Mary Hallock Foote

Devoted wife and mother. Acclaimed novelist, illustrator, and interpreter of the American West. At a time when society expected women to concentrate on family and hearth, Mary Hallock Foote (1847-1938) published twelve novels, four short story collections, almost two dozen stories and essays, and innumerable illustrations. In Mary Hallock Foote, Darlis A. Miller examines the life of this gifted and spirited woman from the East as she adapted herself and her artistic vision to the West. Foote's images of the American West differed sharply from those offered by male artists and writers of the time. She depicted a more gentle West, a domestic West of families and settlements rather than a Wild West of soldiers, American Indians, and cowboys. Miller examines how Foote's career was molded by the East-West tensions she experienced throughout her adult life and by society's expectations of womanhood and motherhood. This biography recounts Foote's Quaker upbringing; her education at the School of Design for Women at Cooper Union, New York; her marriage to Arthur De Wint Foote, including his alcohol problems; her life in Boise, Idaho, and later Grass Valley, California; her grief over the early death of daughter Agnes Foote; and the previously unexplored last two decades of her life. Miller has made extensive use of every major archive of letters and documents by and about Foote. She sheds light on Foote's numerous stories, essays, and novels. And examines all pertinent sources on Foote's life and works. Anyone interested in the American West, women's history, or life histories in general will find Miller's biography of Mary Hallock Foote fascinating.



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