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**A FEMINIST READING OF CHILDREN LITERATURE  
THROUGH LOUISA MAY ALCOTT'S  
CLASSIC LITTLE WOMEN**

*Dissertation submitted as partial fulfilment of the requirements  
for the degree of Master in Literature and Civilisation.*

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*Declaration of Originality*

*I hereby declare that this submission is my work and that, it contains no material previously published or written by another person nor material which has been accepted for the qualification of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution.*

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## Dedication

My deepest gratitude goes to the sun of my life -my mother- who has been always helping and encouraging me through my educational career. I always take her advice into consideration. This fruit of work is dedicated to my dear father and to my lovely sister and brother who are always overwhelming me by their unconditional love. My sincere thanks go to my best friend Chaimaa.

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## Abstract

The novel of *Little women* by Louisa May Alcott has received a paramount success in the world of literature in general and the American literature in particular. It was written after the American *civil war*. It is characterized as a children novel genre. The present study attempts to deal with the important issues presented in the novel and related to the American Society especially the American woman in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century. It sheds light on the suffering and the oppression of the young girls in that era. Among the important themes and issues which are presented in the novel; the role of woman , self sacrifice , the importance of family , work , and love . This dissertation aims to analyze the feminist theory in the novel, which has been depicted and analyzed from different angles. This research attempts also to depict the experiences and lifestyle of woman inside the American society during the 18<sup>th</sup> century. It has delineated the way in which the novel examines the misery of woman and how to overcome difficulties and achieve success. Louisa May Alcott is based on her real world and experience .She established herself as distinguished feminist novelist with her focus on the daily life of the woman and the young girls and the status of the domestic female life and focused on the important subjects related to the life of woman.

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## General Introduction

Woman was suffering a lot and lived in a hard situation . she suffered from the inequality of rights in all fields especially in education and freedom in a manly society , where she was under the rule and the power of her husband and father .After the American *civil war* , America witnessed many changes that influenced a lot the life of woman and made her in different path.

Louisa May Alcott's *Little women* is an American book that received great attention by experts in children's literature .It is considered as one of the best the American children literature .It dealt with important and deeper themes and issues in the American society during the 18<sup>th</sup> century such as (domestic life, meaning of the family and gender).

This study aims at exploring gender roles presented in the novel and how Louisa May Alcott changed the stereotypical image of gender through her characters based on feminist theory.

*Little women* a story by Louisa May Alcott that revolves around the lives of four sisters growing up during and after the Civil War. Alcott's inspiration for the little women came from her life experiences from her childhood .

The historical significance of this novel is based on the role of woman in the 18<sup>th</sup> century America, philosophical and social forms , education and the Civil war . The novel discussed many themes such us work and social class , and Alcott was preoccupied with what constituted women's work , and how the revolution changed the life of woman and gave her the power to earn a living , also she liscussed the role of woman and her domestic life and love as an important theme in the story.

This dissertation concerns in examining feminism in the story of *Little women* which is a novel classified in children literature that was written after the American *civil war* , and was centered on the suffering of woman and her status in a patriarchal society

The present research questions are :

- How was the status of woman in America in the late 18th century deleanited by Louisa May Alcott?
- What is the main conflict in *Little women*?
- How does *Little women* reflect the feminism of Louisa May Alcott?

These following hypotheses are suggested for the above research questions :

- At the time when Louisa May Alcott wrote her novel , the status of woman in society was slowly increasing and the social norms against her beganto change and the progress towards gender equality was made slowly .

The main conflict in *Little women* is the struggle in which the March family has with the vicissitudes of life.

- Feminism is reflected in *Little women* by the sacrifices and the struggle of the characters to survive in a manly society , being comfort with themselves and overcome difficulties and work hard to achieve their desires.

This dissertation comprises three chapters, the first chapter is entitled historical background which is simply dedicated the history of colonial America, American literature, American *civil war* and woman literature.

The second chapter entitled Theoretical background will focus on the feminist theory at first and children literature which are related to the problem exposed in this work .It also talks about the positioning of the author in the American literature and how the American *civil war* affected her.

The third chapter is about the story of the novel, dealing with the plot summary, defining the characters and analysing the themes, also the reasons behind writing this novel, and how May Alcott was affected by the events of this period.

Finally like any research , This dissertation was under many limitations . The first was the sensitivity of the topic, the second is that there were a lot of references that were not available neither in the internet or library and the unavailability of some documents.

### 1.1 Introduction

The first chapter is divided into two parts , the first one deals with the historical background ,speaking about America during the late 18th century, its history and lifestyle,its economy and the most important events that transformed the American society at that time. The second part will discuss the American *Civil war* , the reasons behind this violent war and the consequences resulted from it and its most important impact on the American society and its economy ,then the American literature in general and the feminist one in particular.

### 1.2 America during the 18s century

The United States has evolved over the ages into a country with its own social and cultural characteristics .Today the United States is an ethnically diverse country as a result of massive immigration from many different countries throughout its history. The early effect of it came from the English and Irish settlers in colonial America due to the colonial relations with Britain that published the English language and the legal system and others.

American colonies called also the thirteen colonies they were established during the 17 century and early 18 century , their expansion had extend further on the Appalachians and extended from Maine the north to Atlanta river in Georgia in which the revolution started. The 13 colonies considered now as a part of the eastern United States were 2.5 millions Americans colonists. The story of the 13 colonies (New Hampshire, Massachusetts,Connecticut , Rhode Island ,New York , New Jersey, Pennsylvania , Delaware , Mryland ,Virginia , North Carolina , South Carolina and Georgiaa) all of those are the colonies that came and established together in the new world to form the United States.England had established a dominant presence on the Atlantic coast.

Most of the people who settled in the new world came to escape a religious oppression. In both Virginia and Massachusetts the colonists flourished with some assistance from native Americans.

The main component of the population in the colonies was of the English descent and the second largest groups from African heritage and a large number of German and Scots immigrants during the 18 century, The new England was almost entirely English in the southern colonies but in the middle the population was very mixed.

It was used everywhere and the English culture prevailed. Over time non-British colonies were captured in the east of Mississippi river and most of the population arrested were occupied. In Novascotia the British expelled were short failures in Virginia in 1676 and also in New York between 1689-1691. Some colonies developed the legal system of slavery that concentrated on the slave trade in the Atlantic. The wars between the French and the British were frequent during the French and Indian wars and in 1760 France was defeated and Britain captured its colonies.

### **1.2.1 American lifestyle**

American colonial life was extremely harsh for the first settlers and colonists, at first it was difficult and rough in the colonies of America and by the 18 century people in the colonies were living in comfortable and decent homes like those in Europe. The wealthy people had their own furniture not the same as the poor, it is completely different. Concerning their eating and drinking, beer and apple juice were very common and for the wealthy brandy wines are imported for them, as for the public rum became a popular drink in the late of 17 century, also tea became popular and chocolate as the first factory chocolate was opened in America in 1765 in Massachusetts.

Men in the colonies wore breeches and stockings they were wearing linen shirts, both men and women wore wigs. For the wealthy people fashion was important in their daily life in which they change in it as for the poor people their cloths didn't change much. People in colonists lived by farming, it was back breaking work and usually lasted from dawn to dusk. Concerning their religion , there was a great religious revival in the North American colonies. People in colonies were never meant to be any real sense of unity between them , each one of them had it's own colonial government ,social system and laws. In the north of America most people lived on agriculture there were many crafts men founded in Europe,they worked in trade , cooper ,tanning ,mills and blacksmithing. Most of their money came from the important trading ports that they held along the Atlantic Coast. As for the Southern colonies were mostly focused on agriculture especially cotton and tabacco.

Shipbuilding was prosperous in the 18th century because the wood was abundant in the colonies of North America and there were also a lot of rivers and many shipwrights and rope makers and also sail makers that's what made the shipbuilding prosperous. Concerning their daily life how they comfort themselves and spend their day ,the entertainment was the same as in Europe Horse racing was common and cock fighting and the bull hunt was popular also fishing for the food as well as entertainment , the Gambling was also a popular game among people as is the Billiards.

### **1.2.2 The American Colonial Economy**

The colonial economy of America was a merchant system . Britain controlled the production and the trade of colonial goods to prevent the colonies from establishing independent economies.

The colonists were only allowed to produce raw materials which Britain then turned it into finished products and sold back to the colonists at a higher price and they were not allowed to make products that could be sold internationally.,

The English colonies depended on building ships and sailing to expand wealth, they produced raw products like the wood or cotton and those were shipped to Britain in which they were made the finished products such as shirts or chairs. Farms in Carolina, Maryland and Virginia were growing tobacco, rice and indigo .The US did not enter the industrial world until after the end of the first third of the nineteenth century, most people lived in farms and produced most of what they consumed . A large proportion of the non-farm population was handling cargo for export. The country was a source of agriculture products.

The mercantile system of Britain was all about control . It imposed a strict trade diminution through ridiculously high taxes to cut the trade of the colonies with other empires. But the colonies didn't respect to all these rules and they made a substantial black market network to trade their products to the other empires.

The colonial economy of the United States was preindustrial and characterized by agriculture for the purpose of living not the trade. Agriculture families participated in handicrafts and most of them were for home consumption. The Market economy relied on extracting natural resources and agriculture products and their treatment for the local consumption in addition to their export "Indian wheat, corn, rice, bread ,flour, tobacco also was a major crop in the Chesapeake Bay region and the same for south Carolina , the dried and salted fish were also important exports. North Carolina was the main producer of pine tree products, another export is potash which is derived from wood ash used in making glass and soap.

The colonies depended on Britain for many manufactured goods because of the laws that prevented the manufacture of many types of goods in the colonies, these laws achieved its intended purpose which is to create a trade surplus for Britain .The colonial trade balance was in Britain favor, shipbuilding was the largest non-agriculture sector and accounted for 5% to 20% of total employment and about 45% of US ships were sold to foreigners. Tabbaco was a quarter of the value of exports and the colonies also produced approximately 15% of the word's iron during the revolution Although the value of the exported iron was small compared to Creals and tobacco. The American iron ores were not a high quality but the huge forests there provided sufficient wood to make charcoal. The United States built the best ships in the world, the textile industry was founded in new England and concentrated there were the hydropower was abundant.

### **1.3The American Civil war**

The Civil waris the conflict that arise inside the country by an organized warring parties comprised of different groups of the population, that aim to take power at the center or in a region or to change government policies. Each party in it sees in his enemy a traitor that cannot live or work with in the same earthern partition.

The warring parties must be from the same country and fighting in order to obtain the control the political center or to force a major change in policy. So the *civil war* is that conflict that arises between more than one party within the borders of the country's lands where the forms of this war differ in multiple reasons .In these wars there are those who seek for independence and autonomy and classify these types of conflicts under the category of revolutionary conflicts while there are those who seek to impose control and judgment on the central government of a particular country these wars are called ethnic wars.



The Civil wars are considered less harmful compared to those direct wars that arise between more than one country, however it may take longer, remain continuous and more frequent, and Note that the number of death resulting from it is greater. It was also noted that most of death recorder in history especially after the end of the cold war and up to the present time are due to civil wars besides many other negative effects and damage for example”the decline in the economic strength of the country and its Great role in declining the investment process and disrupting the commercial process also increasing unemployment rates. These effects are not limited only to the interior of the country but extend to all neighboring countries especially economically as it causes the decline in the level of safety in it and makes it under the war at any time .From the examples of these wars is the American *Civil war* that resulted from many causes where slavery prevalent within society is one of the central issues that led to this war and the situation of the federal government at that time.

### **1.3.1 Reasons and effects**

The American *civil war* caused from a variety of disagreements about American life and politics. There has been a debate about the future that awaits slavery prevailing in the country especially in the Southern provinces where about 4millions Africans employed as slaves on the farms, therefore slavery was a basic pillar of the economy of this region. Also their have been another issues that led to this war (economic interests, cultural values, the power of the federal government to control the states).some of these differences might have been resolved peacefully from diplomacy.

There was a law to sell and rent slaves from the logic that they are a private good that they are entitled to dispose it.

They were considered to be part of the region's resources and wealth as the price of slaves was high and the abolition of slavery was the most prominent goal of that war.

The roots of this war spanned more than eighty years when the slave trade on the American soil .this war depended heavily on new industrial products like the heavy weapons ,railways, ship and telegraph, this is the first war that benefited from the industrial development of the European countries . The spark of it started in April, 12, 1861 and continued until July,9, 1865 and the Battle of "Fort Sumter" was the first battle of the war where the south won and the north has conflicted many defeats on the south until they surrender and the war ended.

The American civil war occurred in 1861-1865 in which the US faced separatists in eleven southern states combined together to be the confederate states of America and the US won this most bloody war .In 1861 seven southern states among the 34 states announced their separation from the United States and its formation of the confederate state. The war broke out the first time when separatists attacked US forts and the confederacy expanded to include eleven additional states .The US government has not diplomatically recognized by any foreign country. The southern States wanted to assert their authority over the federal laws they didn't support, especially laws interfering with the South's right to keep slaves and take them what ever they wished. The territorial expansion is another factor that led to this war. The south wanted to take slavery into the western territories while The north was committed to keep them open to white labor alone. The election of a republican Abraham Lincoln as a president in 1860 sealed the deal. The war ended with the surrender of all confederate arm is and the dissolution of the confederate government .

The war left 4 years of heavy fighting between 620,000 to 750,000 of dead soldiers which is higher than the US Military dead during the two world wars and a large part of the infrastructure has been destroyed in the south, then the confederacy collapsed and 4 millions from slaves were freed. The number of American war dead would exceed 6 million. The number of deaths of casualties suffered in a single day at the battle of Antietam on September 17, 1862, was four times the number of Americans killed in action that September day near Sharpsburg, Maryland, than died in combat in all the other wars fought by The United States in the 19th century. This war was followed by reconstruction between (1863-1877) with the process of restoring the national unity and strengthening the national government and the civil rights were granted to freed slaves across the country.

The Republican Party was determined to prevent any spread of slavery and a number of southern leaders threatened to secede as "Lincoln's" the electoral candidate won the elections in 1860. After Lincoln won without any loyalty from any southern country. Many southerners felt that secession was the only option because they think they have no representative in the country and this impedes their ability to promote pro-slavery and policy work.

The American *Civil War* was the most traumatic experience endured by any generation of Americans. The people of the south were totally dependent on the slave trade, they used them in various professions and plantations even the cultivation of wheat that the people of the south were most producing of it in Europe; it was based on the shoulders of black skinned slaves while the northern states were seeking to free slaves. This liberation means the destruction of the southern economy because the southerners depended totally on the slaves.

Among the signs that show the lack of equality and justice was the discrimination between whites and blacks. The American chief justice "Roger B. Taney" said that the black slaves had no rights and they belonged to the lower class and they had to submit to the white men. That led to the abolition of slavery in the northern states, this decision was dangerous for the blacks in America because most of them were based in the racist southern states so the blacks would be badly treated and that's what made Abraham Lincoln in his speech to people saying that justice and equality must be between all classes and there is no difference between blacks and whites. But the southerners didn't obey to this orders and they tried to put laws on the lands owned by slaves for fear of losing their great economic position in Europe and as a result of these events the slaves of the southern states exited the region either by escaping or selling for fear of the oppression of the southerners.

The southern states leadership was received by president Jefferson Davis as for the union forces were under the leadership of president Abraham Lincoln. The biggest battles of this war took place in Pennsylvania, Georgia and Maryland and Tennessee. Although parts of the war reached many corners of the American lands but they didn't succeed in reaching the heart of the Union. In April, 1865 the federal forces began announcing their surrender after a series of painful strikes and the fall of their fortifications. And with the surrender of the forces in the southern states the confederate president was arrested in May, 1865 to announce the end of the *Civil War*. The end of the slavery was the most important achievements of this war.

The war claimed a huge number of dead, it cost the Americans a huge price of property forms, industry and commerce and many women and children perished. The war was considered the first modern one because it introduced a new methods of fighting, it used equipment from armored ships, mines and observation balloons...

### 1.4 American Literature During the 18 Century

The American literature is all literary work production including ‘books, poetry, theatre, novels and stories...’) it was produced in the United States of America and its former colonies .American literature was heavily influenced by English literature .The heritage of American literature is related to the heritage of English literature, but the distinctive characteristics of American literature and its great production made it in different path. The history of American literature began in the British colonies of North America in the 17 century, the works of this early period reflect the harsh life of the settlers who left England for economic religious or other reasons. Literature that arose in the New world was written by adventures and extremists and that consisted mainly of speeches, stories ,travel magazines , biographies and religious poems .

The 18 century was a period of American awareness and in the period before the struggle for independence, a political publications and other political texts appeared .it is known for its many novels and the depth of its stories.

American literature began with a humble beginning and then soon take its place among the first literature in the world .Among its distinctive characteristic is that it glorifies ideals , qualities of self reliance and independence, respect for human beings and the affirmation of democracy, love of nature and breaking the literary traditions for every new creativity and the satirical humor is a hallmark of this literature. The development of American literature has witnessed several stages, as religious concerns receded in front of political concerns after Britain issued the “Stamp act “ in 1765 , protests spread throughout the colonies and wrote and distributed many revolutionary pamphlets including works of significant literary value And a literary works emerged after the American revolution.

The political independence ignited a strong desire for independence in the art of literature and for the first time American writers separated from their European past.

American Enlightenment is a period of intellectual fermentation during the 17 to 18 century in the thirteen colonies which led to the American Revolution and the establishment of the US. American Enlightenment was influenced by the seventeenth century European enlightenment and original American philosophy.

The term of enlightenment refers to the emergence of a historical and cultural movements , it defended the rationality and its principles as a means of establishing the legal system of ethics and knowledge rather than religion The pioneers of this movement considered their mission to lead the world into development and modernization , leaving old religious and cultural traditions and irrational thoughts within a period of time called “The Dark Ages”. The movement formed the basis of the French revolution and then the American Revolution and the liberation movements in Latin America. The most important philosophers and thinkers of the enlightenment were “Voltaire ,Jean –Jacques Rousseau and David Hume” they all destroyed the institutions of the Church and the existing state.The enlightenment century saw the rise of experimental philosophical ideas and applied it to political economy , as it was applied in physics , chemistry and biology. The Age of enlightenment was preceded by the era of rationality before the renaissance and the Reformation, followed by the Era of Romance.

There are who consider that the Age of Enlightenment began with the glorious revolution in Britain or with the publication of Newton’s principles of Mathematics in 1687 , as for the end of it some scholars considered that the French Revolution (1789) was the appropriate time for its end .

Enlightenment includes a set of ideas that focused on the supremacy of the mind over the senses as an essential source of knowledge and ideals such as “freedom , prosperity tolerance , brotherhood, constitutional government and the separation of the church from the State” Its thoughts applied scientific logic to politics and science and promote religious tolerance and also literature , art and music have regained their status as an important discipline that should be studied in colleges.

Most important founders of the Enlightenment“ Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, James Madison and George Washington “ they fought for freedom to belief for minorities, and they finally achieved their endeavor , for them the US is a country where people of different faiths live In peace .

The age of enlightenment is a stage of complete intellectual reconfiguration of human history , it was distinguished by following ideas and philosophies that were forbidden , as the world left the unseen interpretations based on religious concepts to explain the phenomenon of the world and organizing the daily behaviors of the person, it led people to search for new mechanisms to understand the aspects and appearances around him .Benjamin Franklin became a spoke man for the US interests he criticized British politics in a booklet entitled ‘Laws that can transform a great empire into a small empire in 1773’ , he also presented other writings of political satire, but he did not adhere to the policy as he produced a highly influential literature also he plays his role as a successful publisher, researcher, scientist and philosopher and a thinker. His most popular book was”The poor Ritchen’s Almanack” and the important literary work is that autobiographies about the rise from rock bottom to reach.

In the late of 18 century New York became a radioactive center for literary production and the first most important American novelist' Charles Brockden Brawn', moved from Philadelphia , Pennsylvania to New York He wrote his works in the style of horror stories , he is best known for the story of Welland 1798 and three other writers associated with New York and contributed greatly to the development of American literature "James Fenimore Cooper, Washington Irving, William Clullen Bryant their works were the first American literature to be recognized in Europe 'Cooper' was beather storage , series of five novels, Bryant has served as editor in chief and author of a news paper in New York for fifty years , in his youth he wrote his famous poem about death in 1811 as well as on nature .those were also calling for the emancipation of slaves..Harriet Becherstow is best known for being the most advocates of emancipation of slaves , she has sold millions of copies of her passionate and emotional novel "Uncle Tom's Cabin851-1852".

### **1.5The effects of the Civil war on the American society and its economy**

The American Civil War had a greater impact on the American society and the polity than any other event in the country's history .After the end of the American Civil Warthe United States started with a poor agriculture and economy and throughout the 19 century it was an agriculture country that exported frozen raw materials and imported many factures and presented a rural civilization, but it soon turned into the richest modern civilized force leading the world into all areas of production, it monopolizes priority and leadership in most industries and its population doubled in a century and half to more than fifty times.

In the first half of the 19 century the United states witnessed a major development that covered all fields.



The country has expanded to occupy new lands that were under the rule of the French, English and Spanish, so that the number of the states of America doubled from 13 to 34 states in 1861. The country witnesses at this period a major economic and social transformations as the Americans took advantage of the riches and the ground and invest in the west areas of fertile lands and benefited from new immigrants that's what enabled the American people to make great process in agriculture , industry and trade . But this development was not equal between the north and the south that what cause the outbreak of the Civil War. The North and The South were developing in various ways during this period , the wealthy farmers took advantage of the south and worked in agriculture and expanded in industrial crops especially cotton , meanwhile the northern states have focused on diversified industrialization .

The American Industrial revolution made the 20<sup>th</sup> century an industrial power house. The European industrial development had an important role in making progress for American businessmen where the signs and symbols of modernity and progress in transportation and electricity appeared and also industries, this paved the way for the emergence of America as a global economic power.

The Industrial revolution was a period of major industrialization and innovation in the late of 1700s and early 1800s , it is the changes that happened in manufacturing and transportation, it appeared with the invention of the steam machine in England , and after that it moved to western European countries and then all over the world. The Industrial Revolution means the direction towards production using industrial machines instead of manual work,

it was a result of the comprehensive scientific renaissance led to the invention of many new machines like “The steam machine “ which achieved a great production in a record time compared to that production which depends on manual production and, as a result the increasing of the product. It also replaced the small work shop and home manufacturing with factories that brought together machines and workers simultaneously. The start of the American Industrial revolution is often attributed to Samuel Slater who opened the first industrial mill in The United States in 1790. He introduced a vital new technology to The United States . This revolution was led by wealthy business Man. The Industrial revolution had transformed the American life and societies from rural into industrial ones . it made fundamental changes in industry and agriculture, transportation, technology and mining, it has a profound impact on the social and cultural and economic conditions in the time it started in the UK and then moved to all parts of western Europe , North America, Japan and finally to the rest of the world. The industrial revolution also has a negative effects like crowded and unhealthy housing next to the industrial areas in addition to the air and water pollution caused by factory waste.

The year of 1869 saw the construction of the transcontinental railroad also the invention of the telegraph and telephone contributed to the opening of communication lines and expanding the size of the US market, thus America was able to achieve its independence thanks to its industrial transformations. The industry has made and brought a set of changes in American life like the development of the transport movement, the expanding of the electricity and developing industrial productive process. The innovation had an important role in these changes and developments and among the most prominent innovators we mention:

The out work system was an organizational strategy to increase productivity , this organizational reform was especially important for shoe and boot making . The great economic development of the United States emerged in the last quarter of the 19 century , it help in achieving this unique renaissance in the world and among the factors that helped in this development :The applying modern technologies in American economy , immigration and the expansion of market potential, it has witnessed a great agriculture development as well especially in livestock breeding in the western regions of the country , As the number of cows increased from 17 Million to 47 Millions and the use of modern agricultural machinery and cultivated areas and the increase in production.

In only 20 years, wheat production has doubled by 15% and the cotton industry also has developed in the southern regions where it equals 70% of the global production. The industrial revolution process outpaced agriculture process, as the northeastern region as well as the western American region became the largest producer of grain and copper in the world.

People benefited a lot from this revolution, they had access to healthier diets, and they better housing, the increasing of education, also the creating of jobs in a better working conditions, it contributed in getting rid of the old society and establishing a new society. Factories have been in areas that attract workers; this exacerbated the phenomenon of rural exodus to seek job employment opportunities provided by new industries.

The American Industrial revolution divided society into two completely different classes : The bourgeois class which is the class that has been able to control all areas of industry and business, it's owned the factories , the mines, the markets and others , it lived in a great wealth and slaughter.

The second class is the working class, It formed as a result of the loss of many farmer's work as a result of replacing them with machines , so they were forced to flee to the cities to work in industrial jobs .Overtime the workers began to claim their rights to work and wages that achieve the principle of social justice. And at the beginning of the 19th century workers were able to form their own guilds that demanded their rights and was able to enact laws that would achieve the economic and social rights of workers .As for the economic changes that resulted from this revolution , the intensification of competition between the major industrialized countries to control the important business centers, the emergence of many movements and parties to demand the rights of workers.

Since the late of the 19 century the US has become the world's greatest economic power since that time , it followed an expansionists policy to dominate the American continent as well as to address all European attempts at intervention .Theodore Roosevelt is considered one of the most prominent politician who supported this policy by saying “they should be addressed gently with a thick stick holding a hand”.

### **1.6The Effects of Civil War on The American Literature**

The United States of America developed rapidly after the civil war , the race of democracy increased and the illiteracy rate decreased and the growth accelerated in the industrial and urban conditions and the population expanded due to immigration from different parts of the world in addition to the wealth of middle class and the number of readers who are interested in understanding these rapid transformations in American culture .

For many historians the most important effect of the Civil War is that it ended slavery .”Harriet Becher Stowen’s uncle Tom’s Cabin “ was the most influential literary texts on the issues of anti-slavery , It published continuously in 1851 for the first time .

The Civil War affected the lives of Americans who wanted to escape to a perfect world away from death and destruction of the war , they wanted to put an end to the romance and the emotional traditions associated with most female writers and to move into the American realism .The rise of realism helped destroy romantic and emotional writing styles . The authors try to provide an ideal vision for society and avoid the damaged side of life.

A new generation of American writers appeared around the mid nineteenth century. those writers wrote about their home land and people and experimented with literary forms. They presented new topics and ideas and created a national literature that won admiration

and respect throughout the world. This literature was due to the radical changes in the American society.

Realism is a literary movement linked to the end of the 19 century in response to romance and emotional traditions that associated with female writers. It was a form of American fiction literature. Some writers even considered realism a strategy for identifying the risks posed by social change, it included the entire United States especially in the Midwest and the south , from the real writers in the Midwest “Joseph Kirk Land” , “Hamlin Gerland” from the south “John W. Deforest”.

Some Americans poets and the atricalists committed themselves to realism in their works and writings , it depicted contemporary social life , ordinary people’s life and their daily activities.

At the beginning of the 20 century in the US , many painters who were affected by this movement created new works that reflected the life of the city and the population that was greater urban than the country side in the United States among them “Thomas Aikens , Marg cassat , James Mc Neill Whistler”. Also music, literature and journalism had their shair in dealing with American social facts that led to the development of a true school of thought and culture .George Bellow painted the city of life in New York city , his portraits were expressive and bold . Everett Sheen ,a member of Ashkan school was also Known for his many paintings in New York and the theatre, he painted theater scenes from London ,Paris and New York and embodied real life during that period .

There were many painters affected by this revolution , some American critics considered realism as a writing style that seeks to express American reality in familiar American language, and other considered it depiction of real life , while a third group of critics considered that realism seeks to draw reality objectively . Rationalists resisted

female literature and said that it adhere to idealism in describing and depicting the relationship between men and woman and her role in society. Researchers in the United States said that realistic literature should perform a social function and achieve an ethical purpose , the most famous of them “Jacob Riis” in his book “how to live in the second half –studies in the slums of New York” this book became among the most influential books in the 19 century. Also many critics appreciated this work and considered it as an example of a realistic novel that depicted the conditions of the poor people on the east side of New York . He was +depicted the conditions of the urban poor , as for the “Hamlin Garland “ he published story collections in the country side and their crises in the Midwest forms of the US , he created another class of realism “Rural realism”.

The realistic literature was divided into three periods:

A-The realistic era (1865-1913) is a description and a depiction of the details of life as it is in reality , it emphasized everything that is real in response to what is imagined. Realists tried to write honestly and objectively about people and everything they wrote was in response to romance which was also a movement that arose in the 19 century in response to classicism in the 18 century which emphasized the role of imagination and human emotions . Naturalists joined realists who focused on the impact of genetics and the environment.The American realism has emerged clearly in the work of writers like Mark Twain , Henry James and William Dean Hawells.

B- The natural realistic movement it appeared in the late of 19th century and the beginning of circumstances that are enable to change. Among its important writers “Stephen Gane and Jack London and Theodore Dreisere.

C- Regional realistic movement: “1912- 1927” : it’s a literary movement created by the poet “Ezra Pound and Amy Lowell” the pictorial poets changed a lot in the 19 century

poetry , they organized short poems in which they used ordinary language and free poetry. From the Characteristics of it, it explores reality in great detail , realists avoided exaggerated excitement and reliance on rational description in their description of events , the natural language of dialogue , it speaks with all objectivity , it also talks about the social classes of characters and giving them a great importance.

### **1.7 The effects of the American Civil war on the American feminist literature**

The advent of the American Civil war greatly changed the ideology of Victorian home life, it changed a lot in the lives of women who were focused into the public life , it helped them to obtain their rights and worked alongside the man .

She had an important role that had not been doing in the previous years. Women became nurses and worked to help people.

In the year leading up the Civil war, men worked outside homes in stores, factories, offices as for women , they worked in their homes they have devoted their lives to their husbands and children to create a comfortable atmosphere and good life. during the war most of them became outside the home , She had also a role in the war effort like men. Thousands of women in the north and the south volunteered and took part in the work as nurses, they organized associations to help the Union forces and provide it with the food and all what it need such as washing and sewing the uniform of soldiers , they also organized fundraising campaigns of medical supplies and other necessities.

Women writers had an important role and responsibility in bringing the attention of women to the Nation , they inspired women who had no role in the war to get involved. At that time women became effective alternatives as men , the literature of women became very active , their literary works were very influential on the soldiers to keep them on the



battle field , they also encouraged women at home . So ~~the~~ women writers became a major part of the war even far from the battlefield.

Before the 1850s women had little influence on literature leaving all the role for the men who criticized heavily any woman who tried to impose herself in this field for fear of competition, they didn't give much value and importance to women 's literary products , but in the middle of the 19 century , these opinions about women changed specifically in 1862 when the literacy rates began to rise for women.

After the dawn of the Civil War women made up half of all literary writers in the century female writers became more popular and appeared in various fields and works of literature, they spread their opinions to their readers in the novels they wrote.

The discussion of the aftermath of the Civil war was one of the common themes of all works; their goal became to express their opinions on paper hoping to achieve their goal.

Short stories written by activists were among the most influential literary forms from those writers: writers Rebecca Harding Davis, Louisa May Alcott , Harriet Beecher Stow", they have written complex short stories that include some basic ideas about anti-Nato sentiments.

In 1862 "Rebecca Harding Davis "published her short story (David Gaunt) in which she talks about the negative effects of the Civil War on families left behind home, two main topics also focused on them ( the idea of death and its moral impact on the family), Also Louisa May Alcott" wrote her story to expose the subtleties of the war. Alcott worked as a nurse in the Union army . she highlighted the extent of the violence and provided a picture of the war that was hidden. Much of her works talks about the difficult and dreadful conditions of nurses.

Harriet Beecher Stowe was hailed as the most influential narration, she highlighted in her works human rights and the question of slaves in the half of nineteenth century. She wanted to support her idea that slavery was the most important subjugation that the nation must address, her novel was one of the most important books that motivated the formation of the Civil War. "Uncle's Tom's Cabin" became one of the most settlers. "Lydia Maria Child" although much of her writings was published before the Civil War but she was a figure in abolishing the death penalty through her letters and articles.

Poetry also is genre of literature, the most popular female writers were poets; their poems contributed greatly to expressing their personal opinions about the war in a brief description and convey their feelings to their readers.

Among the most popular and influential poems:

"*Buttles Hyma of the republic*" was written by "Julia Ward Home" published in 1862, it served as a patriotic marching time for the Union soldiers. The literary works were published years after they were written, they provided a valuable insight into the nation's scene in the war.

The annual literary works of that period discussed the violence and the chances of battles of the Civil war. Women were unable to fight, she became a power force in the literary market also during the reconstruction related to the war. Women overcame obstacles facing her and fought in their own cause which is "equality between men and women".

The writers highlighted the ways in which women contributed to the war effort and in this way it dominated the literary field for the first time in the history in 1862. And as a result literary society recognized the ability of women and their contribution to society just as men do.

**1.8 Conclusion**

As a conclusion we notice that the American *Civil War* had transformed the American society and had many effects especially on the lives of women. It changed their path and made them obtain their rights. It was their first step towards liberation and decent life.

### **2.1. Introduction**

The second chapter is a theoretical background , that is devoted to the definition of feminism , its beginning and the most important feminist activists in the United States . It also give a brief look about children literature, and how it started in America , feminism within *Little women* within the novel , then the positioning of Louisa May Alcott in the American literature and how the *Civil War* affected her as female writer.

### **2.2 Feminist Theory**

Feminism is a different set of social theories and political movements and moral philosophies which are motivated by women issues. It contains social policies and philosophies regarding the difference that exists between men and women. These theories shared the goal of eliminating oppression and discrimination related to women so that she can participate in society safely and freely. Most feminists writers particularly related in issues of political, economic and social equality.

#### **2.2.1 Definition and history**

Feminist theory is the theory that calls for women to obtain their social and political rights and equal opportunities as men. It considered also as a model for the ideal social situation desired that has not been achieved in the world yet. The concept of feminist waves generally understood and defined as every activity that aims to give women their rights, but this did not prevent some activists in this movements from giving different dimensions to this term because each one of them has its own look and ideas.

Wilkelmina Drucker (1847-1925) was the first woman who fought of the equal rights (vote) of woman and founded a feminist organizations that helped her in achieving her goals and in 1917-1919 her goal of women's suffrage was reached.

The activities that were presented to give the woman her right, have taken their first steps in the Enlightenment Era with the beginning of the liberation movements and also appeared during the French rule because it granted freedom and equality to all people. "Olimpi Dajonin called for the issuance of the women's rights document after issuing the human rights and the civil rights document in 1789.

During this period, all rights were directed for men only, there was no equality between man and woman as we notice a great difference in the transactions that took place between the sexes, Men had all the rights and powers and his thinking dominates the thinking of women. So equality between the sexes is what this movement sought because all people are born free and search for justice and equality in all fields.

Feminist political activists are often campaigning on issues such as reproductive rights and their right to bodily integrity, also protection of women and young girls from domestic violence, harassment and rape and workplace rights like maternity leave. Many feminists argue that today feminism is a grassroots movement that aims to break down barriers based on (race, social class, culture, religion and sexual orientation) that relates to women in the society. As for the topics that focus on such as 'Patriarchal society, persecution against women as well as turning women into a sexual goods '

Feminists around the world differed in causes, goals, depending on the time, culture and the country. These movements had leaders of white women from the middle class in Eastern Europe and North America and Southeast Asia. And after that, women in the former European colonies suggested « post-colonial feminism and third world ». 'Simon de Beauvoir' wrote that 'Christine de Pizan' was the first woman and writer to defend the women by writing 'Epistle to the god of love' in the 15th century.

The feminist movement began generally in western thought in the 19th century, the term was coined for the first time in 1895 from the resistance movements of the

subordination of women to men that emerged in England then spread to France and The United States.

Many feminist historians have agreed that the activists who advocated and worked for woman's rights before the establishment of the feminist movement belonged to the pre-feminist movement. Some of them have seen that there is no linear history of the feminist movement. The Modern western women's history is divided into three periods of time, it has three waves in its history.

The first feminist wave during the 20th century to obtain legal equality specifically obtaining the right to vote. The second one cared about the social equality and the role of women in society . As for the third wave , it is a complement of the issues of the second feminist wave and a response of its failures , it began in 1990 century.

Feminism in the first wave promoted equal property rights for women. By the late of nineteenth century feminist activities was focused primarily on the right to vote, the first wave ended with the adoption of the nineteenth amendment to the United States constitution that gave the woman her right to vote in 1919.

The second feminist wave, it concerned with the equality and the discrimination issues and political and cultural inequality for woman and also encouraged woman to understand how their personal lives reflected sexist power structures.

'Betty Friedan' was a key player in the second wave feminist in 1963, her book "The Feminine Mystique" criticized the idea that woman could find fulfillment only through child rearing and homemaking.

The third feminist movement began in response to notable failures of the second wave. It sees that people's lives are intertwined and explain how religion, race, social class , sex and nationality are all important factors when discussing feminism.

Feminism have interested with different types of movements, there have been movements that involved black and white woman, young and older, poor and rich every one has its own and special focus. There have been also worker movements and also feminist environmental activists.

During the 19 century many British literature succeeded in extending literature despite the difficult circumstances. Jane Austen' wrote about society restricting women's lives. 'Charlotte Bronte, Anne Bronte and George Elliot ' depicted the woman's suffering and anger.

Many male writers also wrote about discrimination and sexual prejudice such as the novels of Thomas Hardy and the poems of George Meredith and the plays of Henrick Apsen.

### **2.3 The most famous feminist theorists in America during the 18 century**

Women during the 18 century were concerned only with their homes and would only perform domestic roles and duties, society had given them the role of housewives only, but step by step they began to obtain their right in society and the world , and during the American *Civil War* feminism appeared when women worked as nurses and volunteer sin the field , and after that, they fought for the right to control their own property.

women's rights movement is a social movement based largely on the United States, It tried to settle Women's rights in the 1960s and 1970s, recognized as a second wave of feminism and associated with temperance and abolitionist movement of slavery, as it gave the blacks activists their rights.

Feminism changed the society and affected it especially woman , she became more independent and free and obtained some of their rights like « women's suffrage , preater

access to education , the right to initial divorce proceedings , the right of women to make individual decision »

‘Elizabeth Cady Stanton ‘ and Quaker abolitionist ‘Lucretia Mott ‘ were the first major organizers of the first gathering devoted to woman’s rights held on July 19-20-1848 in Seneca Falls , New York where three hundreds of men and women relied on the 13 decision stipulated in « Stanton’s declaration » was the goal of achieving the secret right of franchise , it called ‘ the Declaration of Sentiments or a Declaration of The Rights of women’.Marry Wollstonecraft’s the first feminist philosopher at the time 18<sup>th</sup> century. Also Ernestine Rose joined a group of American women that included influential members and figures like”Anthony Stanton, Paulina Wright, Davis and Sojourner Truth in 1840 s and 1850s”.

Avast immigrants labor movement in 1910 in which feminists was presculed founded across the United States where hundreds of thousands of women workers in strikes and protests and Union drives.

Among the most famous works of the American theorists:

-Abigail and John Adam “*letters on women’s rights* in 1776”.

-Judith Sargent Murray “desultory thoughts upon the utility of encouraging a degree of self especially in female bosoms in 1784”.

-On the equality of the sexes “Judith Sargent Murray from the Massachusetts magazine. -

In 1810s, 1820s Emma Williard “ An adress to the public , particularly to the members of the legislature of New York proposing a plan for improving Female Education. -Robert

Dale Owen “ Mariage low proled”

-Lydia Maria Child “*TheHistory of The Conditions Of Women In Various Ages And*

*Nations* “ -Sarah Grimké “*Letters on The Equality Of The Sexes*” 1837



- In 1845 « *The Rights And Condition Of Women* 'Samuel May'
- Elizabeth Cady Stanton "voting rights speech" in 1848.
- In 1850 *The Scarlet Letters* Nathaniel Hawthorne 1850.
- Elizabeth Qakes Smith « *Women and her Needs* ».
- Ernestine Rose 1851 *Speech at The National Woman's rights convention*.
- Clarina Howard Nichols "*The Responsibilities Of Women*" in 1851.
  
- Matilda Joslyn Gage "*Speech at the national woman's right convention* ».
- Elizabeth Cady Starteen 1860 "*a slave's appeal*".
  
- Harriet Jacobs 1861 "*incidents in the life of slave girl*".
- Louisa May Alcott "*ALong Fatal Love Chase*" in 1866.
- Louisa May Alcott in 1868. "*Little Women*"
- In 1871 "*Are Women A Class ?*" little Blake 1870.
- Matilda Jolsyn Gage on the progress of education and industrial avocations for women.
- Susan B. Anthony "*sentencing for the crime of voting*" 1873.
- Thomas Webster "*Women.Man's Equal*" 1873.
- Mark Twain "*women's Temperaance Movement*"
- Marie Howland "*Papa's Own Girl*" 1874.
- National women suffrage association.
- A declaration of rights of women of the United States on July, 4 th 1876.
- Mirozan Mary Lane (1880-1881).
  
- ThomasWent Worth Higginson "common sense about women" in 1881.
- Elizabeth Cady Stanton 1884, « *The Need Of Liberal Divorce Laws from the north American review*.

- Helen.H. Gardener “*Men, Women and Gods, and Other Lectures*”(1885).
- Arthur Gliman “*Women Who Go To College*” in 1888.
- Voltairine DE Cleyre “*Sex slavery*” in 1890.
- A.P. Mayo “*The Women’s Movement In The South*”1891.
- Anna J. Looper “*A Voice From The South*”1892.
- Elizabeth Cady Stanton “*Solitude Of Her Self*”1892.
- Lucy stone “*The Progress Of Fifty Years*”1893.
- Matilda Joslyn Gage “*Women Church And State*”1893.
- Mary Caurina Putnam Jacob “*The Women’s Suffrage* “1894.
- Carrie Chaplain Catt “*Speech On Women’s Suffrage*1894.
- William Hard “*The Women Of Tomorrow*” 1896.
- Elizabeth Cady Stanton “*eighty years and more*”1898.
- Kate Chapin “*The Storm* “ 1898.
- Charlotte Perkins Gilman “*The Women And Economics* “ 1898.
- Kate Chapin “*The Wakening* “.

These works are just some of the feminist works at that time and not the all.

#### **2.4 Feminism within *Little Women***

The novel of *Little Women* discussed many topics of feminism which is one of the most important topics presented in the book. The story tells the struggle of girls at a time when society was hostile to women’s life stories.

The story delves into the difficulties that women have faced for 50 years in order to find their way through the world that was constraining them, they were seeking freedom during the period of the *Civil War*, woman had to marry only.

Alcott portrayed feminism in her novel when Joe got married at the end of the story, this event confirms that whatever the strong desire to change something, it can not

be changed completely due to the ideals and values that restrict it and which it subject to. Alcott uses Joe 's character to portray feminism through the use of dialogues, behavior sand images. She reveals Joe's feminist traits by relying on herself. Joe was a fun-loving character, she was tomboy and not behave like women and this was unacceptable in the society.

when her father saw that, he made her a family man when he went to the war. Alcott describes Joe's femininity through imagery, it states "Joe enjoyed a state of this satisfaction and ceased to envy richer girls, taking great comfort and need ask no one for a penny".

Joe want to be rich and she knew that she had to work hard for what she wants and make all the sacrifices to achieve her dream and everything she aspires to. This shows Joe's independence and self-reliance, no one else is dependent on him, this also, encourages women to rely on themselves work and sacrifice to achieve their goals so they must defeat everything that impedes their path in achieving their desires. The novel made a clear debate about whether it was feminist or not many said that is feminist and others said that's not feminist novel.

'Kathleen Kenan' considered the novel as a feminist novel, When Joe marries a funky suitor who took her writing seriously and she said even beloved female characters make choices that are neither good nor disappointing, sharing and writing their stories is a feminist act in a manly society , the novel represents the gender ideology that began to raise the value of the female and the woman and this appears in the principal character « Joe Marsh » who was against what woman suffer from in that time and against the traditional habits against her.

## 2.5. Children literature

Children literature defined as a tool of entertainment rather than a tool for moral instruction. It includes all non-fiction, literary and artistic genres and physical formats. It is written for the young people who are not yet interested in adult literature.

### 2.5.1 Definition of children literature

Children literature began to be published in the seventeenth century, most of the early books of children were didactic rather than artistic to improve children's moral and spiritual life. John Newbery (1713-1776) is a British publisher called « The father of children's literature » began publishing books for children amusement. He published a little pretty pocket book, it was heralded as the first Book for only Children's pleasure reading.

Prior to the mid 19th century children's books and stories concentrated mainly on the realistic perspective and the moral principles of the world. The age of renaissance witnessed the first movable printing press's developments that paved the way for more different publications. At that time some children literature was written but it was primarily books for moral instruction such as *Foxe's Book of Martyrs* and *The Pilgrim's Progress*.

The evolution of seeing the child in a different life stage than an adult and the progression of childhood began during the rise of Puritanism when John Locke's philosophies on the mind of the child as a blank slate became popular. Parents became more concerned about the spiritual and the mental minds of their children. When the paper and printing became more economical, the children's book industry veritably boomed during the 1800's. In the 1920s these books which are oriented to children could be mass produced in color. *Wanda Gág's Millions of Cats* (1928) was one of the most successful

book sell in more than a million copies. Also *The Little Engine Could* in 1930 , and *Curious George*.

Literature serves children in four major ways , it helped them to better understand themselves , the others and the world around them and the aesthetic values of written language., because when the children read the Narrative Poetry , fiction or a biography they often take on the role of one of the character's thoughts their words , actions the child develops insight into her or his own character and values.

From the characteristics of this literature , it is simple and straightforward , it depends on actions in order to interest the child, expresses a child's opinion and point of view, tends toward fantasy , it is optimistic , Their events are full of hope , it teaches a lessons and always contain positive themes, it includes repetition it always emphasizes what is important .

### **2.5.2 Children Literature in Louisa May Alcott's writing**

Louisa May Alcott is a writer raised in Massachusetts but was born in Germantown , Pennsylvania . She is The Author of the classic novel *Little Women* .She spent her childhood with her family,her parents and three sisters.

Louisa May Alcott was interested in writing when she was young and when she would write stories and plays to entertain her sisters. Also the Alcotts were close Friends with Concord writers ( Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry David Threau ) , that helped and influenced her to write. Louisa Alcott wrote poetry , sensational short stories , and serious novels for adults and she is best known for her works and books for children . These works were written in the 19th century during the flowering of the children's literature.

Alcott published *Moods* in 1864 , A novel for the adults that was about marriage and the social consequences of divorce. After that her publisher Thomas Niler suggested to her to

write a book for girls , She replied and wrote *Little Women* in September 1868 , drawing on her personal childhood experiences with her sisters , *Little women* published in two versions and it is considered to be landmark in the history of children's literature because it pictures the daily lives of four teenage sisters set a new trend in which books for children became realistic and entertaining. The book was successful and sold more than 60.000 copies in its first year, and brought Alcott immediate fame and fortune.

*Little women* first part was written in six weeks only and published in September 1868 , she created the March family in it and in the following year , she produced *Little women* part 02 (Good Wives) the version that had immediately demanded . Afterthat in 1871 she wrote *Little men* as a tribute to John Pratt . when the public called for another book about the March family she started the last one . *Joe Boy's* in 1880.

### **2.6 Positioning of Louisa May Alcott in The American literature**

“Bronson Alcott”was her father ,he was a popular educator who would become one of America's most influential reformers of education, he was also a part of the transcendentalist movement which encouraged the perfection of the individual.

Louisa May Alcott consider among the most important and enduring of the 19th century American authors, she helped in shape the literature of America, she published “*Concord Sketches*”in 1863 which reflected her life and experience when he was a nurse during the civil war. She wrote in different genres (fantasy, realism , gothic fiction , sketches and poetry. She also placed her work in respected literary magazines such as “*Atlantic Monthly*”.

Alcott was influenced by the transcentalist movement which affected her writing .her primarily education received from her father also from some familyfriends Emerson Nathaniel Hawthorne and Margaret Fuller . She was the first woman to register to vote in

Concord Massachusetts , she worked as a nurse in the Union army during the *civil war* that inspired her to write, *Moods* was her second book in 1864 , after that she wrote a firm story titled *Little Women* she wrote it just in two and half months , which was based on her own experience with her sisters and it made a great success.

Louisa May Alcott was a 19th century American literary icon, she studied under the philosopher Henry David Thoreau and popular authors Ralph Waldo Emerson and Nathaniel Hawthorne . Alcott took many jobs to help Alleviate financial struggles. she worked as a domestic Servant, teacher and washing laundry, she turned to writing for both emotional and financial support. Her first poem was published in magazine titled «Sunlight » in 1854. her first book was a compilation of short stories.

Her success gave her a financial independence and created a demand for more books. Her other books include « *Little men , Eight Cousins and Jo's Boys* ».

She attended the women's congress of 1875 in syracuse New York in which she introduced by "Mary Livermore" also she contributed to Lucy stone's woman's journal while organizing Concord women to vote in the school election, she wrote "I was the first women to register my name as a voter"

She became one of the most important American writers of the nineteenth century, by 1884 the effects of the heavy metal poisoning began to take effect, and Louisa published *Joe's Boy's* in 1886.

*Little Women* became the most popular work and has been made into films , the book treated issues about gender and women's rights . Louisa May Alcott wrote in thirty five years more than three hundred works in different literary genres , she wrote numerous poems, plays and short stories .

### 2.7 The Effects Of The Civil War On Louisa May Alcott As A Writer

During the Civil War Louisa May Alcott worked as a nurse in the Union army , she worked in the hospital that inspired her to write her work .the war affected her greatly from the experiences and memories in her real life that she took from the war, she demonstrated all her skills and beautiful writing style and with this she was able to achieve her success.

Working as nurse even if for a short period of time influenced her greatly and inspired her in writing She also traveled to Europe after the war to see the places and the sites that she had read about, all that affected her.

Louisa May Alcott was a famous American writer especially for her novel *Little Women* which was written after the *Civil War*, when she saw a lot of things and issues and wanted to speak about and change in it.

The war gave a bad impact on the children, it makes them work in order to get money and to help their family and to continue their life , they were working at an age that they were supposed to play in it and live their childhood , read and learn but the difficult circumstances of life deprived them of all this. As for the four March sisters, they sacrificed like “Joe” the main character in the novel , she cut her beautiful hair in order to help her mother.

The book of *Little Women* showed as how closely the family is despite poverty and difficult circumstances. Louisa May Alcott has wrote the book in period when the woman was struggled to obtain their right and to have an important role in society , the struggle for young girls and women in general to be themselves, Louisa’s life and her experiences in the war and her conditions with her family portrayed it in her novel.



The novel encourages women to challenge difficulties and make an effort to finally enjoy comfort as Joe and her sisters did. Alcott from her novel wanted from the readers to understand that the American *Civil War* had a bad impact on families especially the poor. The role of woman is an important and interesting issue treated in the novel, it reflects the role of woman in family and society. And during the war families were lived in poor conditions 'poverty' it affected also the education which was portrayed on the character of 'Amy' who left out the school.

Alcott when worked as nurse she was spending her day in cleaning and sewing bandages, fetching bed linens, water and pillows, assisting during surgical procedures, this work affected a lot and made her see many facts and the suffering that led her to write. She also fought against slavery and registered women to vote, she wrote for women's rights and went door to door in Massachusetts to encourage women to vote.

So the effects of the *Civil War* which are reflected in the little women are one from the most reasons that pushed Louisa to write.

## **2.8 Conclusion**

As a conclusion, this chapter analyzed the theory of feminism that is the main theory in the research, then it clarified the position of Louisa May Alcott in the American literature, how she was affected by the American *Civil War* and how she influenced the thoughts of women through her writings that were directed specifically at women and young girls.

### 3. Introduction

The third chapter is about the story of the novel *Little Women*, The plot summary, characters, themes that were exposed in the book as well as the main reasons that pushed Louisa May Alcott to write her novel.

#### 3.1 Classic Little Women

*Little Women* is a novel, it tells the story of the four sisters “Meg, Joe, Beth, Amy”. It describes and images their lives from the childhood to womanhood. It based on the author and her three sisters.

#### 3.2 The themes

In general the novel of *Little Women* appears simple, it talks about the live of four girls from childhood to adulthood, and the struggle of the young women in their life with their family and the surrounding living conditions. Women focus only on their duty towards their family. As Alcott wrote her novel, woman's position began to change, a progress had been made towards equality between men and women. Among the topics in the novel that were emphasized among them.

##### 3.3.1 Family and marriage

The four girls of March learned about the important of love both familial and romantic. The issue of family and marriage is the most widely discussed topic in the novel, as was the position of girls in that period was also in the nineteenth century. Characters are determined by their family relationship, behavior and support for each other.

Alcott asserts in the novel that all the events that occurred within the family took place within the family unit and confirm their solidarity and love for each other.

There were major dramatic events such as Amy and Joe's struggle over the scorched manuscript. The family in the novel speaks about the girls who marry and became housewives.

Marmee was urging her girls to marry and start a new beautiful life with their new families. For her a happy family is the biggest blessing for a woman. She was teaching them how to behave with each other and towards their parents as well as their husbands. The novel gave a great importance to how to find and choose a good husband. Laurie the neighbor and the friend of the March family became like their son and brother for them. The March family expanded and became other new families due to their appreciation of the family and they were more closely related to each other and their relationship increase with love. By this Alcott confirms that marriage enhance families ties.

### **3.3.2 Poverty**

Among the most important themes discussed in the novel is poverty, the novel focuses on the poverty of poor workers, it shows kindness, help and human side of others, especially the poor people, just as the poor March family helped the poorest Hamill's family and also beggars are taken care of.

The poverty of the March family is specially touching because it results from Mr. March trying to help his friend, The March girls were convinced that love and happiness are better than money.

Meg married John Brook, also Amy didn't marry Laurie for his money, she told him that she would marry him even if she was poor. Alcott in her novel confirms that money is not everything and that money doesn't bring happiness.

Also through Laurence 's character money must be used and spent in a way that benefits yourself and others as helping others . Poverty is not a defect but rather strengthens the human personality and creativity and makes him live in peace of mind while he is satisfied with himself, as he gains the love of others for him , unlike rich. "Work" .

The novel highlights the importance and the value of the work through the characters it embodied. They learned from their experiences in life that working is necessary for a person , although it is difficult and not easy , but honest is a hardship, "Meg" was upset with her work but also struggled to do it with all joy. John Brook also defends Meg and the working class as a symbol and example of American independence. Girls learned from their mother that they should work and keep it safe . "Marmi" was urging them to invest their energy in their work and to do it in the fullest to keep their moral and spirit very high. As an example of that "Hanna" the worker that think about work that is the panacea for most pain , and when the girls neglected their work in a a period of time and became lazy , Beth fell ill.

### **3.3.3 Self improvement**

In the novel the four girls were always working to change themselves and their personalities for the best and improve themselves and learn from their mistakes. This appeared in the first book when the girls" plays pilgrims " in order to correct their mistakes and address the defects of their personality in the absence of the father , they made a great effort for change and that continued even after they reached adulthood when they faced a new experiences . Meg learned to overcome vanity by marrying John. Also Joe involved into a woman after she was a tomboy .Also the case for Amy when she tried to apply experiences abroad to be generous and grateful.

Marmithe mother was the encouraging source for the girls to change like the father despite his distance from them , but this didn't prevent him from encouraging them by a telegrams that he sends , he taught them how to improve themselves. These experiences made them happy and enjoy every moment in their life. "Duty and sacrifice" The duty is an important topic in the novel , it reflects in the girl's focus on their duties , then it is their duty to full fill their role towards their family and Alcott shows the consequences of abandoning these duties, also the novel shows what the girls must do towards their society.

**3.3.4 Self sacrifice**It consider also as duty when the father " John Brook" sacrificed in the army , they gave up the love and affection in the family , his sacrifice was very large despite his age. Lauri also sacrificed his love for music and obeyed his grandfather's wishes , Also Joe also sacrificed her dream and her work as a writer and looked after her parents after Beth's death, These events were significant in the novel. Joe was always considered that her writings is the work that help her in her life and to achieve everything she wants also through her work , she can help her family , just like Mr. Bhaer she learned from him how to be honest and how to do her job with love to achieve their goal. Her happiness was associated with her work as a writer . Also Lauri when seeing the efforts and sacrifices of the girls , he became working with his grandfather in a vital way that made him happy , instead of pursing , music , he was afraid to go to work.

### 3.3.5 Mortality and society

Alcott in her novel emphasized ethics , The March family was an example of a generous family. When the girls gave the breakfast to the poor Hamals Family, it was a strong support for them that makes them happy , they were rewarded by Mr. Laurence , this indicates their beautiful manners.

Amy was very happy with her conviction , she married Lauri because she loved him and didn't marry to Fred Vaughn for the money, she preferred and chose love. Joe was trying to make the noble morals in her community and those around her through her sensual stories with the support of Mr. Bhar who taught her how to be influential in society and changed her path and her unethical stories

“Independence and women's rights” Among the most important topics discussed in the novel is independence .Alcott presented herself as Joe , she longed for autonomy through her writings and works in order to help her family , she considered her success to be independent. As for Lauri also wanted to be independent from his grandfather . the characters in the novel believe that they must achieve autonomy and their goals , as this was part of their American Uprising.

### 3.3.6 Selfless generosity

Generosity is another subject of ethics that has been emphasized in the novel. This appears when the girls gave gifts to their mother “Marmi” and they abandoned themselves as well when they give their breakfast to the poor family “Hammals “ . Beth is the best example of generosity in the novel by caring for others ,even while she was on her deathbed she gave gifts to children who didn't know just because they were passing outside her window.

Alcott portrays the generosity of these characters through the events that happened in the story like Mr .Laurence gifts for the March family , also the generous of Lauri and Amy after they got married.

### **3.3.7 Love**

The novel of little women provide an insight into love , Joe embodied girl's idealistic notions of love in her plays . At the end of the story the girls find true love . her plays were a reflection of the way in which romantic love is seen in that period in the 19 century , she embodied in her stories what she aspired to , she took her first lessons about love from the rich boy “Lauri” she was convinced and understood what she was looking for in a successful marriage.

There were other aspects of love in the novel such as family love and in particular the maternal love. At the end of the novel , the March girls found their way to true love except Beth who died.

### **3.4 Why little women**

Little *women* Was written as a result of different elements and causes , There were several factors that motivated Louisa May Alcott to write this meaningful and influential novel.Among these reasons was poverty and what she and her sisters and all women in society were suffering from , she wanted to visualize us the position of the woman at that time.

### **3.5 Little Women lessons**

In this series” Marmi “took the role of the head of the family she was considered an example of struggling and fighting women for her daughters.She is one of the most realistic characters in the story, through her sacrifice, love humanity and discipline.

Through the characters and events embodied in the story we learned many influential lessons. The novel taught the values of life and how we must sacrifice and tire to achieve our desires and to be comfortable in the end.

The spirit of sacrifice

This topic has a great renaissance throughout the novel , there were many events and scenes illustrating this among them is the grouping of girls for their four dollars and buying new shoes for their mom “Marmi” . Here Alcott urged the girls and the readers to sacrifice for their family and the ones they love

### **3.5.1.The spirit of giving**

This is shown when the girls provided breakfast to the poor Hummalls family and abandoned themselves”

### **3.5.2.The Spirit of independence**

Louisa’s novel was written in the time when woman was suffering . She was committed only to home , raising children , seeking to win the fiance’s hand , building a house and supplying a family. Through this series , Alcott was seeking liberation, changing these beliefs and entering history with this achievement . She embodied this with Joe stubborn character who dreamed of being a writer. At the end of the story , she traveled and left her comfortable home and her small village to realize her dream and autonomy.

**3.5.3.The spirit of family**Despite the conflict of interests of the four sisters. this didn’t affect their family relationship with each other. The novel shows that family ties , no matter how different the family members are , are not broken .



In the difficult times of the family, Joe and Meg insisted on working for the help, this also appears when Amy burns the only Joe manuscript that has suffered so much to write it and strives to complete it. At first she got angry a lot and resulted her sister and didn't want to forgive her, but at the end she realizes the importance of the family and forgives her sister. When Amy dies in an air skiing accident, Joe realizes that her sister is more important than any other thing even her dream.

Also when the rich aunt wanted to take one of the girls, Marmee and her husband refused this. They said "We can't give up our girls for a dozen fortunes rich or poor, we will keep together and be happy in one another." *Little Women* may not be perfect, but most of us could learn a great deal about how to live today from this old-fashioned novel.

### **3.6 Why Louisa May Alcott wrote *little women*?**

Through the events and the character, Alcott shows that the woman's focus on only her family and family duties limits her creativity and stops her personal growth. At the time when the novel was written, woman had many problems on the family and society, she had no value and role as it is now, concerned and committed only to her family.

In the 19th century when Alcott wrote her story, woman began to liberate and open up to society and the way in which society has perceived has changed. She became somewhat open to the outside world, and her focus on her outside world began to take his way. On the surface of the story, shows us that is a simple story follows the lives of the four March girls, they endure hardship and learn life lessons, they embrace values and bounds as they move from childhood to womanhood.

Alcott was suffering from poverty with her family and her sisters that's what makes her began to write in order to achieve her desire in life and her goal and also to help her family. The first part of the book depicts the childhood of the girls , their suffering with poverty , their mistakes and their sacrifices . She talked about how they overcome obstacles and how they learned from their mistakes. Childhood was a period of self-development to move to the womanhood when they got married and became mothers and good housewives. The poverty of the family was the main driver of Alcott's writings , she has contradicted social norms about women , she invited women and young girls to be patient and deal with poverty. Alcott was controlled by her parents, especially her father.

The year preceded the novel of Alcott, her father insisted for her daughter to write simple stories for boys and girls about how overcome selfishness and anger , and the mistakes he had constanty referred to in "Louissa Alcott" The way of Louisa May Alcott to *Little Women* made from her father's ideas .as the March sisters seek to achieve their ideal "femininity". So her fathers thoughts were the supporting source for her writing .

Alcott was an active girl , she chose not to marry , as she was against her wishes. The death of Beth "The shy little sister who lives a secluded life, has been described as a form of self-sacrifice. This tragic event inspired Alcott, she related it to the emotional and aneticsuffering of the child.

Beth died when she was 22, she was upset with the life imposed on her by her parents, and she was living in pain, anger and fear.

The subject of love, sadness, suffering and sacrifice looked at woman to enter the adult world. Alcott wrote "Little women" to fulfill her father's desire. Although she didn't want to write it, she was immediately successful, this forced her to cover the most difficult years of her life.

### **3.7 Conclusion**

In short; this chapter aimed at analyzing the themes that May Alcott discussed in her novel in the light of feminist theory, and the most important reasons that pushed her to write her novel.

## **General Conclusion**

Little Women is an autobiographical story, it speaks about its writer "Louisa May Alcott" her life with her sisters from the childhood to the womanhood. how they grow up during and after the civil war and how they overcome difficulties .

Louisa May Alcott used her novel to describe the status of woman in America that time .She felt that woman had to change her situation and get her right and equality as man , so she decided to write her novel to achieve what the woman want. The story follows the lives of the four sisters , each one of them seeks for her hapiness, Beth wants to marry , Jo wants to be a writer , Amy wants the material success and Meg wants to care for her family.

The whole story portrayed the picture of woman, her suffering in her domestic life in a patriarchal society. The novel treated different and an important themes related especially to the life of woman (family, work, love, domestic life)

To conclude, this research paper describe the life of woman in America in the 19 century and how the Civil War affected women especially the American women writers and it motivates them to write and describe the situation and the life that woman lived , and it speaks also about the major problems that the woman concerned about. The topics that treated in the novel and the definition of the characters.

Louisa May Alcott tried to depict the life of woman in the society in that time by their characters , their personalities , manners and their intensions toward eachother and how the woman lived in a patriarchal society in which she didn't have many rights us they had today.

The novel is a well loved classic of children's literature which achieved a tremendous success , and Louisa May Alcott's writings are always defending woman. At last, it can be said that Louisa May Alcott is one of the famous novelist in the American literature history. This study was conducted to confirm the important role of woman and depict her sufferings as woman in a society dominated by man.

Louisa May Alcott in her novel presented an important reality of the American woman, It is a novel in which carried in love and marriage that's were the issues that Alcott struggled with in her life. She struggled to change the traditional norms against woman and to help woman in getting her right . In the novel Alcott presented herself as Joe who is the main character In the story who rejects the social rules against woman and the struggle the gender inequality . Louisa May Alcott in her novel portrayed the position of American Woman and her domestic life and her enduring in manly society.

As a result of analyzing the characters, it was revealed that May Alcott has changed the image of woman in the American society and the situation in which they were lived at that time. She had overcome all the difficulties that deprived women from getting their rights , and thus helped them to be free and enjoyed their legal rights. Alcott flipped the views and the expectations of her society about woman and put an end to the social boundaries.

For further studies , readers or researchers can examine May Alcott's novel in light of the historical context by applying a historical analysis . In this way , the researcher can return back in time and explore different historical events and facts that shaped the story. So it may help him/ her to better understand the female characters and the impact of these events on them.

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## **Appendices**

### **Appendix 01**

#### **The Plot Summary**

The novel has written and published in two volumes (1832-1869), it achieved a great commercial success. the readers liked the story and requested to know more about the characters , they requested another copy that's why Alcott's completed the second copy titled " good wives in the United Kingdom" it was also successful as the previous one. After that in 1880 the two versions were published in one copy as a single novel titled *Little Women* . The novel of *Little Women* tells the biography of its writer "Louisa May Alcott" and her four sisters in Concord Massachusetts in 1860 in the absence of their father and their fight in the American Civil War. The four girls were living with their mother at their home .The novel tells how the girls grow up, find love and find their way into the world. The four sisters live and grow in post-Civil War of America.

On the Christmas Eve, they get a nice dinner from their neighbor Mr. Laurence. Joe meets his grandson of the old Laurence in dancing who named "Lauri" after that they became friends and very close and the events of this novel began.

This novel is full of hope, joy, surprise, disappointments and love, it speaks about their career and their life and how they grew up ,sacrificed and defied difficulties , and despite all the difficult circumstances they were full of hope , they were a family very close to each other and in the end each of them founded the love and comfort that wthey were locking for.



“Joe ,Meg ,Beth ,Amy” are four sisters live with their mother in new England in war conditions where their father was too far away , he worked as a chaplain in the war, they work and struggle to help their mother to preserve their home after they recently lost their wealth , they were not poor , but they lost their money and everything they had. The story begins with the four girls sitting in their living room sobbing of their poverty. At the Christmas, they decided to buy gifts for their mother for her joys. Marmie“ The mother” was receiving letters from her husband urging them to be patient and not complain from poverty .

On Christmas morning, the girls woke up to find each one of them a book under their pillow as a gift from their mother who was a kind-hearted and encouraged them to share their breakfast with the poor “Hammals” family. When Mr. Laurence saw what they did he rewarded them with Christmas surprise which is ice cream and bonbons along with four bouquets of flowers for the table.

Meg and Joe received an invitation to attend the new year’s party in the house of their affordable Sally Gardiner . At the party Joe was isolated in the garden, where she met Lauri’s grandson of Mr. Laurence who lives with him in the palace , As for Meg her ankle flattened in the party , and Lauri accompanied them to the house. When Lauri fell ill, Joe visited him and met his grandfather Mr . Laurence who admired her courage and they became friends even the two families.

After that Laurence met the four girls and Meg became his favorite , he gave her the special piano for his deceased granddaughter . The girls faced various adventures. Mr. March pulled her daughter Amy out of school after a teacher beat her as a punishment for a wrong act she did.

The beautiful Meg attended her friend's party after she allowed the girls to dress her upscale, but she realized that appearances is not everything , she heard rumors that people thought that she intended to marry Laurie for his money. In the spring Joe smuggled Laurie into a pickwick club meeting, which was created by the March family and then became a member . At the beginning of July, the March family decided to neglect their housework.

One day, Laurie hosted his British friends , and the March family went out with them on a picnic and the good moments and events continued , so Joe published her first story . However this joy didn't last long after they received the news of their father's decease on Washington hospital by a telegram. So, Marmee" the mother" decided to go to take care of her husband but she didn't have enough money , she only had 5 dollars . Joe sold her long chestnut hair to help her mother and solve the problem.

In the absence of her mother, chaos arose between the girls as they neglected their duties , only Beth was going to visit the poor Hamill family , but she was infected with a scarlet fever during one of her visit to them. Beth was on her deathbed and everyone thought that she would die , but with the Marmee's return, Beth began to recover . Meanwhile Amy was spending time in her aunt's home to avoid getting an infection, then Beth somewhat recovered.

Laurie's teacher who named Mr. Brook fell in love with Meg and they got engaged. Mr. March returned from the war to their family , Meg got married and moved into her new home with her husband Mr. Brook , she made a great effort build on the needs of her new home and then she had a twin called Demi and Daisy .

Joe published her version and Amy had the opportunity to travel to Paris instead of Joe who was going to travel but their aunt preferred Amy than Joe , she liked Amy's companionship and her elegant female style.

Joe begins to believe that Beth secretly loves Lori, so she decided to move to New York to escape from Lauri's passion and love toward her and gives Beth the opportunity to win Lauri's heart. In New York, Joe met professor Pierre, who was a German teacher who urged her not to follow thrill stories , and she followed his advice and started in a simple literary style. When she came home Lauri got engaged of her, but she refused him. Soon after Beth died. Lauri traveled to Paris where he met Amy there, they fell in love with each other then married and returned home. As for Joe, she married professor Pierre a year later. Lauri and Amy had a baby girl they named Beth. Joe inherited her aunt's house which she returned it into a boarding school for boys. The novel ended with the family's reunification happily, each sister was grateful for the blessings she received and they were also grateful for being alongside each other.

## Appendix 02

### Characters

*Little Women* characters include “ Josephine March, Meg March ,Beth March , Amy March, Laurie Laurence , Marmee March , Mr. Laurence , Hammers family , Mr. March , Hannah , Aunt March , Mr. Brook , Mr. Bhaer those are the most important characters in the novel.

“MegMarch” The oldest sister of the March family , she was very beautiful , 16 years old , she works as a governess , she hopefully overcome vanity in the first book as for the second she married John Brook and gave birth to Demi and Daisy.

Josephine March : called Joe , the second eldest girl in the March family , she liked writing , she is a writer and she was tomboy . she became famous in the story when she cut her hair and sold it to help her ailing father . she was so close and one of Laurie’s best friends who loved her , but this didn’t prevent her from marrying to another at the end of the story. Joe was a tall , beloved girl writing and selling stories and a Nanny for Mrs . Kirke She is the protagonist of the story , she is 15 years old . Her character based in large part on Louisa May Alcott herself , at the end of the story she married the professor Bhaer and opened a boy’s school. Joe is likely to be the precursor to a plethora of flawed heroes of children’s books , among them “Tom Sawyer from Mark Twain”

Beth March : She is the third sister of the March family , she is very calm , a kind girl who helps Mrs. March around the house .

She is free from selfishness and very shy, all her desires were to marry and to become a housewife, she used to play piano and loved music, she became close and favorite of Mr. Laurence who gave her the piano of her deceased granddaughter, she got infected with scarlet fever and recovered in the first book, but in the second she died before reaching the adulthood., Also the name of Laurie's and Amy's daughter. She was 13 years old, she liked to play piano and liked toys and cats, she had a little cat called "Milky".

Amy March : The youngest girl in the March family, she is the cutest girl who loves arts and doodling, she aspires to be a famous artist, she is a humble girl, she learned how to be elegant, she was planning to marry the rich, she was 12 years old, at the end of the story she refused Fred Vaughn and then married Laurie, she had curly hair and blue eyes. She is able to travel to Europe with her aunt and marries Laurie, the friend of the family.

Marmee March : The mother of the four March sisters "Joe, Meg, Beth, Amy" she was kind loving, caring understandable mother. she liked participating in the charity work and took care of her family in the absence of the father.

"Mr. March" He is the father of the four girls and Marmee's husband and the head of the family, he was a philosopher and pastor during the war, he worked as a chaplain in the union army, generally he considered a good man, he became ill in the war, so he later return well and happy.

“Hammals family”

A family of a poor German immigrants , they lived near the marches . In the story the girls gave up their breakfast and gave it to this family on Christmas day with encouragement from their mother and Beth infected with a scarlet fever during her visit to this family. “Hanna” She is the sincere worker and treated as a family member.

“Mr.Laurence”

He was the neighbor and a close friend of the March family , he was rich and lived with his grandson “Lauri” in the palace , he became close to Beth and gave her a piano of her deceased granddaughter as a gift.

“TheodoreLaurence”

called “Lauri” as for Joe called him “Teddy”, he is the nephew of Mr . Laurence, he became very close to the four girls especially “Joe” he became their best friend. Lauri has no parents he liked so much the March family and was influenced by their morals, he made an engagement to Joe , but she refused him and then he married Amy. “ Aunt March” She is the Mr. March aunt , she is the great aunt , an old woman. Joe was accompaning her at the first then Amy , She supported Amy on her overseas trip , she left “Plumfield” to Joe when she died and Joe turn it into a school for boys. “Mr. Brook”the teacher of Lauri , he accompanied Mrs. March to Washington when she received a telegram stating that her husband ill and at the end he married with Meg.

“Mr.Bhaer”

He was a poor German teacher who encounters Joe , supports her in her career and finally marries her.

### **Appendix03The Biography of the Author**

Louisa May Alcott a famous American Author especially for her children's books and her best known for her novel "The classic little women". She was born on November 29, 1832 in Philadelphia Pennsylvania , she is the daughter of Branson Alcott who was a popular educator which wanted and believed that children must learn , they are obliged to enjoy learning that's what made Louisa May Alcott began to write in an early age . Her education was under the direction of her parents especially her father, Alcott's lifelong concern for the welfare of her family began .she taught briefly , works as a domestic and finally began to write. She volunteered also as a nurse in the American civil war."Hospital Sketches" published in 1860 was her first book , and also submitted work regularly to the Atlantic monthly and other novels and short stories for youth. (1868-1869) was an immediate success based on her life with her sisters (her biography) she describe the domestic adventures of a new England family. the book depicted the lives of Louisa May Alcott and her three sisters from the childhood to womanhood and how they struggled and sacrificed and how they married at the end and achieved their desires.She travelled to Europe in 1870 , and she spent the last two decades of her life in Boston and Concord caring for her mother of a lengthy illness who died in 1877 Louisa's health also never robust and declined, she died in 1888 two days after her father death in Boston. Her book for youngers have remained steadfastly popular. She was also involved in the women's suffrage movement and becoming the first woman to register to vote in Concord Massachusetts. She was suffering from exhaustion; headaches nerve issues and digestive pain.