



Little Women Abroad: The Alcott Sisters' Letters from Europe, 1870-1871

Louisa Alcott, May Alcott

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In 1870, Louisa May Alcott and her younger sister Abby May Alcott began a fourteen-month tour of Europe. Louisa had already made her mark as a writer; May was on the verge of a respected art career. *Little Women Abroad* gathers a generous selection of May's drawings along with all of the known letters written by the two Alcott sisters during their trip. More than thirty drawings are included, nearly all of them previously unpublished. Of the seventy-one letters collected here, more than three-quarters appear in their entirety for the first time. Daniel Shealy's supporting materials add detail and context to the people, places, and events referenced in the letters and illustrations. *By the time of the Alcott sisters' sojourn, Louisa's Little Women was already an international success, and her most recent work, An Old-Fashioned Girl, was selling briskly. Louisa was now a grand literary lioness on tour. She would compose Little Men while in Europe, and her European letters would form the basis of her travel book Shawl Straps. If Louisa's letters reveal a writer's eye, then May's demonstrate an eye for color, detail, and composition. Although May had prior art training in Boston, she came into her own only during her studies with European masters. When at a loss for words, she took her drawing pen in hand.*

These letters of two important American artists, one literary, the other visual, tell a vibrant story at the crossroads of European and American history and culture.

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