

adult new readers. The emphasis of the series is not to present new scholarship but to make the state's culture and history available to a broad audience. Nagel's volume is a worthy addition to the series. It succeeds in making the complex story of Missouri's most famous nineteenth-century artist both accessible and engaging. Readers seeking a concise and solidly written account of the life of George Caleb Bingham and the politically charged times that fueled both his passions and his artwork will find the book rewarding.

A Home in the West, Or, Emigration and Its Consequences, by M. Emilia Rockwell; edited by Sharon E. Wood. Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2005. 142 pp. Illustration. \$15.95 paper.

Reviewer Annamaria Formichella Elsdon is associate professor of English at Buena Vista University. She is the author of *Roman Fever: Domesticity and Nationalism in Nineteenth-Century American Women's Writing* (2003).

The heroine of *A Home in the West*, Annie Judson, has serious misgivings about her husband's proposed relocation from Connecticut to the prairie, fearing the pain of leaving her family. Moved by his inability to thrive economically, however, she puts aside personal concerns and joins Walter on a daring journey to the West. Annie's worries fade away in the village of Newburg, Iowa, where the materialism of the Northeast is replaced by spirituality and humanitarianism, and hard work is justly rewarded. The Judsons establish a comfortable home, and Annie's last remaining conflict is eased when her family decides to join her in Iowa. Walter offers the novel's closing reflection on the prosperity of the frontier, along with a reminder that such rewards are available only to the "honest, persevering laborer" (140).

First published in 1858, *A Home in the West* is, as Sharon Wood asserts in her introduction, "probably the earliest [novel] to portray life in Iowa" (2). The novel's fictional Newburg draws on details from the real-life locations of Lansing and Dubuque, Iowa, giving readers a glimpse of the newly settled state's development in the nineteenth century. Furthermore, the novel is noteworthy as an early articulation of the American Dream. Narrative strategies such as direct addresses to the reader and meditations on the wonders of frontier life make for provocative reading. Readers will recognize the conventions of the domestic novel manipulated to serve an expansionist project, making *A Home in the West* a compelling document for students of Iowa history, nineteenth-century literature, and women's studies.

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