



May Alcott Nieriker, Author and Advocate

Travel Writing and Transformation in the Late Nineteenth Century

By Julia Dabbs

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May Alcott Nieriker, Author and Advocate examines in-depth the writings on art and travel by the youngest sister of famed novelist Louisa May Alcott. Like other American women in the later nineteenth century, due to her gender May was unable to receive the advanced training and exhibition opportunities in the USA that she needed to become a notable professional painter. An additional obstacle was her family's insecure financial status, making it difficult to study abroad for training. Fortunately, thanks to Louisa's generosity May was able to make three extended trips to London and Paris in order to gain further training, and eventually attained the honor of having two paintings accepted into the Paris Salon. However, this book argues that Alcott Nieriker's main contributions to cultural history were not necessarily her artistic creations, but rather her publications on travel and art—specifically, four articles for the *Boston Evening Transcript* and an 1879 guidebook, *Studying Art Abroad and How To Do It Cheaply*. In these works May sought to transform the art world, and social mores, through her advocacy for the rights of women to have equal access to a professional, artistic career.

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About the Author

Julia K. Dabbs is a Distinguished University Teaching Professor of art history at the University of Minnesota, Morris. She has published widely on early modern women artists, as well as the nineteenth-century American artist, May Alcott Nieriker.

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