."[106] As before, she made visits to parents to both report on bad behavior and praise improvements. She reported in December that Ben wrote her a letter both "affectionate and kind" but he would not accept her earnings. This letter could not be kept from her mother and Martha was forced to explain her motives for taking the job in the Darby school. She made no mention of her mother's reaction to the news, but continued to teach, and to send Ben money. Both she and her mother continued to worry about him. But as Christmas approached and she prepared to close her school for the holidays, a clear indication of her success at her work was that many of the students said they would have been happier to continue coming to school rather than staying home until after the new year, and she replied that though she needed rest, she liked teaching in Darby very much and got along well.[107]

Martha said little of the holidays themselves in her diary beyond noting that it was a "lovely, beautiful Christmas," and she hoped for peace for the country in the new year.[108] On her way home from Philadelphia on New Year's Eve, John escorted her and she recorded of the night, "it was well he was there – I always feel safe when he is about and I know he will take good care of me always."[109] Early January brought skating parties with John and evenings reading poetry. They attended a lecture by G. W. Curtis and she wrote of John as of old, "in the evening Oh! it needs no record here – the trust, the confidence, the good the nobleness so rarely found in human nature is indelibly impressed on my mind and heart – Never, never in all my life

[106] Diary 4, 16 November 1864, 33.

[107] Diary 4, 23 December 1864, 9.

[108] Diary 4, 25 December 1864 and 1 January 1865, 40, 42.

[109] Diary 4, 31 December 1864, 41.

can it be forgotten – not one word can be effaced, the beauty and truthfulness – the fidelity manifested must be and will be unchanged – Another link, that binds with eternal strengths."[110]

At the end of January, Martha heralded the great news that the House of Representatives had passed a resolution to amend the constitution and abolish slavery, emphasizing, "this is the good from the War."[111] On her birthday, that annual date of taking an assessment of her life she penned:

> All day I well remembered that a new year was beginning with me – twenty six of mine have passed – gone with the eternal. And at the birth of each new one, resolutions are formed and promises made – This will be particularly memorable for – I received a sweet poem written by my dearest friend – one that does not forget these dates concerning me – Ah! There was more than this, there was the renewal of perfect faith – and trust which binds with stronger ties a friendship that increases with time and grows brighter as we near to Heaven – even there will be undimmed – because founded on purity and unselfishness, kind words & thoughts are mine.[112]

Reiterated here, as before, was that, for her, a part of John would always be hers alone, their relationship unmatched by any other she had known. A few days later and back at school Martha described a quilt that she and her students had been working on for the soldiers. The children brought in patches of fabric and together they personalized them with sentiments, sayings, and Bible verses. Martha said on one she stitched, "This quilt is especially for soldiers not commissioned officers," possibly another chance to make a point with the officer who treated her so rudely at the Summit House the summer before. On another square she stitched a flag, and the less than peaceful inscription, "Our Flag the first man that insults it shoot him down." Martha's sister, Eliza, was more loving in her sentiments, sewing a shield with "A. Lincoln" in

[110] Diary 4, 3 January 1865, 42; 5 January 1865, 43; 14 January 1865, 45; 24 January 1865, 46.

[111] Diary 4, 31 January 1865, 48.

[112] Diary 4, 1 February 1865, 49.

the center, and underneath, "Thou had indeed made this a shield for all Nations."[113] It had been seven months since Martha had been able to work in the hospital but her thoughts remained with the men and their suffering.

March brought the inauguration of Lincoln and a return of complaints from Martha about her health along with a few small spats with John. All were mended however, and they attended a "Soiree at The Academy of Music" which she liked very much but more so the fact that John insisted she stay the night with her sister Sallie in Philadelphia, arguing that it was not 'fit for a lady to ride in [the] cars late [at night]."[114] A few days later, Martha received a letter and the news that Ben would, after all, accept the money from her, but he drew the line at letting her dictate how he would spend it. Of this she said, "the agony & disappointment of my heart was almost unbearable – for I had fondly hoped, this might release my dear Mother from her many burdens."[115]

The month of April proved some of the happiest days of the previous four years and many of the darkest. It began on April 4 with the news that Richmond had been taken. Church bells rang, businesses closed, and cannons were fired. Martha had her students sing patriotic songs. The next day came a celebration of the capture of Petersburg and Martha's exclaimed, "it seems like the beginning of the end." On April 10 was "the glorious news that Lee had surrendered to Grant" and Martha recorded, "thousands turned out, bon fires lighted, bells rung & engines whistled, such an overflowing of joy & thankfulness in peoples hearts. The men ran through Darby in the night Shouting the news ringing bells – it seems too much to believe. I allowed my children to sing for 1/2 hour every heart throbs with the hope of the War soon being

[113] Diary 4, 6 February 1865, 50.

[114] Diary 4, 18 March 1865, 59.

[115] Diary 4, 22 March 1865, 61.

over." The celebrating continued the next day with businesses again closed and "all kinds of excitement."[116] On April 13 Martha wanted to attend a lecture by Emma Hardings in Philadelphia but had no escort and asked, "what is the use in always needing a man?" With her sister Lydia in tow she decided to make the trip alone and though they had to leave the Music Hall before the talk ended, she reported the railroad cars contained "a quiet set." Upon reaching home she declared, "I think we did very well." Martha called Hardings' address "Grand," its focus being "the day of Reconstruction" and the progress that would be made as a result of four terrible years of war. Hardings lavished praise on Lincoln, calling him "the preserver of his country as George Washington [was] its father."[117] However, the elation of victory and war's end would last but a few short days. By the fifteenth of April the pages of Martha's journal would be darkened with the news of Lincoln's assassination and the black ink that would line the borders of its pages.

Of the many words she wrote in the aftermath of the president's death, the most immediate were "this morning the great heart of this nation received its most bitter blow – like lightening it flashes over our whole country." Martha reported that G. Ridgeway brought them the news and "amid the sobs of the family [she] read the messages." Soon her sister Sallie and her family arrived from Philadelphia and it was as solemn a meeting as if one among their family had died. On April 16, they all went to Meeting where Martha said, "Mother spoke beautifully from Deut. 4.30. 'When thou art in tribulation, and all these things are come upon thee, even in the latter days, if thou turn to the Lord thy God, and shall be obedient unto his voice, he will not forsake thee, neither destroy thee, nor forget the covenant of thy fathers.' Many shed tears, strong men that are unused to weeping." On the eighteenth she was back in school but scarcely

[116] Diary 4, 3 April 1865, 63; 5 April 1865, 65; 10 April 1865, 66; 11 April 1865, 66.

[117] Diary 4, 13 April 1865, 68.

taught, talking with the children instead and comforting them. The following day, Martha described the quiet of the streets though thousands walked about. Churches were open and many sought refuge, listening to sermons, organ music, and choirs. She wrote, "millions mourn to day in sincerity, this is not for show, but because Abraham Lincoln had grown in the hearts of the people, his truth, integrity, honesty and great worth, winning for him a love that no other man living or dead ever had."[118] On April 20, Martha put on a tri-colored crepe bow to be worn for 90 days.

Some of the most stunning writing Martha did concerning the assassination and its aftermath concerned her viewing Lincoln's body at Independence Hall. She stood on the steps of a church with Eliza and Sallie until the booming of a gun "announced the arrival" and said:

> we waited until nearly 6, & then came the great procession. Military, Lodges, Societies, the hearse containing the coffin, was splendid to see, being of black trimmed with silver fringe, it was up where all could see the coffin – being 16ft high – drawn by eight horses, we had a good view, as the gas was lit & it stopped opposite us. Following it were miles of people, 2000 colored troops, with muskets reversed, in all not less than 30 or 40,000. It was two hours passing one place -- & had it been before dark, would have been grandly solemn, it was any how; for there was scarcely a sound save the slow music of a dirge as the bands passed – all the flags draped; how different from all other processions. Here there is no shout of welcome, no loud hurrahs, and uncontrollable cheers – nothing but the immensity of a nations grief pressing upon all – this would seem a mockery only there is sincerity in it all, & each one wishes to pay the last sad tribute to a beloved & honored ruler.[119]

The following morning at 6:00 a.m., she walked with a group including Sallie's husband, Sam, and their Uncle Paxton, toward Independence Hall to wait their turn to view the President's body. The line moved slowly and because there were not police or soldiers there early enough, she said there was much disorder at points along the route. They stood in line for four and a half hours before reaching the steps of the Hall. She described the moments she spent inside:

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[118] Diary 4, 15 April 1865, 69; 16 April 1865, 69-70; 18 April 1865, 71; 19 April 1865, 72.

[119] Diary 4, 22 April 1865, 74-75.

> what a throng of memories rushed o'er me as I stood in the presence of all [that was] earthly of Abraham Lincoln. Yes, he lay in his last sleep, looking at rest and in peace; though I better remember the pleasant smile that I had seen in life -- We were hurried on, but words fail to describe all my feelings, or the beauty of the room where he lay, nearly all the portraits were draped, but at the head, was the old Liberty Bell, that proclaimed liberty throughout the land, ninety years ago – there were magnificent flowers everywhere – The exit and entrance was made through two windows on each side, the floor and steps carpeted so no noisy footsteps, disturbed the solemn stillness.[120]

In the afternoon she went to hear a number of sermons and music, and later attended another talk by Emma Hardings. Afterward she offered to return with Lydia, who had not been able to be there in the morning, to view the President's body. This time the wait was only two hours and entering the Hall for a second time she, once again, "gazed on the dead face of [the] murdered President."[121]

Ever the teacher, Martha recorded some unpleasantness that occurred in the morning as she stood in line and her reaction:

> an 11 year old boy was laughing loud & making rough remarks, I took his arm and said, young man do you know where you are going; he replied yes to see old Abe – this was too much. I pulled him out and said no you're not – he says I don't care, I quickly put my fingers on his collar, and told him if he said another word I would have him in the station house in five minutes, get the police to arrest him. He turned pale & seemed so frightened, & the 1/2 hour we remained near him he never said a word. I could not bear it from any one. The great sorrow has made vengeance stronger in our hearts. No one will bear much – from copperheads.[122]

The tipping point for Martha's decision to apply for a position as a freedmen's teacher came after the assassination of Abraham Lincoln. By then she was not only secure in her abilities as a teacher but had become self-assured as well as self-reliant. She made no mention in her journal of the day when she decided to send the letter asking for an appointment to teach in the South. However, after Ben's letter on March 22, she seems to have felt released from her

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[120] Diary 4, 23 April 1865, 75-76.

[121] Diary 4, 23 April 1865, 76.

[122] Diary 4, 23 April 1865, 77-78.

commitment to dedicate her life to saving him and lessening her Mother's burdens where he was concerned. She could now dedicate her life to an even greater cause, and with Lincoln's death her thinking on where best to serve seems to have crystallized. She applied to teach, as she had before, without her family's knowledge and wrote on July 16, "this morn I had a letter from J.E. Rhoads saying I was appointed a teacher by the Penna. Association for the Relief of Freedmen. It was quite a trial to Mother when I read the note. I tried to be cheerful but my own heart was aching."[123] The newly won freedom of former slaves, and Martha Schoefield's freedom to move out into a world far beyond Darby, was delivered at the same time.

As she prepared to leave in August and September, she not only closed her school but brought to a close the chapter of her life that included John Bunting as her "dearest Mon Ami." Not only would she be passing him into the care of another, as she herself had come to frame the relationship between them, but beginning a life he would not take part in. She had no idea how long she would be gone, or if she would return, but this was, as she saw it, a new life, as his would be after his marriage. It was not an easy transition for either of them. On August 25, Martha wrote in her journal, "J up – I asked him for my letters, he would not unless I returned his – this was more than I expected – they had been my great comfort & I could not give them up – even the thought made me cry – it was so sudden. We had much talk & he said he would give me mine back."[124] It does seem more than a little unfair for her to have asked him for her letters without expecting to return his to him. While she could better guarantee that no one would invade the private world they had shared – his letters to her were double locked in a box in her room – she must have wondered if hers to him were, or would remain, as secure. She may have feared what Anna would think should she read them after she became his wife. However, what

[123] Diary 4, 16 July 1865, 100.

[124] Diary 4, 25 August 1865, 114.

Martha planned was to burn their letters together. On September 6, John brought the letters to her and she said, "oh what strange feelings they gave – I sat up late in my room!! I will long remember the eve – how suddenly the long hoped for may come & go."[125]

On September 25, Martha's mother went to see J. E. Rhoads, and returned with "favorable accounts." There was much packing to do, as she and her fellow teacher, Mary Sharp, would have to "keep house," and have everything from beds and mattresses to pots, pans, dishes and a stove sent to Wadmawlaw Island, South Carolina. There were many parties in Martha's honor as well as gifts from family and friends. Ben even contributed to a beautiful trunk given her, though the money may well have come from her own earnings. She took a short trip to New York to see Sadie and to Massachusetts where Anna had moved and was teaching. John joined them there for the last three days and accompanied Martha home. On October first, eight days before she would be at sea, she said, "after all had retired I burned over four hundred pages, that I had written to dear John. It pained me very much – for they had been happiness to him, & a great pleasure to me to write them – I wrapped them all in the shroud of the past – and only on our hearts will there be any record, there they must remain sacred. I wrote to him also. How many memories come over me – trusting and true.[126] This ritual was both an ending and a beginning. On October 2, John came to see her and "read a sweet piece." On the third he brought her new shoes and books. She did not, however, record their saying good bye to each other.

Martha's departure was tinged with sadness to leave her home family and friends, but also contained a feeling of triumph – of a woman's life of her own design – of answering a deep call from within to make a difference in the world beyond the walls of home or community. She

[125] Diary 4, 6 September 1865, 115.

[126] Diary 4, October 1, 1865, 117.

could have been a young woman who, having passed through the tumultuous years of the war as a teacher and a nurse, chosen a more traditional path to happiness and fulfillment in marriage and motherhood. Yet, these were not choices Martha had rejected entirely to this point in her life. Through her relationship with John Bunting, through the years of the war and the assassination of the president, through her reading and her searching, she had begun to find her true life but also more immediately, her mission to aid southern blacks in their transition from enslavement to freedom. The question of her health remained. But at this moment she was strong both in body and spirit and, as ever, determined to be of use.

CHAPTER 4

INTO THE PATHLESS DEEP

On October 6, 1865 at seven o'clock in the morning, Martha Schofield tearfully said goodbye to her mother. She was leaving her home, and the Quaker community she loved in Darby, to begin the greatest journey of her life. She was going to teach the freed people of Wadmalaw Island, South Carolina. She started out with her sisters, Sallie and Lydia, along with Sallie's husband Sam Ash and their son, her nephew, Howard. They were met in New York City by Sadie Brouwer and went directly to meet Mary A. Sharp, her future companion and fellow teacher.[1] Martha wrote of their first meeting. Mary "was very talkitive and pleasant, no doubt I will learn to like her yet a great agony seemed to come over me & formed into the words, my heart will break, she lives without the great loves and affections that are my life." In the months to come her instincts would prove to be right, but with characteristic self-discipline she said, "I resolutely crushed back these feelings, determined to wait and pray."[2] With introductions made and some of the business of traveling attended to, Martha and her family returned to Sadie's to spend the evening and night. Soon after, Edward and Anna Willets arrived and all had "a real

[1] Mary A. Sharp, from Manchester, Pennsylvania, was born about 1837. After teaching with Martha for one year, she continued teaching in black schools on the coast of South Carolina and in Charleston for at least another decade. She subsequently went to Liberia as a missionary teacher. Ronald E. Butchart, The Freedmen's Teacher Project Database (unpublished manuscript, consulted 2009) and Katherine Smedley, *Martha Schofield and the Re-Education of the South, 1839-1916* (New York: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1987), 289.

[2] Martha Schofield Diary (Diary 5), 6 October 1865, 1, Martha Schofield Papers, Friends Historical Library, Swarthmore College. Within a little more than a month Martha wrote of Mary Sharp that she was "as good as a dictionary or encyclopedia … everything must reach her thro' judgment or reason, not the heart" and then added, "No, I guess I will never love her warmly though I may respect and esteem her." Draft of letter from Martha Schofield to Jesse James and Sallie Cleaver, 20 November 1865, in Katherine Smedley, *Martha Schofield and the Re-Education of the South, 1839-1916* (New York: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1987, 74.

happy time."[3] Secretly, Anna Willets and Sadie's mother both slipped five-dollar notes into Martha's portmanteau. This was a parting that justified the gathering of old and dear friends.

During the following two days, Martha did some sightseeing and shopping and went to Plymouth Church to hear "an excellent sermon" by Henry Ward Beecher. Then on October 9, "she bid them all good bye on the wharf" and stepped aboard the *Empire City* for the trip south. Unexpectedly, no one could go onboard without a pass and Martha's goodbyes to her loved ones were hastier than she had expected. In her diary she wrote, "O! this was pain indeed, yet I tried to be brave knowing God watches over all." Martha waited on the upper deck with the Heacock sisters, also traveling south to teach, and later said, as she watched the last waving handkerchiefs disappear from view, "we moved out into the pathless deep … and I knew well that I was leaving all that made life dear." [4] There she stood, a woman of twenty-six, traveling to an unknown land to live and work among strangers for a cause she believed in. It was an act of bravery and, in large part, an act of freedom.

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[3] Martha Schofield Diary (Diary 5), 6 October 1865, 1.

[4] In what looks like a draft of a letter Martha wrote within a month of her arrival on Wadmawlaw she said of the women traveling with her to South Carolina and of the Heacock sisters in particular, "I had never spent an hour with a single one on Board yet many were known to me --, especially the two Misses Heacocks from Chester Hills, I felt drawn to them for the same religious sect claimed us." In a letter written at noon on the day of Martha's departure, Sallie reported to her husband, Samuel Ash, "we have just returned from New York, and taken the last fond look of our dear Sister, who sailed in the steamer 'Empire City' this morning; at half past ten the chords were cut, and we remained on the Wharf as long as they were in sight -- Thee may know my <u>heart ached</u>, as they were sailing off; for it was very very hard to part with my dear Sister, although I tried to keep my spirits up for her sake – the officer would not allow us to go on board at all, which was a <u>great disappointment</u>, as we went down early, Mrs. Brower, Sadie, Howard and self, that we might see her comfortably fixed in her State room, but it was positively forbidden and we had to remain on the wharf … -- as we were standing there & dear Mart with us (for if she went on they would not allow her to come off) the Heacock girls came up, we were so glad to see them, and it quite lightened our hearts that they would be on board, there were some <u>thirty</u> ladies all very nice looking and indeed it was a very pleasant agreeable looking company on board, dear Mart looked quite cheerful, waiving her hankerchief – as long as we could see – she seemed to think they would cheer one another up and have a real good time." There were four Heacock sisters who taught in freedmen's schools in the South and of the four it was most likely Ann and Gayner who were aboard ship with Martha that October. Undated letter, November 1865, Martha Schofield Papers (MSP), Friends Historical Library, Swarthmore College; Sallie Schofield Ash to Samuel Ash, 9 October 1865, 1-2, MSP; Butchart, *The Freedmen's Teacher Project Database*; Diary 5, 9 October 1865, 3.

Martha's courage and determination were built upon a foundation of the love of her family and closest friends, her discernment of God's will for her life, her work as a teacher, the war, Abraham Lincoln's assassination, and the precarious state of her health. Yet, her sensitivity and passion, the progressiveness of her family and its religion, also steered her away from a more ordinary life. For more than five years she had been gathering the tools and honing the skills necessary to construct a life that reflected her beliefs and commitments. That life began in earnest as she embarked on her work as teacher and servant to the poor on Wadmalaw Island. She was venturing out alone into a foreign land and the dangers were many. All was uncertain – where she would live, how she would live, and what her reception would be on that small and remote island. Martha and all those who went south to teach risked their lives. For her, it was perhaps faith in God and the surety she was following God's will that carried her through the day of her departure and her journey south. Her faith as well as her acceptance of the potential dangers were laid out in a note she left for her mother in which she said:

> Do not mourn because thy daughter is striving to walk in the path of duty – can we not trust our Father whose overshadowing love guides and guards even the humble ever if they walk in accordance with his will – I feel deeply the bitterness of the separation – but the Comforter will come, and we will be enabled to bear all the burdens that fall upon us – I go forth in <u>perfect trust</u>, knowing that if I endeavor to do my duty, the end will be well – that one Eye watches over and protects always and in his keeping I trustingly place my life – no future can make me lose that faith or take away the constant comfort it gives – let it be your strength also for we know in whom we trust. Do not be anxious about me on the voyage – Is not God upon the ocean as well as on the land? That He may bless you and keep you restoring us again together if it be his will, or comforting you if I come not back must ever be my prayer. I hope to return. If not <u>remember</u> "I go where I shall behold the face of my Father who is in Heaven" where eternal blessedness fills the soul and the "pure in heart see God."[5]

[5] Handwritten copy of letter with the inscription "Letter found in her Mother's drawer after her departure, 10/5/1865," MSP.

Her mother's reply was both tender and revealing of her recognition of the woman Martha had become. One week after her departure and having received no letters, Mary Child sat alone in her room and wrote to her daughter:

> I have thought about thee day and night, several times got up in the night to look out at the moon, and wondered if thee was enjoying it, you have had beautiful weather – I did not go to meeting 1st day thought I could not be composed enough, and it was as much as I could bear to day, I felt very sorrowful after you left on 6th day and after an hour or two went up stairs opened my drawer and found thy sweet note which I would not part with for one dollar, it gives evidence my dear child of thy faith and confidence in Him whose favor is life – of thy adherence to duty, and perfect trust in his goodness and his power and while mourning for thy departure I asked myself the question, had I not endeavored to instill into the minds of my children the importance of obeying that light within which will lead them in the path of safety therefore I felt that I must give thee into his keeping with full confidence he will restore thee to us again.[6]

Martha would be restored to her family, but in the nine months of her stay on Wadmalaw she would be changed. She would find friendship but would also be plagued by the indifference and coldness of her companion, Mary Sharp. It was a particular hardship for her in their first months together. She would be ill with no doctor and few medicines at hand. She would be stunned by the destitution of the freed people and the magnitude of their needs. She would live, especially in the first few months, without many of the basic necessities and comforts of her life at home. She would be caught in a web of competing political, racial, and social forces that hampered her ability to work directly toward the freedom she believed in and sought to aid former slaves in realizing. She would be homesick and would fall in love. She would relish the beauty of the landscape and seascape and would turn ever inward to find her bearings and strength. With all, Martha would thrive.

To a greater extent than ever before, hers was a life of action. There was little time to read and what time she had away from the classroom, Sabbath School, distributing clothing, attending church, visiting the homes of the refugees, nursing the sick, and housekeeping, she

[6] Mary Schofield Child to Martha Schofield, 12 October 1865, MSP.

spent writing letters, writing in her diary, and walking and riding around the island. Martha never minded the heat and was continually struck by the natural beauty that surrounded her. She felt safe among the freed people on the island. Her freedom of movement was matched by the power inherent in the work she was doing in making decisions about how schools would be organized and how best to meet the most immediate and often basic needs of the people around her. She was living with and working among a small band of others like herself – men and women dedicated to aiding in a social and political revolution come to fruition after four long and bloody years of war. None among her fellow workers would suggest she was too zealous or attempt to restrict her movement or seriously question her judgment. There was no mother or step-father or sisters present to caution, criticize, lecture, or snicker, and Martha was largely in control of what they learned of her life in South Carolina. Her letters were often self-censored out of a desire to spare them worry but also out of a sense of self-protection. Yet at the same time, through letters written and received, Martha shared her experiences and secured the love and support she needed to carry on with her work.

What Martha envisioned, at least initially, was a new South built on and out of the very rubble of the old, and she was exhilarated at the part she would play in the reconstruction. No matter her appreciation of the physical beauty of former plantations on Wadmalaw, even in various stages of disrepair or decay, she was in the main unsympathetic toward white southerners and triumphant over them. As she wrote about a visit to Charleston in April 1866, "we were out attending to business and visiting the ruins until 2. How much good it did me to see that here the traitors had suffered, nothing but walls & demolished houses where our shot & shell had made sad ravages."[7] Yet, her interactions with former planters and their families on Wadmalaw included both cordiality and cooperation, especially with those who displayed even a minimal

[7] Diary 5, 6 April 1866, 86.

amount of loyalty to the Union or sympathy toward the condition of the freed people. The truth remained, however, that she was a foreigner in a foreign land with the power to impose, at least for the moment, her vision of the South's future.

In late November, Martha received a letter from a friend, Matilda McAllister, who, after explaining that she was anxious to hear in detail what Martha had been doing and experiencing, declared, "there is a romance about it which I am satisfied would please me. I am so glad that thy talents are usefully employed in teaching those poor outcasts we may say yet at the same time objects of the love of our Common Father."[8] For all Martha's idealism and faith, she was also practical and experienced. She knew the cost of war on human bodies and in human hearts. She had seen, first hand, the realities of life for the poor, black and white, in the North. Rather than some romantic notion of "teaching those poor outcasts" Martha expected, even desired, to be tested. She expected to find poverty, ignorance, destruction, and resistance. Her overriding motivation was to find work worthy of her ideals and talents, and a sphere that provided greater freedom and autonomy than was possible at home or could be found in marriage. Her work on Wadmalaw Island offered all of that and more.

That the people she had so willingly volunteered to serve were in Matilda McAllister's words, "poor outcasts" and "yet at the same time objects of the love of our Common Father" describes, in part, Martha's attitude toward the freed people. Her family's deep roots in the abolition movement and anti-slavery organizations, their participation in the underground railroad, her own work as a teacher in a black school, and her support for the war, especially in its connection to ending slavery, make clear both her belief that human bondage was on moral and religious grounds indefensible, and her credentials as a friend to and fighter for the race. Unlike most freedmen's teachers, Martha had taught in a black school, been in black homes,

[8] Matilda McAllister to Martha Schofield, 23 November 1865, MSP.

listened to black speakers, and sat at her own dining room table with black guests. She had met the high as well as the lowly and understood the role education could play in lifting individual lives as well as the race as a whole out of the ignorance and poverty inflicted over generations by enslavement.

In her first year in South Carolina among the freed people, Martha exhibited both harshly racist attitudes and deep connections and sympathies. She would move among the refugees on the island and be inspired by their dignity and determination, affected by their faith, and touched by the depth and eloquence of their religious expression. Regardless of the superiority she felt as a northern, white, educated woman, regardless of her intention to impose northern, middle class standards of living and working on former slaves, she was changed by the experience of being among them. She adapted and she learned. Even if in her first season of working as a freedmen's teacher she did not yet realize the extent to which the people and the work had taken root within her, she felt a deep sense of satisfaction and worth in the labor and the cause. Martha had prayed that God would lead her to the life He intended for her and there on Wadmalaw she must have begun to believe that her prayers were being answered.

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Martha's three days at sea on route to South Carolina were pleasant, and for the most part she did not suffer from seasickness. There were, she wrote, approximately twenty-five women on board and their time together was enjoyable. On October 11, their first full day at sea, Martha recorded in her journal, "a most lovely day and we spent most of the time on deck, Miss Allyn from Cape Cod and myself sat on a coil of rope nearly all the P.M. – a hawk was sitting on the mast most of the time." However, on that same day she performed the sad duty of tearing up "some dear precious letters that I could <u>not</u> burn, yet wish destroyed" and then dropped the

pieces "into the deep sea and saw the white waves bear them away for ever."[9] These were surely letters from or to John Bunting that Martha wanted destroyed. It was a ritual that commemorated the ending of one life and the beginning of another. Her apolysis, her final prayer in that hour was, "Gone! Gone! With memory for a monument so that the resting place will never be forgotten."[10]

In three days of "splendid weather and smooth sea" they reached Hilton Head and immediately were transferred to a smaller boat that would take them to Beaufort.[11] With the sun shining, an air of adventure, and an eye for detail, Martha described the scene:

> When we [started] it was a sight the small sea critter was loaded down, boxes, trunks, bundles, white & black folks, children and chaplains, officers and privates, men & women, all huddled together, piled as high as the Pilot House so that the helmsman had to get them to lower their heads so he could see to steer. All along the sides persons sat on the edge. I stood at the Pilot House window watching the beauty of the southern sky and magnificent sunset --. The tall palm trees stood like sentinels along the coast.[12]

At Beaufort, amidst the clamor of cargo and people filling the wharf and with the help of "some teachers on Board," Martha and Mary found their way to James A. DeForest who delivered them to the home of Mr. and Mrs. Gage where they would stay until the steamer arrived that would take them to Wadmalaw.[13] On their first morning in South Carolina, Martha and Mary were escorted to a Mission House by Rev. DeForest where they spent most of the day with one of the

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[9] Diary 5, 9 October 1865, 4.

[10] Diary 5, 9 October 1865, 4.

[11] Diary 5, 12 October 1865, 5.

[12] Diary 5, 12 October 1865, 5.

[13] Reverend James A. DeForest taught in Beaufort, South Carolina between 1863 and 1866, and Martha makes note that he was then Superintendent of Schools. Though she gives no first names for Mr. and Mrs. Gage, she does say that Mr. Gage was the oldest son of Francis Dana Gage who taught in Port Royal between 1862 and 1863. Butchart, *The Freedmen's Teacher Project Database*; Diary 5, 12 October 1865, 5.

teachers, Mrs. Emma Fogg.[14] In the evening Martha was comforted by receiving her first letter, one from Anna Webster, and spent her time before bed writing to Anna, her mother, and her "ami." Clearly, though she had insisted on breaking with the past with John Bunting and ceremoniously burning some of their letters and throwing others into the sea, she continued to rely on him and their deep connection to see her through her first days so far from home.

On the following morning and after a heavy rain, Martha visited "the famous Rhett mansion" and a cemetery about which she reported with a clear stridency, "saw much long praise on tomb stones, yet we scorned the traitors that placed them there, many were broken, especially those where South Carolina soldier sons lay. These had been destroyed by our men, as the church was used as a hospital, 4 mounds marked the resting place of our noble dead."[15] To hear her at that moment is to imagine that she was as motivated by a desire for retribution against white southerners as she was by her desire to aid the freed people. However, a moving example of the recent transformation in the lives of former slaves came that evening when Rev. DeForest married a young black couple and Martha served as a witness. She felt badly at not having a gift to give until Rev. DeForest provided her a Testament as an offering to the bride. Here was a reminder of the sweeping change she had come south to participate in. She said, "It did me good to see it."[16]

On her third morning in Beaufort, while preparing for church, word came that the steamer had arrived and would wait fifteen minutes for her and Mary to board. In great haste they packed, said their goodbyes to the Gage's, and "were hustled off." There was not only the

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[14] Mrs. Emma Fogg was from Boston and matron at the Mission House in Beaufort between 1863 and 1867. Butchart, *The Freedmen's Teacher Project Database*.

[15] Diary 5, 14 October 1865, 6. Martha is referring here to the home of Robert Barnwell Rhett who C. Vann Woodward refers to as a "fire-eating secessionist." C. Vann Woodward, Introduction, Willie Lee Rose, *Rehearsal for Reconstruction: The Port Royal Experiment* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1999), xiii.

[16] Diary 5, 15 October 1865, 7.

excitement of finally being on their way to Wadmalaw, but of being passengers on, in Martha's words, "the famous *Planter*." In addition, she was "much gratified by an introduction to Cap. Robert Small."[17] Their destination was Rockville, some fifty miles from Beaufort and the only town on Wadmalaw. When the steamer arrived at 4 o'clock, they were met by H.A. Evans and his stepbrother, N.B. Fisk, and while waiting for their baggage the foursome "chatted merrily." Thereafter, they made their way to the house the brother's shared on the island and where Martha and Mary would make their home. Martha described the two young men: "H.A. is rather tall, light hair & beard, soft voice, and seems good at heart. The other is young, dark, quick, bright active eye & sensible." She said nothing of the house but of their sleeping arrangements she explained that H.A. and N.B. "went to the Commission Room & we slept on their sofa."[18] Although Martha never made clear under whose jurisdiction the men were working, H.A. Evans seems to have been superintendent over schools for Wadmalaw and the surrounding islands, traveling often between Charleston and the Sea Islands. His step-brother worked as his assistant and both were probably employed by a government agency.

Martha's first day of work centered on sorting through thirty boxes of clothing that arrived on the boat with her while men, women, and children, who had begun to gather at dawn, stood outside in silence, waiting. Which of the abandoned homes they were using she did not say, but by 3 p.m. they stopped work without having given out any clothes and "took a walk through the neglected yards of the fallen aristocracy." She gathered flowers and H.A. climbed a

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[17] Diary 5, 15 October 1865, 7; In May 1862, Robert Smalls, a slave and pilot of a steamship, the *Planter*, secreted his family and a small crew of slaves on board. He brought the ship, part of the Confederate naval fleet, safely out of Charleston Harbor and delivered it and its cargo of artillery to Union authorities at Hilton Head, South Carolina. He not only became a hero for his brave feat, but received a reward of $1500 and a commission in the Union navy. Robert Smalls later served five terms in Congress and remained a political leader in South Carolina through the first decade of the twentieth century. Eric Foner, *Forever Free: The Story of Emancipation and Reconstruction* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2005), 41-42; Rose, *Rehearsal for Reconstruction*, 149-150.

[18] Diary 5, 15 October 1865, 7.

tree to pick "some of the last oranges." They walked further and into empty houses she described as once elegant but now deserted with "doors & windows broken & everything going to decay, yards overgrown -- & negro houses pulled down for firewood."[19] The following morning they began distributing clothing and would continue for three days, "suiting," she said, "over 500." Still, many were turned away when the clothing ran out. There were approximately 1400 people living on the island that fall, most of whom were former slaves. According to Martha, many had "come with the army, marched weeks, and were landed [there] – [and had] been getting Gov. rations."[20] Not only had there been no time for Martha and Mary to unpack, but none of their bedding or other household necessities had arrived. Each evening they walked home, "very weary indeed," to sleep on the floor on a bed of blankets, pieces of clothing, and a few shawls, with only a common basin downstairs for washing in the morning.[21]

Those first few days on Wadmalaw were a kind of boot camp and it would have been understandable if Martha had withered at the realization of the work and the conditions under which she would live. As she admitted, "O! the destitution cannot be described."[22] Yet, she and Mary bravely soldiered on. A bond between the foursome – Martha, Mary, H.A., and N.B. – was forged from the outset in Martha's mind and she described their third evening together:

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[19] Diary 5, 16 October 1865, 8.

[20] Diary 5, 15 and 17 October 1865, 8, 9. By January 1865, there were already as many as 15,000 freed people on the coast of South Carolina, centered at Port Royal. However, on January 16, General William Tecumseh Sherman issued Special Field Order No. 15 designating a black reservation along the coastal area from South Carolina to Florida. Over the next five months, General Rufus Saxton, who became superintendent of Sherman's reservation, arranged for the settlement of more than 40,000 freed people and distributed land to them totaling approximately 400,000 acres. Beginning in January 1865, a wave of refugees, many ill and destitute, began arriving on the coast of South Carolina and by March totaled as many as 10,000. Paul A. Cimbala, *The Freedmen's Bureau: Reconstructing the American South After the Civil War* (Malabar, Florida: Krieger Publishing Company, 2005), 5; Rose, *Rehearsal for Reconstruction*, 320-323.

[21] Diary 5, 19 and 20 October 1865, 9.

[22] Diary 5, 17 October 1865, 8.

> All day we stood and gave out clothing, there are many sad scenes, and we try to do our best. These two young men are raised daily in my estimation – They are so true & faithful, upright and just in all their dealing with these people. They are very kind to us and we seem like a home family. I have been reading out loud in the evenings. They are pious people, say grace and have prayers, there is certainly much good here, and few would do a duty so well. They forget their own comfort & convenience, in seeking that of others.[23]

Her connection, however, was strongest with the two young men and she would soon feel it her duty to nurse both of them through illness. In her first week, she was energized by a mixture of duty, sacrifice, service, and pride of membership in a select band of reformers and bolstered by the natural beauty of the sea islands. Martha's orientation and early contentment were displayed in her journal entry at the end of the week.

> The sunrising and settings are beautiful here and last so long, we enjoy them much. Mr. H.A. and Miss S are both worn out. I succeeded in getting our room pretty comfortable, every window has some glass & not a door would stay shut, but we will get them fixed sometime, workman and tools are both scarce & things are very dilapidated. I have hung my pictures round the walls and it begins to seem like home. Then I never tire of looking out at the glorious views, the Bohickin Creek touches the yard almost, we see where it empties into Edisto Inlet not far beyond, then the Island in every direction, with the tall Palm trees and beyond the glistening waters. All these things are Natures beauties & my heart and soul find comfort and peace in them. Miss S read to us from the Atlantic Monthly, and for the first time I did some knitting. H.A. has been quite sick with the fever. I have tried to be kind to him. He needs a sisters care, & has not known it.[24]

Martha did not attend church on her first Sunday, remarking "it would be discord instead of peace to me," referring most likely to having to accompany Mary, but also because H.A. asked her to stay behind to read to him. His fever affected his eyes and so she read to him from a book by Thomas Dick. Although Martha did not offer the title, it was most likely one of a number of books Dick authored on the relationship between science and religion.[25] The two

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[23] Diary 5, 18 October 1865, 9.

[24] Diary 5, 21 October 1865, 10.

[25] Between 1825 and 1851, Thomas Dick published books on a variety of philosophical, religious, and scientific subjects including: *The Philosophy of Religion, On the Mental Illumination of and Moral Improvement of Mankind, Celestial Scenery, The Sidereal Heavens, The Practical Astronomer, The Solar System,* and *The Telescope and*

discussed the book, of which she said there were beautiful passages, and she confided, "I can talk to him on this subject, he does not overwhelm me with words & quotations like Miss S, so my own thoughts can find language." Alone again in the evening, she continued to read aloud to him and confessed, "in this act of kindness I benefited myself – for I was getting almost homesick and it kept off the feeling."[26]

Notwithstanding her fortitude in foregoing a bed, mattress, sheets, pillow, and proper toilette, Martha looked daily for a steamer to arrive with her missing boxes, barrels, and trunks. An even greater hardship was not receiving letters from home. Nevertheless, there was plenty of work and there was also the adventure of exploring more of the island. With his recovery, H.A. managed an afternoon's outing for the women to a plantation seven miles away, the former home of Dr. J.B. Whitridge.[27] Martha's record of the few hours they spent was reminiscent of her first year away from home, teaching at her Aunt Eliza's – she sounded, once again, like a young woman enjoying a ride with a group of friends, a handsome escort, and a bit of freedom. Of the afternoon she recorded:

> H.A. took us about 7 miles to the deserted home of Dr. Witheridge, one of the most grand houses on the island. The team! was a buggy & small horse with pieces of harnass, we broke one shaft going out the gate, & mended it, & broke it again coming oh! oh! oh! oh! oh! We had a gay ride, shady nearly all the way, no fences but embankments and a thick growth of undergrowth, above which the live oaks were draped with hanging moss, these things must be seen not described. I drove part way, the avenue to the house is nearly two miles & shaded with live oaks, the Mansion had been quite spacious & elegant, yard beautifully laid out, & fish pond – some distance off the "Quarters" looked clean and neat, he was the kindest master on the island—married first a Southern then Northern woman – he was from the North and went there soon as the War broke out – He has died

Microscope. The Editors of the Gazetteer for Scotland, The Robertson Trust, the Royal Scottish Geographical Society, the Institute of Geography, Edinburgh University, www.geo.ed.ac.uk. (accessed September 20, 2009).

[26] Diary 5, 22 October 1865, 11.

[27] In the 1860 census, Dr. Whitridge is listed as a planter originally from Rhode Island with an estate totaling $250,000, making him one of the richest planters on the island and among the richest in the state. His cotton plantation of 1200 acres was named Rose Bank and included 185 enslaved men, women and children. 1860 Census, South Carolina, St. John's Colleton, Wadmalaw Island, 15.

> since. We rambled all over the house, I brought away the model of a skull from his office, where bones struned the floor – we had a happy ride home & will long remember our first land trip.[28]

Martha's sense of entitlement to roam freely over the island and through its homes, to use them to live and teach in, came with the privileges of victory in war and extended to carrying away souvenirs, even one as macabre as a model of a human skull. Her acknowledgement of the old doctor's kindness toward his slaves, and the cleanliness and neatness of the houses he provided, may have been based on stories she heard or her appraisal based on his northern roots. However, her relative benevolence would not be extended to the doctor's son when he returned to Wadmalaw to reclaim his birthright.

Ten days after arriving on the island, Martha and Mary began teaching. Another house was claimed as a schoolhouse rather than using a church because, as she said, churches could not be heated. This was important not only for the comfort of the teachers, but especially the students, children and adults alike, whose clothing was barely adequate to keep them covered, much less warm. On the first day there were only forty students, so Mary returned home to aid a woman in making clothes for herself and her family while Martha stayed behind to teach. Her first day of teaching went smoothly. She reported the students cleaner and more neatly dressed than she expected, surely a testament to their desire to learn and the value they placed on education. On the second day, there were enough scholars for Mary to take the children in one room while Martha took the adults in another. Of the numerous satisfactions of her new life and work, teaching was the greatest – "they seemed so anxious to learn – it was a pleasure."[29] The

[28] Diary 5, 23 October 1865, 12.

[29] Diary 5, 25 October 1865, 13.

day's work was extended when Martha, Mary, and N.B. walked "two miles to see a sick man & take him food & clothing."[30]

However, later in the day there was sad news delivered by the arrival of a Captain Towles who announced the plantations "were going back into the hands of the owners," to which Martha replied, "this is too bad, what will become of the negroes?"[31] In part, the answer to that question on Wadmalaw, in the short term, lay in the hands of Martha, Mary, H.A., and N.B.

For all her strength and courage in the face of the misery and need she encountered, Martha began to feel keenly the want of a lifeline to the love and security of home. Since leaving Darby, she had received only two letters, one from Anna Webster and the other from her sister Sallie, brought to her by Captain Towles. However, the silence was finally broken when H.A. returned from a trip to Charleston with letters from home. Of news from her mother and sisters, Martha declared, "O! how joyful my heart was, nothing could take away the sweet from it."[32] She would need that sweet the following day when, after school, she was asked to see a fifteen year-old girl who lay dying on a scanty bed on a hard floor. Her father told Martha, "she was 15 had a child 10 months old" and "'was engaged but de young man tricked her.'"[33] She was vomiting "thick blood" and Martha felt certain she would not live long. In saying, "Alas, here is one of the worst curses of Slavery," Martha not only affirmed her commitment to altering, if not transforming, the lives of black girls and women, but also acknowledged the painful

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[30] Diary 5, 25 October 1865, 13.

[31] Daniel F. Towles was from Chatham County, Georgia, and enlisted in Company K, 1st Infantry Regiment of Georgia on August 26, 1861. He was promoted to Full 1st Sergeant in October of 1862 and later than year transferred to Company B, 22nd Battalion H. He mustered out on April 4, 1963. *U.S. Civil War Soldier Records and Profiles* [database on-line], Provo, Utah, USA: The Generations Network, Inc., 2009, http://search.ancestry.com, (accessed October 18, 2009).

[32] Diary 5, 26 October 1865, 14.

[33] Diary 5, 27 October 1865, 14.

realities she would encounter again and again in the process. The young girl, who Martha never named, died the next day.[34]

Unlike other northern whites who were critical, even harshly so, of black forms of worship, Martha's first encounter with the freed people's preaching and singing was to her both moving and impressive.[35] On her second Sunday on Wadmalaw, one hundred people attended Sabbath School and when teaching ended, preaching and singing began. Martha wrote of the experience:

> 3 colored men, preached gave very good advice – and so earnest. One said "ye must tank de Lord he has put in de hearts of dese people to cum down h'ar & teach ye to read his word, dey has cum across rivers, an over de great ocean on purpose to teach ye, and now if ye don't want to slight de Lord, don't slight dem, for he sent em. My own tears flowed as I listened to the earnest pleadings of these uneducated but immortal men, and constantly some voice would swell out a glad amen! Amen! Bress de Lord! Dats de truth! Lord have mercy on us! And many such. It lasted a long while & then they prayed and sang – afterwards some woman struck up a tune & then they shook hands all joined and swayed to & fro for keeping time wonderfully well. This was the first time I ever atten[d]ed Methodist meeting – & I am sure I will not forget this.[36]

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[34] Diary 5, 27 and 29 October 1865, 14, 15.

[35] For example, Jacqueline Jones states that in Georgia "black worship services shocked the teachers" and "aspects of this type of religious meeting deeply offended [them]." In addition she says, "they described the congregation's body movements – shuffling, peculiar gesticulations, swaying back and forth – as 'animal excitement' and therefore indecent church behavior. Music had its place but not the 'weird songs,' which combined religious and secular themes. … And the lack of an intelligent sermon based on scriptural evidence rendered every black 'shout' incomplete and according to the teachers, spiritually meaningless." Writing of the shout in particular, a combination of singing and dancing performed in a circle and lasting from a few hours to all night, Willie Lee Rose says the early teachers on the Sea Islands were "troubled by the 'shout.'" She explains that, "with a few romantic-minded exceptions, the missionaries disapproved of the shouting, regarding it as a survival of paganism, 'the remains of some old idol worship,' and were happy to state that the older and more pious Christians had nothing to do with it. Jacqueline Jones, *Soldiers of Light and Love: Northern Teachers and Georgia Blacks, 1865-1875* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1992), 154; Rose, *Rehearsal for Reconstruction*, 92-93.

[36] Diary 5, 29 October 1865, 16. It is interesting to note the history of Methodism and the stand that many of its clergy took, early on, against slavery. In an essay focusing on enslaved women and the Methodist church, Cynthia Lynn Lyerly points out that clergy preached openly against slavery, "many proselytized privately against slavery, and all actively sought black converts." In addition, "Methodism was a major force in manumissions in the early national era, especially in the Upper South" and "although the official church position against slavery weakened over the years … slaves must have preferred a church with some emancipation record to one with no such record." It is also interesting to note Martha's generous attitude toward her first encounter with Methodism. She was often less generous in her opinion of other churches and their forms of worship. Cynthia Lynn Lyerly, "Religion, Gender, and Identity: Black Methodist Women in a Slave Society, 1770-1810," *Discovering the Women in Slavery: Emancipating Perspectives on the American Past,* Patricia Morton, Editor (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1996), 204.

It may be that Martha was as affected as she was by the preaching because it was in praise of her and supportive of her efforts. It may be that the three men who preached were attempting to curry favor with their white allies as much as to lead the people in their duty to the newly arrived teachers. Yet, the fact remains that Martha's reaction to the emotion of the appeal, to the call and response, to the singing and movement, was positive.

Martha's first few weeks in the South and on Wadmalaw had been a rare mixture of people and experiences that provided both its satisfactions and its serious challenges. However, the greatest challenge she would face would come in the form of a serious illness. Whether due to the water she was drinking, the food she was eating, or to some other contagion, she became gravely ill. For a few days she continued to teach but said it was necessary to go home to lie down as soon as her student's were dismissed. Feeling sickly and weak made her living conditions all the more burdensome and she wrote to Dr. Rhoades that their boxes sat in Charleston while the contents were greatly needed and confided in her diary, "we have no sheets sleep between blankets, my pillow is the sawdust that my jars were packed in. But there are necessaries it is very hard to do without. What would my mother think if she knew how great was the need of them. Yet I will not complain if I keep well that is one great blessing.[37] But Martha did not keep well.

By the first of November she was unable to sit up and "was suffering dreadfully." Martha named her disease, dysentery, and said she tried "several kinds of medicine," though not what they were or where they came from. At her request, H.A. searched the island for buttermilk for her but could find none. Dysentery was a painful and debilitating illness caused by a bacillus or amoeba and spread through contaminated food and water. It was most prevalent in the South and where sanitary conditions were poor. Symptoms included severe and sometimes bloody

[37] Diary 5, 30 October 1865, 17.

diarrhea, fever, acute abdominal pain, and vomiting, and left untreated could result in severe dehydration and even death. Common treatments included various teas and opiates, but also purgatives, though given the symptoms that would seem a particularly torturous remedy. With no doctor nearer than twenty miles and on the mainland, Martha was left to the care of Mary, H.A., and a house servant, Aunt Maria. On November second, too ill to leave her bed, her greatest comfort and best medicine was eight letters delivered to her, again by H.A., who returned that evening from a short trip to Charleston. Too weak to sit up and read, she "could only hold them close … at first and <u>feel</u> they were <u>blessings</u>." During the night, still feverish and unable to sleep, Martha found the strength to open and read the fifty-eight pages she received and said of them, "I found sweet comfort in their loving words. How little the writers knew my need."[38]

Martha's need would be spelled out in her journal in the following ten days and would determine much of the course of her relationship with Mary Sharp thereafter. Writing a few lines on the days she was sickest and then adding to them when she began to recover, Martha chronicled Mary's lack of attention and care for her, and by contrast, H.A.'s and Aunt Maria's ministrations on her behalf. Her complaints of Mary echoed those she had lodged against her Aunt Eliza when ill and teaching in her school on Long Island. Martha, ever sensitive to the needs of those around her, could not understand being ignored and, in her mind, abandoned, especially by another woman at a moment of such weakness and vulnerability. The contrast between her mother and her mother's sister had been one kind of trial but being so ill on Wadmalaw with no doctor, no mother or sister or female friend to nurse her, with not even a bed or pillow to lay her head on, was quite another. Martha turned to her journal to vent her anger at Mary:

[38] Diary 5, 2 November 1865, 18.

> Still unable to get up, trying some of "Aunt Marias" mysterious tea & hope it will help me. H.A. is very kind I shall always be grateful to him. He came up & read to me. Even handed me the basin & towel to wash the fever off. She never offered to do it – tho' I told her I tried 3 times to reach it and each time whirled fainting back to bed. Oh! my God. To be ill in this strange land, to suffer intense physical pain, and yet to be with a woman that has no woman's nature, no human sympathy, entirely indifferent to all the agonies of disease, when it attacks her own sex. Often when I have been up & dropped on the bed again too weak to pull the covers over me, she has not offered to do it. I would be glad to die here and be free from all this pain, only I know well I must try & live for the sake of those who love me so well. I cannot eat "Aunt Maria" brought me some pie & ginger cake! (the first I've seen on the Island) & H.A. made me lemonade but I dared not touch them. He hardly understands why, & she meant to be very kind. For once, she made me some corn starch (I brot it from home) but it was so lumpy & covered with brown sugar, that I could only taste it – I tried to put on clean clothes, but was too weak. How strange that she never asked me about such things, she seemed not to care – and yet must have known I needed bathing & change, after so much fever. I did not dare draw comparisons between this & my own dear home and faithful nursing. I am too ill to murmur too weak to complain.[39]

Yet, murmur and complain she did.

In her journal entry on the fourth of November, Martha said that, feeling a bit stronger, she had managed to get up in the morning and bathe, but felt so weak afterward that she returned to bed. In the afternoon she insisted on putting on a dressing gown and going downstairs to lie on the sofa, but within a few hours had to return, once again, to her bed. As on the day before, Martha's anger and frustration were voiced in her diary where she wrote in a shaky hand:

> After I tottered up stairs had to lie down half an hour before I had strength to remove my clothes. I remarked, that "I guess I would have to sleep in them as I was too weak to get them off." She sat by the fire warming her feet and replied "well, if they are not too tight." I suppose she thought it would be "petting" me to offer to assist for she said in the beginning of my illness that I wanted to be petted & she didn't know how … Oh! woman! Woman! you have thought to withhold every act of kindness, every deed of human charity, fearing it would show sympathy with what you deam weakness, with what is, sickness, illness. I have questioned whether, mind, intellect, education, can compensate, or, are, more acceptable to God, than a few kindly spoken words, a few deeds of humanity. Will she stand nearer to the Throne of Love, because she has deemed herself above all human weakness? Keep me from such a heaven.[40]

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[39] Diary 5, 3 November 1865, 18-19.

[40] Diary 5, 4 November 1865, 20.

It had been clear from their first meeting that she and Mary were dissimilar in ways that would make it difficult for the kind of deep connection Martha looked for in her closest friendships. That she and Mary would be living so closely together and under such trying circumstances made it all the more important for her to feel a bond and a likeness with one of the only other white women, northern or southern, on the island. Their differences had initially been offset by the urgency of the work at hand, their shared status as aliens, and their banding together with H.A. and N.B. But Martha's illness exposed a fault line between them that would never wholly disappear. Mary Sharp's strength and determination must have been fierce indeed for Martha only wrote once of her showing any sign of illness.

By the following day, her third Sunday on Wadmalaw, Mary and H.A. left Martha and an ailing N.B. alone while they attended to Sabbath School. Martha complained of staggering around trying to prepare Farina for the two of them to eat. Still unable to stomach heartier fare or sit long at the table near "fish & hot bread & sweet potatoes," she longed for a piece of toast or cup of hot chocolate. The nearest stove to bake bread was five miles away and no store to buy milk or cocoa closer than thirty miles. She complained, as she had at Aunt Eliza's, that Mary never took notice of how little she was eating. Even H.A. was a target of her anger and pen when in the afternoon she said, "now they have been gone for <u>five hours</u> & <u>knew</u> there was nothing in the house cooked to eat. This is being faithful to religious forms, but not to Christianity."[41] While Mary was right that Martha wanted attention and even "petting" during her sickness and grew increasingly sulky in its absence, there was nothing for Martha to do but endure both her disease and Mary's indifference.

[41] Diary 5, 5 November 1865, 21.

Here was a key to Martha's personality and a pattern that would continue throughout her adult life. She longed to follow God's will and direction for her life. She longed to do some great work in the world. Seeking and following, in her mother's words, "that light within," justified an independence of thought and action that otherwise might have been too much for her to bear in terms of censure and disconnection. As it was, her behavior had created a measure of alienation from her mother and her sisters. Still, Martha admired women who acted with courage and independence, both women she knew, like Anna Dickinson, and women she read about in novels. Yet, for her, that independence must be in the service of caring for and nurturing others. It must remain within woman's nature, a nature designed and bestowed by God himself. But at the same time, Martha yearned for and sought human love, whether with women or with men. Her ability to sustain her independence was directly tied to her sense of being understood and cared for. Being so far from home, she had hoped Mary Sharp might be an anchor and a shield. Now that Mary had proved unwilling or incapable of deep friendship and demonstrative love, Martha would, for the time being, draw on the love and constancy of her family and friends in their letters to her, and hers to them. She would secretly gloat at the number of letters she received in comparison to Mary.

Within a few days, a boat arrived by which Martha, alone, received letters from home. She wrote, "I was glad to get them. <u>She</u> is even above having her letters care of Mr. E consequently does not get any, ha! Ha! I specs dey waitin at de office."[42] This, after Martha confessed she was determined to go back to the classroom "if it killed [her]" but then reconsidered, feeling it her duty to continue to rest and get well owing it most, she said, "to those who love me & for their sakes." Mary ignored her and Martha increasingly referred to Mary as She.

[42] Diary 5, 7 November 1875, 22.

Martha also copied into her journal a passage she wrote in a letter that most likely was addressed to John Bunting. Anna Webster had written that John had recently purchased a house in Philadelphia that they would move into after their marriage and, though no date had yet been set, the ceremony would likely take place soon after the new year.[43] Even at a distance Martha, John, and Anna continued a complicated triangle of love and dependency. Anna seemed frightened at the prospect of actually being married and moving permanently from her family and home in Massachusetts. She teased that Martha had promised never to marry and when her work was done in the South, to come to Philadelphia to live with them. John and Martha continued to write to each other. Given her illness and feelings of abandonment, Martha attempted to walk a fine and delicate line of reaffirming the love and deep bond between them, while at the same time directing that it must be put permanently aside. As she explained to John:

> The child would like one little room in the hearts many chambers, called Hers. In it, put all the joys & pleasures, & happy times that were shared with her, all that was sweet & tender & true – yes, put in everything, but what the whole world can see put them all in carefully, tenderly. Let them lay in the stillness of death. Stand a moment on the threshold to feel a lasting farewell. To look on them for the last time. To say, God, Keep you. Then come out & lock the door never again to re-enter.[44]

The irony was that she was directing John to do something she had not yet done herself. Martha had not sealed away her memories or her feelings for him. There remained a cord of love and sympathy between them that Martha would continue to draw on. She noted on November 9, "sent by H.A. to Charleston letters to Aunt J[ane], Home, Mon ami. Anna E. Webster."[45]

Martha slowly recovered and returned to her classroom, though in her first few days she complained of pain and fatigue. Soon, however, she was back to a full schedule of teaching, aid

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[43] Anna Webster to Martha Schofield, 22 October 1865, MSP.

[44] Diary 5, 8 November 1865, 22-23.

[45] Diary 5, 9 November 1865, 23.

work, and housework. She continued to speak warmly and approvingly of the deep faith she encountered in the freed people, of the "good preaching from Uncle Dundy," and "how earnest they seem," even going so far as saying, "surely his faithful Christians here will be robed in white and be as angels round the Throne."[46] Then, after four weeks' wait, the *Planter* returned, the first steamer to touch shore on the island since Martha's arrival, and on it some of her missing boxes. With nothing short of glee, she unpacked "real dishes, cooking utensils, chamber crockery, &c &c" and called them "valuable luxuries." Though her bedding and a stove were still to come, there were letters to relish from "Sallie, Sadie, and Mother." She wrote of the arrival of the boat saying, "O! I cannot describe the scenes here when such an event occurs, every man, woman, & child huddles down to the landing, and in the evening the dusky faces look so strange, lit up with burning bits of pine which they use for lights & then there is such queer talking."[47] At the same time she proudly recorded that the children were anxious to meet Captain Smalls, having told them the story of his escape.

Martha continued to make home visits after school, finding many "in utter destitution." To one young woman, Emeline, she offered one of her plates to replace the piece of a bucket she was using to eat from. Emeline, like many others, had arrived on Wadmalaw with nothing but the clothes she wore.[48] Martha repeatedly said of the people she met, "they are very destitute, many of them not having dishes or cooking utensils of any kind." In addition, there was a steady flow of people arriving on the island and leaving it. On November 18 the steamer *St. Helena* arrived with one hundred "negroes to be landed" and Aunt Maria, who had been cooking and caring for the Yankee teachers, boarded the boat for Beaufort, leaving them to fend for

[46] Diary 5, 12 November 1865, 24.

[47] Diary 5, 13 November 1865, 25.

[48] Diary 5, 17 November 1865, 27.

themselves. Martha began to bake bread, taking the dough to school to watch its risings and then sending it five miles away to be baked. Suddenly, not unlike the recently fallen aristocracy she began to complain, "O! dear such ignorant, slow servants."[49] She also began to write of H.A. in ways reminiscent of John, her dear ami. While H.A. and his stepbrother were away for a few days she whined, "O! we have been lonely in our house by ourselves. When they returned she wrote, "at one the Steamer came & brought our folks." The following day a notation of their gift of apples prompted her to remark that they "always remember us by some such act of kindness. How can we thank them"?[50] On the steamer with the returning brothers was, finally, the missing beds and most of the bedding (a pillow and six blankets having been stolen), and Martha exalted in sleeping between sheets after weeks of bags filled with straw for a mattress and a sawdust pillow.[51]

Martha's growing affection for H.A. was offset by her increasing disaccord with Mary. As much as Martha appreciated black worship, she grumbled at Mary's injunction that it was their duty to attend Sunday services. Martha countered, "she forgets how very far from my belief are the doctrines I hear there. She would not think it a duty to attend Theodore Parker's church every week – even for example I can hear many good things – but some make me shudder."[52] Nursing H.A. through his recurring bouts of fever came to be a convenient excuse to remain at home on some Sundays and with it a chance for their friendship to grow. But even her growing closeness to him did not outweigh her need to draw on the love and attention she received from those up North. As Martha explained:

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[49] Diary 5, 18 and 20 November 1865, 27-28.

[50] Diary 5, 24 and 25 November 1865, 28-29.

[51] Diary 5, 29 November 1865, 29.

[52] Diary 5, 29 November 1865, 29.

> H.A. has been quite sick today, I read him one of Uncle John's sermons. It always affects his head, aches so, that I put cold clothes on it. I can never forget his kindness to me when I was ill. I esteem, admire, and respect him, yet free and unrestrained – We talk as if we had been acquainted for years, he knows me better than the rest, yet, they scarcely know me & never will I guess – All noble purposes all good resolutions, all that make me what I am, will be covered, not crushed, or destroyed, or lost, only hidden, bound as the ice binds shore to shore, even while the still waters run beneath, they may walk on or scar it, perhaps admire the wintry life – but I know, the warm spring time, and sunlight of pure affection will melt away the ice and all traces of the time when my heart only opened to the evidences of love that come from the beloved afar off.[53]

Notwithstanding Martha's need to rely on the affections and constancy of home, she had, when there, felt a similar need to withdraw emotionally, relying on herself, in part through her books and her work, and the love and understanding she shared with John Bunting. On Wadmalaw, the fullness of her inner life and her ability to draw strength and courage from the belief that she was answering God's call sustained her in the midst of many trials. She had begun to move away from John, though as yet not entirely. At the same time she moved toward H.A., though with some caution. In the meantime, she would wait. There was much to sustain her from within and the promise of a time in the future when this new relationship might replace the old. As she wrote on a Sunday afternoon, she defied Mary Sharp by staying home and nursing H.A., "this has been a most beautiful day and I have enjoyed it much. The sunshine was warm enough to have the window open. I have not written much to-day, been reading some in Hours at Home. Was reading out loud part of the time to him."[54]

However, Martha would need little more evidence of her advantages away from home than a letter she received from her mother around the same time. While Mary Child was happy to hear that her daughter enjoyed the water and sunshine and walks, and approved of her unusual

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[53] Diary 5, 26 November 1865, 29-30.

[54] Diary 5, 26 November 1865, 30. Charles Scribner & Company began publishing *Hours at Home: A Popular Monthly or Instruction and Recreation* in 1865. A quarterly, it included articles on popular subjects of the day, serialized novels, and poetry.

living arrangements saying, "we rather felt it was best for you to be in the home with the brothers for I should not have liked you to have been in a house unprotected, windows and doors all out," she grew alarmed at what she heard, or thought she heard in Martha's letters concerning H.A. Evans. Knowing her daughter's independence and passionate nature, Mary Child warned, "be guarded in all your words and actions remember you went down there to teach the colored ones not to fall in love with the white ones, well I must stop as I think I have confidence in my daughters better judgment – I hope we will soon get another letter off – I [fear] Martha thee will doubt we are in earnest about the man we are, and afraid."[55]

In the meantime the school flourished, so much so that Martha noted spending the afternoon of December 1 with H.A. on a plantation eight miles away, supervising cleaning for the possible arrival of new teachers but also the pleasant ride they took afterward picking cotton "as a relic" and supping on hard tack he brought along and "a good jolly drink of coffee."[56] During the month of December much of her life on Wadmalaw remained the same – rounds of teaching, nursing, distributing clothing, house work, visiting homes, walking and riding, writing letters, and writing in her journal. But in addition, her relationship with H.A. would take a turn and she would encounter the first of a number of former planters come to reclaim their homes and hire workers. On December 6, H.A. returned from Charleston with Gustavus Whitridge the eldest son of Dr. Whitridge, on whose plantation, Rose Bank, Martha had so freely roamed on her second day on the island. She said of him that "he went to Harvard College at 16, then to a Law School, practiced three years in N.Y. then went to China, California, and at the breaking out

[55] Mary Schofield Child to Martha Schofield, undated letter, MSP. I have placed the word fear in brackets because Mary Child's handwriting became less clear as she reached the bottom of the page and I think it is the word she wrote, but I cannot be certain.

[56] Diary 5, 1 December 1865, 32.

of the War joined the Rebel army."[57] Some of what she wrote was true. Gustavus Rodolphous Whitridge did attend college but not at Harvard. He graduated in 1850 (at nineteen) from his father's alma mater, Union College, and for the following two years attended law school at New York University. He may well have practice law in New York and traveled to California and China. He did join the Confederate army but saw no action.[58]

Whithridge had been granted permission to come to the island, Martha said, to try to sign contracts with workers, some of whom may have been enslaved by his father, and was, in addition, interested in seeing the freedmen's school and meeting the teachers. Though she had claimed that the elder Whitridge had gone north at the start of the war, the truth was that he had fled first to Charleston and then to Greenville, South Carolina, where he had died the previous April. His fortune had been vast, his plantation one of the loveliest and most profitable on the island, and he had enjoyed the comforts and pleasures of a mansion in Charleston where he practiced medicine until his retirement in 1847. The vast majority of the destruction to Rose Bank was at the hands of Confederates who occupied the property when the island was threatened by Union forces and the inhabitants forced to leave. Dr. Whitridge, by then a widower, was reluctant to go and one of the last to escape, leaving most of his enslaved workers and many of his valuable household goods. In a letter written in 1863 to a commission appointed by the Governor of South Carolina to assess the value of property in the coastal area that had been confiscated, lost, or destroyed by the Union or the Confederacy, Dr. Whitridge wrote:

> All that was portable they took away, and the rest, when I last heard from the mansion, was in a dilapidated and broken state, among which were a large drawing room mirror – and a $600 upright English piano, rifled of its silk front & some of its wires – keys broken & the walls of the house were much marred – and some of the doors broken off the hinges. Common soldiers as well as officers, having for a long time quartered there.

[57] Diary 5, 6 December 1865, 33.

[58] Family Tree of Gustavus Rodolphus by Bill Salmons, http://trees.ancestry/com., (accessed September 22, 2009).

> Thus it appears, that from the demoralizing effects of War – were upon our own soldiery – (to say nothing of the enemy, who are said to have visited my plantation several times without committing any depredations—) the accumulation of a life time and a long life too – have been destroyed in the course of a few weeks, – the people driven off – it is feared, irrevocably gone – probably lost forever![59]

Now, Gustavus Whitridge would have to face the likes of Martha Schofield.

On his first day back on the island, Martha reported that he visited the school and seemed pleased with the work they were doing but later had no luck in hiring any of his old hands, or any new ones, for that matter. As she said, "no one will hire with a Rebel." She went on to say that he seemed quite afraid, though not why or why she perceived him to be fearful. She made her sentiments quite clear, showing her colors by wearing a patriotic apron and a flag. Thinking both would ward off any extended conversation, Martha was surprised at herself and at him. She said, "we have given him many a hard hit, he bears it all meekly – I asked him if he had killed any of our men, & he said 'no he never killed any one' he was a private, orderly, duty on this and adjacent islands."[60]

The following day, the day appointed that year by President Johnson for National Thanksgiving, the northerners hosted their southern guest and in the evening all took a ride to Oak Grove, the former plantation of Osma Bailey, Whitridge's uncle by marriage.[61] Martha said, "we enjoyed it hugely." Of the continued hazing of the rebel she wrote, "poor Mr. W seems like a fish out of water, we have not spared him in the least, expressed our thoughts plainly. I told him this eve, we knew we were tantalizing but we could not help it. If I <u>could</u> have pity I would

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[59] Joshua Barker Whitridge to William Whaley, Esq, 6 October 1863, South Carolina Department of Archives & History,http://sciway3.net/clark/civilwar/whitridgereport.html, (accessed October 31, 2009).

[60] Diary 5, 6 December 1865, 33.

[61] Born in 1827, Osma Bailey is listed in the 1860 census as a planter on Wadmalaw Island with an estate worth $160,000. He joined the Confederate army in 1863, serving in the 1st Regiment, South Carolina State Troops. 1860 census, South Carolina, St.John's Colleton, Wadmalaw Island, 15; U.S. Civil War Soldiers, 1861-1865 [database on-line], Provo, Utah: USA: The Generations Network, 2007, (accessed October 31, 2009).

for such as he – but … they deserve it all."[62] Back at home Martha wrote a list of things to be thankful for that included: "Nights rest; Beautiful day; we had three meals; a bushel of sweet potatoes; chance to mend cloths; a huge good ride; that 'our grandmothers weren't monkeys!!'; that we were not too hard on Reb G. Wetheridge; 'for the certain death of two blood thirsty fleas'; we were not born South of the Mason & D line."[63]

The next morning, Martha and Mary began distributing clothing that had recently arrived. Martha said of the departing Mr. Whitridge, "the Rebel left to-day, he offered to shake hands and I said 'on one condition that he would be a good union man, repent of his disloyalty, and put out his sign G. Witheridge Esq. in N.Y. it must be under the American flag that he would fight for – ' O! we hit him hard often under jokes, but they were none the less bitter."[64] With an influx of new arrivals, the demand for clothing increased along with the numbers in their classrooms. Some, she said, were very smart. But, in addition, there were break-ins in what Martha called "the commissariat" forcing H.A. to sleep in the building to drive the thieves away. He, in fact, caught one coming in the window hitting him and driving him away. Within a day, however, H.A. suffered yet another relapse of chills, fever, and vomiting, and Martha nursed him with teas and warm bricks wrapped in flannel to make him sweat to break the fever. She called him a "delicate – youth."[65]

He, in turn, when he was feeling better, combed her hair. There is significance not only in the act itself, but in the way she recorded it in her diary. It was one thing to act as nurse to a male family member and quite another to a friend, even one as close as John Bunting had been.

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[62] Diary 5, 7 December 1865, 34.

[63] Diary 5, 7 December 1865, 34.

[64] Diary 5, 8 December 1865, 35.

[65] Diary 5, 10 December 1865, 36.

After all, Martha had railed against the possibility of being barred from John's sick room, at least in the sense that it would have been considered inappropriate and even slightly scandalous. Though the exigencies of war had done much to expand the acceptance of nursing as respectable work for young single women, Martha's intimacies with H.A., under any other circumstances than their unusual living arrangements and his chronic illness, would have been shocking. Combing or brushing another's hair was and is an intimate act. Again, it would be one thing between siblings or other family members, but takes on other meanings and significance between single men and women. It is something that lovers might do, and indicates the closeness and growing attraction between the two. Martha wrote on December 15, "I had my hair combed by M.H.A.E."[66] In the briefness of her statement and the formality of using all of his initials, there is a sense that the act was meaningful and meant to be remembered.

On Sunday, December 17, Martha remained at home. When H.A. returned from Sabbath School, he was unwell. She gave him medicine and "combed his hair for a long time" saying, "I want to be kind to him for I have much to be thankful for." In her relationship with him, she found a closer and more immediate emotional anchor than with the folks back home. H.A. rallied; the following day he left for Charleston while she, Mary, Captain Towles, his son, and Mrs. Knickerbocker, a northern neighbor, took a small steamer over to Seabroook Island. There they wandered along the beach collecting shells and through the grounds of a former Union encampment. In early November she had received a letter from a Major Price, a friend from Darby, who had written of his time on Edisto and the surrounding islands between 1862 and 1863. She wished him there that afternoon to act as guide. The war and the men whose sacrifice she honored and even imitated seemed very close and she walked quietly, reverently around "the beds still standing, in rows." She saw "remnants of old clothes, real army blue, pieces of tents,

[66] Diary 5, 15 December 1865, 37.

oil cloth still on the ground, tables that perhaps some of our letters were written on." However, she felt a certain chill, that "every thing looked dreary & desolate" especially as the present scene was contrasted in her imaginings of what it may have looked like, that "they must have been nicely fixed & the camp could have looked beautiful with its white tents stretching across the island." As before, Martha took away a relic, this time a small stool.[67]

In the days leading up to Christmas the number of students at school swelled, as did those asking for blankets and clothing. Martha noted that Sundays were normally busier in that regard than any other day of the week. She also noted their continuing difficulty in keeping household help, especially those who met her standards of cleanliness and effort. After Aunt Maria's departure for Beaufort, the job of cooking had been filled by a young woman named Disey who was now herself leaving for the mainland, following her husband searching for work other than planting. Martha said, "she was a smart active girl & just learning our ways" and "she had become attached to us … and would have let him & [her] child both go but he wanted her so much."[68] While it may well be that Martha's belief that Disey preferred staying on Wadmalaw with the small band of Northerners was true and that Disey herself had said as much, it is also likely that her conclusions concerning Disey were erroneous. Moreover, they were reminiscent of the delusions under which many southerners labored where their enslaved workers were concerned. Acts of resistance by blacks could appear to whites as evidence of a general lack of ability and caring. Many believed blacks incapable of working productively without white supervision or even caring for their children without white control. In addition, before, during, and after the war, southern slaveholders were shocked, and often deeply hurt, by the escape and,

[67] J. Price to Martha Schofield, 2 November 1865, 6, MSP; Diary 5, 18 December 1865, 37-38.

[68] Diary 5, 19 December 1865, 39.

in their minds, utter disloyalty of their slaves. To them, it was inconceivable that their servants would have identities and lives wholly apart from them.[69]

Though Martha's sympathies for the freed people were sincere and deeply felt, and her willingness to sacrifice for them clear, there was a line between them across which she did not go. When Major Towles' wife, a southerner, made her first visit to the teachers, Martha wrote in her journal, "I never saw her before, yet was glad to have her little 18 month old boy to kiss – The first white child seen."[70] Never in her nine months on Wadmalaw did Martha mention any instance of affection, not a caress or hug or kiss, given to any of the children she was teaching. Neither did she mention any corporal punishment on her part. She talked of shaking hands with adults and certainly must have had physical contact with those she nursed, but never spoke of even small tokens of affection between herself and the children that surrounded her. In contrast, Mary Ames, who was teaching with Emily Bliss on nearby Edisto Island, wrote in the diary she kept in 1865 of Ben, one of the younger sons of their housekeeper. The women had arrived on Edisto in May and by July moved with most of the white inhabitants to houses built along the beach by former planters to avoid the heat and fevers of the summer months. Soon after, Ben arrived for a visit, brought by his father, Jim. Of Ben, Mary Ames said, "I have dressed him in a suit of underwear which came in a barrel of clothing from the 'Church of the Disciples' (Boston). He sleeps on the floor beside my bed. One night, as he hung over my chair, he was

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[69] See Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, *Within the Plantation Household: Black and White Women of the Old South* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988), 129-145; Catherine Clinton, *The Plantation Mistress: Woman's World in the Old South* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1982), 194-198; Deborah Gray White, *Ar'n't I a Woman?: Female Slaves in the Plantation South* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1985), 76-84; Wilma King, "The Mistress and Her Maids: White and Black Omen in a *Slavery: Emancipating Perspectives on the American Past* (Athen: University of Georgia Press, 1996), 82-106; Drew Gilpin Faust, *Mothers of Invention: Women of the Slaveholding South in the American Civil War* (New York: Vintage Books, 1996), 60-61, 72-77; Melanie Pavich-Lindsay, *Anna: The Letters of a St. Simons Island Plantation Mistress, 1817-1859* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2002), 185-186, 188.

[70] Diary 5, 22 December 1865, 39.

uneasy, and I asked what troubled him. He whispered, 'Is the reason you don't kiss me 'cause I'm black?' I took him into my lap and held him till he slept."[71] Martha's restraint may have been the result of the differences of class as much as race. Yet, clearly it was not a result of any lack of an affectionate nature on her part. Disey left with her husband and child, and Martha and Mary got on with cooking for themselves. They were aided by the fact that the long awaited stove arrived on the steamer on which Disey departed.

Christmas Eve fell on a Sunday that year, and at evening service Martha prayed "from her own heart, not with their words & doctrines" and later recorded a dream. Whether the dream came while she prayed or while she slept that night, was unclear, but its description was partially cross hatched and across the left margin of her diary entry for the day. In it she said, "A dream a strange dream – a voice came saying that it was the will of the Creator and might as well try and accept it – It was and it was not – two and one – Mon H.A."[72] As cryptic as her entry was, it might be understood in the context of her feelings for H.A. As John had become her mon ami, it was now mon H.A. While she might believe that God had brought them together and sanctioned their feelings for each other, she could control the relationship by interpreting her dream as a message about H.A. and about boundaries. They were to be close friends but no more than that. H.A. would remain a part of her emotional arsenal while on Wadmalaw, but would not threaten her freedom. To be in love and to contemplate marriage was to bring an end to her teaching and her mission.

Her next day's journal entry began, "And this is Christmas! Warm and lovely as a June morning" and ended, "we went to Knickerbockers to dine, some teachers and military from

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[71] Mary Ames, *"She Came to Edisto Island," from A New England Woman's Diary in Dixie, 1865,* (Edisto Island, South Carolina: The Presbyterian Church on Edisto Island, 2002), 88-89.

[72] Diary 5, 25 December 1865, 40.

Edisto were there. The dinner was very good, but the evening was spoiled by Captain Towles drinking too much. We were glad to get '<u>home</u>' again, enjoying our own fireside & society. Misses Bliss & Ames &c, called here awhile. I am glad we are not in the region of shoulder straps &c &c."[73] Mary Ames opinion of the day's celebration was somewhat different. In her diary entry that Christmas she said:

> All of us at headquarters were invited to dine on Christmas with Captain and Mrs. Towles, and their friends on Wadmalaw Island. It was a foggy morning. and we were not in the best of spirits. Four of the soldiers rowed us in a pontoon. The dinner of wild turkey, etc. was excellent. The ladies who were asked to meet us, and whom we liked, had been sent out by the Philadelphia Society. Captain Towles had got a fiddle and an old negro to play it, and insisted upon our dancing, because it was Christmas and we must be merry. It was bad music and worse dancing, but we danced ourselves into a great heat and great good spirits.[74]

The days following were quiet though eventful. News came on the twenty-sixth that three teachers had drowned on Christmas night. Martha recorded that "a Miss Stanton and Kempton from N[ew] E[ngland] and a Mr. Blake, were <u>drowned</u> while crossing a small stream in an unsafe boat – Miss S … was found this morn and will be buried on Edisto. How hard it will be for their friends yet it was recklessness for those three begged them not to go."[75] Who the three were, she did not say. However, Mary Ames wrote of her party being lost in the fog and on the winding creeks between the two islands as they returned to Edisto on Christmas night and having to take to dry land in order to rest and wait for sunlight to find their way. When they finally reached home on the morning of the twenty-sixth, they were immediately handed a letter with the message, "Sad News," written on it. She then explained:

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[73] Diary 5, 25 December 1865, 40.

[74] Ames, *"She Came to Edisto,"* 103-106.

[75] Diary 5, 26 December 1865, 40; Elmira B. Stanton was from Lowell, Massachusetts; Ellen S. Kempton was from New Bedford, Massachusetts; and, James. B. Blake, a Yale College graduate, was from New Haven, Connecticut. Butchart, *The Freedmen's Teacher Project Database.*

> [Captain Bacheller] hurriedly opened the letter, and told us that our friends, Miss Kempton and Miss Stanton, and their friend, Mr. J.P. Blake, had been drowned in St. Pierre Creek. We were stunned, but drove immediately to their home, the Middleton Place. They had been to see some friends two miles down the creek, and had nearly reached the landing on their return, when screams were heard; the boat, which was small and unseaworthy, had been overturned, and they were in the water. Mr. Blake was lame and unable to swim, and the young women could not. A boat was quickly put out, but only the hats and cloaks of the girls were found floating near the spot. Miss Kempton's body was recovered the next day. She was buried in the graveyard, back of the Congregational Church. Captain Bacheller read the service. All her school children came to look upon her, and walked to the churchyard singing as they went. … Three weeks afterwards, Miss Stanton's body was brought back by the sea, and she was buried beside Ellen. Stones to mark the graves were sent by their own people.[76]

December 26 was also significant to Martha in an even more personal way. That evening she and H.A. sat together talking about the future of the freed people and the business of growing cotton. She did not write specifically of what he said but at some length of her feelings toward him, confiding, "it only makes me esteem and respect him more. So few in his situation would be so firm to every principle of right, there is no deviating from conscious duty, and a nobleness of purpose in small transactions which proves <u>true manhood</u>."[77] Here, for a moment, life mimicked fiction. Martha found qualities in H.A. she read of in novels and looked for in the men she encountered. As with John, the attraction between them was mutual and deeply felt. For her, both John and H.A. were men worth surrendering to, but neither one was overpowering. She could flirt, she could share her inner self, but she did not risk losing her heart or herself. However, she expressed her feelings that evening in ways that could have been misconstrued or looked upon as unseemly, and confessed in her journal:

> I guess I did a strange thing, perhaps, unproper, yet innocent – foolish to relate it here but I will, just to see what my opinion will be when old. We had been talking a long while, I was sitting on a chair by the sofa, smoothing the hair, admiring the spirit that clung firmly to the right amidst all temptation. I stopped and kissed the fair brow, a smile passed over

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[76] Ames, *"She Came to Edisto,"* 106-107.

[77] Diary 5, 26 December 1865, 41.

> his face, like a bright shadow of an angels wings. Did his spirit mother see us then? She would not misjudge me. I meant no harm.[78]

Had Martha's own mother seen her at that moment, she may well have misjudged her daughter and felt well justified in expressing her fears where this young man was concerned. As it was, Martha might second guess herself but need not endure the censure or ridicule of her mother, step-father, or sisters. Though Mary Sharp may have seen the two together or heard of their affectionate exchange, Martha had, by then, abandoned any hope of friendship or support from her. What Mary thought, one way or the other was, at the moment, of little consequence to Martha.

In the last days of December there was time for walks with Mary and horseback rides with H.A. to neighboring plantations. From the twenty-ninth to the thirtieth, the little family from Wadmalaw traveled in a small boat manned by three boatmen to Jehossee Island, visiting the teachers posted there, the Misses Allen and Mr. Archer, taking them gifts of a frying pan and tin plates, and walking around the grounds of ex-governor Aiken's plantation where they were making their home. Martha liked her hosts, and said not only that they enjoyed a pleasant evening together, but they were "so intelligent." In the morning, they left Jehossee to return home by way of Edisto in order to pay a visit to Mary Ames and Emily Bliss. Regarding the boat ride, Martha wrote:

> The dew began to fall rather heavily and we huddled under the umbrella. It was a novelty to me and I enjoyed it, and felt joyous. It stopped raining before long and we turned the corners of the crooked streams, with sail and oar, watching the ducks leave their native element as we neared them. Miss S became quiet, Mr. Fisk tired, H.A. sleepy, and M's thoughts as restless as the tide and winding as the stream. The gift of the 26th was returned!!!!![79]

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[78] Diary 5, 26 December 1865, 41.

[79] Diary 5, 30 December 1865, 44. At this point in Martha's diary there begins to be underlining and comments in the margins that were clearly done at a later date, given the color of ink and the handwriting itself. Written over the exclamation marks of this passage and in blue ink (the diary is written in black ink) was, "glad."

The gift returned may well have been a kiss from H.A. and a way of making a statement that they had nothing to hide. They were loving and demonstrative friends rather than secret lovers. The teachers from the two islands ate together and gathered flowers, and it was dark by the time they parted. Martha thought the trip home was made more pleasant by the bright moonlight, but enjoyed the whole of the two days, she said, "very much." Her tone in her journal during the short holiday was, again, reminiscent of her writings in 1859 when away from home for the first time. She sounded young and happy and free – free from the prying eyes of parents and chaperones and free from the usual constraints placed on single, well-bred women. Martha was happy on Wadmalaw. She preferred her island and her people to any of the others she visited and met. Jehossee was too confining and Edisto too crowded. None of the houses on the other two islands were home-like enough to suit her. "Give me Rockville," she said, and "the ever-changing tides for companion with the murmuring ocean making music for my ears."[80]

The last day of the year was rainy and rather dull until she and H.A. sat together to talk. They spoke of religion and she lamented not being able to "talk the religion I feel." They seemed to have disagreed on some points of scripture and she was willing to concede that he may have been more familiar with the passages because he had studied them more. Also, in the end, it was "not the belief in certain doctrines, but the righteous living that give the crown in the immortal home beyond."[81] Whatever their religious differences, they were bridged by her belief in his goodness and righteousness. Later that evening, they attended a watch service together where "H.A. made some good remarks." Martha sat among the freed people on that new year's eve and wrote of the night:

[80] Diary 5, 30 December 1865, 44.

[81] Diary 5, 31 December 1865, 45.

> In the silence of my own heart I prayed earnestly that all the errors and wrongs of the old year might be blotted out by better deeds in the one just approaching. I do sincerely ask that the Good Father will give me strength to walk uprightly, to follow in the paths that He has pointed out, to practice justice and mercy and Charity, to prove my love to Him by love to his creatures. I humbly hope that I have accomplished some good in the last twelve months. We remained till after 12 oclock, then came home. My new years gift was a lovely rose bud, emblem of purity and the giver.[82]

So ended 1865 and Martha's first two months in the South.

The new year dawned cloudy and Martha's comment that "in this Southern clime we have damp weather instead of cold" could be taken as a sign of how settled she felt in South Carolina. Certainly, she was not ready to move permanently to the South, but with the work, her attachments, the natural beauty, and climate, it had its attractions. One great advantage was the fact that she had not, as yet, suffered because of her feet. This alone was reason to feel in tune with her temporary home. New Year 's Day brought 76 people to her door asking for clothing. As barrels arrived from the North, they were quickly emptied. The need for clothing remained constant. One of the young woman who had been helping with housework had stolen clothing while the white folks were visiting Jehossee and Edisto. Martha was particularly sympathetic. She and H.A. had gone to another of the abandoned plantations where the girl was staying and found the stolen articles. She confessed, kneeling before them and begging forgiveness. Martha's response was, "poor thing, I would rather save her than the clothes, so young."[83] School began again after the holiday and she noted teaching Phonography, a system of stenography, but offered no explanation of its purpose.[84] H.A. painted the walls in the classrooms, "making nice black boards."[85]

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[82] Diary 5, 31 December 1865, 45.

[83] Diary 5, 1 January 1866, 46.

[84] Diary 5, 2 January 1866, 46. It is most likely that Martha was teaching a method developed by Sir Isaac Pitman, and promoted by him through the publication in 1840 of his manual titled, *Phonography*. Because the book was published in inexpensive additions, it was widely distributed throughout England and the United States. Why she

Between January 3 and 4, a small uprising occurred that would have serious consequences for the freed people and for Martha and H.A. Some time in the afternoon of the third, Gustavus Whitridge arrived with two other white men, L. Beckett and Mr. Swail. Martha identified Mr. Swail as the superintendent of John's Island, probably the island's plantation superintendent, and L. Beckett only as a Rebel. On the heels of the white men was a large group of freedmen. Martha reported that many were on horseback and a crowd filled their yard. According to her, the white men, under order of General Rufus Saxton, Assistant Commissioner for the Freedmen's Bureau in South Carolina, were attempting to count the number of freed people on the island. At one of the plantations, "a colored person demanded their business [and] Mr Swail very imprudently drew his revolver & said

> "that was his authority." Afterwards he heard a musket go off, it was a signal and soon a large number had collected [and] notwithstanding the white men showed their papers from Gen. Saxton & told them they wanted to find out the number of people, they thought best to leave, and came immediately to [the northerners], not stopping to take the census of the other plantations."[86]

Martha gloated, calling them "poor weak cowards come here to one man & Northern school marms for protection not daring to go out to meet the crowd we have no fear of."[87] Moreover she said, "my whole being thrilled in the presence of traitors and I immediately put on a flag & national colors."[88]

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was teaching a method of shorthand is interesting but unclear. While stenography is based on phonetics, then as now, a method of teaching reading, it is a system of writing rather than of reading and of questionable use to her students at this point in their education.

[85] Diary 5, 3 January 1866, 46.

[86] Diary 5, 3 January 1866, 47.

[87] Diary 5, 3 January 1866, 48.

[88] Diary 5, 3 January 1866, 47.

Of everything Martha wrote of the incident, her focus and her praise were placed on the actions and behavior of the freedmen and H.A. Angry black men with guns aimed at southern white men was potentially volatile and dangerous on all sides. Martha explained, in some detail, the conversation between the crowd and H.A.:

> It did me real good to see so much manhood, manifested, they talked well, like men worthy of freedom and ready to suffer for it. One Henry Green said he had been wounded nine times & would be 9 times more before he would submit to a Rebel. Ooh! He said if the one they call superintendent will do that, what may we not expect from a Rebel, oh! he said it was shaking the pistol in the man's face that has made us come here, such things kill us, if they had treated us as men we would not have harmed them. The good H.A. reasoned & talked with them a long while. And to me it was a grand sight to see, how even these out-raged, excited men cooled down under the mild firm words of one they could trust. Here was the influence of a pure mind working out noble purposes. The contrast seemed so great; in the house among the traitors, or out amid the dusky forms, that face wore its look of spiritual purity, and the outward vexations, had no power to erace the evidences of inward peace which is stamped upon those who strive so faithfully to walk uprightly. I felt like drawing nearer and blessing him, for the light which was in his own soul was dispelling the darkness from other minds – O! there was something above the mere words, they felt and recognized the true, honest, conscientious man; and were willing to let it rule their impetuous wills –. Yet, they were in earnest, one told me "lady we hab a boat all ready, dun no who boat 'him' was, but we going to take dem over te de military at Edisto." – & they would have done it, except for H.A. Oh! they said "Mr. Evans would never done such a thing, tell them if dey come wid him, we'll not harm , but if they land here alone, we hab muskets dat neber lie." … The colored people left, but the whites had large fears all night I guess. We had none.[89]

Whitridge, Beckett, and Swail spent the night upstairs in the house, while H.A. slept on the sofa downstairs, in part, most likely, as guard. The freedmen did not go far, spending the night around a fire in a nearby woods. In the morning, H.A. had another long talk with them, advising them to let the men go and send a delegation to Charleston to see General Saxton and lodge a formal complaint. The incident was ended when "the rebs left, with a large number following as guards!!" but not before Martha herself had addressed the freedmen. In her journal she wrote:

> Oh! I have enjoyed this – it has proved that there is something that has not been crushed by slavery, and is worthy all the protection our Government can give – I had quite a talk with them, told them that H.A. was their best friend they must trust him & do as he said,

[89] Diary 5, 3 January 1866, 48-49.

> if they wanted <u>him</u> for Supt go tell Gen. Saxton. I guess they will for they admire & <u>respect</u> him – They said many good things of him, and I am glad our pathway has fallen among those whose principles we can admire and appreciate.[90]

For the moment, life returned to the normal rounds of work and aid, though there was, finally, a change in the weather. The northerners experienced their first snowstorm in the South, Martha calling it a mere squall, the sun soon reappearing and melting the little snow and ice that accumulated. Mary and Martha instituted a new policy concerning the distribution of clothing, requiring payment in food or other goods. Martha said the people could well afford it and "we have several dozen eggs which are <u>living</u> to us & they do not miss." However, given the widespread destitution on the island, bartering with even small amounts of food may have been more of a sacrifice to the freed people than Martha realized or admitted. Yet, paying for clothing brought with it the satisfaction of avoiding both charity and indebtedness. On the first, cold, Saturday of the new year there were so many people to outfit that Martha did not have a chance to comb her hair until after dark. A family of four arrived who had walked six miles and brought with them a chicken, grits, and sweet potatoes. But the most valued offering of the day came from the youngest daughter who brought flowers she picked and placed in a box. Martha said, "it was touching & I gave her equal with the rest."[91]

Martha began noting in her journal Mary Sharp's frequent visits to Captain Towles and his wife, Ann. Evidently, Mary found more in common with Ann Towles, a southerner, than she did with Martha and may have discovered an outlet for complaints and gossip where Martha was concerned. Too, it must have been a relief for both of them not to have to spend every hour of every day together. In the meantime, there were even more demands placed on Martha with an outbreak of smallpox on the island. One of the first to succumb was N.B., though he had been

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[90] Diary 5, 4 January 1866, 50.

[91] Diary 5, 6 January 1866, 51.

vaccinated the previous fall. His was not to be a life threatening case, but among the freed people on the island the disease was more deadly.[92] Martha insisted on nursing him and many others, writing that it was her duty and, in exaggeratedly pious language, that she expected to receive her reward in heaven should she die. This was Martha at her preachiest and, likely for Mary, her most annoying. But she toiled on, distributing blankets and medicine to any who arrived at her doorstep and taking both to those too ill to leave their houses. Martha and Mary suspended school for a few days but decided the risk was no greater for themselves or the students if they continued. Most households on the island had someone who was ill. However, they asked any who were sick to stay home until fully recovered. There was, about the same time, an outbreak of smallpox on Edisto and Mary Ames and Emily Bliss decided to suspend classes for five weeks. In the end, none of the four teachers on either island became ill.[93] The disease on Wadmalaw lingered well into March. In the meantime, however, Martha was about to enter into the most challenging period of her time on the island.

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In March of 1865, Congress created the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands, popularly known as the Freedmen's Bureau. At its inception, it was believed that much of the revenue to support the Freedmen's Bureau would be generated in the South by the

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[92] As Leslie Schwalm explains, "The contraband camps – such as Montgomery Hill and Mitchelville on Hilton Head Island – were overwhelmed with … a 'kind of refugee black population, of women, children, the infirm, and the aged.' Some were families of enlisted men, but many more were individuals and families left destitute by four years of war and Union liberation. Infectious disease – like measles and smallpox – swept through the black refugee population." Leslie A. Schwalm, *A Hard Fight For We: Women's Transition from Slavery to Freedom in South Carolina* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1997), 125-126.

[93] In her diary, Mary Ames said, "in January smallpox broke out among the soldiers quartered on out place. Many of our scholars took it, and we closed the school for five weeks. We escaped though in continual danger, for the negroes, even when repulsively sick, were so eager for our gifts of clothing that they forced their way to our very bedrooms, and our carryall, drawn by men was used to carry the patients to the improvised hospital. Several of our earliest friends on the Whaley place died. When on Monday, February twenty-sixth, we began school again, we had thirteen pupils. One of them, when asked if there was smallpox on her plantation, answered, "No, the last one died Saturday." On the third day one hundred children had come back." Ames, *"She Came to Edisto,"* 112-113.

cultivation of abandoned and confiscated land and the sale of land and other property.[94] In coastal areas like Wadmalaw that came under General Sherman's Special Field Order No. 15, freed people occupied houses, planted crops, and organized militias. In addition, some had been granted possessory titles to land by the military and waited for Congress to iron out the details and make them legal. However, with Andrew Johnson's decision in May, 1865 to pardon former rebels and return confiscated and abandoned land to original owners, a potential source of funding for the Freedmen's Bureau was lost as was land ownership and economic freedom for former slaves. The future for all southerners, black and white was, in the early months of 1866, uncertain.[95]

Added to that were the competing and often overlapping forces of the Freedmen's Bureau, the military and teachers like Martha. Not only was it unclear whether President Johnson would continue to support and maintain the Bureau, but with no funding as yet appropriated by Congress, the hiring of agents and other personnel was greatly limited. Beginning in the late summer of 1865, Bureau posts were being filled by the military, placing many in untenable situations when army and Bureau conflicted, especially in disputes over land and labor contracts. In August 1865, General James C. Beecher, brother of Harriet Beecher Stowe and Henry Ward Beecher, was made a Subassistant Commissioner of the Freedmen's Bureau in South Carolina and by the end of the year his military jurisdiction extended to the islands of St. Johns, Edisto, and Wadmalaw. Commander of the 35th Regiment, United States Colored Infantry, he was considered by some as a staunch and even overly zealous supporter of the rights of freed people. But by February, 1866, Beecher's efforts were largely focused on

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[94] Cimbala, *The Freedman's Bureau,* 8; Robert R. Singleton, "James C. Beecher and the Freedmen's Bureau," *Mississippi Quarterly*, Winter 1999/2000, Vol. 53, Issue 1, 2.

[95] Cimbala, *The Freedman's Bureau,* 4-5.

returning plantations to their former owners and compelling blacks to sign labor contracts with them or with northern entrepreneurs who had bought or were leasing plantations. He was accused of too often doing both at either end of a gun.[96]

By mid-January, there was an influx of Union soldiers on Wadmalaw, sent to the island, in part, because of the uprising of January 3 and 4, and the efforts of General Beecher to aid planters like Gustavus Whitridge in reclaiming their plantations and securing labor contracts. Ironically, most of the soldiers who arrived were members of the 35th Colored Infantry and would participate in forcing freed people to sign contracts or to leave the island if they would not. For those who would not agree to return to work for Rebels or northern whites, General Order No.1, issued by General Daniel Sickles on the first of January 1866, required that every freed person who refused to sign contracts must leave within ten days.[97]

When not on duty, many of the black soldiers attended school and Martha remarked that they were very anxious to learn.[98] In addition to the soldiers in her classroom, she also noted their white captain, William Nerland, as a regular guest at dinner.[99] She told him that it would

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[96] Initially, Beecher believed that the government had committed itself to distributing land to former slaves, but soon changed his mind. Instead, in order to restore order and to avoid widespread famine, he supported the return of land to southern owners and the necessity of freedmen to sign labor contracts that gave half of what they produced to their employers. In addition, he agreed to allow orphans to be taken out of school and apprenticed to planters for terms of ten years or longer. When freedmen and women refused to follow his orders, he and his men resorted to brute force. In 1866, one of his critics wrote, "'the job of turning out of house and home the poor loyal freedman, to make place for the rebels steeped in treason was given to Col. Beecher, because his name and his antecedents might make the inhumanity, seem less inhuman.'" Singleton, "James C. Beecher and the Freedmen's Bureau," pp.1-2, 4-36; Schwalm, *A Hard Fight For We*, 170.

[97] Singleton, "James C. Beecher and the Freedmen's Bureau," 8.

[98] Diary 5, 22 January 1866, 58.

[99] Wiliam A.M. Nerland, born in 1842, enlisted in Boston as a private in the Union army in May, 1861. He was discharged for wounds in November 1862, and re-enlisted and was commissioned an officer in June 1863. He was promoted to full Captain in October, 1864 and was mustered out on the first of June, 1866. Between March 1867 and April 1868 he worked as an agent of the Freedmen's Bureau in Barnwell, South Carolina, and is listed in the 1870 Census in Barnwell as Clerk of the County Court. *U.S. Civil War Soldier Records and Profiles*, [database on-line], Provo, Utah, USA: Ancestry.com, (accessed September 24, 2009); 1870 Census, South Carolina, Barnwell County, Barnwell, 14.

be "too bad" if he were to arrest any of the people who chased Whitridge, Beckett, and Swail to them.[100] Whether arrests were rumored or Nerland hinted at the possibility or told her outright they would occur, she did not say.

On January 18, in the midst of all the uproar, Martha sat in the evening to commemorate the wedding of John Bunting and Anna Webster. She wrote,

> This has been a most lovely day, and all the time my thoughts were with my two friends at Hyde Park, for this is the day fixed for their marriage – I do wish I could have been there have so long looked forward to this, and now cannot witness the ceremony. Yet, I have prayed earnestly that our Father may bless them continually in this life and fit them for the life to come. I could fill pages with my feelings to-day but it is not worth while. I felt restless and longing to be there, so wanted to do some thing.[101]

This was a marriage that Martha had played a part in, if not as matchmaker, certainly in supporting, even nurturing, the attraction between Anna and John. Still, the attraction between John and Martha had come first and been powerful and their relationship was important to her becoming a freedmen's teacher. She had deflected his pursuit of her as a marriage partner while continuing in a deep friendship that developed into a close bond. Even as she had worked to break her ties with him, Martha continued to rely on his letters as one of her sources of support and love while on Wadmalaw. Now all would be different – he was a married man and could no longer play the same role in her life. That she would say, "I could fill pages with my feelings," was understandable, as was her remark that it was not worthwhile. Notwithstanding her saying she longed to be there to witness the ceremony, she may well have been glad she was not. It was an emotional transition more easily accomplished from afar. In the meantime, there was much else to occupy her thoughts and her time.

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[100] Diary 5, 18 January 1866, 57.

[101] Diary 5, 18 January 1866, 57.

Within a few days there was a rift between Mary and Martha that was partially overcome by "a good sisterly talk," but Martha worried she would still be misjudged. However, on the twenty-second they attended a meeting of the freed people from Edisto and Wadmalaw, most likely concerning the issue of land and labor contracts. There were soldiers present and two men from a revenue cutter, evidence that the military was worried about the possibility of unrest, if not violence. Martha described the evening, saying

> some from Edisto spoke very well, all did, and were much interested, afterwards Mary Sharp made some remarks, we were so anxious they should know, we were in sympathy with them. Some one moved a vote of thanks be offered to the Ladies – it was seconded & then the whole audience rose and bowed. It was touching and my tears almost came.[102]

In this, the women were united but in the days leading up to her birthday on the first of February, there was a series of quarrels between them, so much so that for the first time Martha wrote "I am feeling very, very badly, worse than any time since I came away. Oh! how I have longed to be among those that love me."[103] With H.A. away in Charleston and John so recently married, her incompatibility with Mary may have been more keenly felt.

On the evening before her birthday, not having received letters in twelve days, she and Mary decided to go to Edisto in a borrowed boat with "some men to row" and invited Mrs. Knickerbocker and her sister. They rode in the moonlight. After reaching Seabrook plantation on Edisto, they walked two miles to the military headquarters and were rewarded with letters – eight for Martha alone. On her birthday, her journal entry was uncharacteristically short and mostly cryptic. She began with, "I will not forget it commencing on our way from Edisto," and asked, "which is it Captain Wragge or Mrs. Lecount?" Both Wragge and Lecount were characters in Wilkie Collins' novel, *No Name*. The plot centers on a young woman who is

[102] Diary 5, 21 and 22 January 1865, 58.

[103] Diary 5. 28 January 1866, 60.

orphaned and made penniless by an evil uncle. Captain Wragge aids her in launching a career on stage as a means of supporting herself. She hatched a plan to seek revenge on her cousin who has inherited her rightful fortune from his father, her uncle. Mrs. Lecount, her cousin's housekeeper, and Wragge plot against her but just when all seems lost, she is rescued by a man who nurses her back to health and then marries her. Both Wragge and Lecount are villains; one appears for a time to be more friend than foe, while the other is clearly an enemy. Martha may have been trying to decide just how serious her differences with Mary were. Was she part friend and part foe, or an out-and-out enemy? She may even have fantasized about what it would be like to be rescued by love and marriage. She may have fantasized about H.A. playing that role in her life.

On the evening of her birthday, the men went to prayer meeting and Martha stayed at home to write letters. She recorded receiving a single gift, "a nice little stool from Mr. Fisk" and said, "my good thoughts need not be recorded here."[104] She made no mention of receiving a gift from H.A., much less Mary. In a few days, she was working to find an emotional equilibrium and confessed, "I do want to do right, I want no enmity or malice in my heart – let it be unselfish & kind – true to its nature."[105]

However, beginning on February 4, Martha's life on Wadmalaw was turned upside down by General Beecher's order that H.A. Evans leave the island in four days time for "inciting the freedmen to stupid acts of violence." Martha called the order insulting and an injustice and said

[104] Diary 5, 1 February 1866, 62.

[105] Diary 5, 3 February 1866, 62.

of H.A., "he is my brother now."[106] That they were soon to be separated could well have been the driving force in this declaration to herself.

The order came as H.A. was battling another bout of fever and within a day his illness worsened. Once again, Martha became his nurse. On the evening of February 5, they were alone in the house because the new the cook was home sick and Mary and N.B. had gone to Charleston to see if anything could be done to override Beecher's decision. H.A. became delirious and called to his dead mother and to God saying, "I am coming," and "God! take me to thyself." Martha said at one point she had to put her arms around him to keep him from trying to stand and pleaded, "lie down, Minor, do, Sister wants you too." She wept at the tenderness of his words and the depth of his feelings. She also felt that his mother's spirit was there and said, "the mother-spirit was with me, and I watched him with tender affection knowing she was with us." At his most vulnerable and weakest, in a moment of physical and emotional intimacy, Martha felt sure she saw deeply into his character, as few others, other than his mother, had or maybe would. Here was the familiar territory of pushing boundaries justified by unselfish love sanctioned by God, and in this case, the spirit of a dead mother. Moreover, she had now finally defined her love for him as sisterly rather than romantic. She wrote of her nursing and his recovery:

> About 10, he was able to sit up, I read, & he made one of the most beautiful prayers I ever heard – such as is acceptable to our Father who has promised to be where a few are gathered together in his name. What a comfort to know we are all under the care of an All seeing Eye that never wearies and a great Love that blesses continually. H.A. was very very weak & I fixed his bed down stairs, hardly conscious of his doings yet. Every two hours through the night I went down to replenish the fire & see my patient. He slept quite well and is better this morning. Our cook came but so sick she had to lie down, so with my two patients and school had my hands full; he was much better toward night and we spent quite a blessed evening.[107]

[106] Diary 5, 4 February 1866, 63.

[107] Diary 5, 5 and 6 February 1866, 64-65.

On February 8, Martha wrote, "we are in real trouble here."[108] Mary and N.B. returned from Charleston, having met with the new Assistant Commissioner of the Bureau, General Robert K. Scott, but not with General Beecher who had gone to Summerville.[109] While they left with no assurance that Beecher's order would be rescinded, they hoped their trip had been worthwhile and H.A.'s job would be saved. In addition, a former planter on the island, Mr. Townsend, arrived asking them to relinquish possession of his house – one of the two they were using as schools.[110] While Mary agreed, on the condition he found them another building to use as schoolhouse, Martha flatly refused:

> My heart beat fast, but the memory of our starved soldiers and martyred President was fresh with me & I dared not swerve from my principles, so calmly told him I was not willing to give up my part, that it was put to good purpose, and it was not worth while to change. I will not change my mind! Only a few more words & he left. If H.A. had not been ill I would have said more, but I could not be false to the principles I have professed. They would spurn us if they dared, and I believe are not half repentant for their insults to our flag. Oh! I cannot treat a Rebel with the cordiality of an acquaintance. – No! No! They get too much with their lands, we deserve the house, to do what they would once have hung us for attempting.[111]

The ground was shifting beneath her. Rebels were beginning to return and the army was usurping the power and position of the teachers and the Bureau. Moreover, she claimed that they had begun to insult "the whole family," and were "using & taking things that are personal property & when Mr. F objected to the horse going to Cap. N[erland] sent a note ordering him to leave 'by 9 A.M. on the 9th inst.'" N.B. left Wadmalaw the same evening and Martha said, "we watched the little lantern he took as the boat skimmed over the waters. How I disliked to see him

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[108] Diary 5, 8 February 1866, 67.

[109] Robert K. Scott had replaced Rufus Saxton as Assistant Commissioner for South Carolina in January.

[110] In the 1860 census there were two Townsends listed on Wadmalaw. One was D.I. Townsend, 53 years old, and the other, David Townsend, 24 years old. Both were listed as planters. The elder Townsend's estate was worth $443,000 and the younger Townsend's was worth $20,000. 1860 census, South Carolina, St. John's Colleton, Wadmalaw Island, 14.

[111] Diary 5, 7 February 1866, 66.

go, it is unjust and cruel. I believe I shall feel this breaking up more than any – it makes my heart sick now."[112]

Then on February 11, General Beecher arrived on the island with his wife and blew over them like a small tornado. According to Martha, "his few words were insults to the family." His verbal attacks on them were personal and hurtful. He accused Mary of things she did not say and told her "the wheels of time could not reverse her age." He yelled at H.A. who was still bedridden that "he must be weak in judgment or bad moraly [sic]." Martha was uncharacteristically silent during the attack but responded in her journal: "O! what a contrast! A man in his position professing to be a minister of the gospel, yet descending to such small things while the white face on the sick pillow was stamped with innocence. – The Christian spirit bore it meekly, but it must have pained his sensitive nature. I could have cried at his feelings being thus hurt. The call left us in a disturbed state."[113] Beecher's behavior was certainly unbecoming to a man in his position, and might be seen as evidence of a manic personality. His wife, who Martha said "appear[ed] to be a fine woman," was grieved at his behavior and evidently attempted some type of reconciliation before returning with him to the steamer. The evening was filled with visiting teachers from Edisto and later a call by Captain Nerland who got a lecture from Martha on the smallness of his behavior where N.B. was concerned. However, he must have taken his medicine because he stayed for prayers and said nothing of N.B.'s return.[114]

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[112] Diary 5, 8 February 1866, 66-67.

[113] Diary 5, 11 February 1866, 69.

[114] Diary 5. 11 February 1866, 69. In her biography of Henry Ward Beecher, Debby Applegate explains that in 1843 Lyman Beecher sent his youngest son, James, to older brother Henry in hopes that Henry would steer James toward the ministry. However, "raised almost entirely in the West, [he] was hotheaded, with a taste for violent pranks, brawling, gambling, and drinking. Unfortunately James did not fall under Henry's spell. Shipped off to Dartmouth College in 1845, he was a constant troublemaker who graduated only because he was Lyman Beecher's son." Still, as with all his six brothers, he became a Congregational minister. Debby Applegate, *The Most Famous Man in*

The following day a box arrived from Darby with a bounty of letters and food including cakes, almonds, raisins, & pickles as well as a book titled, *Mizpah – Prayer and Friendship*. The title was taken from the thirty-first chapter of Genesis in which Laban and Jacob made a covenant of friendship symbolized by a heap of rocks they build together and came to represent a watchpost called a Mizpah. Laban says, "The Lord watch between you and me, when we are absent one from another."[115] Martha said it was a book she had wanted for a long time and it could not have come at a better moment for her. Given Beecher's outburst, it was clear that H.A. and his brother would soon leave the island permanently and the family she had come to rely on would be separated forever. The book was meant as a guide for daily prayer and especially prayer that bound separated loved ones, even those separated by death. In the preface the author wrote, "there is no hour more sacred to sincere friendship and affection than the hour of prayer. A kind Providence has given to each of us, those around whom entwine the strong tendrils of the heart. … It comforts and encourages the heart to know that friends, some perhaps far away, seek daily guidance from the same page of Wisdom, and remember us on bended knee."[116] In the weeks to come this book and the prayers it contained would be a comfort binding her to friends recently gone from Wadmalaw, and friends and family she had not seen for four months. As she wrote, "what sweet sweet company for my lonely hours."[117]

America: The Biography of Henry Ward Beecher (New York: Three Leaves Press, 2006), 177-176. While Martha notes in her diary that N.B. returned that evening on a steamer she does not explain why.

[115] Genesis, 31, 49.

[116] Lafeyette C. Loomis, A.M., *Mizpah, Prayer and Friendship*, (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott & Company, 1858).

[117] Diary 5, 12 February 1866, 70.

On February 13, H.A. was well enough to take a walk and to make a declaration – "the 'first time' in life a sister was chosen."[118] Some time later Martha had written below this line and upside down, "a pledge given." Whether or not he had felt more for her than brotherly love we cannot know. Like John, H.A. may have been persuaded that platonic love was all that was open to him. As parting gifts he gave Martha and Mary each a vase and to Martha two canaries he had brought with him from New Hampshire. She mended his coat and together with Mary helped him and his stepbrother pack their things.

Yet in the midst of the sadness of parting, they managed to laugh together, though ironically. Theirlast joke was illustrative of the level of racism even among the most sincere and dedicated defenders of the freed people. H.A. had planned to leave on February 15 but it was so windy the boat was not sent out. He "called awhile at school" and Martha said, "we three sat there, when a ragged orang outang [sic], dirty urchin, passed us, the worst specimen of humanity on the island. Miss S remarked, 'a little lower than the angels,' I looked and said, 'of such is the kingdom of heaven.' She replied 'the gods must have laughed when they made us' – the time, place & figures were so ludicrous we all laughed heartily, and will long remember these little sallies."[119] It is hard to imagine that this child was not aware that the white people there to help were making an ugly joke at his or her expense or that there were other children who might not have heard the exchange or understood the source of their laughter.

While it is not unusual for teachers to make fun of students or to treat them cruelly, the comparison of this child to an orangutan makes clear the deep roots of racist ideology within the culture. It also points to the strong identification of middle class whites in the nineteenth century

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[118] Martha had also written later but at the bottom of this page, "Years after I visited him & his wife in New Hampshire." Diary 5, 13 February 1866, 70.

[119] Diary 5, 15 February 1866, 71.

with bourgeois values and what constituted a civilized existence. It also draws attention to what teachers thought they were doing in the South among the freed people. Martha's sense of cultural superiority was focused on white southerners who she blamed for slavery's existence. Her sense of racial superiority was mitigated by the potential of education to fit blacks for the responsibilities of freedom and citizenship as she saw them. However, it is unclear whether she believed the ultimate goal of education was racial equality, at least to this point in her experience. A mitigating factor in her racial attitude was religion – all were part of God's creation and kingdom, and therefore, the basic humanity of blacks must be recognized and supported. At the same time, it is significant that, when teaching at the Bethany school in Philadelphia, she had referred to some of her students as brutes and savages but never compared them to orangutans.

The following morning, the boat arrived and H.A. left the island and may well have left work in the South altogether. Martha lost her "best friend on Wadmelaw [sic]" and praised him for "his sympathy," and "the goodness of his heart." She vowed to pray that God would watch over him and he would find peace and happiness. She said, "I can scarcely realize that the parting may be forever, that he is indeed gone away from our 'Island Home.' We watched him as the row boat moved away, that carries him to Charleston & then with a heavy heart we went to school."[120]

Yet there was little time to mourn. There was the nearly endless task of giving out clothing and the daily rounds of teaching. When the boat returned from Charleston two days, later there were gifts from H.A. of a box of apples and a photograph albums for each of the women. Martha was particularly touched by his thoughtfulness – "he seldom makes gifts," she noted.

[120] Diary 5, 16 February 1866, 75.

On the same morning she attended church and heard a sermon by General Beecher, pronouncing it "very good." She remarked that he extended an olive branch. "[I wonder] if we could not settle our little quarrel," he had asked. His return to the island served the dual purpose of establishing a new order and attempting to build a more amicable relationship with the people there. Gaining their trust might go a long way in aiding the goal of a peaceful transition of the freed people into landless paid laborers. Beecher visited with the women that afternoon and Martha wrote, "he came in and I guess no Rev. ever had his Christian character so picked to pieces; we were very very plain, told him it was 'his privilege as a military man to order Mr. E., but as a Christian he had no right to couch it in such language.' That he insulted us when he spoke against him, that we believed no purer man trod these Islands. He could do nothing but bear it, remained to dinner but we hit him very hard much of the time."[121]

Martha's sparring with General Beecher continued in the morning over breakfast and later during a ride together. They "talked a great deal about Mr. E" and she held nothing back, though she was more good-natured about it all than the day before. However, at one point she stopped her pony and said she would go no further if he did not "recall every word." Given that they later had tea together, he must have complied. Martha said she made no fuss, made him sit in the kitchen and explained to him her commitment to speaking plainly and truthfully even to Generals. He responded that it felt quite natural to talk with her and he appreciated that there was no putting on of airs where she was concerned. He said he guessed they "would be good friends yet." Martha replied, "no General never till you have changed your mind of Mr. Evans."[122]

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[121] Diary 5, 18 February 1866, 73.

[122] Diary 5, 19 February, 1866, 74.

Though between H.A.'s departure and Beecher's arrival Martha made no mention of N.B., he was still on the island, and finally prepared to leave on February 20, four days after his stepbrother. She wrote him "a long funny letter" and placed it in an envelope with a carte-de-visite and drawing with instructions that it not be opened until he was at sea.

What was particularly interesting was that she signed the letter and envelope "M.S. or modern spinster." This could have been an old joke between them or something new she thought up for the occasion. But it came at an interesting point in her time on Wadmalaw. Rather than a statement of her desire or prospects for marrying, it sounded more like a declaration of her independence and womanhood. Even in the wake of losing the home life she had come to depend on, Martha's confidence was not shaken nor did she lose faith in herself. The number of students declined because, as she explained, the people were "so unsettled about contracting & having to leave."[123] She felt their absence keenly but soldiered on. Small pox still plagued the island and especially the recently arrived soldiers, so nearly every evening she made rounds delivering food and medicine. On some weekends she worked alone while Mary went to visit the Towles, and wrote of a Saturday's work:

> Very busy all day looking over & giving out clothing. … I did not sit down except to meals, just about dark went to take supper to the sick men, found Simon Perry quite poorly again, I then went to Clarksons, took him a Jacket which pleased him much, he thought 'the Lord sent me to see him.' Came home in a pouring rain made mustard plaster for Simon – How the folks North would be frightened if they knew I was with those having such a dreaded disease – but I believe they would have died if we had not cared for them, and if I should take it, better to go through life scarred & maimed than carry a narrow scarred soul into eternity.[124]

The following morning Martha took the men breakfast and reported they were all better and read a prayer at a meeting to commemorate, belatedly, Lincoln's birthday. In the afternoon

[123] Diary 5, 21 February, 1866, 75.

[124] Diary 5, 24 February 1866, 75.

she invited Henry Owens, a black preacher, to dine at home with her. When sadness did intrude she had letters from home and a newly arrived box of books including one of her old favorites, *The Chronicles of the Schonberg-Cotta Family*, and books by Lydia Maria Child.

Although with H.A.'s banishment went the one emotional lifeline Martha had on the island, there were compensations in immersing herself in the work at hand and in the marked increase in social life on Wadmalaw. With the Bureau and its mission came soldiers, enlisted men and officers, who seemed to wash in and out like the tide. In addition, there were numerous visitors – northerners looking to invest in southern land, visiting teachers and administrators, visiting clergy, journalists writing stories for northern newspapers about the post-war South, and returning planters and their families. The island was no longer largely the domain of the freed people and the four young northerners as it had been when Martha first arrived, and the home life the four created together was lost to her. She now turned, most often, to reading and the natural world to find comfort and renewal. Interestingly, from the time of H.A.'s departure until Martha left the island in June, she only mentioned him four times in her diary. In each case her entries were short. On March 23 she noted receiving a letter and photograph and on March 30 a letter. On May 29, Martha said she wrote to H.A. and on June 13 sent him a photograph of herself.[125] Why, after the centrality of their relationship to her happiness she seems to have forgotten him, is difficult to say. However, one reason may have been her budding relationship with General Robert K. Scott.

In January 1866, Robert Scott replaced Rufus Saxton as Assistant Commissioner for the Freedman's Bureau in South Carolina and by mid-March met Martha for the first time. He was a war hero and a man of many trades. A physician, Scott fought in the Mexican-American war, practiced medicine in Ohio, and established a mercantile business there. He volunteered with the

[125] Diary 5, 23 and 30 March 1866, 82, 85; Diary 5, 29 May and 14 June 1866, 98, 101.

67th Ohio infantry at the outbreak of the Civil War, fought in the Vicksburg campaign, and joined Sherman in the Atlanta campaign and the march to the sea. He was made Brigadier General of volunteers in January 1865, and promoted to Major General for meritorious service the following December. Scott married Rebecca J. Lowry in 1854 and by 1866 had a son less than a year old.[126]

With the month of March came spring weather and Martha relished the warmth. When possible she rambled over the island drinking in the sunshine and the fragrances of the many flowers in bloom. She also stopped frequently along the way to talk with people she met. On March 3, she recorded of one afternoon's outing:

> I wonder what my friends North would have thought had they seen me on my way home. A level path way, with high thick trees & thick underbrush both sides, <u>one white girl</u> on a little pony stopped to talk to some colored men in a cart, as one after another sable traveler came along the audience increased and soon amounted to 20; yet all listened attentively while the speaker explained and reasoned with them about the duties of the Freedmen &c.[127]

It is likely that land and labor contracts were the topic of conversation as well as government rations. An argument had ensued within the Bureau over issuing rations to white southerners in need as well as black Since early in the year, General Beecher had refused to provide them for anyone on Wadmalaw, at first because he thought it unjust to exclude whites and later as an incentive for blacks to sign labor contracts or leave the island.[128]

With the month of March also came the beginning of Martha's later editing of her journal by cutting out whole pages or sections of pages. It is likely that these portions of the journal

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[126] American Civil War General Officers, [database on-line], Provo, Utah, USA: The Generations Network, Inc., 1999, http://search.ancestry.com, (accessed September 22, 2009; 1860 census, Ohio, Henry County, Florida Flatrock Township, 1, (accessed September 22, 2009); 1870 census, South Carolina, Richland County, Ward 4 City of Columbia, 45, (accessed September 22, 2009); Obituary for Robert K. Scott in *The New York Times*, August 14, 1900.

[127] Diary 5, 3 March 1866, 77.

[128] Singleton, "James C. Beecher and the Freedmen's Bureau," 22-23.

were entries concerning Robert Scott . Though their relationship was just beginning in the spring of 1866, she would later say that he was the one man she truly loved. Moreover, she later excised from her journal almost everything she wrote about him and destroyed all the letters she received from him. Sometime between March 5 and March 11, he most likely came to the island, because two pages were cut out of her journal covering those dates. Then on March 12, Martha left an entry standing relating to him that said, "lovely morning, very pleasant talk with the General – there seems a purity of moral life in him that claims my respect, and a great noble heart which meets all with a general smile. He had a bath with some colored men, afterwards visited our school & spoke to the children, surely we were honored. He kindly invited us to come to see him in C[harleston] & promised to go round with us. All this from the goodness of his heart."[129]

Scott emerges from the pages of Martha's diary, at least those that remain where she wrote of him, as a man of power, sensitivity, and great charisma. He affected her in much the same way as Edward Willets – he was someone she admired and was physically attracted to. Unlike John Bunting or H.A. Evans, he was not a man easily controlled or manipulated. At the same time, like Willets, he was unavailable. Here again was a balancing act, though one fraught with more danger than with John or H.A., of pursuing a course that would carry her outside the bounds of propriety but bring her the love and intimacy she craved. There is little doubt that Martha knew he was married and a father, and those facts may have made the relationship all the

[129] Diary 5, 12 March 1866, 80.

more desirable to her.[130] Again there was love without the threat of losing her freedom – without losing her life, as she knew it.

The following day, Martha wrote of packing up and moving to a house that Scott had secured for her and Mary on the plantation of J. Whaley.[131] Despite her earlier stand against moving, Hampton Jenkins had rented the house from the owner and was waiting for them to move and may have appealed to Scott for help. In Martha's view, Jenkins' gentlemanly behavior had swayed her but Scott's involvement may have been the real motivation for her to finally go. On March 17 they were all moved in and settled by evening but not before complaining of the help – "none of these folks know how to work our way, won't half clean."[132]

Martha added to her day's journal entry a drawing of the layout of the house on the first floor that included the kitchen, pantry, bedroom and sitting room with all the pieces of furniture they moved and their arrangement. She noted the view on each side of the house – the Bohicket & Edisto inlet, grass and trees, the marsh – the direction to school and where the sun rose. On two sides of the house she drew stick figures of men, women, children and a dog. There was a woman holding a basket with the caption, "Please ma'am Ise got a chicken and wants some close." But on each side was repeated a short figure with long arms, elbows raised to the height of its ears so that if the arms were straight they would reach the ground. On one the face was blackened and beside each was written. "Of such is the kingdom of heaven." Here was the same ugly, racist joke as before. It is interesting to note that in her later editing she chose neither to

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[130] In a postscript to a letter dated April 11, 1866, A. Kimber wrote, "Gen. Scott is married and has one child – 18 mo. old – did not bring her with him, fearing the acclimation – by which I infer another may be coming." A. Kimber to Martha Schofield and Mary Sharp, 11 April 1866, MSP.

[131] According to the 1860 census, J. Whaley was one of three Whaleys on the island and his real estate holdings were valued at $25,000.00 and personal estate at $81,700. 1860 Census, South Carolina, St. John's Colleton, Wadmalaw Island, 14.

[132] Diary 5, 17 March 1866, 81.

comment on it nor to exclude it. On March 24, Mary sent one of Martha's pictures called "Wadmelaw life illustrated" to General Scott. Martha's comment was, "I guess he will have a hearty laugh it was comical."[133]

Day after day, Martha walked and rode around the island, either early in the morning before the start of school or afterward when she visited the sick and needy. She was often alone and it was not unusual for her to make her way home by moonlight. Wadmalaw Island in the spring of 1866 offered her safety and extraordinary freedom of movement. In the meantime, there were letters from home and boxes filled with food to sustain her. April brought two unusual events – an early morning serenade and her first trip to the mainland since her arrival in the fall. On the first of April, Martha and Mary were "awakened by the sweet music of a Guitar & two manly voices under our window." She said, "we enjoyed and listened awhile then rose & dressed & opened the door – it was Dr. Hoyt & two gents from the Steamer, they played and sang exquisitely, one Spanish song was delicious." There is the sense that, for some on the island, the two women formed the center of social life. On April 4, Martha decided, on the spur of the moment, to accompany Mary on a trip to Charleston, though her motivation may have been the possibility of seeing Robert Scott. There had been ample opportunities over the months to go to Charleston, but this was the first time she had chosen to go.[134]

Martha was thrilled to see the American flag waving over Fort Sumter and was moved to say, "how well I remember the first shots fired upon our country's flag" a reminder of how recently the last guns of the war had been silenced. In the three days of their visit, the women met with Reuben Tomlinson, Bureau Superintendent of Schools in South Carolina, and visited with teachers in Mt. Pleasant and at the teachers' home in Charleston. In Mt. Pleasant they met

[133] Diary 5, 17 and 24 March 1866, 81, 83.

[134] Diary 5, 1-4 April 1866, 85.

with fellow teachers Cornelia Hancock and Mary and Carrie Taylor. Martha remarked that it felt more like home because she "heard thee spoken by those used to it," and opined that Cornelia was "working injudiciously" by paying students money. In Charleston, she saw her cousin Abby Sumter who had just arrived to take a teaching post, and Reverend De Forest who had welcomed Martha and Mary on their arrival in Beaufort. The journal then goes silent about her trip with two full pages cut out, perhaps because of references to Robert Scott.[135]

Despite Martha's derision of the freed people in her jokes and drawings, she continued to be a dedicated teacher, holding classes at the Osma Bailey plantation, Oak Grove, because of its proximity to the fields where many of the children worked in the morning. Classes were held in the afternoon. She was emphatic that they not miss school. In addition, she began to attend Sabbath School more regularly and even to speak to the people during worship. On April 22, she recorded, in some detail, talking at services after having read a circular pertaining to the importance of cleanliness, and as she wrote, "got warmed up & spoke quite awhile, explained how the Cholera would come & insisted on cleanliness – told them they were done with Slavery & you must give up the curses of slavery & almost the worst thing was filth and breaking up of family ties."[136] She then went on to speak to them about education and its value for citizenship saying,

> you must prove worthy of freedom, you are free men & free women, responsible for every one of your acts, you men must be educated so that if the ballot is placed in your hands, you will know how to use your power & you women, must strive to elevate yourselves so that you may be fit to train your children for noble men & women. And here let me tell you it is your duty to send every child to school, now when they have the advantage, do not let them stay away for trivial causes you are responsible for every child

[135] Diary 5, 4-6 April 1866, 85-87. It is unclear when Martha returned to Wadmalaw, given the two pages that are missing from her journal. The last date she wrote from Charleston was April 6 and her journal entries begin again from the island on page 90 on April 16. Also, given that the letter from Kimber was dated April 11, just after this trip to Charleston, it may be that Martha did see Scott, thus prompting the inclusion of information about his wife and child.

[136] Diary 5, 22 April 1866, 90.

> that God has given you, & you neglect your duty when you do not use every means in your power to train them in a way that will make them good & true men & women. If the Southern … law that they should not go to school you would … spill your life blood to have them educated & now when … chance may neglect it. Your enemies & your friends are looking on to see the result of emancipation and education is the only thing that can raise you to a position worthy of that freedom for which our soldiers & your soldiers, God bless them, have fought for. I said many more things & all over the house there would be murmured responses of yes, yes, yes, I felt every word uttered.[137]

Just before the Sunday of her lecture, Martha received a note from General Scott, though the rest of the line that described the contents was cut out.[138] And for the first time since her arrival in the South she hemorrhaged, but coughing up a small enough amount of blood to call it "delicate."[139]

In the weeks that followed, Martha and Mary were visited almost on a daily basis by a Captain Poe, on Scott's staff, who not only exchanged gifts with both women but sent Martha "a magnificent bouquet." There were other officers who came to tea or to spend an evening, and other men arrived on the island with whom she rode or took boat rides. In addition, Robert Scott may have visited the island or sent notes or letters, suggested by two pages that were cut out of her journal covering the last week of April and the first week of May. However, she let stand her entry of the receipt of a letter from Scott, hand delivered by Lieutenant Everson, inviting her and Mary to Charleston as his guests. The invitation was accepted.[140]

Martha and Mary arrived in Charleston on May 9 and were met with a carriage and escort to the Mills House where they left some of their bags. They were then taken back to a steamer and to Mt. Pleasant for a visit with the Taylor sisters. The following morning they returned to Charleston and visited a girl's school, about which she commented, "found them very well

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[137] Diary 5, 22 April 1866, 90.

[138] Diary 5, 19 April 1866, 90.

[139] Diary 5, 24 April 1866, 90.

[140] Diary 5, 6 May 1866, 93.

educated, orderly & attentive much more blood than with us, and not so many field hands." It may be that Martha's reference to "much more blood" meant there were many more girls of mixed race in the school than on Wadmalaw, and she believed it accounted for their deportment and educational accomplishments. Some, if not many, people believed that an infusion of white blood made blacks more intelligent and educable. It could also be that she was referring to a class issue, as in "blue blood" – that the students in Charleston were of a higher class than those on the island.[141]

The next day she noted shopping and paying a call on Joe Whaley but finding only his wife at home. The call had to do with the Whaley's house on the island where Martha and Mary were now living. Martha called Mrs. Whaley "a real southern aristocrat," and said of her that she

> controlled herself but all the color left her face & lips [when we] told her our business & she said they would not want to move before the first of July – so I hope we can remain till we go home. During the talk she said "most all southerners were Episcopals she from England the good old Cavalier blood." I wanted to say some sharp pointed things but did not.[142]

One of Martha's purchases of the day was a vase and bouquet of flowers she had sent to Captain Poe "for a Philopena." Then at three o'clock they boarded the *St. Helena* as guests of General Scott to tour Fort Sumter and Fort Wagner. The other guests aboard were Generals Steadman and Fullerton and Captain Poe. Unfortunately, the weather turned showery, preventing them from stopping at either fort, which caused Martha to pronounce the outing unsatisfactory. She "longed to tread the soil where the brave Col. Shaw fell." When they returned, Scott escorted them back to the Mills House but did not stay, Captain Poe remaining with them for the evening. On their last day in the city, May 12, Martha's only mention of Scott was in reference to the first night she spent "in the most aristocratic hotel in Charleston." She

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[141] Diary 5, 9-10 May 1866, 93.

[142] Diary 5, 11 May 1866, 93.

wrote merely, "memory will keep record of every noteworthy event of our first night in the Mills House." Consequently, in her later reading and editing, there was no need for her scissors.

Martha and Mary returned to Wadmalaw the following day and spent part of their time talking with Osma Bailey about his house and teaching there. Martha said of him he was "partly loyal" and well knew they would soon have to move their school yet again.[143]

Soon after their return, a party arrived from Charleston including Generals Fullerton and Steadman – Steadman sent by President Johnson as an inspector for the bureau and Fullerton as Johnson's private secretary – and a Mr. Clarke, editor of the *New York Tribune*, his wife, a Mr. Brooks, an artist for the paper, and a private detective. They visited the school and Martha reported an evening of talking politics with her guests, but none of the details other than "we made a display of Standards & Liberators and I told them 'our papers show our politics.' The Ed. of Herald sniggered behind his paper."[144] General Steadman stayed after the others left, and, in Martha's telling, appeared the most sympathetic toward the work she and Mary were doing. Earlier in the evening he had told them that most of his male relatives fought in the war on both sides and he lost a brother in each army. He also confided that he had always been a democrat though not "lenient to the traitors." He then added that he was a supporter of Andrew Johnson, which Martha reported, "was enough for us."[145]

Another noteworthy event of the day was a gift received from Anna Thomas, a little girl who was Martha's student at the Bethany school. Anna sent her former teacher a box of candy

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[143] Diary 5, 12 May 1866, 94.

[144] Diary 5, 14 May 1866, 95. The *National Anti-Slavery Standard* was the newspaper of the American Anti-Slavery Society and began publication in 1840. It was edited by Lydia Maria Child and David Lee Child. William Lloyd Garrison published the *Liberator* for thirty-five years beginning on January 1, 1831. Both were published weekly and called for the immediate abolition of slavery. Martha also added, in reference to the editor (Mr. Clarke) and his wife, "He was her husband & seemed so grateful for our kindness to her – or else I would not have wanted him here."

[145] Diary 5, 14 May 1866, 95.

and "a nice letter" and Martha said, "the Generals helped me dispatch some of it." There they sat, freedmen's teacher and generals, with overlapping as well as opposing goals, with varying and complicated racial attitudes, eating candy lovingly sent by a little black girl from the North in support of her former white teacher. As her time on Wadmalaw drew to a close, life had become a broader, if not at times stranger, mix of people, loyalties, and affections.[146]

Of her writing about General Scott that was not later excised, there was a small entry about him being ill toward the end of May and coming to the island. She nursed him, giving him some of her own medicine for his cough. It is interesting that, when sick, he would come to her. Meanwhile, Martha's health was declining, not precipitously, but steadily. She wrote of losing her appetite and losing weight. She began to be troubled by a cough.[147]

Still the work continued and with another influx of black soldiers, her schoolroom was filled to capacity. She especially liked teaching the soldiers. They were disciplined, quiet, and hard working. She also made the decision to name the school on Wadmalaw after William Lloyd Garrison and wrote him a three-page letter telling him she knew "that <u>the</u> great heart which throbbed for justice & humanity was still interested in the children of that oppressed people for whose race he has labored so long, often receiving naught but thorns."[148] Then on May 24, she and Mary wrote to General Steadman telling him about the ugly comments of one of his attendants, F. McClosky, reported to them. He allegedly "told some of the Southern people, 'the teachers from the North were the scum of society of doubtful reputation, &c." and that he had heard that they "were going to make it a permanent home" so the southerners were "right to

[146] Diary 5, 14 May 1866, 95.

[147] Diary 5, 20 May 1866, 96.

[148] Diary 5, 23 May 1866, 97.

make it too hot" for the teachers to stay.[149] Given the general attitude of white southerners and some northerners toward Martha and Mary, and freedmen's teachers in general, it was not surprising, then, when Martha noted of the first service held in the Presbyterian church since the war that she scarcely knew where all the white people came from because, as she said, "we see so little of them."[150]

Though during the spring Martha wrote nothing of the details of the negotiations or arrangements concerning the signing of labor contracts, she did write of the crop on a plantation owned, she said, by the grandson of the Marquis De Lafayette, who lived in France and visited the island infrequently. He had been on Wadmawlaw to find laborers but did not leave a white overseer or manager. On a warm afternoon, Martha walked over to the plantation to inspect the crop and gloated, "there is no white person to oversee and yet the cotton looks better than any we have seen, they have about 300 acres in, and all in first rate order. It does one good to see it."[151] Even though it was clear in the length and tone of her diary entries that she was growing increasingly tired and physically weak, her support and efforts on behalf of the freed people never wavered. By the third week in June, after a long day of teaching "a full school," including eighteen soldiers, Martha said, "am much interested but want rest and will be glad when it is over. Teaching 9 months is enough."[152]

On June 22, Martha received seven letters, including one from Reuben Tomlinson saying that a Miss Redrick was going home the following week and was looking for someone to accompany her on the trip. Martha's reply was, "I wrote a note saying engage a state room."

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[149] Diary 5, 24 May 1866, 97.

[150] Diary 5, 27 May 1866, 98.

[151] Diary 5, 1 June 1866, 99.

[152] Diary 5, 21 June 1866, 102.

She, too, was going home. Her packing began immediately, as did her ruminating over the extent to which Mary would miss her. Their relationship had certainly had its ups and downs but, over the months, stabilized enough for them to work together and even to share and enjoy leisure time. They walked together on the island in late afternoons and on some moonlit nights. They sat together in the evening taking turns reading out loud or knitting. Martha had worked to smooth over many of their disagreements in a spirit of Christian charity and love, and wrote of her departure:

> [I] guess after all she will miss me – I don't say anything or ask her, but her own words prove she rather dreads coming back & not finding me or some one here – Now she can try the old 'Orphan home life!! To her satisfaction. Not that she likes me – particularly – only – she is a great talker & does not live within herself half as much as she thinks. In fact she can't keep from hunting someone to talk to – & I know she will miss me very much – because these colored people are too ignorant – the white Rebs not much better.[153]

Of all the things that Martha had written about Mary over the nine months they were together, nothing was more disturbing than Martha's comments surrounding an argument between Mary and Emeline, the young woman Martha had given a plate to in November and who came to work for them. Martha blamed both of them, Mary for her impatience and Emeline for her impudence, but went on to say of Mary:

> Miss S prides herself on self control when self control is not necessary – for instance – she professes that in order to govern herself she would not hasten to open letters – sometimes waits an hour – Has an idea she can command all emotions &c, yet I have seen her angry & heard her voice tremble in a few words with an ignorant cook that did not work to suit her – & seen her whip children with face flushed & even threaten to take their skin off of them –Alas! Alas! Why will we close our eyes to our own little faults that are the poison of life – while in great things we try to walk straight before the Lord.[154]

[153] Diary 5, 22 June 1866, 102.

[154] Diary 5, 23 June 1866, 103.

Over the course of her adult life, Martha had chosen to look inward, to turn much of her anger and frustration, and much of her longing, inward. She could be forthright and her tongue sharp, but she was never cruel in her interactions and never violent toward her students. Though she exhibited racist attitudes toward blacks, she also worked tirelessly for their benefit.

June 24 brought the steamer *St. Helena* to the island and with it Robert Scott, a Major Corbin, and Mary and Carrie Taylor. Scott brought perfume to Martha and Mary. He spoke to the freed people at church and Martha said of him, "he is so kind & patient with the freed people & such good judgment." She also said, "we all had a funny time not sleeping – We four girls tried the floor but the mosquitoes were dreadful – Miss S smoked them out, with Harper Religious papers &c – Major tried the settee in the veranda – Gen. wrapped his head in the mosquito net – When morning came we had some funny stories to tell."[155] It is small wonder that southerners and as many northerners might call into question the reputations of young women sleeping in houses with men they were not related to by blood or marriage. Yet, Martha, Mary, and the Taylor sisters, as well as other women teaching in the South, could approach the circumstances of their southern lives, in light of the revolutionary work they were involved in, as an adventure. They could withstand raised eyebrows or out-and-out condemnation because of their idealism and their dedication to the uplift of former slaves.

Part of Martha's last day on Wadmalaw was spent writing a dedication in her copy of the *Chronicles of the Schonberg-Cotta Family* to give to Scott as a parting gift, and taking a short walk to secure "several relics." She wrote nothing of saying good bye to any of her students or the other people on the island individually, but in her later editing cut out portions of the day's entry which may have included those goodbyes. At noon she walked down to the steamer and later wrote:

[155] Diary 5, 24 June 1866, 103.

> I took my last look at the house & many things that had grown very dear to me. Yes dear, I had no human hearts here to lean on & my affection was poured out on Nature. Some of the people are real sorry to have me go and I to leave them – a great many people bid me good bye – well we left – Gen. and I walked together – waited on the wharf – and I shall not forget the kind words spoken. He seems to think He will miss me very much. I can partially understand this. He is away from his dear friends & here grows weary with the business of the world – perhaps its cares and hypocrisies – coming to our Island Home, found a free, open candid child, for he has certainly found my child nature – and all my talk with him is unstudied and natural. Just right out of my heart, and without much thinking. I have always felt a sense of protection with him, a rest from the doubts that mostly throng around me, when meeting those here.[156]

It is interesting that Martha made no mention of Scott's wife and child, and that she spoke of the sense of protection she felt with him. He and Edward Willets were the only two men in her life who elicited this kind of response in her and both were married. The Taylor sisters and Mary Sharp, along with Scott, accompanied Martha to Charleston and all spent a restless night on board the boat, attacked by sand flies, mosquitoes, and fleas. Carrie cried out, "Oh dear, only take me to my mother's bosom & I will never leave it for the land of mosquitoes & fleas." But rather than agreeing, Martha said, "I was thinking much." For all its hardships and challenges, she would return to the South, and to the work she had begun.[157]

During her five days in Charleston before going North, Martha shopped and visited the teachers at Mt. Pleasant. She suggested that Ellie Way replace her on Wadmalaw but said Cornelia Hancock heartily opposed the idea. She visited a school in Charleston and "was pleased with the exercises" and concluded, "education & mingling with intellectual white people will raise the race and only this." Martha spent the evening of the twenty-seventh with Scott, though prior to going out she commented on Mary Sharp's jealousy over his attentions. Martha dressed all in white and he called for her in a carriage. They rode to Magnolia cemetery and walked together to a secluded bank by the water where they could see Charleston in the distance.

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[156] Diary 5, 25 June 1866, 104.

[157] Diary 5, 25 June 1866, 104.

She said, "there under the moss covered oak – we talked till the friendship grew stronger – and we knew henceforth – we are friends. Only one other understands me so well – he told me he knew me better than I knew myself – & I, see straight through the outward form into the very nature of the man – And standing thus – we cannot help being friends. Plain candid words, the truth was spoken."[158] The rest of this entry was cut out and Martha leaves much to the imagination. On July first, on the boat for home Martha wrote, "I slept quite a good deal, and then I had some sweet memories, and many joyful anticipations which were pleasant company – I read again the one farewell letter, and its kindly words cheered the tedious hours."[159]

Though Martha became quite sea sick, by July 3 she was well enough to join a party on deck celebrating Independence Day but slipped away to the bow of the steamer as the moon rose and once again dropped letters into the sea. In her ritual "she kissed the dear familiar words, and one by one dropped the love messages into the broad deep" and watched as the waves caught them and thought "the bright sparks of phosphorous were as torches at the grave," and "then all was gone, gone – down into that myriad sea, where no human eyes can ever again brighten at their coming."[160]

These were letters she had loved and valued "as evidences of a friendship which must be eternal." Some dated from 1861, so were from John Bunting. That she had saved these letters and kept them with her was testament to the role he played in her life. She moved south alone and took up the most difficult and trying work she had ever done. It had been fulfilling, even exhilarating, and she had met every challenge with courage and sometimes with humor. Martha had forged a relationship with H.A. that mirrored her relationship with John and may have

[158] Diary 5, 27 June 1866, 105.

[159] Diary 5, 1 July 1866, 108.

[160] Diary 5, 3 July 1866, 110.

momentarily fancied herself in love. She drew strength from her work on behalf of the freed people of Wadmalaw, from H.A., from the sea, the flowers, the birds, and the very heat of the South. She began a relationship with a powerful, dashing man who she would never marry and was buoyed by his attentions. But ultimately it was her inner strength and desire to lead a life of independence that sustained her. Martha came back from the South a stronger woman than when she had left. She would, however, need a time of rest. She looked forward to going home and to her mother.

CHAPTER 5

MY HEART, MY WORK

Martha returned to Darby in the summer of 1866 after her first season as a freedmen's teacher knowing she would go south again in the fall, and she returned home with her heart not fully her own. As once before in her life, she was falling in love with a married man. In addition, her strategy for gaining her mother's consent for another year teaching in the South had been to write for permission before coming home. Mary Child could not have been surprised at her daughter's request or her determination to have her way and wrote in reply, "Thee says thee will come home for a visit if I will consent to thy going back. Now, thee knows it will be a great trial to me and to us to part with thee again but what can I say. I have always endeavored to teach my children to obey the light of Christ within them let it lead them where it might and I … think that now, thee says thee knows thee is in the right place, that I must say, fulfill thy duty to thy heavenly Father first."[1] Mary Child was proud of her daughter, not only because she seemed to so clearly "comprehend the will of her Father," but she showed a remarkable faith and ability to perform the work of teaching and aiding the freed people on Wadmalaw.[2] But she was also afraid for her daughter, especially when it came to her health.

Had her mother known the depth of Martha's feelings for Robert Scott she might have been far more reluctant to grant her request. As it was, Martha closed the journal that included

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[1] Mary Schofield Child to Martha Schofield, 1 May 1866, Martha Schofield Papers (MSP), Friends Historical Library, Swarthmore College.

[2] Mary Schofield Child to Martha Schofield, 1 May 1866, Martha Schofield Papers (MSP), Friends Historical Library, Swarthmore College.

her first nine months in the South saying, "Many things have transpired which can be written nowhere but in my memory and heart. Some, traces in letters of gold, which will be precious through all time and no human power can deface or destroy. Some, have been made as the writing on marble, By cutting away the stone & leaving them stand."[3] With these images she evoked the world of her heart – all those she held dear including Scott – and the world of her work, which with its focus on the freed people of South Carolina, was now deeply and lastingly placed.

Though confiding in her journal remained a priority for Martha until 1870, a diary is missing for the period between July 17, 1866 and August 1, 1867 and might well be due to her relationship with Scott and her writing about him. When she returned to South Carolina in the fall of 1866 for her second year of teaching, she had no permanent posting and was left with more time in Charleston. This may have offered them the opportunity to be together with some regularity. However, in her diary that begins in August 1867, Robert Scott appears only intermittently, and mostly within the context of an irregular correspondence between them. Yet he remained a central figure in Martha's emotional life, the one man, she would later say, she truly loved.

Martha's third season of teaching in the South, from the fall of 1867 to the summer of 1868, was spent on St. Helena Island under the watchful eye of Laura Towne. Towne had gone south in 1862 to coastal South Carolina with the first band of teachers and aid workers and established a school on St. Helena with the help of her closest friend, Ellen Murray. But the island was large and the need for schools and teachers was great. Towne and Murray served as role models for Martha both in terms of their dedication and commitment to the freed people and

[3] Martha Schofield Diary (Diary 5), 10 July 1866, 116, Martha Schofield Papers, Friends Historical Library, Swarthmore College.

in their dedication to each other. Their love and friendship sustained them over the nearly forty years they spent together working in the South. It was foundational to their ability to continue, year after year, to focus on teaching and aiding the people of St. Helena especially within an increasingly hostile south and in light of a growing indifference in the north to the needs of former slaves. Their relationship, lacking, as it did, the entanglements of marriage and motherhood, was the kind Martha searched and longed for.[4]

Martha's bond with Laura Towne was made even deeper when Towne's training in homeopathic medicine all but saved her life. During the course of Martha's time on St. Helena the tuberculosis that had plagued her for so many years reached a crisis point. She spent ten weeks in bed under Towne's skilled care and much of the rest of her time on the island nursed by Towne and her sister Lydia who was sent for within a few weeks of her collapse. For the first time in her journal, Martha would broach the subject of consumption, that her chronic hoarseness, cough, weight loss, and hemorrhaging might, in fact, be due to the illness. Yet, she rejected the idea that the disease had actually taken hold, and instead worried that if she was not careful, her illness would result in the deadly scourge. But for much of the two years that followed, from 1868 to 1870, she battled the disease often despairing of ever fully regaining her health and periodically prepared herself for the eventuality of a premature death. It was, in fact, the precarious state of her health that resulted in her move away from the South Carolina coast to Aiken in the fall of 1868 for her fourth year of teaching. Her mother's permission for her to return that year was predicated on finding a more healthful climate than the sea islands.

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[4] For Laura Towne and Ellen Murray see, Ron Butchart, "Laura Towne and Ellen Murray: Northern Expatriates and the Foundations of Black Education in South Carolina, 1862-1908." In Marjorie Spruill, Valinda Littlefield, & Joan Marie Johnsons, eds. *South Carolina Women: Their Lives and Times, Vol. 2* (Athens, University of Georgia Press, 2010), 12-30; Kurt J. Wolf, "Laura M. Towne and the Freed People of South Carolina, 1862-1901," *South Carolina Historical Magazine* 98, No. 4 (October 1997), 375-405; and Rupert Sargent Holland, ed., *The Letters and Diary of Laura M. Townne; Written from the Sea Islands of South Carolina* (New York: Negro Universities Press, 1969).

Martha's first year in Aiken was fraught with crisis though, unlike the previous year, it was more an emotional crisis than a physical one. Her relationship with Robert Scott had become more distant but no less powerful. Martha's fellow teacher that year was Mary Taylor who she had known since her first year in South Carolina. Both Mary and her sister Caroline were friends, but during their year together, Martha and Mary grew very close. When both Mary Taylor and Sadie Brouwer became engaged, Martha experienced an emotional crisis. However, the work of teaching continued and she would turn to that work to a greater extent than before as the central focus of her time and energy. She was not only a skilled teacher but supported the freed people's efforts to secure a foothold in the South's economic, political, and social landscape.

Her decision to buy land in Aiken to build a school and home for herself came at a pivotal point in her emotional life. The man Martha professed to love could never be hers. The two women she was closest to would marry. She worried that she might die. At moments she felt isolated and despaired of ever finding the love she longed for. But her needs and desires were complicated. She wanted a love that would sustain but not bind. She looked to God for guidance and strength, and hoped that, in teaching and eventually opening a school of her own, she would fulfill God's will for her life. She might never have children of her own but would have a school named after herself and the possibility that her name and work would live on in the lives of students for generations to come. Unlike many women of her time, Martha created for herself the opportunity of a professional life that offered the freedom to follow her talents and live out her ideals. No matter the length of her life, she would leave a lasting mark on the world in which she lived.

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With no diary and few letters extant from Martha's second year in South Carolina, only the broadest outline of her experiences can be drawn. She traveled south in the fall of 1866 with her cousin, Lizzie Satterthwaite, the daughter of her maternal aunt, Phoebe Jackson Sattherthwaite, but without a permanent assignment for the year. They spent time teaching in Charleston at the Shaw School and on Edisto Island and Johns Island. By December, Martha received a letter from Robert Corson, the corresponding secretary of the Pennsylvania Freedmen's Relief Association (PFRA) apologizing for their being so "knocked about."[5] However, as her sister Lydia pointed out, they had the consolation of Scott's friendship and protection while in Charleston. Lydia wrote:

> Thee cannot tell my dear Mart what a satisfaction it was to hear thee had found thy friend General Scott it must have been so pleasant to feel thee had one friend in that far off land and doubtless it removed or lessened the feeling of loneliness or home sickness, we will anxiously wait to hear where you finally go … I think the girls will indeed be glad of thy friend & to us it is such a satisfaction, knowing thee enjoys his friendship as well as he thine & well he may – did any gentleman ever know my noble sister intimately without being benefited, the influence she exerts is always pure and elevating, and thus ennobles those most intimately connected with her – give the General my warm thanks for his kindness to my dear Sister though I know her to be entirely worthy of any attention bestowed upon her.[6]

Lydia's message to Martha is interesting in a number of ways. One is the fact that she seems to have been well aware of the relationship between Scott and Martha, though certainly not of its true nature. Not only does this suggest that while home and prior to traveling south that fall Martha was corresponding with Scott, but that she talked of him and maybe even shared some of his letters, or portions of his letters, with her sisters. Moreover, Lydia appeared proud of the association – that her sister not only had a friend to rely on, but a powerful friend within the Freedmen's Bureau and in the state. But in addition, by extolling her sister's virtues in her

[5] Robert Corson to Martha Schofield, 27 December 1866, MSP.

[6] Lydia Schofield to Martha Schofield, 25 November 1866, MSP.

relationships with men, she made clear her belief that the connection was as beneficial to Scott as to Martha. There is a note of pride in Lydia's voice as well as an indication that while she worried, she supported her sister's work and mission. Among the Schofield sisters Martha had long been the most independent of the group. They had teased her in the past and even ridiculed her for her conduct with men, especially in her relationships with John Bunting and Oldden Ridgeway, but they respected her too, and marveled at her commitment to her new work and her courage to venture so far from home. Lydia clearly loved her sister and thought her the equal, if not the better, of any man.

Martha began a new diary on August 1, 1867 saying:

> Another new book, will these hands fill its pure & spotless pages, with records of an every day life! Or will they be folded to <u>rest</u> – I ask not to have the veil lifted, I wait in patience the will of Him who seems to be leading my life into strange <u>deep</u> channels, not the mere streams so shallow that every pebble can be seen, but <u>deep</u> still <u>silent</u> current which is not known or realized by those around me –. I live two lives one outward, active, moving, one that I hope may not all be in vain – the other cannot be described, the <u>result</u> only can be seen & know[n].[7]

Whether she would live another year was never far from her thoughts and, with that, how the outward form of her life would be judged. Her inner life continued a vital and fertile ground from which she derived much of her strength and determination to continue as a freedmen's teacher, and that private self, in 1867, was buoyed by her love for Scott and her belief that her love was reciprocated. Yet, what Scott's feelings were for Martha, then or earlier, we cannot know for certain. Martha destroyed all of the letters he wrote to her along with most of her diary entries about him, but from the fragments that remain and her statements about him later in her life, we can assume their initial attraction was mutual and that, for some time, he continued to demonstrate a keen interest in her welfare. Nevertheless, for some time to come, the love she

[7] Diary 6, 1 August 1867, 1.

believed he had for her (as well as the love he may have demonstrated) was a mainstay of her life.

During the month of August, Martha visited aunts, uncles, and cousins in preparation for her departure in the fall of 1867, and began to meet with Robert Corson as well as Laura Towne who was in Philadelphia during part of her summer holiday. The Race Street Friends' Meeting had decided to support the reopening of a school on St. Helena, and the PFRA was sending Martha there as one of its teachers.[8] With her teaching post settled for the coming year, she took a few days to visit Sadie who was suffering, both mentally and physically, at the hands of her father who had a reputation for drinking and gambling, and who had recently abandoned his wife and daughter. Sadie was reduced to sewing – "making beautiful under-garments for a lady in N.Y." – in order to help support herself and her mother. Martha remarked that her dear friend was "very white and has no strength." [9]

At the end of the month, Martha noted spending a day with her sisters and said it was the first time they had all been together since her return home. But she also noted in her diary entry for the day, "I had a letter which said 'was glad did not let appearances make me distrust fidelity.' I did not forget that this is the 30th of August – a day of memories -- !Forever!"[10] This was, in all probability, a letter from Robert Scott and as with dates she associated with Edward Willets, Martha would continue, in the years to come, to make reference to August 30 as significant in her relationship with Scott.

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[8] Katherine Smedley, *Martha Schofield and the Re-Education of the South, 1839-1916* (New York: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1987), 95.

[9] Diary 6, 17 August, 1867, 4.

[10] Diary 6, 30 August 1867, 7.

Martha also began to periodically record her weight in her journal as a means of tracking one sign of the state of her health. For instance, on the top of the page above her entry for August 19 she wrote, "weighed 117."[11] Evidence of her health and evidence of Scott's continued connection to her were important markers.

In her trips that fall in and out of Philadelphia, she often saw John and Anna Bunting, and occasionally stayed overnight with them. On a day of going to the dentist to have three teeth filled, a meeting with Robert Corson, and shopping, she stopped at the Buntings on her way home to Darby. However, when they learned she was suffering with a headache, they insisted she stay the night. Their friendship remained vital to Martha. Though her bond was deeper with John, her relationship with Anna provided a steady source of love and attention, as well as a sense of being needed. This was evidenced in a letter Anna wrote to Martha the previous year in which she said:

> I cannot write as long a letter as I would like, but this will show you that I have not forgotten you I am anxious to know how you are, and what you are doing – I want to hear from you often, just as often as you have time to write me – I think I am beginning to feel almost hurt that I cannot know more of you, and I thought in reading the <u>only</u> letter I have had from you that you did care much whether I wrote to you or not. I have felt like crying a good many times about it – only have hated to tell you so – but I cannot help it – Don't you care any thing about me now? I haven't one intimate friend and I sometimes feel almost alone. I must close now, with much love from John & me – Your friend – ever – [12]

With no permanent teaching position and likely preoccupied with Robert Scott, Martha appears to have been a less attentive correspondent than usual even with a close friend like Anna.

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[11] Diary 6, 19 August 1867, 5.

[12] Anna Bunting to Martha Schofield, 23 December 1866, MSP.

On that evening in September 1867, Martha's friends gladly took her in and the three spent a happy time together.[13]

Within a few days, she was in Philadelphia again, this time to pay a call on Henry Laing, which then turned into a gathering of "nearly all the teachers sent by Race St. Association." "There were about 70 there in the evening, & a sumptuous refreshment table." Martha saw Caroline and Mary Taylor as well as Gaynor and Anne Heacock and explained in her journal, "each teacher was presented with a boquet & vase from Alfred Love. Dear James & Lucretia Mott were there – Dr. Truman & so many pure congenial spirits." Philena Heald read a letter to the group from one of her students "& then Lucretia spoke beautifully, encouraged all – so much."[14] It must have been heartening for Martha to be among so many teachers like herself within a month of her departure.

Parting with her home, family, and friends had not become any easier. She closed her journal entry for October 25 writing, "I have very many thoughts of this parting. None know what it <u>costs</u> me to leave my Mother and the dear home God has blessed me with."[15] But leave it she would. The following day Anna Bunting came out to Darby again and, though she had not realized Martha was leaving the following day, they had one last chance to see each other before the separation. Martha remarked, "I was very thankful for it is hard to leave without bidding <u>them</u> good bye." Yet, she made no mention of seeing John the day before or the day of her departure.

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[13] Diary 6, 26 September 1867, 11.

[14] Diary 6, 30 September 1867, 11.

[15] Diary 6, 30 September 1867, 11.

On October 27, Martha left Darby with her sisters and her brother-in-law. Her mother did not see her off at the train station but, as before, said her goodbyes to her daughter at home. Everyone tried to be cheerful but Martha admitted, "if this were not going out to minister to Gods poor I never would break away from endearments of loved ones and the pleasures of home." She then added, "But He will care for me and my own prayer is that they may be spared."[16] She met Laura Towne and Ellen Murray at the train station in Philadelphia and "smothered down the aching of the heart." In Washington, D.C., they were met by Eliza Way, who would be teaching with her, Annie and Jane Heacock, Ann Hunn, and Lizzie – very likely her cousin Lizzie Satterthwaite.[17] The group reached Florence, South Carolina, at 3:30 a.m. on October 30, and had to wait until 9:00 a.m. for the train to Charleston. They arrived in Charleston at 2:30 p.m. and after seeing Reuben Tomlinson went on to the teacher's home in Mt. Pleasant. The following day Martha spent in Charleston making arrangements with the Quarter Master for her trunks and tracking down items she had stored including a stove and beds that would be needed on St. Helena. It was a busy day spent, as she said, mostly on her feet.

However, she did see Robert Scott in the afternoon although wrote little of it in her journal with the exception of, "While waiting for a car, General drove up & getting in took me to the Hotel …."[18] After the first night spent in Mt. Pleasant, she was staying in Charleston at the Waverly Hotel.

In the early morning of November 1, Martha was on her way to Beaufort. She arrived at 3:30 in the afternoon and said, "then, I went through a siege, on the hot wharf, tossing my

[16] 27 October 1867, 15.

[17] Hunns.

[18] Diary 6, 31 October 1867, 17.

freight, shoes, bedding, boxes &c &c &c &c – Rebs staring, hired 1 man & 2 boys to put in Mr. Wilson's store house – … then all were hurried into a row boat on top of luggage and carried across the Ferry, found two carts & … one seated carriage – girls went on cart – we in carriage – Miss T soon got out & walked …."[19] They did not reach Towne's house or school before it got dark and so stayed the night with a neighbor.

The following morning after reaching Towne's and Murray's home, Martha and Ellie were taken to the house they would share. Martha found it "a large empty homeless looking building …."[20] They soon received help from among the freed people to begin a thorough cleaning but when Martha found herself alone upstairs she broke down crying, and "could only pray for a brave heart."[21]

Yet, part of her reaction was due to an epidemic of yellow fever that had struck the coastal area from North Carolina southward and west to Texas. It was often fatal and caused panic when it appeared.[22] Martha explained that

> Since we left Washington the one subject of conversation with all classes has been the sickness, and here we hear naught but the ravages of disease and the hasty work of death. Every white person has been ill & many died with only two or three days of illness. … The cotton crop failed, the fever has stricken every household, & all are sad and despondent. We could not stay in Beaufort for the Hotel is filled with fever patients, even in Charleston faces looked white & deathly, moving about. Yet, I do not wish we had not come – or wish to return. It was very hard to overcome a dread that rushed over me every time I thought of coming here – yet I shall conquer it & try to be happy.[23]

Given her already delicate health, it gave her serious reason for worry,

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[19] Diary 6, 1 November 1867, 18.

[20] Diary 6, 2 November 1867, 18.

[21] Diary 6, 2 November 1867, 18.

[22] John Duffy, "Social Impact of Disease in the Late 19th Century, *Sickness and Health in America,* 416.

[23] Diary 6, 2 November 1867, 18-19.

However, in the days that followed, she and Ellie continued to settle into their house and to the island. Until their stove arrived they ate their meals with Laura Towne and Ellen Murray. Classes began on Monday, November 4, and Martha reported, "Ellie teaches primary in the Ball Room and I the Grammar classes in the Church. Wrote to Gen. Giles for two large stoves, children are so poorly clad."[24] In addition, she complained of a scarcity of books and letters from home. Without having received any mail since her arrival she declared, "this is the greatest sacrifice."[25] But her dedication to her work continued even as she fought off a dark mood. On November 9 she confided in her journal, "I am striving hard to overcome an oppressive dread which surrounds me like an impenetrable mantle, it must be kept silent over these thoughts I cannot control – Reason & faith – tell me all is for the best, so I strive not to murmur."[26]

Martha continued her practice of visiting her students at home even with the threat of catching the fever that still plagued the island. All prayed for a frost in hope that the epidemic would end. But by November 15, just two weeks after arriving on St. Helena, Martha began to show symptoms of illness though it was not yellow fever. It started with a headache that did not abate and affected her ability to teach. The following day she went to Laura Towne for medicine because she was "threatened with chills & fever."[27] Her next diary entry was undated but began, "Memorandum of Events during my illness" and included:

> 16th – Hunns here. Began with climatic fever.
> 21st – Gave up my school. Only had short sessions for a week.
> 25th – Not able to leave my bed. No chills only fever.

[24] Diary 6, 2 November 1867, 18-19.

[25] Diary 6, 7 November 1867, 20.

[26] Diary 6, 9 November 1867, 20.

[27] Diary 6, 15 and 16 November 1867, 22.

> 26th – Ellie Way gave up school to take care of me.
> 28th – Laura Towne remained from school to nurse and doctor me.[28]

On December 5, Martha noted that Dr. Orr, U.S. Army Surgeon, arrived as a consulting physician and "found some congestion & inflammation" in her lungs. On the ninth she recorded not only that books had arrived from Philadelphia, but iron bedsteads and pots and pans that were in storage since her time on Wadmalaw. On December 15 she said, "Dr. Orr here again. I do not take his medicine, but he consults with Miss Towne and approves her course. Lungs in better condition." On December 23, Martha was surprised by the arrival of her sister, Lydia, writing, "I did not know she had left home – 2 hours <u>after</u> letters came telling me of her departure. My feelings can't be described."[29]

Over the Christmas holiday Martha was well enough to be driven to Laura Towne's for an hour's visit with teachers from the island who had gathered for dinner but returned home and was carried to bed by John Hunn who served her meal on a tray. A few days later, Laura Towne took her for a ride and afterward she was permitted to sit on the front porch while barrels sent from home with gifts for her and clothing for the freed people were opened.[30] Between mid-November 1867 and mid-January 1868, the most critical period of Martha's illness, her diary entries were intermittent and brief. However, toward the end of January she began to write as before. In a long passage she confided:

> Although I was ill, it seemed to me I would recover because I feel that my work is not yet done, I had no fear of death and had it come would have accepted as the will of my Father, but now that He has permitted me to live, I pray I may be strengthened to meet bravely and faithfully all that the future may bring whether joy or sorrow. I am conscious that even yet, a heavy cold, or some cause would easily produce the disease I have

[28] Diary 6, 16 – 28 November 1867, 23.

[29] Diary 6, 5 – 23 December 1867, 23.

[30] Diary 6, 26 and 28 December 1867, 23-24.

> dreaded all my life – consumption – yet I do not anticipate this, but look forward to a recovery and doing some good before I leave the school, which I hope to return to another year. Lyd wants me to go North now, but I cannot leave them. … Another trial was having all my long hair cut off – I could scarcely bear to think of it at first, but at last made up my mind & Miss T did it shingled it. This hair that was so dear to me, it has been my close friend – ate breakfast down stairs first time in 8 weeks.[31]

Martha's recovery, however, was a slow process. By the end of the month she was still very weak, in large part due to hemorrhaging, and complained, "wrote a letter for a colored girl & one home, that is about as much as I can do in one day, oh! I feel so utterly useless, yet look pretty well & have a good appetite but my lungs still weak, raised blood again yesterday."[32]

On February 1, Martha wrote her annual entry in commemoration of her birthday. Not only had she reached the age when most women were married and had children, she was seriously ill. Her tone that day was both sober and hopeful, her focus both past and future. In part, her message to herself was, "I am 29 years old today – 29 years! Have I striven faithfully in this time to mold my life, to my highest ideal – or have I faltered and grown weary in the duty; in either case it is past – and the record is not only on earth, but in heaven. May the future be full of thoughts & deeds worthy a remembrance in this world and the next." Yet, Martha was not only thinking about her legacy, but of the present, of the simple pleasures awaiting her if she could regain her strength. Her confinement indoors was wearing thin and even on her birthday she could not venture out. As she wrote, "Miss Towne and Lyd thought it too cold for me to ride

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[31] Diary 6, 25 January 1868, 29. It was often the practice to cut a woman's hair when fever and prolonged illness kept her bedridden. To care for long hair – to keep it combed and clean – would have been burdensome for those nursing her. Washing long hair might also pose an added risk to an ill patient in terms of the inability to dry it quickly especially in cold weather. It is interesting that when younger, Martha chose to cut off her hair but now found it a trial.

[32] Diary, 30 January 1868. 30.

out – so I helped Ellen cut out her wrapper – hoping for a clear day to morrow for I long to be out doors … I have not walked on the grounds ten steps for 10 weeks."[33]

Though unable to be outside, Martha's life began to return to normal when she started to teach again on the third of February. However, rather than returning to the church to teach, she was relegated to the parlor of her house and a small class. Unable to speak much above a whisper, it was the best she could do and said herself, "this is better than none." By February 6 she could write, "I do pretty well" and "I quite enjoy having my scholars again."[34] However, determined not to continue as a semi-invalid she was soon out riding with Ellen Murray or Laura Towne and walking between their home and her own. She soon flatly stated, "Am getting well now."[35]

In her diary entries in February, Martha wrote of her heart and her work. The receipt of letters remained a highlight of any day and she was especially pleased with long letters from John and Anna Bunting and, of old, noted writing to her Mon Ami. She noted the fluctuation in the number of students in her class, a result of the need for them to help in early planting. However, she was especially happy to be able to organize a belated Christmas party for all the students in the school and wrote of the celebration:

> As I was ill Christmas, we fixed for all to come … & had 107. Had arranged the dolls & marbles with greens – & books & candy – the table looked very pretty, we had them all collect in Ellie's room & after recess, sing of their songs, then gave each child a doll & calico to dress it in – and the boys marbles – be-sides every one … candy, and nice little books to all my children. It was a happy time for all.[36]

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[33] Diary 6, 1 February 1868, 31.

[34] Diary 6, 3, 4, and 6 February 1868, 31.

[35] Diary 6, 8 February 1868, 31.

[36] Diary 6, 21 February 1868, 33.

During the month of March, Martha continued to take carriage rides and short walks. She also attended an afternoon gathering of teachers from the island and Beaufort for supper and games of croquet. Neither Laura Towne nor Lydia wanted her to go believing she was risking her still fragile health by so much activity and a carriage ride home in the night air. But Martha went, had a lovely time, and declared the following day, "I do not feel worn out or exhausted at all."[37]

For months, Martha made no mention of Robert Scott directly or indirectly. But on March 12 she confided in her journal, "Yesterday I wrote to know 'if one who made so many promises & pledges of friendship is my friend still' – My thoughts by day & dreams at night have been of one whose memory holds a sacred place in my heart – my heart – oh! it seems like a dead lifeless thing at times – and often a weary load when there is no outward shadow. Yet – I am brave & able to bear it. If I cannot be remembered without pain – better to be absent from mind. – The uncertainty & suspense hurt me."[38] In the days between writing the letter and a reply, Martha began a journal entry with, "I had a strange …" but later cut out the eight lines that followed.[39] It might have been a strange dream concerning Scott she was writing of. She hemorrhaged the next day and commented, "My little mental excitement yesterday or something else made me raise more blood this morning – Lungs still in very critical condition."[40]

On the twenty-first she "went to Church with Laura & Ellen. Spoke to the people about giving liberally for the cause of education."[41] On the same day she wrote of receiving a letter

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[37] Diary 6, 5 March 1868, 36.

[38] Diary 6, 12 March 1868, 38.

[39] Diary 6, 16 March 1868, 39.

[40] Diary 6, 17 March 1868, 39.

[41] Diary 6, 21 March 1868, 40.

but the entry was partially destroyed when the lines of the sixteenth had been cut out on the opposite side of the page. The fragment that remains begins, "Sarah – I can hardly realize it" and then continues, "Never see him again here – I had a letter saying, 'I never forget my old friends though circumstances may separate for a while – I don't forget the claims I am under – an answer to the one of the 11th yet daring not to trust much to paper – "[42]

Five days later Martha's diary entry addressed her heart and her work. It began with, "there were live coals beneath the outward ashes & a skillful hand lit the flame anew till the living fire breathed through every fibre."[43] Assuming she wrote to Scott and he replied, she seems to have been reassured of their connection, that he loved her still. Though she says he did not dare to write openly to her, either there was enough in that letter or possibly another letter altogether that elicited a deeply passionate response. With a "skillful hand" he "lit the flame anew till the living fire breathed through every fibre." Her heart, for the moment, was no longer "a dead lifeless thing." The day's entry ended with the news that "Miss Towne visited our schools to-day, seemed quite pleased – children did well."[44]

Martha spent the last days of March and the first days of April in Beaufort staying at the Teacher's Home and visiting with friends like Annie Heacock. When she returned to St. Helena it was her work she wrote of. The children were glad to see her. Lydia had taught in her place but as Martha said, "it suits me best."[45]

But Martha's health remained poor overall. Shortly after returning from Beaufort she reported being up in the middle of the night "to raise blood" and admitted it was "rather

[42] Diary 6, 21 March 1868, 40.

[43] Diary 6, 26 March 1868, 41.

[44] Diary 6, 26 March 1868, 41.

[45] Diary 6, 2 April 1868, 42.

discouraging." Within a few days she also admitted having "much pain in my breast & side this week and taking medicine, but do not tell Lyd it would worry her unnecessarily – and I will get over it."[46] On April 10, Martha and Lydia declined an invitation to a party because she said, "the General 'may come'" but he did not. Instead, since Ellie had gone to the party, Martha took both schools while Lydia baked ginger cakes to distribute to the children and everyone "got along very well."[47] However, by the end of April, Martha was not getting along very well having lost not only physical strength but emotional strength as well. At an unusually low moment she wrote, "The past two years have been too much for me. My mind and heart have passed through such fiery ordeals. The frail tenement is shattered and broken, I could welcome peacefully the end of earthly struggles but I dread a long time of uselessness – the physical suffering can never be worse than the mental has been."[48]

Martha wrote little during the month of May and by early June was once more on her way home to Darby. She intended to return south but not before attempting to regain her health or at least becoming a good deal stronger. On route to Pennsylvania she spent a day in Richmond visiting a school and touring the city. In Washington, D.C. she and Lydia toured the Capitol and the Patent Office before boarding the train for Philadelphia. Their brother-in-law, Sam Ash, met them at the station on their arrival and they "went right up home with him" where they were welcomed by Sallie and Eliza. Once again all four Schofield sisters were together. After a hearty supper and night's rest, Martha and Sallie went out early in the morning to shop, Martha wanting to buy a gift for Ellie Way. They chose "a nice writing desk" because, as

[46] Diary 6, 6 and 9 April 1868, 43.

[47] Diary 6, 10 April 1868, 43.

[48] Diary 6, 29 April 1868, 43-44.

Martha said, "she was so good when I was ill." After dinner, Lydia and Martha took the cars for Darby and soon she found herself "once more in my own dear Mother's arms" and where "all looks so charming and happy and comfortable." She happily wrote, "the heart feels rest here" and John and Anna Bunting were "up a little in the eve."[49]

In the days that followed Martha's homecoming, she rested and unpacked her trunk. She also wrote to Laura Towne. Within a week, she met her mother in Philadelphia, in part, to consult with Dr. Jacob Hassenplug about her lungs. Martha's mother arranged the appointment in hopes that the doctor's use of magnetic healing would be of benefit. Dr. Hassenplug came highly recommended and as Martha explained, "Hannah C & several friends had been cured – We went right down there 809 Arch St. met Mary Child – she is a patient – Dr. H. examined my lungs & I am now under his care – they do not put people to sleep but rub – magnetize &c – Mother paid him $20.00 & I must see him every day for a month."[50]

Along with his treatments, the doctor recommended a vacation in the mountains, a common prescription for those suffering with lung ailments, especially consumptives. Breathing pure mountain air was considered both therapeutic and curative. Martha spent three weeks with her sister Eliza in the mountains of western Pennsylvania and returned home "quite well and strong and able to work some."[51]

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[49] Diary 6, 7-10 June 1868, 56-57.

[50] Diary 6, 17 June 1868, p. 57; Dr. Jacob Hassenplug graduated from the Jefferson Medical College of Philadelphia in 1851, and was trained in traditional methods of medicine of the time. For a brief history of Magnetic Healing and its developer, Franz Anton Mesmer, see "Magnetic Healing, Quakery, and the Debate about the Health Effects of Electromagnetic Fields" by Roger M. Macklis, M.D. in *Annals of Internal Medicine*, 1 March 1993, Volume 118, No. 5, 376-383. For a discussion of the development of the medical profession and alternative methods of treatment see "Medicine in a Democratic Culture, 1760-1850," in Paul Starr's *The Social Transformation of American Medicine: The Rise of a Sovereign Profession and the Making of a Vast Industry*, (New York: Basic Books, 1982), 30-59; Mary Child was a relative of Martha's stepfather, John Child, and Martha considered her a cousin.

[51] Diary 6, 25 August 1868, 70.

In conjunction with her mother and Robert Corson at the PFRA, it was decided that she should not return to the South Carolina coast but instead fill a teaching post in Aiken in a school established by the Freedman's Bureau in 1866. There had been three teachers there between 1866 and the fall of 1868, one a Methodist minister who stayed only a few days. He was boarding with a freed woman and was visited by a group of young men who forced him to sign an agreement that he would leave Aiken by the first train the following day.[52] Teaching black students in South Carolina and throughout the South could bring anything from ostracism to beatings to death threats to death itself from southern whites. However, by the time of Martha's arrival in 1868, white opposition to black schooling in Aiken was largely expressed through social ostracism rather than violence.[53] Military Reconstruction and a newly formed state government under Republican control brought a modicum of protection for northern teachers and aide workers as well as freed people attempting to exercise their rights as citizens.

Aiken's town charter dated from 1835. It came into existence as a railroad stop on the line completed in 1833 between Charleston and the town of Hamburg, on the Savannah River across from Augusta, Georgia. Aiken was named after William Aiken, a cotton merchant and investor in the railroad, and it soon became a summer resort for coastal planters escaping the heat and contagion of the rice and cotton fields. Situated some one hundred miles from the coast and five hundred-thirty feet above sea level, it also gained a reputation as a health resort for patients

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[52] Suzanne Stone Johnson and Robert Allison Johnson, *Bitter Freedom: William Stone's Record of Service in the Freedmen's Bureau* (Columbia: The University of South Carolina Press, 2008), 35-36.

[53] For violence and black education see Ronald E. Butchart, "Black Hopes, White Power: Emancipation, Reconstruction, and the Legacy of Unequal Schooling in the U.S. South, 1861-1880, *Pedagogica Historica,* 46, 33-50; For an account of schools and teachers in and around Aiken, South Carolina see Suzanne Stone Johnson and Robert Allison Johnson, eds., *Bitter Freedom: William Stones Record of Service in the Freedmen's Bureau* (Columbia: The University of South Carolina Press, 2008), 35-43.

suffering from respiratory ailments.[54] It was the perfect environment for Martha to continue both to teach and to heal.

Prior to leaving home in early November, there was the usual round of visiting, shopping, and packing, though not the same depth of sadness at departing. Instead, Martha said, "I didn't feel so bitterly as a year ago … the pang seemed less poignant."[55] For her mother, it was also a less painful parting than the year before even with her deep concern for her daughter's health. Martha's dedication and resolve proved stronger than any objections her mother or sisters might mount to returning yearly to work in the South. Mary Child wrote to her daughter the day before she left for Aiken:

> How we shall miss thee! at thy accustomed seat at the table in the family circle, in the varied occupations of life, in the ever ready endeavor to help when help was needed … but the feeling with me is that we shall meet again, that thee will again return to bless our home with thy presence, crowned with the sheaves of peace for having fulfilled thy duty while so many are leading such aimless lives … may the Father of us all bless and protect you and after your work is accomplished return you safely to your kindred & friends is the earnest wish of thy own dear Mother.[56]

Martha's teaching partner for the year was Mary Taylor who was a Quaker, a friend, and a veteran freedmen's teacher. Their friendship was forged during Martha's time on Wadmalaw when she visited the teacher's school in Mt. Pleasant and met Mary and her sister Carrie. Martha not only shared a similar background with Mary, but a similar temperament, interests, and dedication to black education. The two arrived in Aiken and were met by Major William Stone of the Freedmen's Bureau and soon found the house they would share, a house much to Martha's

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[54] History of Aiken, www.cityofaiken.gov, (accessed December 1, 2009); Smedley, *Martha Schofield and the Re-Education of the South*, 100.

[55] Diary 6, 5 November 1868, 82.

[56] Mary Schofield Child to Martha Schofield, 4 November 1868, MSP.

liking.[57] It was both near the town and next to the schoolhouse. Once their trunks and boxes had arrived along with Martha's stored furniture she could say, "things look quite comfortable." She described and drew a layout of the house, which included, "a high point to the roof – wide hall – open stairway – parlor – dining room with folding doors. Pantry at the end of the hall – 4 rooms upstairs."[58]

There were more than one hundred students when classes began, Martha taking the beginners and Mary the more advanced students. All went well in their first month of teaching. When Christmas arrived, so did a generous gift of books, "a splendid library," from an English benefactor who also sent along a croquet set.[59]

When Martha began a new diary on January 1, 1869 she took stock of herself and her life saying:

> A new month, a new book, and with these come many new resolves, or rather old ones renewed. Month after month, year after year, book after book all marked with the thoughts and words of my life – Oh! are they white or black marks – I fear they are too much like the penmanship, nearly all poor with here and there a page of neatness and beauty. In the past year there has been joy and sorrow, pleasure and pain, not such as come to all – but deeper than only outward evidences give – Many of us live two lives – one known to the common world which is subject to praise or blame – which is ruled by and for those around us – the other lies buried but not dead wrapped in an armor of self control yet living, moving, breathing, acting, though only ourselves and the hand of the Eternal can raise the veil that divides it from outward eyes.[60]

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[57] William Stone was born in 1842 in Maine and was the son of Thomas Treadwell Stone, a Unitarian minister and staunch abolitionist. William Stone enlisted in the Nineteenth Massachusetts Infantry Regiment a unit that fought in nearly all the major battles on the eastern front. He was wounded three times – the last time a head wound received at Gettysburg. He spent time in hospital and was later sent home, but rejoined his unit for a short time before being assigned a desk job in Philadelphia. He joined the Freedmen's Bureau in March 1866. Lou Falkner Williams, Introduction to *Bitter Freedom,* xiii-xvii.

[58] Diary 6, 19 November 1868, 81.

[59] Diary 6, 29 December 1868; Smedley, *Martha Schofield and the Re-Education of the South,* 105.

[60] Diary 7, 1 January 1869, 1.

Martha had, for much of her adult life, lived two lives. Her connections were deep and not always visible to those closest to her. She constructed a life for herself that met her obligations as a woman within the context of the values of her family and community, and at the same time allowed her work of great meaning and satisfaction. She lived a life of far more autonomy than most women like herself. She pursued relationships that sustained her emotionally, if only for a time, and relationships that fed her passions but those privately and with the utmost secrecy. However, Martha was well aware of the fragility of life – of the precariousness of her health and her relationships.

On January 2, she began a series of entries in her journal that marked one of the most painful periods of her life. Years later she wrote in pencil across the top of this journal the confusing note, "Destroy all this unread! Look in each page."[61] Yet, she did not follow through with destroying the diary. Her journal entry on the second of January came in response to a letter from Sadie in which she told Martha of her engagement to Chalkely Bartram, a Schofield family friend from Darby. In fact, Martha was responsible for introducing the two, but was clearly crushed by the news and said:

> This gave me joy for her – but the most bitter anguish for my own poor heart. The time so long dreaded has come at last – She whom I have so long claimed as my own – my sweetest and dearest friend, has found another heart on whom to lean and trust & love. When I knew that God had touched her soul with the choicest of His gifts to his children – pure love – I thanked him for his blessing her – my whole heart was gratified that the 'silver lining' I had prayed for was coming at last. In my intense joy at her happiness, I did not at first realize my own bitter grief. But now, now that she tells me she is a "promised wife" now comes into my heart a crushing weight, a burden heavy to be borne. If it must be, there is none to whom I would rather trust my darling, than the one she has chosen – ; but oh! the bitterness the agony, that comes with the consciousness, of her needing me less, of her turning from me, to find peace, comfort, rest on another love. For ten years I have known her inmost thoughts – have let my affections wind around her till another's gaining entrance, sadly rends my own. In all this time there has not been an unkind thought between us, perfect love and trust, all the world might turn away, but we would cling together still – I may be selfish yet with all my pain I would not raise a finger

[61] Diary 7, 1. Her note here adds evidence to the possibility that Martha destroyed some of her journals.

> to oppose it. Oh! No I have always prayed God to give her happiness, to give her the sunshine and me the shadow – so I will not murmur no. All those I have loved & who loved me – have found others dearer still, one by one they have left me standing alone and now my last and dearest, my most precious and cherished, my idol my darling – my little 'ewe lamb' – must be given into another's keeping. Will it always be so? Must I … stand alone![62]

The following day Martha found herself, literally, crying on Mary's shoulder in the morning and then alone in her room writing in the afternoon. "In the evening the burden was heavy – I left the room and wept bitter tears then prayed for strength, and when calmer, returned to the parlor," she wrote before bed.[63]

In the weeks that followed, much of Martha's writing in her journal centered on her health, her emotions, and her school. She was "raising blood at times quite often" and said, "it leaves me weak. And yet I am stronger & better than when I came."[64] However, she began making notes of her weight in the margins – on "January 12, 1869 weighed 131 lbs" – and remarking, on some days, the hemorrhaging caused her to feel weak for the entire day.[65] Yet, walking or riding after school seemed to bring a renewed sense of strength as did the enjoyment of a game of croquet. At the same time, Martha continued to write of her grief. "I am having many a heartache – and cannot become familiar with the truth that my precious Sadie is no longer wholly my own. I attempted to write yesterday, but said little about it because I would spare her the pain that <u>will</u> come into my heart – although I rejoice continually in her happiness."[66] The school prospered and drew daily visits from northerners in town who, like

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[62] Diary 7, 2 January 1869, 2-3.

[63] Diary 7, 3 January 1869, 3.

[64] Diary 7, 15 January 1869, 5.

[65] Diary 7, 16 January 1869, 5-6.

[66] Diary 7, 10 January 1869, 5.

Martha, were drawn to Aiken for its temperate climate and healthful air. She noted on a daily basis at least one and as many as six visitors in her classroom. In addition, many offered gifts of money, and sometimes food, to support the students and their teachers. They also contributed greatly to the women's social life, shunned as they were by the majority of Aikenites.

Toward the end of January a trip to Columbia planned by Mary's sister, Carrie, and her husband, Major David T. Corbin, was cancelled and Martha suffered saying, "it adds one more to my griefs. I scarcely know their reasons – but greatly regret that it was ever proposed – though with so many heavier burdens this ought to seem light; only these little things distress me – though I have tried not to express a word. My life never looked so hopeless, cheerless, desolate as it does now – indeed I have no hope for the future – only to die."[67] Her despondency at the change in plans may well have been due to the fact that she had hopes of seeing Robert Scott, now Governor, while in Columbia.[68] It would have given her the opportunity to feel connected to him and less alone, if only for a few short hours. But, as quickly as the trip was cancelled, the Corbins changed their minds. A telegraph arrived saying Martha and Mary should plan to arrive in Columbia on January 21.

David Corbin met the women at the train station and escorted them to the Nickerson Hotel. After dinner they "had a pleasant ride" and would have attended a "reception of the Governor's" had they not been so tired.[69] The itinerary for the following day included visiting

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[67] Diary 7, 19 January 1869, 6.

[68] Robert Scott entered politics in 1868 after his resignation from the army. He was elected governor of South Carolina that year and served for two terms. In 1871, impeachment proceedings were brought against him when the state lost more than six million dollars due to an over-issue of state bonds. He was later acquitted of all charges. See Hyman Rubin III, *South Carolina Scalawags* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2006), 53-57, 62, 63-65, 70, 72-76, 95; Paul A. Cimbala and Randall M. Miller, eds., *The Freedmen's Bureau and Reconstruction* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1999), 219, 221, 222, 228-232, 234.

[69] Diary 7, 21 January 1869, 7.

an asylum, where an inmate entertained them with her paintings, and afterward attending sessions of both branches of the legislature. Under Reconstruction, South Carolina's legislature contained a black majority as well as northern Republicans like David Corbin. It was an experience to savor and commemorate, and Martha recorded in her journal:

> Went to the Senate, Major C was Presiding, and it was with strange feelings I sat in that body where all men were equal before the law, where those whose race had been oppressed for two centuries, were now making laws for the oppressors – The colored members appeared as much at ease and at home as the others – We then went to the House where colored and white, democrats and republicans were sandwiched in a way that would disturb the dead bones of many of Carolina's proud sons. Reuben Tomlinson was speaking on a Bill to abolish capital punishment except for willful murder, he spoke well. R.C. Delarge Col. answered him – Reuben came to us & we had a nice chat, also Henry Paris & Mr. Wells from Beaufort – or St. Helena – I recognized a good many acquaintances – among the colored ones. Who would have prophesied this 10 years since.[70]

And she said, "After dinner we rode to dress parade – Governor spent the eve with us – had a pleasant happy time."[71]

The following day their sightseeing continued with a tour of the new state penitentiary and Capitol building. Martha's day ended with "a very pleasant ride with the Gen. – and a talk of our old friendship. He tells me his plans."[72] Though she said no more about Robert Scott or their time together in Columbia, the fact that he made time for her in what must have been a busy schedule as Governor is significant. Moreover, he arranged for time when they could be alone – at least in a carriage – for private conversation. Martha seemed satisfied with their contact and even renewed by it. The day after she and Mary were "up early, and bade good bye to Nickerson's where we had spent three very pleasant days as guests of Major Corbin and wife"

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[70] Diary 7, 22 January 1869, 8.

[71] Diary 7, 22 January 1869, 8.

[72] Diary 7, 23 January 1869, 9.

and soon, with the Corbins, their infant son, and Mrs, Taylor, Carrie and Mary's mother, were on the train bound for Aiken. Once home, all "enjoyed the rest of the day" and "retired early."[73]

On January 25, David Corbin returned to Columbia leaving his wife, son, and mother-in-law behind, and Martha and Mary returned to their classrooms. However, Martha was, once again, made heavyhearted by a letter from Darby "telling of the death of dear Mary Child." Mary, had been under Dr. Hassenplug's care and her death, surely, a reminder of Martha's own delicate health. Soon Martha was lamenting, "there has been much sadness in my heart often – some things are troubling me much – Oh! my dear precious Sadie – how oft my thoughts are with her. A letter from Dr H[assenplug] says Hector Ivins was buried on 7th day. How sudden these losses come into the family."[74]

In addition was the pall cast by her hemorrhaging and the physical weakness it caused. Classes were held on Saturday, January 30, to make up for the days lost while Martha and Mary were away, but Martha said afterward, "I don't know yet how I will stand the term – nearly every morn for two or three weeks, I have spit some blood from my lungs, & the left one pains me a good deal. I try to take very good care of myself and keep my spirits up, which is half the battle."[75] But keeping her spirits up remained an uphill battle. Within a few days she confessed, "I suffer much with constant pain in my left lung, that it makes me irritable and cross, which I regret very much."[76] And, on her birthday, February 1, Martha wrote in her journal:

> Thirty years ago – my dear mother gave me her first kiss – 30 years – has my life been an honor and a joy to her, have I proved a worthy daughter to so true and noble a Mother. Alas! Alas – I fear there has been many many errors, and little to be proud of – Night. I

[73] Diary 7, 24 January 1869, 9.

[74] Diary 7, 25 January 1869, 10.

[75] Diary 7, 30 January 1869, 11.

[76] Diary 7, 2 February 1869, 12.

> did not retire when the others did – this day has been full of memories – many sad ones – and sitting here in the stillness – mine seems like a broken wasted life – and my only hope in Gods love and mercy. If He has willed it so – He can give me strength to meet and bear it. If this is to be my last year on earth – may it be devoted to His service – & when the end comes may He find me ready and willing to welcome the messenger to go to Him.[77]

Though there was much that made her sad, there were lighter moments too. Life for Martha was something of an emotional roller coaster. William Stone began to be a regular visitor, often arriving early in the morning before the women were downstairs. He would come bearing news of St. Helena and "the Hunns, Heacock, Towne and Murray and all the schools down there," or would read to them in the evening, or play rounds of croquet in the afternoon. At the same time, Martha and Mary grew closer, often "writing, sewing, & talking" together.[78]

On February 2, Mrs. Taylor, Carrie Taylor Corbin, and her baby left Aiken to return to Charelston, and a visitor arrived in Aiken looking for Miss Schofield. When Martha met him in her parlor he introduced himself as Dr. Rockwell sent by the Governor to examine her lungs. He was to return in two days for the exam and in the meantime she responded, "it was very kind in my good friend. I have suffered much lately with pain."[79] The following day was "a very quiet Sabbath – such a stillness in the air."[80] But it was also a day to think about death. It was the anniversary of her father's death. Her own death seemed looming. She believed her relationship with Sadie, at least as she had known it, would soon die. For all her worries and sadness, Martha fought on, praying for God's love and strength to sustain her. The hard facts were that she was alone and seriously ill. By choice and circumstances, she had no mother, sisters, or husband to

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[77] Diary 7, 1 February 1869, 11.

[78] Diary 7, 26 January 1869, 10; 2 February 1869, 12.

[79] Diary 7, 6 February 1869, 12.

[80] Diary 7, 7 February 1869, 13.

care for her or comfort her. The emotional lifeline of Sadie's love would end. Their relationship, begun as teacher and student, had always placed Martha in a position of greater power. Martha was older. Sadie was the victim of a feckless father. Martha was her confidante, comforter, and advisor. It was a role she had played many times with her closest friends. It was a role that brought a dependent love. It was love she could call on when needed and she could control at least for a time. For Martha, the greatest alteration in these relationships came with her own ambition and with marriage.

From the time of her relationship with Edward Willets, an antidote for her feelings of guilt for defying conventions or the expectations or demands of her family was the idea of sacrifice. Another was her belief that God was guiding her through her relationships and choices. She would sacrifice her own happiness for the sake of others. She would sacrifice her own desire for love, marriage, and motherhood, for the sake of God's will for her life. She would sacrifice her own comforts and life at home, for the freed people of the South. As her friend and supporter, Sallie Corlies said to her, "How often I think with tender loving respect, of the noble work, and sacrifice to which thee devotes thy life, surely thee must have thy reward."[81] In part, Martha's reward was a life of greater freedom and autonomy than most women experienced. In part, it was the satisfaction of a great work of vital importance to black children and their families, to the South, and to the country as a whole. But her freedom and her work did not come without its costs. Alone and at a time of great emotional need, Martha turned to God, her one constant source of love, guidance, and strength, and to her journal where she wrote:

> How plain to me comes up this day 17 years ago – 17 years, since my Father was laid in still grave – How we wept for him, and yet how happy and joyous must this intervening time been for <u>him</u>, in that world where there is no sorrow, no partings, no death. And for us – we who have had to fight through the Battle of life – who have stumbled and faltered

[81] Sallie Corliss to Martha Schofield, 18 February 1869, MSP.

> by the wayside – and one of us – one – been through deep and bitter trials – till the frail tenement is shattered and broken – till the one prayer of my heart is – Oh! Lord – let me forget self, teach me to rise above all thoughts of my own happiness, and consecrate my life and service to thy holy work. Strengthen me, to lay my will in thine, to say with a sincere and victorious heart & faith, "not my will but thine be done."[82]

On February 8, Martha had a good day in school, played a game of croquet in the afternoon and later had her appointment with Dr. Rockwell of which she reported:

> He examined my lungs, "did not wish to alarm me, but the left one was a good deal diseased & the right one inflamed" – advised painting with iodine, wearing a plaster – & breathing plenty of fresh air – "Alarmed"! Oh! no nothing of this kind frightens me – I am entirely resigned. What I regret is my family having to know this sometime – I cannot bear to have my precious Mother have this grief – for I know it would grieve her – and all of them, and it pains me to know they will have any sorrow. Yet by care I may get well – and for their sakes I am willing to try – For myself – the Father's will is mine.[83]

Over the next ten days Martha followed Dr. Rockwell's directions. She bought the iodine, made a point of walking in to Aiken in the afternoons, and applied a plaster to her chest. Still, she complained of tiredness and pain. She was weighed and found she had lost three pounds – "Feb 10th weighed 128." She hired a carpenter to enlarge her classroom by taking down a partition and moving another making one large room so that "where three were crowded only two need sit – and all face the black boards." In addition a gift from William Stone arrived of a desk, table, and chairs – enhancements to both the classroom and the parlor. She said, "I bothered Major Stone so much – he has procured us these things."[84] In the early morning of February 14, Valentine's Day, Martha lay awake unable to sleep and decided to write several letters. In one she explained her two wishes "to bear with Christian patience all that may come – the other to have my death do some good to two dearer than life." She then added, "I can meet it

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[82] Sallie Corliss to Martha Schofield, 18 February 1869, MSP.

[83] Diary 7, 8 February 1869, 13-14.

[84] Diary 7, 10 and 13 February 1869, 14.

calmly and with joy if God will let me bless them thus."[85] She did not say who the two were. One may have been Sadie and the other Robert Scott though what good she imagined they might derive from her death is difficult to imagine.

In the meantime, there were "the radiant faces" of her students to cheer her and the pleasure of teaching in her new classroom. The pain in her side did not subside and she had no choice but to "rest between school hours." However, she continued with "the Drs prescriptions" and added to her regimen taking sunbaths. The good news was that her hemorrhages ended but then she developed a cough "without knowing I had taken cold." This was the cycle of her disease.[86]

Teaching and her health remained major topics of her journal writing as did visitors to the school and visits from William Stone. He, Mary, and Martha would walk together through town and in the woods. They gathered flowers – "trailing arbutus, violets, &c" – and played games of croquet even when it was too cold to stay outdoors for long. He visited in their classrooms and "spoke well" to the children. Martha concluded, "Major seems quite like one of our own folks, and although he is quite at home here – there has never been a word or the slightest thing that he [unreadable word] other than a perfect gentleman. – His home education has been one of refinement and culture."[87] Martha seemed wholly unaware of the budding romance between Mary and William.

On March 11, Martha wrote lines she later cut out but were followed by "short note – always write on this day of the year. I think I am resigned to the past, satisfied with the present

[85] Diary 7, 14 February 1869, 15.

[86] Diary 7, 15, 16 and 19 February 1869, 15.

[87] Diary 7, 28 February and 1 March 1869, 17-18.

and do not dread the future. Unless I recover soon my life cannot be very long – the cough grows more troublesome."[88] That she destroyed part of the day's entry suggests that it was about Robert Scott and March 11 a date that was important to her in relationship to him. What brought about her change in attitude – that she thought she was resigned to the past, satisfied with the present and did not dread the future – was not made clear. But it was centered in the satisfaction she derived from teaching and aiding the freed people. She commented on March 12, "Busy but pleasant day in school – I love best, to feel & know I am doing something." Feeling and knowing that she was doing something would be her central focus going forward. It would sustain her even at her weakest moments both physically and emotionally. On March 14, she and Mary attended the Colored Baptist Church where

> May read Grant's Oath and Inaugural, said some pretty words, then I spoke to them awhile told them Grant with all his power, could not do as much for them as they could do for themselves, that now in this state "all men are equal before the law", it depended upon their own efforts to raise them into [unreadable word] that they must be masters of their passions & vices and habits, must be guided by the Spirit of truth written in their own hearts, &c". Then the minister came & said "Friends I have heard many words since freedom, but none purer and better than those just spoken by our worthy friends &c" – It touched me – after meeting, many crowded round to shake hands. May expressed great satisfaction & pleasure at it.[89]

School was soon closed for a week for the Easter holiday and Martha and Mary went to Charleston where they stayed with the Corbins. Martha took a day to visit Mt. Pleasant and the teachers' home. However, she said that Mary had not been invited. Evidently, Cornelia Hancock, with whom Mary had lived and taught, was now jealous not only that Mary was teaching with Martha in Aiken, but the two had become such close friends. Martha described Cornelia as not speaking or looking at her and said, "when I asked a question jerked out a yes or

[88] Diary 7, 11 March 1869, 20.

[89] Diary 7, 14 March 1869, 21.

no – did not go down to dinner till we were done." In the end she concluded, "Poor thing – she must be unhappy with such bitterness in her heart toward me who never wronged her … Am glad I do not live at the Home.[90] While group living could provide teachers both support in their work and friendship, it could also provide fertile ground for jealousy and discord. Martha's preference from the start had been to live and work with one other woman and preferably someone she could bond with. With the exception of Mary Sharp, her relationships with her teaching partners had worked out well for her.

On April 1, Mary and Martha played jokes on both the Corbins. To Carrie they wrote a note from Mary Hosley, a fellow teacher in Charleston, saying she would arrive for a visit of a few days. Not until Carrie had made arrangements for meals and a bedroom did the two announce that it was all a joke. Later in the afternoon Martha wrote a letter to David Corbin and "signed R.K. Scott asking him to meet him at the Charleston Hotel at 5 on important business. Major came out to dinner bringing Mr. Epping, read the note … & when done said he must go down to see the Governor – After getting his hat we told him, but he said – oh! you can't fool me – I know that writing too well, & Mr. E desired to see it & declared it his. We convinced them and laughed over it."[91] Martha's mood during the days of her holiday was much lighter. On April 2 she and Mary met Mary Hosley while shopping and invited her to stay the night with them. Martha said, "we had a grand pantomime upstairs – both dressed in red silk."[92] Here was the Martha of old, a lover of fun and practical jokes. Her mood was such that one of the jokes

[90] Diary 7, 29 and 30 March 1869, 23-24.

[91] Diary 7, 1 April 1869, 25.

[92] Diary 7, 2 April 1869, 25.

could involve Robert Scott. She knew his handwriting well enough to convince those also familiar with his writing that the note she forged was genuine.

On April 4, the women returned to Aiken. While on the train Mary confided to Martha that she and William Stone had become engaged. Martha's initial reaction seemed positive. She wrote later that day, "I was drawn with deep feeling unto Mary, and greatly valued the confidence which she placed in me, during the eventful ride – May her dear good heart always be happy."[93] On the same day, William Stone wrote to Martha asking for her congratulations on his engagement and saying, in part:

> Before this time, I suppose you know what shape the "Reveries" of my Bachelorhood have taken. You have a woman's eyes and intuitions and no doubt guessed long ago what was the meaning of the frequent letters which passed between Mary and me. I can't flatter myself that I managed to conceal from you the fondness I always had for her although you will do us both the credit of conducting ourselves in company (i.e. in your presence) in an eminently proper way. I am not quite certain that she had told you the story of our love although I wrote her that I thought she had better do so and have little doubt that she has done so since she had told it to her mother and sister. I shall immediately look for a letter of congratulations from you upon my good fortune in obtaining such a prize as I have in Mary and perhaps you'll season such a letter with a bit of advice which your profession of teacher renders you competent to give! … I am waiting to hear again from her before I write home about the treasure I found before leaving South Carolina and you are the first to whom I havesaid anything about it. I hope you'll not think Mary has been hasty or unwise in the step she has taken. … I hope you'll not be inclined to bring an action for grand larceny against me for "taking, stealing and carrying away" Mary's heart! If you do, I shall plead to the jurisdiction of any court before which you might bring me.[94]

But Martha was surprised at the news. Neither by their conduct nor through Mary's confidences did she know of their romance. Both William and Mary appeared solicitous of Martha's feelings concerning the matter. Both well knew the precarious state of Martha's health. Notwithstanding Mary's secretiveness about the true nature of her relationship with William, she

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[93] Diary 7, 4 April 1869, 26.

[94] William Stone to Martha Schofield, 4 April 1869, MSP.

and Martha had grown increasingly close over the months they spent together in Aiken. They began to develop that special and intimate bond between women so common of the time – a bond all the more valued and essential to northern women teaching black students in the South. Mary was surely aware of the pain Martha suffered at Sadie's engagement and forthcoming marriage. William Stone emphasized Martha's focus on teaching saying, "I hope you had a pleasant visit at Charleston and go back to Aiken free of your cold and with renewed vigor of body. I think your mind has about enough vigor now so far as the interest you take in your school is concerned."[95] Martha remarked a few days later, "I had a kind letter from Major Stone which I value much."[96]

As school began again, visitors arrived in greater numbers. With spring weather came more northerners, many of whom began contributing money toward a picnic for the students to be held on the first of May. Martha began reading *A Woman's Secret* a book she received as a Christmas gift from her mother and sister, Eliza. Written in 1867 by Caroline Fairfield Corbin, it was a novel centered on the issue of women's rights.[97] A few days later, when Mary was not feeling well, they "lay on the bed two or three hours – reading A Woman's Secret" and agreed it was "so good."[98] Later in the week Martha made note of sending a letter to the editor of *The*

[95] William Stone to Martha Schofield, 4 April 1869, MSP.

[96] Diary 7, 7 April 1869, 27.

[97] Corbin later reversed her position on women's rights, writing a novel in 1886 titled, *Letters From a Chimney Corner: a Plea for Pure Homes and Secure Relations Between Men and Women* and in 1897 founding the Illinois Association Opposed to the Extension of Suffrage to Women. Marlene Cook, "So we All Can Be Heard, in *Pen Points*, Iowa Woman's Press Association, April, 2005, www.iwpa.org/pen_points/2005, (accessed December 23, 2009).

[98] Diary 7, 11 April 1869, 27.

Independent, "a reply to Rev. R. M. Holyfield on Woman's Rights – which Mary thought worthy of being printed. Gave him some ideas overlooked."[99] In a draft of her letter Martha wrote:

> On hearing your paper read last week I was somewhat surprised to find that you whom we all thought endowed with justice and good feeling, had permitted such an article as the one entitled "Womans Rights" to enter your columns without comment, surely you could not agree with it, for in my humble opinion some of it was, to use a vulgar expression a real slur on the female part of the community. – Now if you, Mr Editor, would permit me through your paper to reply to him (I say him for I imagine the author to be some crusty old bachelor who has been refused by all the nice ladies) I will endeavor to show the other side and also prove men have some rights which they do not use, rights which God gave them, but in order to show their superiority they forget these Higher Laws. I admit that man may be the strongest physically, but yet, does might make right? should the strong always rule the weak? no! let them rather protect without boasting of their power. – Can there be any man "that is a man" so far lose his reason as to think it would be right under all circumstances for a woman to yield. Has she by her marriage lost all her identity? Has she no principles that must be regarded? has she not a soul that bids her follow the right whether it be in accordance or against a man's will – A woman may coincide, agree, & believe as the man, but it is not because she yields, not because it is him that thinks so but because her own conscience tells her the thing itself is right.
>
> Woman's influence is greatest, though man may have the most power, and his nature not being so pure and elevated is often governed by wrong, and that wrong he calls his power and with it tries to rule the woman, whom he would have a passive creature submitting always to his will – I would not have a woman always oppose the man, neither could it be so when there was true love and unity – but if he loves he would not wish her to yield to what she was conscientiously opposed too. There is reason in all things and hers may often be the better, or they may agree to disagree.*
>
> Now, to a few of the rights men have, they have the right, to protect, to guard from evil, to help bear the burdens – they have the right to "scatter sunshine" to breathe kinds words, to wear a "calm smile," to have an unruffled disposition, and many other things which they would require of those whom they call "inferior" – and yet with all their "superiority" possess not themselves – [100]

Although in her journal Martha attributed the article to a Rev. R.M. Holyfield, in her letter to the editor she said, given its content, her assumption was the author was a man – and one "refused by all the "nice ladies." *A Woman's Secret* had its Reverend as well and one who

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[99] Diary 7, 16 April 1869, 28.

[100] Undated draft of letter to the editor titled, "On Being," 1-2. *In this draft, Martha crossed through "they may agree to disagree." She did not indicate the full name of the newspaper.

echoed Holyfield's sentiments. In the novel Reverend Linscott says to his fiancé, "there is something in the spectacle of a gentle, refined, intelligent woman, yielding herself graciously to the dictation of her male protectors, simply because providence has so ordered, that touches me inexpressibly."[101] While Martha's support of women's rights did not preclude marriage, she staunchly critiqued the notion of male superiority outside of men's greater physical power. Though men possessed the legal right to rule over women, she invoked a higher law by which men would protect women and at the same time respect their right to follow their own conscience. Martha asked, "Has she by her marriage lost all her identity?" The question and its answer seemed to be at the center of her avoidance of marriage, outweighing even her concerns about her health. For Mary, however, it would seem the answer to that question either held less weight, or in the case of William Stone, was answered with a no, for she would marry him. In addition, on the day Martha sent her letter to *The Independent*, Mary read William's letters to Martha.[102] Once again, she would find herself, or place herself, in a triangular relationship with a couple engaged to be married.

Of significance in mid-April was a note Martha made of taking a ride outside of town to look at forty acres of land that might be bought and then sold or rented "to the colored people." She immediately went to see the agent, a Mr. Wood, to discuss purchasing the land but said, "was told by his oily tongue – he doubted if a clear title could be given."[103] Though it is unclear what her plans were for the land, it suggests she was thinking of a permanent site for a school as well as long-term work as a teacher in Aiken.

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[101] Caroline Fairfield Corbin, *Rebecca, or A Woman's Secret*, 322.

[102] Diary 7, 16 April 1869, 28.

[103] Diary 7, 17 April 1869, 28.

By the end of the month her heart was pierced once again. Mary received a registered letter that contained "a handsome plain gold ring" which caused Martha to say after seeing it, "dear, dear girl I was wishing her happiness – then the date – March 11th shot a great pain through my heart. Why oh! God do such <u>little</u> things still give me pain – am I never to get over the sorrowful past – Make me patient and give me strength to endure to the end."[104] She learned that Mary and William had become engaged on March 11, the date she associated with her relationship with Robert Scott. Her emotional rollercoaster continued.

On May 1, the long awaited day of the school picnic arrived and, though the night before was rainy, by morning "the blue sky appeared." Then, "about 11 the procession started" and Martha reported:

> 130 children all dressed nicely and singing on the way, were soon in the beautiful oak grove, where ranks were broken and they went off to play. At one all formed in a ring, and we went round giving a large sandwich, & cakes & candy to each one. Then helped the parents – and treated the few white visitors – At 3 exercises commenced singing, lessons, pieces, dialogues &c – 3 little girls & as many boys stood on a bench & said a piece I had taught them – looking very cute and pretty – White spectators were coming and going all the time, and seemed very interested in the children. Before separating treated again to ginger cake, and candy – It was a very happy pleasant day to all – and the visitors at the school contributed enough to pay for everything. We enjoyed it very much, though were tired enough to ride home with Remus in his <u>new cart</u>.[105]

It was an important day to the scholars, their families, their teachers, and all who supported the school. As with Martha's comments about black members of the state legislature, it would have been hard to imagine such an event a scant four or five years earlier. It must have been a curiosity to some Aikenites and may well have been and offense to others. Yet it drew attention to the school for three days later the Honorable C. Hayne "colored member of the Legislature"

[104] Diary 7, 26 April 1869, 29-30.

[105] Diary 7, 1 May 1869, 31.

and a Mr. Payne arrived and Martha noted, "seemed much interested in our school, and the children."[106]

Between May 11 and 12, Martha received letters from three of the men who were most significant to her. First was a letter from John Bunting. Though she identified the writer only as "my long tried friend" it is clear from the excerpt she included in her journal that it was John who wrote to her. In the letter he said:

> Do not wonder why none of the poetry of our youthful days flows from my pen – do not think it is because I will not trust thee. I really never have time to write them down & little by little time to think them. I know however that, choked down as they have been, & crushed under the heavy wheels of business, which keep turning, turning, turning until my head turns with them, they are still there, all the sweet thoughts that beguiled my earlier days; all that vivid love for that devout worship of the beautiful, which I have thanked God for so often & often with me still. Old memories when I am alone even for a few moments, precious divine harmonies which sometimes gush out from the musical performances that I listen to, a thought of peculiar tenderness, or the sight of a child's innocent face will often & often moisten my eyelids & make my heart beat quick. … Do take care of that fragile health of thine. I cling eagerly, to life. Will thee not do so? Perhaps after all, even in death we may not be so long separated. When the slow gray curtain rolls away what will it reveal to us?
>
> My faith is strong enough for us both and if I am taken first, the immortal will not seem so unreal to that dear heart – With such pure sweet thoughts, there certainly will be no fear when the time does come. On the bosom of the Father's love – we will be born safely over into realms of eternal peace and rest."[107]

There were not only strains of their relationship of old in his letter but clear evidence that he remained deeply attached to her. As he said, "Perhaps after all, even in death we may not be so long separated … my faith is strong enough for both of us … we will be born safely over into realms of eternal peace and rest." Whatever the happiness of his marriage to Anna, Martha maintained a principal place in his heart. Though their relationship had changed, it continued a

[106] Diary 7, 4 May 1869, 32.

[107] Diary 7, 11 May 1869, 32-33.

powerful force and may have been the most emotionally intimate of his life. It had been Martha who chose friendship over marriage.

On May 12 she noted receiving "nice letters" from Robert Scott and Brother Evans but nothing of their contents.[108] Yet all three were from men she loved – men who played vital roles in her life. They were men who would remain connected to her. They were men who continued to appear in her journal. On May 22 a package arrived with "both volumes of 'Little Women' by L.M. Alcott" and she exclaimed, "now when I so need this pure sweet book it is here."[109] They were a gift from John.

Mary had gone to Charleston for a few days to be with her sister and their mother who was soon to return north and Martha was left to manage "both schools – 95 and the children all did nicely – got along well."[110] However, her health grew worse. She had stopped taking "Hypophosphites for a week" and not only felt physically weaker but confessed "for two days have felt as if my life could not be very long."[111] Mary returned and Martha was not only relieved of teaching so large a school, but happy to have her home and to begin reading *Little Women* together in the evenings. Of their first night's reading she said it was "a most charming book, so home like so natural & helpful to anyone that needs, like me, to overcome a quick hasty temper."[112]

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[108] Brother Evans was H.A. Evans.

[109] Diary 7, 22 May 1869, 35.

[110] Diary 7, 24 May 1869, 36.

[111] Diary 7, 26 May 1869, 36.

[112] Diary 7, 30 May 1869, 36.

The following day Martha noted being "so weak in my lungs closed at one oclock – and went to lie down – There seems a vacuum where the talk comes from."[113] She also noted in the top margin of the page, "weighed May 10 113 lbs." June 2 was Mary's birthday but Martha complained, "my strength is poor. I fear I have not added much to her happiness" though Mary's happiness was surely enhanced by the gift of "two beautiful silver vases" from William.[114] Yet, oddly the following evening Martha felt well enough to play a practical joke, dressing "as an old Irish woman" and begging for "a night lodging." She gloated. "fooled them all even Uncle Reuben" and then added, "enjoyed the laugh."[115] It was as though she needed to shift the attention back to herself. On the fourth it rained all day and Martha closed her school early saying, "I was feeling very miserable … try to be patient – but often long for the dear touch of a Mother's gentle hand & the tender sympathy of a dear sisters heart – but do not mean to complain."[116] A few nights later Mary read aloud from *Little Women* and it was the character of Beth that captured Martha's attention. Her first comment on the book had been about its lessons on a quick, hasty temper – a reference to the character of Jo, the passionate, non-conformist of the March sisters. But now it was Beth, who died prematurely, that Martha seemed most to identify with. She wrote, "dear Beth she was the sweet flower that was transplanted to a Higher Home – I wish my life had been as pure, for it may not be long."[117]

However, it was Martha's temper that was on display the following Sunday when she and Mary attended evening services at a Methodist church. Their morning's worship had been

[113] Diary 7, 31 May 1869, 36.

[114] Diary 7, 2 June 1869, 37.

[115] Diary 7, 3 June 1869, 37.

[116] Diary 7, 4 June 1869, 37.

[117] Diary 7, 6 June 1869, 37.

tranquil and satisfying. They attended a Baptist Church where Martha "spoke to the people" and she reported afterward "a woman pressed my hand and said, thank you Miss you have grace for your portion – pray for me – others expressed satisfaction and I was glad to have done my duty."[118] But that evening as congregants stood and made their way forward to receive communion she became angry and lost control of herself. That night writing of the incident she said:

> So many went up to the communion table, and kneeled while the minister said "eat this bread as the body, drink the wine as the blood of Christ" – I saw two young girls laugh & do it with less reverence than I would look upon any dead – The feelings came as fast, that my whole body trembled with emotion – and the words found this utterance – "you, when you come here & kneel do you ask your own hearts whether you are willing to accept the spirit of Christ, his love & peace & good will towards men. – God does not ask that we worship him on the one day of the week, when we have nothing else to do – but he wants us to live that our lives will be governed and influenced by the teaching of Christ." The Preacher had told them of Abrahams sacrifice – I said "the Lord did not ask you to sacrifice sons, but those things we loved best – our own wills & desires – you men when you have a desire to go into places and partake of that which will drag you down and bring sorrow to your family, that moment your time or sacrifice has come, and the Lord calls upon you to put away evil and resist temptation" – These seasons are often very embarrassing to my outward senses, and my heart beats audibly, but when I begin there is no waiting for words, they roll out fast so I can utter them. May told me after her one closed hand trembled for some time.[119]

What must the people in the church have thought of her outburst? What was their reaction to her impassioned stridency? Though she does not say, it was, most likely, a black congregation – it is unlikely that Martha and Mary would have desired to attend or been welcome in a church of white southerners. Moreover, notwithstanding the explanation that her response was, more or less, out of her control, she would have been mindful that such a display amongst southern whites might have serious consequences for her and for her school. Violence against freedmen's teachers was widespread and well known throughout the South. It had only

[118] Diary 7, 12 June 1869, 38.

[119] Diary 7, 12 June 1869, 38.

been a year and a half since a teacher had been threatened with violence in Aiken and left the following morning. In addition, three days later her attitude toward a white southerner with whom she talked was remarkably civil and even sympathetic. While making a visit to a freed woman, she and Mary "saw a white woman on the porch of the big house," and Martha recounted in her journal entry for the day:

> She spoke – owns it and came from Augusta to spend the day – invited us in – and we talked a long while, she was a lady in all her manners & words – though religiously believes slavery is right -- & says Freedom was a curse to the negroes – she talked so gently it was impossible to get angry – & she is finely educated – & broader minded than any Southern woman I ever saw – 9 years in Europe – Said she never could teach – the colored people – but if we thought it a duty we were right to do it – We quite enjoyed the call & I told her in 10 years she would think freedom a great blessing – She is Mrs. Bonatheau is now teaching a large school in Augusta –[120]

Martha's chastising and lecturing was a side of her personality that she revealed only intermittently in her diary. Years before, in Philadelphia, she had chastised and lectured a boy for his lack of reverence while waiting in line to view the body of Abraham Lincoln. She lectured friends about the evils of drinking alcohol and smoking. She chastised and lectured Gustavus Whitridge and James Beecher when on Wadmalaw Island. She lectured the freed people, though, in her telling, rarely in harsh tones. Yet in every case where she reported an incident of speaking out in a provocative, if not self-righteous way, she was, afterward, unrepentant. This aspect of her character made her an effective ally and worker for the freed people but could also be alienating to those closest to her. As William Stone had written to her, though she may have lacked vigor when it came to her physical strength, she had plenty of vigor in terms of the interest she took in her school and in teaching. Her independence, her assertiveness, her stridency were qualities that served her work but not so well her heart.

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[120] Diary 7, 15 June 1869, 39-40.

Soon school would end and Martha and Mary would leave for the North. On June 23 there was a dinner planned "under the trees" and a meeting called by the Methodist minister. All thanked us & urged the necessity of education. It was quite touching some of their remarks – Mary thanked them and I spoke – A resolution was adopted thanking us, & a copy sent to two papers – and Mr. Corson."[121] Martha's last entry for the day was, "This is our last night together – we who have been so happy in these past eight months – My Mary & I."[122] Martha had, over the months she spent with Mary, become closer to her, even covetous of her. She had in letters to William Stone attempted to persuade him to make their home in Aiken and had even gone so far as to suggest a particular house. His letters in return were never entirely dismissive of the idea, but he held out little hope that they would settle there. However, he was always solicitous of her feelings, recognizing the depth of feeling between the two women and even Martha's emotional dependency on Mary.

Having lived in the South and superintending schools, he was sensitive to the relationships that formed between teachers living and working together. Yet, he also made clear that come their marriage, his would be the first claim on Mary's heart. In April he wrote to Martha, "For your sake I shall be sorry to deprive you of her society another year but I think I must claim her before that time."[123] In May he said, "Whether we deserve your compliment that we are a 'model couple' we must leave others to say although we should be very selfish if we could forget you in our own happiness. I am sure that even when I am with Mary I shall feel as though we might look for you at any time so accustomed did I become to your presence and I

[121] Diary 7, 23 June 1869, 40-41.

[122] Diary 7, 23 June 1869, 41.

[123] William Stone to Martha Schofield, 22 April 1869, MSP.

would think that you were entitled to the first place in our thoughts outside our own families."[124] In his last letter to Martha before the end of school he confessed, "I suppose we men are a little cruel to others in this carrying off their dear friends when they seem most to need them but so long as the world lasts it will never be otherwise and you must consol yourselves with the thought that what may appear loss to you is not really so but only a greater gain to the fortunate possessors of a good womans love."[125] William then added before closing his letter:

> I had intended fully when I wrote you on Thursday or Friday to send you a photograph of myself. You'll not think it vain in me, I hope to do so, only I take it for granted that since you have one of Mary you may want one to keep it company. I thought that perhaps you would ask for one but as you have not done so I anticipate by sending one before all of them are gone. Had it not that Mary is so dear to you I should hardly have had the courage to send you this, unasked. With it you may be sure goes just as much of my love as Mary thinks it proper for you to have and all the good wishes of him who will try to prove himself worthy to be called Mary's husband and your own True friend.[126]

The day they left, Martha on route to Columbia and Mary to Charleston before both went home to Pennsylvania,"a large number of men women & children … many with farewell offerings, peeches, peanuts &c" accompanied them to the depot. Martha recorded she and Mary traveled as far as Branchville together "and there parted Oh! parted – to me it was sorrow indeed, for no one will ever be as dear as she was. I gave her a long letter of 6 pages written at odd times."[127] Three days later Mary wrote a letter in reply to Martha in which she said:

> As I read page after page – it seemed as tho I must go to thee, and tell thee how much I sympathize with thee. …But if I had only known all before, and how much thee had suffered. I know I should have acted differently. … It is enough for me to feel, that thee has loved, as I know thee can love and has had to give all up – and live along with out it, and darling thee wont blame me – if I ask just once more – if it must be forever? Is there no hope, that you will yet come together? … I dont write this question expecting thee to

[124] William Stone to Martha Schofield, 14 May 1869. MSP.

[125] William Stone to Martha Schofield, 17 June 1869, MSP.

[126] William Stone to Martha Schofield, 17 June 1869, MSP.

[127] Diary 7, 24 June 1869, 41.

> answer it, but only that thee may know – that my whole heart is interested in thy happiness, and I cannot bear to feel that thee must ever struggle on. … I almost wish darling I had not told thee of my happiness if it made thee unhappy, and then to think how I would so thoughtlessly ask thee why thee would not love some one. ... I also remember another thoughtless question I asked thee on the 11th of March – but as I did not know I do not fear that thee would think one cruel. But since reading thy words I am glad that we are engaged on that day for I shall ever think of it in connection with thee, and hope in thinking of it it may make me even more loving and true to Major. … On Friday morning Gov Scott called on us – and we had quite a long talk but of course I did not ask him any important questions. He told me he was going up that evening and I do hope that he telegraphed to thee and that thee stayed over until yesterday…. I hope thee waited to see him.[128]

Here, in Mary's letter to Martha, seems clearer proof of Martha's love for Robert Scott. Martha's letter of six pages was, in part, a defense of her singleness – proof that she could love and be loved – proof that she was alone not for lack of her desirability or through her own choice, but through fate. There was proof that March 11 was a date of significance associated with Scott. Yet, what compelled her to write such a letter? Clearly she trusted Mary with her deepest secret, but why risk putting it all down in a letter that could be lost, or misplaced, or read by others? Why not confide in Mary when they were together and she could at least be comforted? It would seem, too, that Martha offered some defense or explanation that justified her relationship with a married man even to the point of Mary asking if they might not find some way to be together. Martha's life continued to be as dramatic and complicated as any plot in the novels she read. The narrative she constructed to explain her choices in life to herself and others, was rooted in the nobility of sacrifice and the reward of God's love. But even with the satisfactions of her work, was that enough for her?

In Columbia Martha called on a Major Needes of the Freedman's Bureau and secured the school in Aiken for another year. He would arrange for the payment of rent during the summer. On her second day in the city she received "an exquisite bouquet tied with a white ribbon, from

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[128] Mary Taylor to Martha Schofield, 27 June 1869, 1-3, 4.

some young fellow in the Hotel" and later wore some of the flowers in her hair "in acknowledgement."[129] On her third morning in Columbia "two more most exquisite bouquets" arrived at her room, this time sent by a Mr. White. However, having neither seen nor heard from Robert Scott she said, "at 11 sent a line to Gov – he did not know I was there had only come up that morning – he came round and staid one hour – It was distant, unsatisfactory – & short but I rejoiced that I had this much – for I left with no bitter feelings."[130] He arrived from Charleston having just seen Mary. In Martha's telling his call suggested obligation rather than desire. The contrast was sharp between the attention she drew from the men who sent her flowers and the attention she received from the man she loved.

Notwithstanding her statement that she left with no bitter feelings, Martha must have stepped onto the train that evening on the first leg of her trip home with some sadness of heart. She slept but awoke in "Saulsbury" and looking out the window remembered "our suffering soldiers had sent up agonized prayers, from this very spot which now lay still and peaceful in the moonlight."[131] The memories of war and suffering were still fresh. With daylight came heat and Martha said, "it was well I did not have to talk my voice was so weak," a possible indication of her emotional as well as her physical state.[132] She arrived in Philadelphia at 2:30 the following morning and wrote of her homecoming:

> Insisted on going to Johns though the depot man offered to let me sleep there – but I was tired & wanted to get my clothes off – So one police man kindly went to the end of his beat & then another took me to the house. John soon let me in, though surprised – and then Anna welcomed me – & in half and hour I had a nice bath and soon slept till 7 oclock. It was very warm and John would not let me go down town till he found out if

[129] Diary 7, 25 June 1869, 42.

[130] Diary 7, 26 June 1869, 42.

[131] Diary 7, 27 June 1869, 43.

[132] Diary 7, 28 June 1869, 43.

> Samuels were in – so I spent the time with Anna – till he went down & sent me word all were at Sallies – Anna and I went right over and found them – Sam was there and we had a nice time till 4 – when we came out home and I was once more folded in my Mothers Arms – Thanking the Father for his goodness in thus bringing us together again – Parents & children.[133]

Three days later the family gathered together for dinner, including her brother Ben, and Martha remarked not only on the blessing of their reunion but "from the weak state of my lungs I have often felt that my absence would be the first break in the circle – but now the sisters look so delicate I think they need the watchful care and tender nursing."[134] All were growing older. Martha returned to the care of Dr. Hassenplug. She also began a round of visits to aunts, uncles, and cousins, as well as trips to Philadelphia to be with Sallie and her children though she complained of not feeling very strong. She kept up regular visits with John and Anna. Then, whatever she was writing about between mid-July and mid-August, she later decided needed excising and ten pages were cut out of her journal. When her writing begins again on August 19, she was with Mary Taylor in Bordentown visiting friends but was preoccupied with the weather writing, "Hot – hot – hottest" and "Hot, dry, hottest, driest."[135]

On August 22 she was back in Philadelphia to meet with Robert Corson and reported, "think he will let me have two teachers therefore shall get Jennie," her cousin, Jennie Satterthwaite. Of a visit to Dr. Hassenplug the same afternoon she said, "While treating me, he told me his <u>impressions</u> which <u>he</u> is sure will come true – I will remember what he has told, me, and see if <u>one</u> year from this time it is fulfilled. One thing I know that now in my inmost soul, I know that the Father's ways are best & I shall <u>trust</u> him. The <u>deepest</u> prayer of my daily life is to

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[133] Diary 7, 28 June 1869, 44.

[134] Diary 7 1 July 1869, 44.

[135] Diary 7, 20 and 21 August 1869, 56.

be able to say 'not my will, oh! Lord – but thine be done.'"[136] The doctor most surely told her that her health would improve.

Soon she would be returning south but before that she would have to face her separation from Sadie and Mary. Mary wrote her on August 22:

> And so darling – thee has to part with Sadie on the 13th – I would be sorry for thee did I not know thee would be happier in seeing her happy – Now we had thought of being married on the 19th of October which would be just a week from the day Sadie is married – but if that is too soon for thee, I would just as soon leave it until the 26th which will be a week later, we were not decided which time it would be but I think now I will let it be on whichever time it suits thee. … I do hope darling I will get to see thee often and I want to come out and stay a night with thee. I really feel as if I could talk all night to thee. … Does thee know, yesterday I felt real homesick for Aunt Amy and our home at Aiken and I always do when I think of never going back. I have had letters from lots of the children lately, and I must answer some of them. Obanyan said he heard I was going to marry Major Stone, but he wanted me to come back whether I married or not. … I wish I could be with thee another year but Will wont spare me I know.[137]

One benefit of Martha's letter to Mary concerning Robert Scott was Mary's solicitousness when it came to Martha's feelings about the forthcoming weddings even to the point of arranging her own to suit Martha rather than herself or William.

During the month of September Martha bought wedding gifts for both brides and chose the dress she would wear at Sadie's wedding as her attendant – "Poplin made short with basque & double skirt trimmed with fringe -- handsome."[138] It was important to her to look her best. She also began drawing lessons in Philadelphia with "a real artist who teaches the principles of drawing, and makes one Master of them in a few lessons." Of their first class she said, "I was much pleased & learned much in 2 hours."[139] A few days later she had lessons of a different

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[136] Diary 7, 22 August 1869, 56.

[137] Mary Taylor to Martha Schofield, 22 August 1869, MSP.

[138] Diary 7, 21 September 1869, 61.

[139] Diary 7, 15 September 1869, 60.

kind when a Mrs. Hollowell came to the house to teach her "some of the movements for gymnastics."[140] Mary visited Darby as did Chalkely Bartram, Sadie's fiancé. Martha stayed busy until September 29 when she left for New York to spend two weeks with Sadie before her marriage.

She wrote much during her time with Sadie. Her journal, as often before, offered a place to pour out her feelings and to regain her equilibrium. She also drew strength and comfort from walking outdoors, drinking in the sunlight and beauties of autumn. She worked to support Sadie as she prepared to take her wedding vows and suffered acutely on the day they were spoken. Martha said of the days leading up to the wedding:

> So much to talk about – we two – we have not seen each other since her engagement – How our hearts are thus opened for each other's gaze – and yet she must not read the deepest in mine – must not know how every hour the pain comes to me, that I am losing my own darling.[141]

> Emm Matthews & Anna Willets came at noon and we were busy arranging the beautiful flowers & fixing things – Little after dark, the party from Phila arrived … The evening passed off nicely – … After showing the others their room – I retired – but not to sleep – alone in our little room – I realized the bond that bound her to another & made her less my own. When she came in we lay in each others arms till morning.[142]

The day of the wedding was, unsurprisingly, the most difficult and even traumatic for Martha, but, then, in her telling, there was a turning point, a minor miracle. However, the day began with:

> … preparations, & I would sink under the conflict of feeling only I am striving to entirely forget self. Two or three times I get off by myself -- & have a little weep. We were engaged till nearly 11 – then went off to dress – How my heart seemed bursting & I longed to get away and be alone with my pain –. A little before one – I went down & waiting for Chalk to come to her – that they might be together – he then placed the ring on her finger – plain gold – elegant –. Then we went down in the parlor and stood for a

[140] Diary 7, 17 September 1869, 60.

[141] Diary 7, 30 September 1869, 62.

[142] Diary 7, 12 October 1869, 65.

> few minutes – in that solemn silence – amid the waiting audience – he removed his glove & went through the sacred ceremony, then with the stillness of death resting on us – she my beloved darling, promised to be his wife – She spoke slowly, impressively and with the most feeling I ever heard –. May I never again undergo the agony I endured in those few minutes. The struggle was as much as I could bear – it seems as if all I had, my very life – was going away from me-. I had thought I should show no outward sign – but the tears trickled down my cheeks & I trembled all over. My heart seemed bursting, and a hemorrhage would not have surprised – yet I strove to be calm but could not – till Esther Haviland, spoke to me out loud the blessed promise – "Seek ye first the kingdom of heaven & all things will be added unto you." – Gods message to me through her – quieted the troubled waters gave peace to the soul & from that moment I was a changed being – the struggle seemed to end, the burden to be gone. Do I need it so much – How can I seek only this – [143]

Calmed by Esther Haviland's words, Martha was able to enjoy the celebration and meal that followed the ceremony, as well as the trip back to Philadelphia taken by the entire wedding party. She did not arrive home in Darby until some time after 10:00 p.m. but said, "Mother & Lide got up to hear my talk – Retired at 3.—"[144] It was before bed that she would have written her journal entry recounting the day, but what did she mean when she asked, "Do I Need it so much – How can I seek only this – " after writing of Esther's message to her? Were her questions to herself about her need for tangible, earthly, human love versus her pursuit of a professional life clothed as it was in the rhetoric of piety, sacrifice, and obedience to God? And whose love and how much love would be enough to strike the right balance for her?

In part, an answer came the following day when Martha explained:

> After breakfast I went up to my darlings home having promised her I would – They were at breakfast but soon came in rejoiced to see me. We soon went up to see her room – she – his wife, I her friend were alone together, the first time since her marriage – not separated, but bound nearer than ever – She is my own still – Those few minutes are burned in my brain never to be effaced – My own darling – We soon went down then Sadie, Chalk & I went to the Chestnut tree & gathered some – returned to the house & talked over domestic affairs, decided to use the parlor as a sitting room – only the carpet she sent – must be matched – I came home & was just done dinner when she & he came

[143] Diary 7, 13 October 1869, 65-66.

[144] Diary 7, 13 October 1869, 67.

> on their way to town – I went with them as I had to go in – They matched the carpet easily – [145]

Whatever was said in that room, whatever passed between these two women in "those few minutes" was, for the moment, enough to assure Martha of her place in Sadie's heart and in her life. Her love was, clearly, essential to Martha's sense of wellbeing. Sallie Hollie and Caroline Putnam forged a friendship when both attended Oberlin College that lasted a lifetime. Putnam supported Hollie in her work as an anti-slavery lecturer, while later, Hollie supported Putnam in her work as a teacher of freed people in Virginia. During a period when they were separated from each other Hollie wrote her friend, "Oh, my heart yearns toward you this morning, and the heaviest disappointment of my life would fall if *you* should die. Again and again I thank you for all your love to me. I wish I were more deserving of it."[146] Anna Bunting, though married, had written to Martha when she felt ignored by her, "I haven't one intimate friend and I sometimes feel almost alone." Lydia had commiserated with Martha when Sadie became engaged that "the realization that we can no longer be <u>first</u> in the heart of our dearest and most cherished friend is fraught with the keenest sense of agony and few know the suffering of a sensitive heart except those who pass through it."[147]

For most women, whether married or single, home and the domestic sphere formed the contours and substance of their lives. Even those with a calling or vocation that moved them

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[145] Diary 7, 14 October 1869, 67-68.

[146] Chambers-Schiller, *Liberty a Better Husband*, 152; On female love and friendship in the nineteenth century see Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, "The Female World of Love and Ritual: Relations Between Women in Nineteenth Century America, *Signs* 1, (Aug. 1975): 1-29; Lillian Faderman, *Surpassing the Love of Men: Romantic Friendship and Love Between Women from the Renaissance to the Present* (New York: William Morrow, 1981); Chambers-Schiller, *Liberty a Better Husband*, 41-43, 61-62, 123-26, 148-155, 172-173, 179-189; 277, n.29; Christine Jacobson Carter, Southern Single Blessedness: Unmarried Women in the Urban South, 1800-1865 (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2006), 95-98; Christine Anne Farnham, The Education of the Southern Belle: Higher Education and Student Socialization in the Antebellum South (New York: New York University Press, 1996), 155-167.

[147] Smedley, *Martha Schofield and the Re-Education of the South*, 113.

outside home were, most often, still anchored by responsibilities to spouse, children, parents, or siblings to feed, clothe, nurse, or teach. Beds must be made, laundry done, pantries filled and even if some women were not laboring themselves, they were responsible for seeing the work necessary to run a household and care for its inhabitants was accomplished on a daily basis. Martha did not escape domestic responsibilities while working in the South. Teaching might take precedents but household duties remained a constant even while they were shared. She returned home each year, in part, to fulfill her responsibilities to her family as a daughter and sister. Her life as a freedman's teacher was made possible by her sister's Lydia and Eliza staying at home to care for their parents and their home.

Married or single, women's relationships with each other could be intense and foundational to their work and to their happiness. In Martha's telling, Sadie was as dependent on their friendship and love as she was. Anna lamented the lack of intimacy with a close friend. Mary was willing to arrange her wedding date out of consideration for her friend's feelings. However, the difference between Martha and Sadie, Anna, and Mary was that they were married or about to be married. While remaining single rather than marrying was a viable, though not necessarily preferable alternative, it continued to be seen, in the main, as outside the norm. Taken up as a theme of women's literature, and often from the hand of women writers, it nevertheless suggested the possibility of happiness and fulfillment in living a single life.[148] Single women were encouraged "to search for eternal happiness through the adoption of a 'higher calling' than marriage. Whether moral or intellectual in nature, such a vocation was considered 'thrice blessed'; blessed to the individual because it guarded the integrity of her soul;

[148] Chambers-Schiller, *Liberty a Better Husband*, 15.

blessed of God because through it she committed her life to His work; and blessed to those for whom her efforts ensured a better life."[149]

Yet, for Martha and other women like her who searched for and answered a higher calling than marriage, who lived lives of action and independence, the contradictions were many. While women might be called by God to a life of work and service outside of marriage, they were not necessarily relieved of their responsibilities to home and family. In addition, it was difficult for most women to earn enough money to support themselves especially when answering a call from God rather than simply working for a living. As Cornelia Hancock wrote, "Poverty I think is now my greatest stumbling block. I have such a horror of organizations that for the last two years I have given my service gratuitously and that has got my purse in such a condition it behooves me to look about for an organization to sail under in my next crusade."[150] Where were single women to find love and with whom?

For Martha, the answer to that question was complicated. She seems to have been a collector of hearts. Like many other women of her time, she relied on relationships with other women, siblings, and friends. She had always been close to her sisters, even given their differences and petty squabbles, and she relied on them to support her through their letters and through their care of hearth and home while she was away. When she was ill or unhappy, it was their love and care she most desired – though she longed for her mother at difficult times too. But a number of her friends were as close, if not closer than her sisters. When away from home teaching at the Willets school, Martha relied on Anna Willets much like an older sister or even a mother. Anna was mentor and comforter even as Martha was falling in love with her husband.

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[149] Chambers-Schiller, *Liberty a Better Husband*, 18.

[150] Chambers-Schiller, *Liberty a Better Husband*, 161.

It was at the Willets school that Martha met Sadie and they began their friendship though one was teacher and the other student.

Martha befriended Anna Webster when she came to Darby as a teacher. She proved the depth of her commitment to her friend by nursing Anna through scarlet fever. She proved her trust by telling her, if only in part, of her attachment to Edward Willets. And by so doing, she helped to orchestrate the relationship between Anna and John Bunting. Anna and Sadie were friends who saw Martha through the years of the war and her decision to go south to teach. They were women she could write to, visit with, confide in, love and be loved by. Though they were not her only female friends, they were the ones she was closest to, the ones she wrote most often about. Of the women Martha taught with in the South, Mary Taylor stood out as the one she felt closest to, a woman she trusted enough to tell her deepest secret. As she said, "My Mary & I … no one will ever be as dear to me as she was."

The men who Martha loved, and wrote most about, made her life a richer and more complex tapestry. Oldden Ridgeway stood out as a friend in need of her guidance and love, a role she relished. Her ability to share herself with him contributed to her sense of self – her individuality and her self-esteem. When her mother objected to the intimacy of her relationship with Oldden, their talking into the night long after everyone else had gone to bed for instance, her adjustments to her behavior were largely on her own terms. For the most part, she simply sent him home earlier. When it came to nursing Anna through scarlet fever, however, she defied the wishes of her family entirely and followed her conscience and her heart. From what we know, her relationship with Edward Willets was passionate and reciprocal, and proved a turning point in her life. He was the first man she loved romantically and a man she could never hope to be with. Moreover, her close friendship with Anna Willets added a sense of guilt for the

transgression of loving a married man. This was the first in a series of triangular relationships Martha found herself in – or chose.

An antidote to Edward Willets was John Bunting, a man with whom she could not only pursue a relationship but one whose friendship was the closest and deepest she would know. She offered him love and nurturing. She felt she guided him toward greater spirituality and faith. He offered her love that bordered on the romantic. He broadened her world by introducing her to serious music, taking her to concerts, and introducing her to a wide variety of books and poetry. He was a sensitive and cultivated man. With great skill, Martha pursued her relationship with John while eventually maneuvering his attentions and desires toward her friend, Anna. In 1862, John included a poem, entitled, "A Better Life" within a letter he sent Martha. It was but one of a number of poems he wrote for her. After his death in 1904, Anna and his sisters published a small volume of his writings and included this poem. In Martha's copy, in the margins around the poem she wrote, "We wrote almost every day and I had pushed for a Better Life -- & in answering he wrote this in the letter. Even he did not know <u>then</u>, that in the <u>see</u> of my being I, had promised my life to the Masters Service, and only waiting my ideal Mothers consent – which she gave later."[151] After their marriage, Martha's relationship with John and Anna became the second time she had a deep attachment to a married couple.

Her relationship with H.A. Evans, though short, was essential to her first months as a freedman's teacher. Not only did it mirror her early relationship with John Bunting in terms of their connection and attraction to each other, it was conducted under the unusual circumstances of her living in a house with strangers, two of whom were men. There is the possibility that if Mary Sharp had been a more congenial and loving companion, Martha's relationship with H.A.

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[151] *In Memoriam: John Bunting, Born Eighth Month, Fourteenth, 1839, Died Fourth Month, Fifth, 1904*, Friend's Book Association of Philadelphia, Fifteenth and Race Streets, 43.

would have been different. As it was, their physical intimacy, though in the name of nursing each other through illness, in its day, was wholly inappropriate for men and women unrelated by birth or marriage. Moreover, it is the only evidence of her intimacies, on a physical level, with any of the men she loved. She either did not write about this aspect of her other relationships, as was common, or what she may have written of Edward or John or Robert in that respect was destroyed when she burned their letters or otherwise disposed of journals or portions of journals.

Where Robert Scott was concerned, Martha's clearest statements of the contours and substance of their relationship were written in a notebook that was dated from 1910 and 1913 when she would have been between seventy and seventy-four years old. Interspersed among the pages were these references to him:

> A memory – Years ago when I asked a man a great good man – who was a high officer in the army – and the Governor of his State – Why he loved me so soon after we met –? His reply was – you gave me higher ideals and more faith in God –
>
> From one of his letters (all burnt later) Be brave restful girl for my sake and take all your duties slowly and do not worry about anything. I am loving you enough for you to live on without using a bit of your strength. Just draw on me for supplies of love, comfort, sympathy, and repose. I love you.
>
> Words of a "strong man to a strong woman" –
>
> And for him heaven – waiting there for her.
>
> I can close my eyes – and see the open door – to Eternity – There stands my father & my Mother and my sisters Lydia, Sarah & Eliza to welcome me – and behind them the strong noble man who after their greeting opens his arms repeating the words of long ago – God made my soul for yours & yours for mine for all eternity – 45 years of waiting –
>
> In 1910 a visitor at the school said to M.S. The Lord writes on faces he has written on yours – Turn back to "A Memory" and then wonder if he saw the writing in the face he so loved – that was not even pretty – but he found "simplicity" and "sincerity" in the Quaker girl and once spent $250.00 for a Steamer to go see her – 2 nights & a day it took – to make the visit –

> They sat on an old sofa – neither touched the other – yet she felt part of herself going out to him never to return – no wonder time seems long waiting for the re-union in the other land.[152]

Over the course of her life and up to the time of Sadie's wedding, Martha could rely on a large and extended family for love and care. In addition, her mother and sisters supported her in her unorthodox decision to live and work among the freed people of South Carolina for an extended period of time. At the same time the love she gave and received from friends had, over the years, contributed to the development of her sense of self – with friends she found her likeness but sometimes her opposite. Like her sisters, her friends might nurture, validate, and affirm her in her choices and actions, but they also provided her the opportunity to differentiate herself from them and in that process and with their love, she grew strong and independent.[153] But was the love of her family and friends enough for Martha? The answer to that question was both yes and no.

The crisis caused by Sadie's engagement and marriage pointed to the fault line in Martha's emotional life. Though by all outward appearances she seemed dedicated to her work and uninterested in marriage, the truth was she had not, to that point, rejected the idea of some day marrying. Though past the age when most women were married and even past what some would have considered her prime, she continued to garner attention from men wherever she went. Moreover, her source of love drawn from her family, Oldden, Sadie, Edward and Anna Willets, John and Anna Bunting, H.A. Evans, Mary Taylor, and Robert Scott had sustained her over a fairly long period of time. While people came and went from her life, there had been

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[152] Notebook 1910, unnumbered pages.

[153] In a similar vein, in her discussion of the bonds of female friendship Lee Virginia Chambers-Schiller writes, "Female friends, sisters, and cousins provided validation, affirmation, and nurturing. They encouraged self-esteem. …The process of differentiating self from beloved 'sisters' was sometimes painful and unsatisfactory, but the struggle strengthened women." Chambers-Schiller, *Liberty a Better Husband*, 155.

enough loved ones she could call on at any given time, there had been assurances of their love and loyalty when she needed them most. There was even the assurance in her relationship with Robert Scott, and with Edward Willets before him, that she was desired and the object of romantic love. Yet suddenly, at the age of thirty, her world shifted. Sadie's marriage was the tipping point and the balance seemed lost. Suddenly there loomed before her the possibility of spending her life alone, that not just one or two but all the relationships she depended on might slip away. Of all those she loved, there was no one to be truly and wholly her own. Though marriage, with the right partner, offered love of her own, with it came the sacrifice of her independence and selfhood. How could she marry and still follow God's call? But how could she follow God's call without the love she needed? The answer to her question, "Do I need it so much,?" assuming she was asking if she needed love she could claim as her own, was a resounding yes,

Something in Martha's conversation with Sadie the morning after Sadie's marriage reassured her, righted the ground beneath her. She could say, "not separated, but bound nearer than ever – She is my own still." For the moment, the other half of her question, "How can I seek only this?" was answered too. If Sadie's heart was still her own, Martha could continue on with her work and her life. On October 16, three days after the wedding, Sadie and Martha spent the day together and Martha was prompted to say, "a happy happier one it was to us – we will long remember it – Chalk came for her in the Evening – How strange to have her go away from me with him … My attractions here are stronger than ever – now that my own dear Sadie's home is so near my own. –"[154] It may be that, in part, the realization that Sadie's home was now so near her own in Darby gave Martha a sense of security where her friend was concerned. At least

[154] Diary 7, 16 October 1869, 68.

when Martha was home Sadie would be close at hand. The following day was a Sunday and Mary Child's sixty-sixth birthday. Of the day Martha wrote, "My precious Mother's 66th birthday – may she live long yet to bless her children – me most especially – We all went to Mtg. I took the bride in and afterward introduced her to some friends."[155] For all of Martha's striving for independence, her dependencies were great.

On October 21, Martha hosted a party, a rather elegant party, that seems to have been in honor of the newlyweds. Her brother, Ben, contributed Oysters – "500 & a Caterer Mrs. Ritter came from W. Phila. – brought the cake & ice creams & made the chicken salad." The house was trimmed "with ivy & flowers" and Martha announced, "they seemed to enjoy themselves very much, and all had a good time."[156] Martha's motivation for organizing and hosting the party was likely to introduce Sadie to her new neighbors and the Quaker community in which she would now live especially given that Martha would soon be leaving for South Carolina.

For the next three days, the days leading up to Mary Taylor's wedding, Martha kept a busy schedule of drawing lessons, shopping for her upcoming trip, and an evening at the theater with Mary and William to hear "Booth as Shylock." It was Martha's first time seeing a play and she pronounced it "very excellent." The three shared a dinner of oysters afterward and stayed the night at Sallie's. Martha said, "Mary Taylor & I slept together for the last time." Though her spirits were good and she felt physically strong, Martha noted a morning hemorrhage a few days later. The night before Mary's wedding she wrote, "I feel very much this near parting with Mary

[155] Diary 7, 17 October 1869, 69.

[156] Diary 7, 21 October 1869, 69.

– we had become such close friends."[157] Yet she remained calm during the ceremony the following day.

Of Mary's wedding day Martha recorded in her journal:

> A lovely morning for dear Mary's bridal – we were quite busy till dressing time – then attired ourselves for the Bridal … At two we went down, Mary looked lovely but was nervous, & my whole sympathy was with her – then Mr. Stone who is a Unitarian Minister made a prayer – asked a question – to which each answered "I do" – then made another prayer & said Amen – He read the Friend's Certificate – & then came congratulations – It was a pretty ceremony, but not Equal to Friends in my mind. Mary seemed so unnerved I was offering a little prayer in my heart for her the while –. We had a nice time at dinner – table looked real handsome. … At five we bade adieu -- & then went to W[est] C[hester] – I enjoyed the ride very much over the hills covered with rich foliage.
>
> Quite a party came to Phila. – went to John Chandlers – then Mary finished packing up & at 11 – she, her husband J & I – went in a carriage out to Penna. Depot,, saw them in the car and at 12 they started for Niagara & Minnesota – We returned to J's – & I slept well.[158]

Here was none of the anguish caused by Sadie's marriage. Certainly, Martha's relationship with Sadie was longer and her attachment to her deeper. But, Mary shared with Martha the experience of living and teaching in the South. She had been her close friend and colleague the previous year and confided in Mary one of her deepest secrets. Martha had attempted to keep her close by suggesting she and William settle in Aiken and live nearby her. But now her role was supporting a nervous bride. For the moment she was needed.

Key to Martha's closest and most crucial relationships was not just the love she gave and received, but the feeling that she was needed. Not only did the fact or perception that her friends needed her bring a sense of control, but also a sense of inclusion even when they were married. The turning point for Martha in her crisis over Sadie's engagement and marriage may have come with Esther Haviland's words to her, but may also have come with the realization that Sadie still

[157] Diary 7, 22-25 October 1869, 70.

[158] Diary 7, 26 October 1869, p. 71.

needed her. In addition to their assurances of love to each other was Martha's conviction that newly married, in a new state, in a new town, her friend needed her as much as, if not more than ever. She could introduce her at Meeting. She could host a welcoming party. She could advise her on how to arrange her furniture. And when she was gone, through their letters, Martha could remain a central figure in Sadie's life. If Sadie and Chalkely had moved to another city or town, Martha's position may not have been as secure. For the moment, Martha's position in Mary's new life was neither as clear nor as crucial.

In eight days, Martha would once again be on route to Aiken and there was still much to do in preparation. Her writing in her journal focused on both her work and her heart. She bought a clock for her classroom – a gift from "the Gentlemen of Darby" who donated the money to make the purchase. Martha later cut out a line of her journal entry on the same day. She had her last sketching lesson, had four teeth filled, and saw Dr. Hassenplug for the last time. John Bunting paid a visit alone for an evening, and came again another night with Anna to have supper. Sadie hosted her first dinner and Martha said, "a nice time we had dear Sadie had her new silver & all are christened."[159] Of leaving in three days she wrote, "I hate to go away and leave my dear Sadie so long – now that she has just come & is a stranger here – but I hope that she is happy –. Oh! they all think I don't feel these partings – how little they know – the secret pangs of grief I experience."[160]

Between the first and third of November the Schofield household was in an uproar both in preparation for Martha's departure and for Quarterly Meeting. On the first and the second

[159] Diary 7, 27-31 October 1869, 71.

[160] Diary 7, 31 October 1869, 71.

there were family and friends dining with them and a "House full all night."[161] She said of her leaving:

> My precious Sadie came down to bid me adieu – We both feel this parting very much – She with her new life amid strangers needs me –. At 1/2 past 2 – The yearly parting again took place – hard to bear, yet I have been strengthened and supported amid it all – & have my faith to hope we shall again mingle together. The 4 sisters went to town, leaving dear Mother with Aunt E to comfort her – called at Uncle Williams to bid them adieu as they start for Europe on the 10th – they seem to feel it, particularly Uncle William – the parting with Father was quite affecting – We then went up to Samuels – quite a number there to tea – Ellen Price &c – After laid down till 10 – then 8 of us started for the depot – there met Miss Jackson – Mr. & Mrs. Carson – Miss C. Ranstead & Flora – were soon in the cars – & then the sad good bye and we were on our way again – me to my work.[162]

With her in her work for the year were Jennie Satterthewaite, Miss Cynthia Ranstead and her cousin, Flora Cummings. All were veteran teachers with the exception of Flora Cummings and Martha reported, "I am head for a while – and have considerable responsibility."[163] On route to Aiken they passed through Columbia though she noted, "did not see any one I knew." However, stepping off the train in Aiken they found "almost 20" people to welcome them and they "came home to a warm fire and supper."[164] On the eighth of November, school opened with eighty students and afterward Martha was "busy arranging matters and writing business letters."[165] For the rest of the month Martha's writing in her journal was regular though her entries brief. She noted receiving "a dear sweet letter from May" and said "it did me so much

[161] Diary 7, 2 November 1869, 73.

[162] Diary 7, 3 November 1869, 73.

[163] Diary 7, 6 November 1869, 74.

[164] Diary 7, 5 November 1869, 74.

[165] Diary 7, 8 November 1869. 75.

good."[166] As before, she pronounced, "A letter every morning does me good."[167] Here, again, was her emotional lifeline. There were many visitors in the school. There were by the middle of the month 120 students and Jennie convened the youngest in the kitchen for their lessons. Martha commented, "she will do very well in time I guess."[168] On Thanksgiving day Martha said, "not such a happy one as we had last year – I miss Marys – sweet love." But in addition, she noted that a Mrs. R had gone to see the owner or an agent for the owner of the school house "to try & buy this place … but he would not sell it – She did not let on who she was – till ready to leave."[169] Two days later she also noted having sent a long letter to General O.O. Howard, Commissioner of the Freedmen's Bureau. Two days after that Isaac Satterthewaite, another cousin, "spent the day in looking at property" and in the afternoon Martha and Aunt Amy "met Mr. Williams and went to look at his lots – he was kind & polite."[170] Isaac Satthethewaite also spent a day looking at farms. Clearly Martha had come to a decision about making her work in Aiken more permanent.

On November 26 Martha recorded receiving a letter from "R.K.S." and then "Midnight found Aunt Amy and 'daughter' sitting by the flickering fire light – she had her cards and was telling the story of my life – Dear old black crone – she oft reads truer than she thinks –"[171] Her relationship with Aunt Amy had grown since returning to Aiken and she wrote a few days later, "spent two hours in the sun long bath with Aunt Amy – Poor old sensitive heart – she has more

[166] Diary 7, 10 November 1869, 75. May was Mary Taylor's nickname and Martha refers to her as both Mary and May in her journal.

[167] Diary 7, 12 November 1869, 75.

[168] Diary 7, 16 November 1869, 75.

[169] Diary 7, 18 November 1869, 75.

[170] Diary 7, 22 November 1869, 76.

[171] Diary 7, 26 November 1869, 76.

womanly nature than many of fairer hue – here my own heart finds sympathy for her in the many trials she has still to bear –."[172] Perhaps, in part, they shared the pain of separation from loved ones. Of teaching Martha said, "was in night school awhile – until Jennie gets a little started it takes some time for her to know. We have dismissed those in the alphabet & intend to spend our strength on the adults who need it now."[173]

Of significance at the beginning of December was an incident that pointed to the difficulties of group living. Over a three-day period Martha wrote of what she called "An unpleasant circumstance" and explained:

> I went in the house on an errand, during school hours, and found my private diary out on the table – some one had been to the secret drawer in my desk & rummaged – then left it out—. I was shocked – & of course judged Flora – no one else had been in the room – told her so – she denied it – but there is no one else to judge.
>
> I know Miss R. feels sadly – she talked to me yesterday & seemed to think it was not Flora – yet cannot blame me for thinking so. It made me angry at first to see my private papers meddled with – but I got over all bitter feelings before I spoke to her about it – No doubt she would be interested after she once began. She is a deep girl – It pained me to suspect her but I did.[174]

It is interesting that she seemed so sure that the culprit was Flora and that she did not hesitate to accuse her. It is also interesting that she thought Flora would be interested in her diary once she began reading. Martha called her a "deep girl" – someone like herself. However, it must have made life uncomfortable for everyone in the house given Flora's denial. In addition, both Martha's tone and attitude were that of a head teacher. She had begun to take on a position of authority, if not superiority.

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[172] Diary 7, 28 November 1869, 76.

[173] Diary 7, 1 December 1869, 77.

[174] Diary 7, 7 and 9 December 1869, 78-79.

At the same time her health, once again, deteriorated and she was forced to leave her classroom for nearly a week. However, her plans for building a school continued. Though she did not note the date the transaction took place, Martha purchased two lots from Mr. Williams. On December 21 she wrote:

> I have been out of school for five days, had hemorrhages every morning till yesterday but now am getting stronger – Last Evening Major Deane came – all the way from Columbia to see me, had been directed by Gen. Howard – to build a school house on my land unless the Methodists would give them a promise & lease on their Church. I wrote to Gen. H. that I thought it would be better – & he is trying to do all he can. Major was very polite & gracious, not at all offended because – I wrote "over his head."[175]

Martha's reference to the Methodists had to do with their application to the Bureau for money to support building both a church and school. When she wrote in her journal of writing to Howard, "I thought it would be better," she meant she thought it would be better for the Bureau to build a schoolhouse on her land rather than supporting the Methodists. In a draft of a letter written to Howard a month later she both explained and argued:

> After I wrote thee that I had purchased a lot of land here which I was willing to give (used for school purposes) we had a visit from Major Deane, and when he left, my impression was that he was favorable to having the school house put on it. Since then I have learned the money has been promised to the Methodists (for finishing) their church on condition that they will put a school house on their lot. More than a year ago, the Bureau Officer here, Major Stone, tried to induce the colored people to purchase a lot but sectarian jealousy prevented him from accomplishing anything. The Methodist minister, Mr. Hayne – was here a few days ago & told me he had altered the papers which were first drawn up for a church into school building and they intended to build a school house, out of the old lumber which was their former church. They have been trying for months to get money to finish their church and it will take about all of the $500.00 that was appropriated to do it, put in windows, seats, etc.
>
> The whole piece of land is less than [unreadable] quarters of an acre, and a school building should be put up that would accommodate 100 pupils. If a school building should be put up by the Methodists from the old lumber as Mr. Hayne proposes, it would be entirely inadequate to the wants of such a place as this.
>
> If therefore the Methodists of this place have prevailed upon the authorities to allow them money for what they call a schoolhouse I would urgently request a reconsideration of this

[175] Diary 7, 21 December 1869, 79.

> decision as I am satisfied they cannot carry out their design in a manner which will be at all satisfactory to the Bureau.
>
> The Baptists here have done quite as much for the school as the Methodists and they would feel that their claims were ignored if a Board of Trustees composed of Methodists should have the supervision of the expenditure of so much money under such circumstances. I am thus earnest because I fear the effect of placing any school under what may seem to be sectarian influences as will be the case if the Methodists get control of the money meant to be spent for school purposes here.[176]

Martha's motivations for attempting to prevent the Methodists from receiving money from the Bureau stemmed from a number of interrelated issues. On the one hand was the fact that in order to construct a schoolhouse on her land she had to have financial support from the Bureau or she would be forced to go begging elsewhere. As she explained, the black community in and around Aiken was too poor to support the building of a schoolhouse no matter on whose land it might be placed. On the other hand was the central issue of Martha's decision to remain in Aiken and to continue to teach the freed people. Just as she seemed to regain her equilibrium after Sadie's marriage with the realization that she still held a place of significance in her friend's life, buying land and building a school seemed to right her further still. The core of her life would be the work she would do as a teacher of freed people in South Carolina. But in order to secure a place for herself in Aiken, she must build a school. As it was, the Freedman's Bureau would be unable to support the building of schools for much longer. By the summer of 1870 the work of the Bureau in supporting black education in the South would come to an end. Soon after, in 1871, the PFRA would disband altogether. Martha would be left to carve out a place for herself where her work could continue and she could earn a living. Her aspirations for herself

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[176] Draft of letter to General O.O. Howard from Martha Schofield, 17 January 1870, 1-3, MSP. I have placed in parenthesis editing Martha placed above the line. In William Stone's writing about the school in Aiken in the fall of 1868 he said, "At present (September 1868), a movement is on foot to build a school house here, but it is doubtful if a free school is taught here next year. The people are too poor to hire a teacher, and the Freedman's Union Commission declines to send out one. The State is not yet in a condition to support a system of free schools as by the Constitution of the State it is required to do." Stone, 37.

and her vision for a school would come into direct conflict with at least a portion of the community she was there to serve.

On January 1, 1870 Martha sat down at her desk to write in her diary as she had on many New Years days'. However, this journal entry and this year would be different. On that morning she said:

> The new year has come yet this Diary will now only be a partial broken record of Events. For twelve years I have scarcely missed a day, unless very sick – that I did not make some sentence, some visible mark of my doings, thoughts or experiences –. I am sorry now to give it up – but – I have much writing to do – and it tires me – so that this seems the one thing I can leave out of an almost exhausted life. Once I had hoped these books would amuse my grand children – now I feel that Motherhood – that most glorious of all the Fathers Blessings – will not be given to me – I am a woman – and all women hope for this – But I accept my life as God wills it – and so loosing this – will be content with less. This book can still keep events – but not be a journal heretofore – Goodbye dear old daily thoughts – good bye.[177]

She believed that her work, from this time forward, would take precedence over her heart. She would no longer have the time or energy to explore the workings of her heart in the pages of her diary. Her energy and her heart would now be poured into her school.

[177] Diary 7, January 1870, 80.

EPILOGUE

On January 1, 1870, Martha declared herself finished with keeping a diary, though she continued to write sporadically in her journal until 1878. From 1870 onward, the bulk of her time and energy was focused on teaching and establishing what would become the Schofield Normal and Industrial School. Her school began with a lot purchased for $468.00 out of her own earnings.[1] Soon after, she received word from General O. O. Howard that the Freedmen's Bureau would build a schoolhouse in Aiken if she would "give the land." Martha agreed but only after complaining, "cant very well afford."[2] On April 12, a deed was made out in which one-half of her lot would be "held in trust for school purposes forever – irrespective of race or color."[3] She and her students occupied the school's first permanent building in late 1870.

Work began a few months later on a house for Martha. Oakwald would be her home and a home for her teachers as well as a means of support by serving as a boarding house for northern visitors. The money to build Oakwald came from northern supporters and was solicited by both Martha and her mother. Even more than the schoolhouse, this home represented her commitment to her work but also to her choice of an autonomous life. She would never return permanently to the North and she would never marry.

Over the course of the following four decades, Martha's school would grow. In 1874, she hired an assistant, Will Rodenbach, a recent graduate of City College in New York who

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[1] Diary 7, 26 March 1870, 84.

[2] Diary 7, 26 March 1870, 84.

[3] Diary 7, 12 April 1870, 84. This was in keeping with General Howard's instructions for the building of schoolhouses as insurance against their closure once the work of the Bureau ended. See for instance, "The Bureau's School Buildings," in Paul A. Cimbala, *The Freedman's Bureau: Reconstructing the American South After the Civil War* (Malabar, Florida: Kreiger Publishing Company, 2005), 86-87.

became Principal of the school while she took the title of Business Manager.[4] By 1882, classrooms were so overcrowded the need for additional space could no longer be ignored. For an estimated $6000, a new building could be constructed that would house classrooms, printing and carpentry shops, a library, a chapel, and dormitory space.[5] The students and their parents pledged to contribute a combination of money, goods, and services equaling $1000, if Martha and Will raised the balance. Ground was broken in July and the building was ready to be used by late November. Martha believed the brick, two-story addition to her school the finest building in Aiken.[6] By 1910, the Schofield Normal and Industrial School occupied two city blocks and included two frame buildings, three brick buildings, a farm and farmhouse, and a number of smaller buildings used for trades taught at the school. [7]

While over time Martha moved toward forms of industrial education and incorporated them into her school, she never entirely aligned herself with contemporaries like Samuel C. Armstrong and Booker T. Washington who were among industrial education's strongest proponents. Instead, she continued to encourage and support those among her students who desired to become teachers or wanted to pursue higher education.[8] In 1870, she sent two

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[4] Katherine Smedley, *Martha Schofield and the Re-Education of the South, 1839-1916,* (Lewiston, New York: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1987), 135.

[5] Smedley, *Martha Schofield and the Re-Education of the South,* 137, 139.

[6] Smedley, *Martha Schofield and the Re-Education of the South,* 139.

[7] Smedley, *Martha Schofield and the Re-Education of the South,* 139.

[8] Martha did, however, establish a relationship with Samuel C. Armstrong, founder of the Hampton Institute in Virginia and sent a number of her students to Hampton to complete their education: Smedley, *Martha Schofield and the Re-Education of the South,* 182-183; For a discussion of Samuel C. Armstrong, Booker T. Washington, and the Industrial school movement in the South see "The Hampton Model of Normal School Industrial Education, 1868-1916 in James D. Anderson, *The Education of Black in the South, 1860-1835,* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988), 33-78. For the purposes of black education see "The Degrees of Freedom: Education to Bind, Education to Liberate," in Ronald E. Butchart, *Northern School, Southern Blacks, and Reconstruction: Freedmen's Education, 1862-1875,* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1980), 53-75; for a discussion of Booker T. Washington in the context of his relationship to W.E.B. Dubois see, "Black Educators and the Quest to Uplift and Develop the Race," in Derrick P. Alridge, *The Educational Thoughts of W.E.B. Dubois: An Intellectual History,*

students to Lincoln University in Pennsylvania to be enrolled in its preparatory programs. One of them, Obanyon Posey, went on to Howard University and in 1882 graduated as valedictorian of his class. In her annual report in 1883, she "counted twenty-five former students teaching in Aiken or adjacent counties and estimated that no less than a thousand children must be benefiting from their instruction."[9]

Among the most successful of Martha's students was Matilda Evans who, after graduating from Schofield, attended Oberlin College in part through the financial support of Martha and other white benefactors. She returned to Aiken to teach at Schofield but, with Martha's help, soon gained admission to the Women's Medical College in Philadelphia where she graduated in 1897. As a single, professional woman, her life was patterned after her teacher and mentor.[10] Other Schofield students also went on to lead professional lives including Edward Dickerson who became a lawyer and established a practice in Aiken. Another, Robert Perry, became a state legislator, and S.J. Lee, who taught at Schofield, also published the *Aiken Herald.* There were other lawyers, politicians, and journalists among Schofield graduates as well as ministers, businessmen, teachers, and architects.[11]

From her school's founding, Martha refused to incur debt and would only embark on building or buying land when the money to support expansion was in hand. Given the poverty of

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(New York: Teachers College Press, 2008), 52-55; see also, William H. Watkins, *The White Architects of Black Education: Ideology and Power in America, 1865-1954,* (New York: Teachers College Press, 2001).

[9] Smedley, 128, 293.

[10] Darlene Clark Hine writes that, "Evans revered Schofield as a saint whose fortitude and courage she emulated and whose values she internalized." That is, "Evans, as did Schofield, identified strongly with the poor black victims of white terrorism and oppression, and both women bore a deep sense of moral and professional responsibility for black's survival." Darlene Clark Hine, "The Corporeal and Ocular Veil: Dr. Matilda A. Evans (1872-1935) and the Complexity of Southern History," *The Journal of Southern History*, Vol. 70, No. 1, (Feb., 2004), 13-14.

[11] Smedley, *Martha Schofield and the Re-Education of the South,* 237-238. Matilda A. Evans, M.D., *Martha Schofield, Pioneer Negro Educator: Historical and Philosophical Review of Reconstruction Period of South Carolina,* (Columbia, South Carolina: Du Pre Printing Company, 1916), 12-13.

most of her students and their families, tuition met only a small portion of the school's financial needs. And while she eventually received state money allocated to support black education, it was both minimal in comparison to the need and sporadic in its disbursement. There were many years when teachers' salaries were late in being paid or were covered, in part, out of Martha's pocket. Still, she continued to receive support from the Germantown Friend's Aid Association. Contributions often came in the form of a steady stream of used clothing that was repaired or remade in sewing classes and sold in a store on campus. Another means of support was northern visitors who boarded at Oakwald and made donations to the school. In addition, Martha kept up a steady stream of correspondence with her benefactors and instituted a monthly newsletter as a means of keeping Schofield and its students from being forgotten. She made trips north to raise funds and, when traveling during summer holidays, took time to make calls on potential donors. It was an ongoing struggle to keep the school solvent that for the most part, rested on her shoulders.[12]

Martha was among a small number of female freedmen's teachers who founded schools in the South and made black education their life's work.[13] Yet, with all her successes there were many strains within the life she chose. As a woman of great energy and talent she made to prosper, under some of the most difficult circumstances, a school for blacks in the South. Moreover, for many years she was a woman standing alone against overwhelming odds and violent forces. Martha witnessed the brutal terrorism white southerners unleashed on African Americans and white northerners in answer to the enfranchisement of former slaves and the

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[12] Smedley, *Martha Schofield and the Re-Education of the South*, 125-126, 136-138, 209-210, 220-224, 240.

[13] Of the more than eleven thousand women and men who taught in the South between 1861 and 1876, few did so for more than two or three years. Eighteen women established schools and remained in the South for many years. Martha was among them and lived and worked in South Carolina for fifty years. Ronald E. Butchart, *Schooling the Free People: Teaching, Learning, and the Struggle for Black Freedom, 1861-1876*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, forthcoming).

state's Republican-led government. One of the most horrific was the murder of an elderly man, a deaf mute, in the yard at Oakwald.[14] Southern rage was also let loose on teachers who dared to participate in equipping the freed people to take on the rights and responsibilities of citizenship. But when armed men arrived at Oakwald with the intention of setting fire to the school, she met them on the porch and calmly asked what they wanted. No one answered and the group soon dispersed, leaving her and her school unharmed. Martha's courage in standing with and aiding the freed people of Aiken in the face of the hatred and violence directed toward them was heroic and rare. In Matilda Evans' estimation, "the tact, power and magnetism with which this woman met and disarmed her enemies were the same forces wielded by her in drawing to herself the great following at the North so necessary in the accomplishment of her great educational mission in the South."[15]

Yet, over time both Martha and her students rose in the estimation of Aiken's citizens. In 1885, she was enlisted to campaign for a plan to extend the Carolina Cumberland Gap Railroad through Aiken.[16] Though the proposal was voted down, her participation gained her friends among the white citizens.[17] By 1887, she was invited to become a stockholder in the New Bank of Aiken, providing her a vote at meetings she felt well worth the one hundred dollar investment.[18] Within ten years, the Aiken *Journal and Review* would praise the work of the Schofield Industrial Department, reporting, "the printing office, harness shop, carpenter shop and

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[14] Evans, *Martha Schofield, Pioneer Negro Educator,* 34.

[15] Evans, *Martha Schofield, Pioneer Negro Educator,* 51; Smedley, *Martha Schofield and the Re-Education of the South,* p 152; Mary S. Patterson, "Martha Schofield: Servant of the Least, 1839-1916 (By Mary S. Patterson, 1944), 20.

[16] Extending the railroad would connect Charleston and towns along the line to markets as far west as Chicago.

[17] Smedley, *Martha Schofield and the Re-Education of the South,* 174.

[18] Smedley, *Martha Schofield and the Re-Education of the South,* 175.

shoe department are never without work on hand for residents of the city or county." In fact, most of the printing required for local businesses was eventually produced at the school. Martha was soon asked to become a member of the Aiken Improvement Society and served with the leading citizens of the town. She and her school became well integrated within the community that for many years rejected her and posed a threat to her very life.

In 1912, Martha officially retired from managing her school, but she remained at Oakwald and a presence on campus. Her birthday had, for some time, been a day of celebration at the school, but in 1916 an especially elaborate party was planned in honor of her seventy-seventh birthday and her fifty years of working in the South. However, in the early morning of February 1, Martha Schofield died in her sleep. Those who had gathered to celebrate would instead offer tearful remembrances. On February 3, as many as a thousand mourners filed past her coffin before it was placed on a northbound train. The mourners quietly sang the spiritual, "Steal Away to Jesus," as the train pulled away from the Aiken station.[19]

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Martha's decision in 1868 to establish a school in Aiken represented a major shift in her emotional life. She not only relinquished any hope of marriage and motherhood but never again showed a romantic interest in any man. This could have been due to the fact that the majority of men she came into contact with in Aiken were southern and antagonistic. Or, it may well have been true that Robert Scott was the one man she truly loved. Not only did their contact with each other come to an end, but so did any mention of him until much later in her life when she wrote of Scott as her one, true love. More significant, however, was the fact that her life after 1868

[19] Smedley, *Martha Schofield and the Re-Education of the South*, 277-278. After Martha's death, the Schofield Normal and Industrial School continued and in 1956 was incorporated into the public school system of Aiken County. Though none of the original school buildings remain, there is a new middle school that bears her name on the land deeded in 1868 for a school open to all. Oakwald still stands across the street from the school.

was poured into her school and the people she came south to aid. This work and this life were the culmination of her efforts to construct an autonomous life.

Within the diaries that Martha Schofield kept between 1858 and 1878 can be found the workings of a woman's search for and construction of a life at a pivotal point in the history of her country. War and its aftermath would set the lives of former slaves on new paths long dreamed of but almost unimaginable prior to the conflict. Women, as during all wars, would be called upon to take up work and roles denied them under normal circumstances. A very few, like Martha, would use that small crack in the door barring women from professional lives and pry it open yet further. The forces allied against her were many and prolonged. But at the same time her motivations and role models were considerable. With grit and perseverance, with determination and great courage, she pushed boundaries and over time gained confidence in her abilities as a teacher, administrator, and institution-builder.

Martha's Quaker upbringing laid a foundation for her belief in expanded roles for women and their capacity for independent thought and action. Her mother was among a number of women who served as role models as both an abolitionist and feminist. In addition, the Quaker emphasis on finding and following the inner light of God formed both a framework and justification for many of Martha's unorthodox choices. It helped justify her relationships with the men and women she loved, especially as she attempted to balance her desires with what was deemed proper and appropriate behavior for a middle class woman. Her striving to discern and follow God's will fed her ability to stand against her family in choosing her own way. Her steadfast belief in the righteousness of her chosen path allowed her to live in opposition to the mainstream. Within her faith, she found the strength to face the precarious state of her health and the possibility of an early death.

Martha could be seen as being preoccupied with death. It was not only a constant in nineteenth-century life, but with crude medical practices and a lack of drugs to fight infectious diseases or methods to contain epidemic diseases, could come at any moment. As a woman trained, as most women were, to attend the sick and dying, Martha witnessed suffering and death from the time she was a young woman. Her father's death, alone, was a profound lesson that life was temporary and fragile. Moreover, her experience of war-time hospital work, newspaper accounts of battles and casualties, and photographs of the ravages of warfare, brought suffering and death on a larger scale than she could otherwise have imagined. She experienced the assassination of a beloved president. As her illness progressed, she watched as her own life's blood was spent. That she accepted the real possibility of her own imminent death helps explain her courage and near fearlessness in confronting the dangers of the South, if not her decision to go there. By the time she faced full-blown southern terrorism she could say, "we who have been as leaders to this people must not desert them in their hour of need. I would be sorry to have my house burned but I am willing to lose my life if necessary. I made up my mind to this long ago and if justice and right will come quicker for the sacrifice, I am ready."[20]

Martha's sensitivity to the suffering of others was ever-present in the pages of her diaries. Her friends were often the beneficiaries of her sympathy and guidance. But her focus on the lives of slaves and former slaves was rooted in the Quaker witness against slavery and more closely in her parent's participation in the Underground Railroad. As a young girl, she met fleeing slaves and saw the dangers her parent's faced in aiding their escape. While teaching became the focus of her working life, during the war, a war she justified by the goal of ending slavery, her choice was to teach in a black school in Philadelphia. As with nursing, it was a part

[20] *New York Daily Tribune,* 16 November 1876, in Smedley, *Martha Schofield and the Re-Education of the South, Martha Schofield and the Re-Education of the South,* 146-147.

she could play in advancing the northern cause. At the same time, she could aid in the uplift of a poor and oppressed people. Her work with black students in Philadelphia was not confined to the classroom but extended into their homes and neighborhoods. She visited students and their families, in part, to better understand their lives and how best to serve them. It was an experience that would be of benefit when among the freed people in South Carolina and place her among a rare few who knew, first hand, something of black life. Her experience as a woman pushing boundaries in an oppressive society reinforced her identification with the lives of African Americans.

Martha's passionate nature was evidenced throughout her diaries but never more so than when writing of the people she loved. It was in the course of her love life, of platonic, romantic, and forbidden love, that she searched for a balance between deep connection and personal freedom. And there were moments when she found relationships that both sustained her need for love and her desire for independence. While they lasted, her relationships with Sadie Brouwer and John Bunting were emotionally intimate but never overpowering. Yet, these were treacherous waters for Martha to navigate. Here she had no role models close at hand. Her sisters were far less adventuresome or rebellious than she. She had no female friends who equaled her in bravery in terms of the risks she was willing to take to find her own way – a veritable third way in love. She pushed the boundaries of propriety in falling in love with married men but was unwilling to break the boundaries altogether. She pushed boundaries in the way she transacted her relationships with her closest male friends. The paradox was that neither remaining single nor marrying ever fully suited her. One was too binding and the other too lonely. What she needed, but was unable to sustain, was a network of deeply intimate relationships to draw on for love and support.

For guidance in constructing an independent life, Martha looked to women like Anna Dickinson who used her prodigious powers as a speaker and performer to further the causes of abolition and women's rights. She walked on thin ice, risking her femininity and her reputation by speaking in public to audiences of men and women. While there were other such women, women known to Martha, who were among a vanguard of reformers and progressives like Lucretia Mott, Clara Barton, and Susan B. Anthony, Dickinson was closer to her age and, therefore, of greater interest and value as a role model. However, a great difference between them was the commercial nature of Dickinson's efforts versus Martha's focus on service and sacrifice.

Martha was guided and inspired by women and men she met in the pages of the books she read. Many were popular novels often dismissed (especially by male critics) for their formulaic plots and sentimentality. However, they functioned for her, as they did for others, as evidence of possibilities for women's lives beyond the confines of marriage or the obscurity of spinsterhood. Rather than referring to them as domestic novels or women's novels, Susan K. Harris has chosen to call them exploratory in that "their cover stories of female dependence are radically undermined by their underplots, which suggest, at the very least, that women can learn how to achieve physical, emotional, and financial independence."[21] Martha's coming of age as well as her development as a teacher and later a freedmen's teacher were marked by exploration and her determination to construct an autonomous life.

By any measure, Martha Schofield was a remarkable woman. From the opening pages of her diaries, she exhibited intelligence, strength, passion, sensitivity, courage, and even defiance – qualities critical to her growth as a woman seeking a life beyond the norm, an

[21] Susan K. Harris, *19th Century Women's Novels: Interpretive Strategies,* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 20-21.

autonomous life. While not a great beauty, she was charismatic. Friends were drawn to her. They sought her advice. They relied on her love. They could count on her steadfast loyalty. She was a natural leader who could capture and hold the attention of a room full of squirming children or a literary group or a church full of freedmen and women. She could, with few words, defeat an arson squad. And she was a seeker. Throughout the time she kept her journals, she sought to know and understand herself. She sought God's will for her life. She sought love. She sought a purpose for life greater than herself. We see through her writing both her struggles to emancipate herself and the freed people she chose to serve. Yet, Martha Schofield was neither a saint nor a martyr, though at times of emotional weakness she often succumbed to the language of martyrdom. Rather, she was a woman who took full advantage of the opportunities open to her to develop and put to use her many talents. Her work as a black educator and institution builder was her true life.

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