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Uncommon Women

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INTRODUCTION

1. For *Ruth Hall's* mixed reception, see Warren's Introduction to *Ruth Hall*.
2. For provocative discussion of the normative and its restrictive implication, and of conservative gay and lesbian politics, see Warner.
3. As Amy Kaplan writes, "The 'cult of domesticity,' the ideology of 'separate spheres,' and the 'culture of sentiment' have together provided a productive paradigm for understanding the work of white women writers in creating a middle-class American culture in the nineteenth century. Most studies of this paradigm have revealed the permeability of the border that separates the spheres, demonstrating that the private feminized space of the home both infused and bolstered the public male arena of the market, and that the sentimental values attached to maternal influence were used to sanction women's entry into the wider civic realm from which those same values theoretically excluded them. More recently, scholars have argued that the extension of female sympathy across social divides could violently reinforce the very racial and class hierarchies that sentimentality claims to dissolve" (581). Also, as Shirley Samuels writes, scholars have recently tried to arrive at "a more thoroughly situated and engaged sense of how sentimental texts produce effects and how social and cultural meanings are embodied" (8). For a retrospective on Welter's work and scholarly responses to it, see Kelley, Commentary. For a useful summary of the "Cult of True Womanhood," see Saulsbury.
4. See Gollin's *Annie Adams Fields*.
5. See Baym's "Delia Bacon: Hawthorne's Last Heroine" and "Delia Bacon, History's Odd Woman Out."
6. Examples in this section are drawn from Cornell University's indispensable site *Making of America*. See <http://cdl.library.cornell.edu/moa/>.
7. Lehuu provides compelling discussion of visual texts in *Godey's Lady's Book*. Also, Ballier, though concerned with conventional illustrations of women in post-Civil War periodicals, documents the diversifying of women's professional activities against continuing normative female representations in the press.
8. For discussion of illustrations that appeared following Maria Bickford's murder, see Halttunen, especially 182–83. Bickford's death was multiply and variously

trivialized. Her murderer's "fans . . . applauded at his verdict of 'not guilty' . . . and wax figures of both murderer and victim were displayed by a traveling wax museum, which advertised that the dress and jewelry adorning its model . . . had actually belonged to the victim" (Haltunnen 88).

CHAPTER 1

1. See Michaelsen's summary of the *Journal's* publication history (33–34).
2. Margolies provides crucial information regarding dates, authenticity, and versions of the journal in the nineteenth century.
3. Balkun briefly discusses Dwight's publishing of Knight's text.
4. For criticism of the *Journal*, see Arner; Derounian; Derounian-Stodola; Margolies; Seelye 292–309; Spengemann 39–44; and Julia Stern ("To Relish"). To summarize disparate readings, Buell characterizes Knight's text as travel narrative and humor writing (283, 377); Michaelsen and Stern as a chronicle of class, etiquette, and consumption; Spengemann as related to works by John Bunyan and Aphra Behn; and Derounian-Stodola as picaresque narrative ("The New England Frontier").
5. Biographical information used here is largely drawn from Bush's Introduction. See especially 69–70.
6. See Shields's discussion of women's reading and literary interests ("Eighteenth-Century" 460–65).
7. From Sarah Kemble Knight, *The Journal of Madam Knight*, in William L. Andrews et al., eds., *Journeys in New Worlds*. All subsequent references are to this edition.
8. Dwight's musings on travel and landscape changes are echoed two years later in Sedgwick's *Hope Leslie* (1827). See especially chapters 6 and 8.
9. For discussion of authorship and publication in the nineteenth-century United States, see Charvat's foundational study. Also see Hackel and Kelly for essays responding to Charvat's work.
10. See Caesar's examination of U.S. travel abroad.
11. Imbarrato lists popular tourist guides of the time (33). She also notes that Dwight wrote three tourist guidebooks (all published after his edition of the *Journal*).
12. See Imbarrato's comprehensive bibliography, 231–45.
13. Margolies's essay, essential reading for students of Knight's text, cites these responses.
14. Felt's *Annals of Salem* (1827) was one of Hawthorne's primary sources for *The House of the Seven Gables*. See Kesselring.
15. Dwight's letter was written to Charles Deane in 1846 in response to Deane's letter concerning the authenticity of Knight's text. Thirty years later, at the December 1877 meeting of the Massachusetts Historical Society, Deane read Dwight's letter to the group; it was subsequently incorporated into their minutes, which were published annually. According to the minutes, "Mr. Dwight's prompt reply put to rest all doubts as to the genuineness of this quaint production, and some extracts from his letter were published in the 'Boston Evening Transcript,' of January 6, 1847,—that is, a few days after it was received" ("December Meeting" 388).
16. Charles Deane is not to be confused with William R. Deane, who edited an edition of Knight's text, though the two were close friends (Margolies 27).
17. As I focus on the nineteenth-century United States, I do not discuss later editions of the journal. However, Winship's Introduction to the 1920 edition reflects continued evolution of Knight ("the plump mistress . . . [with an] independent mind and energetic, withal somewhat feminist, character" [v]) and her text.

18. For further biographical information regarding Crocker, see Ruth Rosenberg. For discussion of Crocker's life and writing, see Post. For brief discussion of Crocker and excerpts from her work, see Harris; and Westbrook and Westbrook.

19. By 1825 Crocker knew of Knight's journal and provided information concerning it. See *Historical Magazine & American Notes & Queries* (341).

20. Excerpts from Knight's *Journal* in *The Museum of Foreign Literature and Science* were reprinted from those published a year earlier in the British *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* (Margolies 29).

21. Of seventy-four notes to Learned's edition, fourteen are written by others (e.g., William R. Deane); twenty-seven are quoted from books Learned cites; eight translate vernacular or archaic language; and twenty-two are factual explanations. Only three are Learned's opinionated commentary.

22. Unlike Learned, Knight criticizes the blurring of racialized boundaries: "But [whites are] too Indulgent (especially the farmers) to their slaves: suffering too great familiarity from them, permitting them to sit at Table and eat with them, (as they say to save time,) and into the dish goes the black hoof as freely as the white hand" (104-5).

23. Margolies writes that the unverified story of Franklin as Knight's student originated with Crocker. See 26n8.

24. Saar describes Tyler's text: "Spanning over one hundred and fifty years, and describing the works of almost one hundred and fifty writers, *A History of American Literature* is remarkable in its thoroughness." Further, "the comprehensiveness and accuracy of Tyler's research enabled scholars to survey, for the first time, the whole of early American literature" (247).

25. See Vanderbilt on Tyler and his work.

26. Howells wrote the "Editor's Study" feature of *Harper's* from January 1886 to March 1892. For Howells's collected "Editor's Study" columns, see Simpson. (Howells's authorship of the "Editor's Study" feature is well-known. However, to my knowledge, I am the first to point to Howells's commentary on Knight.)

27. This volume was published by Charles L. Webster and Company, the publishing firm of Mark Twain. The series was well-received but failed to make enough profit, contributing to the company's bankruptcy and Twain's own financial difficulties.

28. References to Knight's journal appear regularly in nineteenth-century U.S. periodicals and books. While I do not cite every reference, I attempt to provide sufficient examples to demonstrate this appearance across the nineteenth century. Cornell's *Making of America* site (<http://cdl.library.cornell.edu/moa/>) is an indispensable source for such references.

29. In trial transcripts Thomas Shephard, alarmed by Hutchinson's speech, tellingly employs a travel metaphor regarding this "verye dayngerous Woman." Shephard criticizes "the Flewentness of her Tonge and her Willingness to open herselfe and to divulge her Opinions and to sowe her seed in us that are but highway side" (Hall, *Antinomian* 353). For Shephard, when Hutchinson speaks ("the Flewentness of her Tonge"), she commands the main road, crowding Puritan leaders off to the side. I thank Allison Giffen for bringing this section of the transcripts to my attention.

30. See Kamensky's historical and linguistic treatment of Hutchinson, the Salem trials, and transgressive female speech in New England, especially 71-81, 150-79. Some women accused as witches during the delusion were, like Knight, married women managing business or property while their husbands were away. Witchcraft accusations were a way of gaining property at a time when the state had lost its charter and legal authority to resolve property disputes. Familial and civic circumstances of these women led to disruptive female visibility linked to autonomy and prop-

erty. A husband's absence—while he was away on business, in the fields, fighting Indians—increased a visible woman's vulnerability, despite the limited protection her socioeconomic status might have typically provided.

31. For other early American white women's travel narratives, see *Journeys in New Worlds* (Andrews et al.); *Puritans among the Indians* (Vaughan and Clark); and *Women's Indian Captivity Narratives* (Derounian-Stodola). For a study of white women's captivity narratives extending from early America to the abduction of heiress Patty Hearst, see Castiglia.

32. For unresolved questions of early American literacy, see Davidson, 56. For readings that “track the dramatic emergence of girls and women as important participants in the production and consumption of texts” from 1500 to 1800 “and as statistically meaningful possessors of literacy,” see Hackel and Kelly.

33. As Balkun observes, “Knight always gets the last word in any given situation; her days typically end with the recording of events, the translation of action and word into a self-authorizing text” (17).

34. For discussions of cultural authority of voice in printed texts in early national narratives, see both Fliegelman and Looby.

35. I follow Kerber's understanding of eighteenth-century American women's community: “Like most women in preindustrial societies eighteenth-century American women lived in what might be called woman's domain. Their daily activities took place within a feminine, domestic circle: infants were delivered by midwives, the sick were cared for by nurses, women who traveled overnight stayed at boardinghouses owned or run by females. We may think of women as forming a tradition-bound, underdeveloped nation within a larger, more politically sophisticated one” (7).

36. Julia Stern concludes that “Knight is mistaken for a prostitute” because “a woman of her social rank . . . on the road late at night in fine clothes could be understood in no other way in rural Connecticut of 1704” (“To Relish” 3).

37. For a less gendered reading of Knight's system of social classification, see Michaelsen, 38.

38. See Breitwieser's discussion of Lot's wife, 95–102.

39. For an excellent discussion of Knight's use of poetry, see Imbarrato, 159–61.

40. Bush posits this reference as “possibly a witty allusion to baptism by immersion, as practiced by the Baptists, who had settled in Rhode Island (where Madam Knight then was) in the previous century” (Introduction 92n15).

CHAPTER 2

1. In this chapter I use “Sara Willis” to identify the woman variously known as Sara Payson Willis Eldredge, Sara Payson Willis Farrington, and Sara Payson Willis Parton.

2. In her February 1854 contract, Willis agreed to perform no other literary writing while working on *Ruth Hall*. See Warren, *Fanny Fern*, 120.

3. The popularity of Fern's early periodical writing underscores the efficacy of strategies of female multiplicity. In an overt example of such success, a *Harper's* review, “Literary Notices,” praised the “rapid transitions from fun to pathos” in Fern's early periodical writing as “very effective,” noting that “[h]er pictures of domestic life . . . excite alternate smiles and tears” (July 1854).

4. Joyce Warren in her foundational work on Fern details the punitive conditional financial support that Charles Eldredge's disapproving parents, Hezekiah and Mary Eldredge, were willing to provide their widowed daughter-in-law and her two

daughters, the only children of their only child (of four) who had survived to adulthood. Hezekiah Eldredge, who died in 1853, stipulated in his will “that his estate was to go to his wife and two granddaughters, *provided* they were brought up by their grandmother” (*Fanny Fern* 106; emphasis in original). Mary Eldredge, who died four years later in 1857, willed the majority of her estate to charity. She left virtually all Eldredge family possessions, including her son’s portrait, to non-family members. A reading of these documents today clearly conveys the Eldredges’s censorious view of their daughter-in-law. See *Fanny Fern*, 106–7.

5. Both Homestead (152) and Warren (*Fanny Fern* 123) identify the anonymous editor as the *True Flag*’s William U. Moulton.

6. Much of the biographical information in this section is drawn from Warren’s Introduction to *Ruth Hall*.

7. Throughout her writing Willis repeatedly criticizes hypocrisies regarding gender construction and women’s limited economic choices: “As a general thing there are few people who speak approbatively of a woman who has a smart business talent or capability. No matter how isolated or destitute her condition, the majority would consider it more ‘feminine’ would she unobtrusively gather up her thimble, and, retiring into some out-of-the-way-place, gradually scoop out her coffin with it, than to develop that smart turn of business which would lift her at once out of her troubles; and which, in a man so situated, would be applauded as exceedingly praiseworthy. The most curious part of it is, that they who are the loudest in their abhorrence of this ‘unfeminine’ trait, are they who are the most intolerant of dependent female relatives. . . . ‘Do something for yourself,’ is their advice in general terms; but, above all, you are to do it quietly, unobtrusively; in other words, die as soon as you like on sixpence a day, but don’t trouble *us*!” (“A Bit of Injustice,” 8 June 1861, *New York Ledger*).

8. Various contemporary sources characterize Willis as permanently damaged by her experiences. However, it is difficult to determine the accuracy of such remarks. For instance, James Parton, Willis’s husband, wrote in “Memoir of Fanny Fern” that after Charles Eldredge’s death “his widow and her two little children found themselves suddenly reduced from a condition resembling affluence, to a situation inexpressibly forlorn and miserable—dependence in a third-rate boarding house. I shall not dwell upon the next seven years. They were years of wretchedness, which left deep traces upon her nature, never wholly obliterated” (49). In her unpublished biography of Willis, Ethel Parton, Willis’s granddaughter wrote, “So many repeated blows of fate, the bitter anxiety, the long strain, had told upon her severely, leaving her nerves in an over-sensitive condition to be assuaged, but never wholly repaired, by happier fortunes” (138).

9. Characterizations of Fern as masculine continued throughout Willis’s life. In “One Sort of Woman” (written nearly two decades after her identity had been revealed), Fern writes that a plumber she has called tells her, “Why, ma’am, I judged from your writings that you were three-quarters a man yourself, and wouldn’t need one of us to tell you what to do!”

10. Mary Kelley valuably examines nineteenth-century U.S. population growth and rising literacy rates (*Private Woman* 10–11). For discussion of changes in mid-nineteenth-century U.S. “print technology [that] resulted in a whole new kind of literature for the masses,” see Reynolds, especially 81–97.

11. For fascinating discussion of changing mid-nineteenth-century U.S. periodical publication and its intersection with copyright laws, see Homestead, especially chapter 4.

12. Discussing growth of the U.S. publishing industry, Kelley writes that “a new publishing empire emerged in the United States, grew with the nation, and provided

for women in the United States an opportunity such as they had never confronted before" (*Private Woman* 7).

13. For discussion of Bonner's hiring celebrity authors to write exclusively for his paper, see Warren, *Fanny Fern*, 144–49.

14. For details on Bonner's editorial policies regarding his carefully selected writers, see Warren, "Uncommon Discourse," especially 61 and 64.

15. For discussion of nineteenth-century U.S. advertising strategies, see Reynolds, 344–47.

16. Once Willis turned to the novel, she began to satirize readers' letters. Williams reads this as "a sign . . . of the growing sense that celebrity authors needed to distance themselves from their readers." In *Ruth Hall* Willis "devoted several chapters to fictionalized fan mail . . . showing how many liberties readers took with authors as they demanded everything from literary advice to money to marriage" (106).

17. Bonner's "final tribute to Fern was to purchase the huge marble tombstone for her grave" (Warren, "Uncommon Discourse" 57). The elaborate tombstone, shaped as a cross, is draped and entwined with granite fern leaves. "Fanny Fern" is engraved at its base. See Warren, *Fanny Fern*, photograph facing page 155.

18. For details and analysis of Willis's 1856 lawsuit to establish exclusive legal claim to the name Fanny Fern, see Tonkovich, 47–49.

CHAPTER 3

1. "I even think of trying the *Atlantic*," she noted in her journal in the autumn of 1859. "There's ambition for you!" The ambition was shared, as William Dean Howells observed, by every young writer hoping to join his name to the august list of Boston authors associated with that magazine" (Jones, Introduction ix). After having a story accepted by the *Atlantic*, Alcott wrote, "People seem to think it a great thing to get into the *Atlantic*, but I've not been pegging away all these years in vain, and may yet have books and publishers and a fortune of my own" (qtd. in Jones ix).

2. Apologetic forewords, introductions, and letters by nineteenth-century U.S. women writing in a range of genres are familiar to readers in this period. In recent years, much interesting criticism has been devoted to this subject. See especially Kelley's groundbreaking *Private Woman, Public Stage* and Brodhead's classic "Veiled Ladies."

3. Readings of sexual identity and gender construction in Alcott's life and writing appear in, among others, Bedell; Elbert; Saxton; and Showalter, *Sister's Choice*.

4. We owe our knowledge of particulars of Alcott's delirium to a 20 February 1863 letter written by Sophia Peabody Hawthorne to Annie Adams Field. The sixteen-page letter has never been published in its entirety. To quote partially from it: "On Monday I saw her for a few moments. . . . She was so changed, I think I should not have known her. After that, no one saw her but the physician, for she was delirious almost uninterruptedly, and often very furious, and Mrs. Alcott told me she was haunted by hospital scenes and men. . . . Sometimes she would say 'If you will only take that man away, I can bear the rest.' One day she sprang out of bed, when they left her for a moment, and beneath they heard a sudden step . . . , and then a heavy fall. Horror stricken—they rushed up, and Louisa was stretched upon the floor. . . . Abby dragged up Louisa and laid her on the bed, when she exclaimed 'How could you leave me alone when the room was full of men!'" (qtd. in Julie E. Hall, "Crisis" 69).

5. For discussion of nineteenth-century sexology and Krafft-Ebing theories of

homosexuality popularized late in Alcott's life, see Smith-Rosenberg's landmark *Disorderly Conduct*, especially 268–73.

6. For detailed discussion of women's train travel and its behavioral strictures in the nineteenth-century United States, see Richter.

7. Comprehensive listings of Civil War nursing accounts published after *Hospital Sketches* appear in Schultz, "Embattled Care," 115, and Jones, Introduction, xlii–xliii. Walt Whitman's reading of *Hospital Sketches* resulted in his planning to write his *Memoranda during the War* (1876) (Schultz, *Women at the Front* 228). For the number and types of Civil War narratives—published and archival—see Schultz's excellent "The Inhospitable Hospital," 364. For examples of representative Civil War nursing narratives, see *Notes of Hospital Life from November, 1861, to August, 1863*; George Barton, *Angels of the Battlefield*; Fannie A. Beers, *Memories*; Jane (Mrs. A. H.) Hoge, *The Boys in Blue*; Mrs. A. M. Holstein (Ellis), *Three Years in Field Hospitals*; Henriette Stratton Jaquette, ed., *South after Gettysburg*; Mary A. Livermore, *My Story of the War*; Charlotte E. McKay, *Stories of Hospital and Camp*; Adelaide W. Smith, *Reminiscences of an Army Nurse*; Susie King Taylor, *A Black Woman's Civil War Memoirs*; Annie Turner Wittenmyer, *Under the Guns*; Jane Stuart Woolsey, *Hospital Days*; and Katharine Prescott Wormeley, *The Other Side of War*.

8. For Nightingale's influence on U.S. female nursing, particularly in the post-Civil War period, see Schultz, "The Inhospitable Hospital," 364 and 390; and Vicinus, 85–120.

9. For further discussion of Nightingale, see Fish's reading of Mary Seacole, "a freeborn woman of color from Kingston, Jamaica" (64), who worked as a healer in the Crimean War. Fish reads "Seacole's text as a counternarrative to the white, Western myth of Florence Nightingale" (2).

10. Alcott's supervisor in the Union Hotel Hospital, Hannah Ropes (who also contracted typhoid and unlike Alcott died from it soon after), was also influenced by Nightingale's *Notes on Nursing*. See Schultz, *Women at the Front*, 47.

11. Louisa May Alcott, *Hospital Sketches*, reprinted in *Alternative Alcott*, 51 and 55; hereafter cited parenthetically in the text.

12. For discussion of gradual public acceptance of female nursing, see Schultz, *Women at the Front*, especially 54–55.

13. Edmonds's plagiarizing of sections from *Hospital Sketches* is plain in a comparison of the two texts. This borrowing of Alcott's passages may not have been recognized or uncovered at the time (I have been unable to locate references to the borrowing).

14. For a history of the professionalization and desexualization of women nurses, see Reverby, 20, 43.

15. The Battle at Fredericksburg resulted in grim defeat for the Union Army and "nearly 13,000 Union casualties, compared to around 5,000 for the Confederates" (Fahs 20).

16. Unlike her letters home—from which *Hospital Sketches* was composed—Alcott's Washington journal survives in manuscript and was used by both Cheney and Myerson. Though letters Alcott wrote home have not been recovered (Madeleine Stern, Introduction xxiv), Cheney describes sections of *Hospital Sketches* as "almost a literal reproduction of her letters to her family" (139). It is unclear whether Cheney had access to the original letters.

17. While some of Alcott's work saw increased critical attention in the late 1970s and early 1980s with the rise in interest in popular U.S. nineteenth-century women writers (Baym, *American Women Writers*; Tompkins), *Hospital Sketches* received little notice until its reprinting in *Alternative Alcott*. For recent discussions of *Hospital Sketches*, see Showalter, Introduction, ix–xliii; Schultz, "Embattled Care";

Cappello; and Young, *Disarming the Nation*. For a recent edition of *Hospital Sketches*, see Fahs.

18. "In the North, 'nurse' was the most prestigious tag. . . . 'Matron' was . . . sometimes used to refer to the regimental women who nursed, cooked, and did laundry, and sometimes to designate the woman in charge of ward nurses in a hospital"; also, "Confederates used 'matron' in lieu of 'nurse,' the latter term bearing generic and the former, titular, weight" (Schultz, "The Inhospitable Hospital" 369-70). Here, Alcott uses "matron" in the sense of marital status while also implying its wartime institutional sense.

19. Alcott's characterization of John, as well as her naming and descriptions of other wounded soldiers, aligns with the tendency of Civil War nurses "to individualize [the] suffering" (380) of their patients, as opposed to the tendency of Civil War surgeons to refer to the same patients "in the abstract or to refer to the clinical details of a particular treatment without mentioning the soldier's name at all" (Schultz, "The Inhospitable Hospital" 378-79).

20. Schultz goes further, arguing, "Only in John's death does Trib step out of the maternal role and meet him as a sexual equal. As his life ebbs away, John holds Trib's hand so tightly that she has difficulty extricating it when he is dead. She notices that the mark of his grasp still makes an imprint on her hand after her circulation has returned. One of the orderlies cautions Trib that it is 'unsafe for dead and living flesh to lie so long together,' but she 'could not but be glad that, through its touch, the presence of human sympathy . . . had lightened that hard hour.'" Schultz sees Trib "finally acknowledg[ing] her own sexual power as the symbolic beloved of the most virile and gentle soldier of all" ("Embattled Care" 113).

21. I quote here from the insightful report of one of my anonymous readers. I am unable to improve on this felicitous phrasing and meaning.

22. For Alcott's reaction to her father's arrival, see endnote 25, below.

23. Alcott accurately assigns to Trib what she herself was paid for war nursing. See Schultz, *Women at the Front*, 41.

24. Alcott's establishing an opposition between "experiment" and convention suggests scientific discourse. Her choice of "experiment" gestures toward the distancing that occurs in Civil War surgeons' accounts of war service. See endnote 19, above.

25. When Alcott was hospitalized, Bronson Alcott was sent for without her permission or knowledge. Recognizing this affront to her independence, Alcott was "amazed" at her father's arrival and "was very angry at first" (Myerson et al., *Journals* 116). (Her journal entry shows that she initially wrote "mad" and then crossed it out and substituted "angry" [122].)

26. Trib's loss of hair due to illness is close to circumstances of Alcott's own hair loss. Alcott lost her 1½ yards of long hair (Myerson et al., *Journals* 117) when the doctor ordered her head shaved. She subsequently wore a wig for many months (Myerson et al., *Letters* 84, 95). Alcott reads Trib's hair loss as a wartime sacrifice intended to help save the nation. Alcott's own wartime sacrifice was significant: not only did she lose her hair, but mercury she ingested as treatment for typhoid fever damaged her health and eventually killed her. For discussion of Alcott's hair loss in *Little Women*, see Young, *Disarming the Nation*, especially 86-87.

27. Despite her poem on Trib's death, Alcott continued to use the Tribulation Periwinkle name, if perhaps not the full persona. In addition to signing "A Postscript" chapter with Trib's name, Alcott, in correspondence with *Hospital Sketches* publisher James Redpath, signed a letter "T.P." and told him that the American consul at Venice had "sent his compliments to 'Nurse P'" (Madeline B. Stern, "Louisa Alcott's Self-Criticism" 360, 361). As late as 1869—six years after *Hospital Sketches* was

published—Alcott used the Tribulation Periwinkle persona when writing a letter to the *Springfield Republican* (Myerson et al., *Letters* 126–28).

28. The series in which the book *Hospital Sketches* appeared was published by ardent abolitionist James Redpath, whose interviews and articles had brought John Brown his earliest national attention and who subsequently wrote the first biography of Brown. Redpath's involvement with Concord abolitionists led him to Alcott and helped begin her career. Redpath, who donated a percentage of the (very successful) Brown biography profits to the Brown family, sold *Hospital Sketches* at a reduced price to improve morale. He also included an advertisement in the book in which he resolved "to devote at least five cents for every copy sold to the support of orphans made fatherless or homeless by the war. . . . Should the sale of the little book be large, the orphans' percentage will be doubled." See Madeleine B. Stern, Introduction, xxiv–xxv. I thank Albert von Frank for alerting me to Redpath's publications and marketing strategies.

29. In *Hospital Sketches* Alcott's uses of the war narrative to explore gender considerations are limited to concerns of one white, Northern, middle-class U.S. woman. Black women, working-class women, men and women who are not hospital patients—male surgeons and male and female relatives of the dead and wounded—receive only glancing notice. That they appear at all points to Alcott's awareness of those outside her race, class, sex, and situation, while suggesting that for her the dominant and nearly exclusive focus of her nursing experience is her intimate contact with wounded men. Schultz's reminder that Alcott, once hospitalized, was nursed by a Black woman, Matilda Cleaver, furthers the white focus of the text (*Women at the Front* 118).

CHAPTER 4

1. S. Emma E. Edmonds, *Nurse and Spy in the Union Army* (Hartford, CT: W. S. Williams and Co., 1865); Mary Livermore, *My Story of the War* (Hartford, CT: A. D. Worthington, 1889); and Annie Turner Wittenmyer, *Under the Guns: A Woman's Reminiscences of the Civil War* (Boston: E. B. Stillings, 1895). Subsequent references are from these editions and will be given in parentheses.

2. For documentation of women's war participation, see Moore (whose work contains over forty chapters on individual women and women's war work); and Brockett and Vaughan (nearly eight hundred pages of small print on administrators, aid society organizers, and volunteers in non-nursing capacities).

3. For contemporary Civil War narratives that mention cross-dressing, see Young, "Confederate Counterfeit." For Civil War histories that mention cross-dressing and appeared well after the war, see Larson.

4. See Hall, *Patriots*, 205–12.

5. This is not to say that Schultz disregards the (in)authenticity of Edmonds's narrated experience: "*Nurse and Spy*'s authenticity as a historical narrative is dubious at best. In the course of the narrative, Edmonds' performances become increasingly outlandish, inviting readers to suspend their disbelief and interpret *Nurse and Spy* as fiction. While the text is based on historically documented evidence of Edmonds' soldiering, its embellishments consign it to a more speculative mode" ("Performing Genres" 75).

6. Bristow's discussion of the development of sexology in the 1860s and 1870s is particularly useful; see 12–61.

7. Notions of non-normative sexual appearances and behaviors were provisionally linked in discussion of the time: "In their effort to understand homosexuality

and to identify what could be done to correct it, physicians and sexologists employed the term 'psychical hermaphroditism'" (Matta 79). See Matta's discussion of homosexuality and hermaphroditism in the nineteenth century.

8. For valuable background, see Reis.

9. Schultz provides crucial publication and sales data. *Nurse and Spy* was "published in 1865 by W. S. Williams in Hartford (in 1864 DeWolfe, Fiske in Boston had brought it out as *The Female Spy of the Union Army* and the Philadelphia Publishing Company as *Unsexed; or, The Female Soldier*") (*Women at the Front* 227). "By 1900, three more editions had been published, including one in German" ("Performing Genres" 73n4). And "*Nurse and Spy* and its alternately titled editions sold over 175,000 copies" ("Performing Genres" 78), "more than any other nursing narrative" (*Women at the Front* 227).

10. Biographical information on Edmonds is largely derived from Edmonds's *Nurse and Spy*, as well as Fladeland.

11. As David T. Mitchell and Sharon L. Snyder write regarding Melville's *The Confidence-Man*: "Jacksonian America provided an important venue for practices that were founded on empirical observation: craniometry, phrenology, palmistry, psychology, and physiognomy. All these sciences of the surface named external body features as reliable signs by which the identity of a person could be fixed and known" (35). While Edmonds's phrenological examination ostensibly revealed qualities of an able soldier, it missed signs of female identity.

12. Fladeland (451) and Richard Hall (68) speculate briefly on this scene's authenticity. Both Edmonds's recording of the scene and readings of it as imaginative mark the intersection of cross-dressing, authenticity, and fiction.

13. Edmonds wrote in an 1883 letter that, ill with malarial fever and fearing disclosure of her sex, she had left the hospital ("to remain and become a helpless patient in a hospital was sure discovery, which to me was far worse than death" [Fladeland 455]). Frank Thompson's desertion was another compelling reason for Edmonds to keep that impersonation out of *Nurse and Spy*.

14. Schultz writes that "[t]he illustrations . . . [to *Nurse and Spy*] were a series of wood engravings done by R. O'Brien. The single exception is the portrait of Edmonds with which the narrative begins—a steel engraving done by George E. Perine" ("Performing Genres" 82n29).

15. For background regarding Livermore's and Wittenmyer's writing long after the war, see Schultz, *Women at the Front*, 231.

16. Between 1870 and 1895, "during her twenty-five year Lyceum lecture career," Livermore delivered more than 150 speeches "in small towns across the nation" and traveled over 25,000 miles (Gayle and Griffin 55, 57). Biographical information on Livermore is largely derived from *My Story of the War*. For further details regarding Livermore, see Schultz, *Women at the Front*, 166–67; Gayle and Griffin; and Venet.

17. The alignment of Livermore's text with convention as opposed to Edmonds's less conventional material helps explain why Edmonds's text "sold 175,000 copies, more than any other nursing narrative and roughly three times as many as Mary Livermore's, the next most successful" (Schultz, *Women at the Front* 227).

18. Venet argues that while the war altered Livermore's antebellum rejection of political activism, nonetheless "in her writings and speeches as a woman suffragist, Livermore upheld and even glorified women's traditional role within the household" (144, 164).

19. This biographical information on Wittenmyer is largely derived from *Under the Guns*. For further biographical details regarding Wittenmyer, see Schultz, *Women at the Front*, 168–69 and 196–98; and Leonard, *Yankee Women*.

CONCLUSION

1. From Harriet Jacobs, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*. Subsequent references will be from this edition and will be noted parenthetically in the text.

2. Lydia Maria Childs's Introduction to *Incidents* specifies the audience as "conscientious and reflecting women at the North" (6). The Preface by "Linda Brent" expresses her "desire to arouse the women of the North to a realizing sense of the condition of two millions of women at the South, still in bondage, suffering what I suffered, and most of them far worse" (5). I am in agreement with McKay and Foster who argue, "This is not to suggest that African Americans, especially women, did not buy and read books like Jacobs's for their own instruction, only that in her text, Jacobs appealed directly to a group of other women from whom she hoped for a compassionate hearing and for an understanding of the far-reaching effects of slavery, especially how it linked together the sexual defilement of slave women and the violation of the natural laws of mother/child relationships" (x).

3. Two different women are named "Mrs. Bruce" in *Incidents*. The first Mrs. Bruce is Mary Stace Willis (c. 1816–45); the second, Cornelia Grinnell Willis (1825–1904). Mary Stace Willis is the Mrs. Bruce who, "true to her English upbringing, insisted that she [Jacobs] receive equal treatment" on board the *Knickerbocker* (Yellin, *Harriet Jacobs* 73).

4. See Julia Stern's valuable essay "Live Burial and Its Discontents," 76.

5. In his 1845 *Narrative*, Frederick Douglass provides a foundational example of what W. E. B. Du Bois, as noted in the text, later described as "double-consciousness." Douglass writes of listening to the singing of "slaves selected to go to the Great House Farm" (23), explaining that he "did not, when a slave, understand the deep meaning of those rude and apparently incoherent songs. I was myself within the circle; so that I neither saw nor heard as those without might see and hear" (24).

6. See, for instance, the excellent discussions conducted by Taves; Valerie Smith; and Burnham. Since its landmark 1973 recovery and subsequent 1981 authentication, *Incidents* has received significant critical study. Works essential to Jacobs scholarship include the meticulous authentication work of Jean Fagan Yellin as well as Yellin's biography *Harriet Jacobs*; and Carby's fundamental readings of Jacobs's *Incidents*, and the ideology of true womanhood. More recent scholarship on *Incidents* considers roles of legal discourses (Accomando) and the capitalistic, free-labor economy of the North (Cope). For a selected bibliography of criticism on *Incidents*, see McKay and Foster, 389–90.

7. In her study of nineteenth-century U.S. women's train travel, Amy Richter notes that "in important ways the steamboat captured the same urban qualities of railroad travel" (171n14).

8. Two decades later another Black woman, Ida B. Wells, would respond in a more heightened fashion to an attempt to evict her from travel spaces perceived as raced. When asked "to leave a first-class car on the Chesapeake, Ohio & Southwestern Railroad in May of 1884," Wells refused. "When the conductor tried to remove her physically, Wells struggled, bit the conductor, and was dragged out of the car by three white men" as white passengers applauded (Richter 54). Richter terms the white male response of "physical force [as] the ultimate denial of a black woman's status as a lady" (100).

9. After her escape North in 1842 and until her freedom was purchased in 1852 by Cornelia Grinnell Willis (the second Mrs. Bruce), Jacobs was relentlessly pursued by her former owners and their representatives. Passage of the 1851 Fugitive Slave Law (see note 22, below) exacerbated this fear for Jacobs, for other escaped slaves, and for many free Blacks.

10. "Snaky Swamp" was Jacobs's fictive name for Cabarrus Pocosin ("pocosin," derived from the Eastern Algonquian language, was used to signify a type of swamp). It "lay near the Great Dismal Swamp, for two centuries the largest hideout for fugitive slaves in North Carolina and Virginia" (Yellin, *Harriet Jacobs* 47). For a description of Cabarrus Pocosin in Jacobs's day, see Yellin, *Harriet Jacobs*, 47–48 and 280n47. For a far-ranging discussion of swamps and their resonances, see Miller's *Dark Eden*.

11. This comparison is explicit later in *Incidents* when Jacobs, now a fugitive slave in New York, fears recognition by vacationing Southerners. She "dreaded the approach of summer, when snakes and slaveholders make their appearance" (150).

12. Spengemann reads this scene more narrowly as Knight's being forced to "admit her dependence on the very backwoodsmen she has scoffed at earlier" (42), arguing that it reflects "Knight's becoming someone new as she travels" (44). See 38–44.

13. Warren argues that Jacobs "probably knew Fern during the times that she (Jacobs) was living in Boston between 1844 and 1849 and perhaps during her flights to New England in 1851 and 1852. Jacobs was working as a seamstress in Boston at the time of Fern's first husband's death (October 1846), and she returned to New England after Fern had left her second husband (January 1851) and was shunned by her family and friends" (*Fanny Fern* 223).

Willis's sense of obligation and loyalty to Jacobs can be seen in the fact that Jacobs's daughter lived with Willis for an extended period. Warren writes, "from July 1856 to April 1858, when she was in her early twenties, Jacobs's daughter Louisa Matilda Jacobs lived with Fern" (*Fanny Fern* 222), serving as governess to Willis's daughter Ellen. Thomas Butler Gunn, who had once been a regular visitor to the Willis household but later disparaged Willis, wrote in his diary that Willis was sexually jealous of Louisa which, he claimed, led to Louisa's dismissal. See Yellin, *Harriet Jacobs*, 133.

14. Lauren Berlant also compares Willis and Jacobs, as well as *Incidents* and *Ruth Hall*, through their connections with Nathaniel Parker Willis, Willis's brother and Jacobs's Northern employer. Berlant makes an especially effective comparison between the endings of *Ruth Hall* and *Incidents*. Where *Ruth Hall* receives a substantial banknote that signals her economic success, Brent is given her bill of sale: "Both women have struggled to procure these papers, but while the one denotes the minimal unit of freedom experienced by an American citizen, the other denotes a successful negotiation of the national-capitalist public sphere, a profitable commodification of female pain and heroism in an emerging industry of female cultural workers" ("The Female Woman" 448).

15. But see endnote 13, above, regarding reports of Louisa Jacobs's experience in the Parton household.

16. See Roediger, especially chapter 7, "Irish-American Workers and White Racial Formation in the Antebellum United States."

17. Jacobs's papers, "the only papers of a woman held in American slavery known to have survived" (Yellin, *Harriet Jacobs* 262), consist of over six hundred documents by and about Jacobs, many from her life and writing after *Incidents*. Completion of the Harriet Jacobs Papers Project promises to further enrich understanding of Jacobs and her work. See Yellin, *Harriet Jacobs*, 262 and 268nxx.

18. I borrow the term "critical whiteness studies" (as opposed to "whiteness studies") and the rationale for this choice from Rasmussen et al., 17n1.

19. Mason Stokes's epilogue (178–92) to his fascinating book, *The Color of Sex*, discusses critical whiteness studies and the complexities of such treatments, as does the Introduction to Rasmussen et al. (1–24).

20. See chapter 4's discussion of Edmonds's passing as Black.

21. The accuracy of Jacobs's perception that Blackness determined every aspect of her life is borne out by Roediger's noting that in 1860, 89% of African Americans were slaves (56).

22. Also, as Accomando notes, Jacobs wrote "after Congress had further federalized slavery by passing the Fugitive Slave Act" (231).

23. Information in this section on Jacobs's writing and publication of *Incidents* is largely drawn from McKay and Foster, xii–xiii. For further details of last-minute obstacles to the publication of *Incidents*, see Yellin, *Harriet Jacobs*, 142–43.

24. The Mrs. Bruce referred to in this scene is the second Mrs. Bruce (i.e., the woman who married Nathaniel Parker Willis after the death of his first wife), Cornelia Grinnell Willis.

