

Royal Command

Francis Bedford's photographs of the educational tour of the Middle East by the Prince of Wales, 1862.

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The crowning achievement of Francis Bedford's photographic career, and the work for which he is best known, is his documentation of the educational tour of the Middle East by the Prince of Wales (later Edward VII) in the spring of 1862. This was probably the first overseas Royal tour accompanied by an official photographer.

Too often, photographic events are examined in isolation, without due regard to the surrounding cultural, social, and political trends with which they are inextricably linked. Our understanding of the import of this tour, and therefore of the significance of the photographs, is immeasurably enhanced by an understanding of the events which led to Bedford's Royal Command.

On 10 February 1840 Queen Victoria was married in great splendor to Prince Albert, from the small, but politically influential, principality of Coburg. For 21 years the Royal couple lived in marital bliss - the only blight in their otherwise unsullied home life was the frivolous temperament of their eldest son, Bertie, the Prince of Wales. Late in 1861, the problems between the Royal couple and their errant son reached a climax. Bertie spent a night with a young actress, Nellie Clifden. Albert was thunderstruck and wrote to his son that the news had caused him "the greatest pain I have yet felt in this life".

The news of the Prince's escapade could not have come at a worst time. Prince Albert was exhausted from overwork and was going through a particularly bleak spell of depression. During November, he became progressively more ill - he was dying with typhoid fever. The Royal doctors, blundering once again, assured the Queen that "there was no cause for alarm", so Bertie arrived at the death bed in a rather gay mood, which did not help to cement affection with his mother. Albert died on 14 December 1861. In her distress, the Queen blamed the Prince of Wales: "I never can or shall look at him without a shudder..." (1)

The Queen went into mourning for her dead Albert, and never recovered. Wherever the Queen slept, a photograph of her husband on his deathbed hung over the empty pillow

beside her. Victoria's relations with Bertie - never very close or happy - became painfully strained and even bitter. She believed that Bertie's affair had dealt Albert a mortal blow from which he had no chance to recover. Lord Palmerston talked of the Queen's "unconquerable aversion" to the Prince of Wales. It irritated her to see Bertie in the same room. Both must have been relieved when he left on 6 February 1862 on his educational tour of Egypt and Palestine, an expedition that had already been planned by Albert before his death.

The Prince's companions had already been chosen but in the emotional turmoil of the past month, the idea of having a photographic record of the tour had been forgotten. On 22 January Francis Bedford was hastily summoned into the presence of the Queen, at Osborne, and requested to accompany the Prince of Wales and his party. Bedford was given two weeks only in which to prepare himself and his equipment for the most important assignment of his life.

It must be emphasized that the neglect in arranging for a photographer to accompany the Prince did not reflect either the Queen's or Albert's disinterest in the new medium. Far from it. From the moment when the first daguerreotypes imported into England from France were presented for her inspection (interestingly enough this was on the morning that she proposed to Albert - 15 October 1839) until her death, the Queen not only collected photographs but actively promoted the medium. William Edward Kilburn was appointed "Photographer to Her Majesty and His Royal Highness Prince Albert" in 1847 - the first of many photographers to be so honored by the Queen. The royal pair became patrons of the newly formed London Photographic Society in 1853, when it was said that they were "well skilled and practiced in the art of photography". In fact, a studio and darkroom was fitted out at Windsor Castle for the private use of the Queen and Prince Consort. The couple were probably taught the relatively simple technique of the calotype process by Dr. E. Becker who was not only Prince Albert's librarian but also a founder member of the Photographic Society. Queen Victoria and Prince Albert visited the Society's annual exhibition each year, often accompanied by their children, who were encouraged to take up photography themselves as a useful and elevating art. When a committee of the Photographic Society was formed in 1855, to investigate the causes of fading in photographs, Prince Albert donated 50 pounds towards expenses. On hearing that a Frenchman had solved the problem of fading prints, the Prince dispatched Dr. Becker to investigate, and if possible, to buy the secret for the benefit of the photographic world. The Frenchman refused to sell his secret. (2)

The Queen's and Prince Albert's patronage of photography was vast and wide ranging, and the subject of another study. Photography was considered to be both a refined pleasure as well as a means of useful instruction (the two were inextricably interwoven

in Victorian recreations) and therefore suitable as a royal hobby. (3)

The Illustrated Magazine of Art considered her Majesty and Prince Albert "well known to be no mean proficient in photography, as in other elegant pursuits". (4)

Unfortunately, there was one aspect of photography which was not "elegant" - the messy chemicals of the wet-plate process. When a Mr. Soulier took photographs throughout the Royal dwellings between June and October 1860, he was ordered "by the Queen's express stipulation" to use dry-plates :

".... as pints of solution of cyanide of potassium had been previously expended upon the staircases and floors in removing the stains left by the practitioners of wet processes and Her Majesty said she would have no more wet processes carried on there at all". (5)

But photography's compensation of combining pleasure with edification more than offset its chemical aspects, and Victoria encouraged her children to adopt the process. Prince Alfred became an enthusiastic amateur, undertaking all the tedious and tricky processing work himself. He had been taught the rudiments of photography in 1860, before he left for a naval training voyage to South Africa. His photographic outfit had been made by Murray and Heath and included a novel -design of stereoscopic camera "which is very compact and handy, the lenses, dark slides for a dozen dry plates, focusing screen etc., all being included within the camera, which when closed, forms a rectangular box, with lock and key without any projection whatever". (6) The Prince of Wales, Bertie, also occasionally tried his hand at photography but without the enthusiasm of his brother. He knew enough about the process, however, to take more than a casual interest in Francis Bedford's photography during the Middle East tour.

At this point it is interesting to speculate on why Francis Bedford, as opposed to other equally qualified photographers, was chosen as the Prince's travelling companion. Photographic historians have stated that he was chosen on the basis of his skill and reputation. I believe this is only part of the truth. Other documentary photographers of the period were equally 'skilled' and men like Francis Frith, or George Washington Wilson, had the additional advantage of a larger, more copiously staffed business organization behind them, better capable of exploiting the results of the expedition. Other photographers, such as Roger Fenton, were more frequent visitors to the Royal household. Frederick York would have been a good choice since he had recently instructed Prince Alfred in photography, and accompanied him on his naval expedition to South Africa. Frith seems a particularly suitable candidate since he had recently returned from a highly successful and much publicized series of photographic expeditions to Egypt (1857 - 60) which gave him valuable practical experience in

operating the complex wet-plate process in desert conditions. I suggest this is where Bedford's strong aristocratic family connections paid off. The Navy was a small, closed little world. His admiral uncles would have had the ear of the Queen, and a person of Bedford's lineage would fit more aptly into the small, select travelling group surrounding the Prince. Perhaps it is no coincidence that during the Prince of Wales' later visit to India (1875 - 76) the commander of HMS "Serapis", in which the party travelled, was one-eyed Admiral Sir Frederick George Denham Bedford, son of a Vice-Admiral, and a career officer since the age of 13, later A.D.C. to the Queen (1888 - 91) - and cousin to Francis Bedford.

A fact which is also relevant is that this would not be the first time that Bedford had worked for the Royal Family. In 1854 he had photographed many items in the Royal Archives at Windsor Castle, including terra cotta friezes by Clodion; medallions by Flaxman; a silver vase by Vechte; an agate cup by Morel; ivory carvings ascribed to Fiamingo; an ivory card rack; a pair of Louis XIV pistols; a sword hilt; and an ivory tankard. (7) The order for this set of 11 photographs was sent to Francis Bedford on 14 July 1854 by Dr. Becker. The photographs were delivered on the 12 of October - each print cost the Queen 3 shillings. Incidentally, this assignment also strengthens the earlier conjecture that Bedford was an experienced photographer by the early 1850s; he would not be invited to perform this service for the Queen unless his work was well-known and respected.

In addition, Bedford had been commissioned to travel to Coburg and make photographic views of the area in the summer of 1857. The pictures included two views from the Moritz Kirche, one view from the Ketschenbricke and a general picture of the market place, in which can be seen the Government House, and other scenes from the surrounding countryside. Taken specially for the Queen, the photographs were a gift to the Prince Consort on his birthday.

Francis Bedford's reputation for moderation in all things may have been a small factor in the Queen's choice, bearing in mind Bertie's rather frivolent tastes. Perhaps he would add to the quiet decorum of the expedition. Further, it is possible that it was Bedford who had previously taught the Prince of Wales the rudiments of photography, and he would, therefore, be an acquaintance of the Prince and an acceptable travelling companion, without the risk of friction which might have resulted from an unknown photographer.

It is debatable if all these factors influenced the Royal choice, but the nature of the expedition and the accumulation of these assets meant that Bedford was the ideal photographer for the assignment.

The photographic press was not so sure. It seemed to sense that perhaps Bedford was unsuited to the position, bearing in mind the haste which he had to prepare himself, and his reputation for meticulous attention to detail.

"We well remember the predictions of the probable failure of the expedition, and how positively it was stated that the hurry and pressure of a Royal tour would utterly disarrange the necessary neatness and care which is requisite, especially to such a photographer as Mr. Bedford, whose work has hitherto had those characteristics almost to a proverb" (8)

The tour had been organized by Prince Albert "who traced it out with much care and forethought, the spots to be visited being such as he desired to impress particularly upon his son's mind as being likely to educate and interest the future King of England" Prince Albert died less than two months before his project was fulfilled but Queen Victoria was determined that the tour should continue. The small party selected to accompany the Prince of Wales included: General Bruce, who was to be a sort of commander-in-chief of the party, was a close father-figure to the young Prince; Colonel Teesdale, who was a courageous batchelor-soldier and equerry to the Prince of Wales from 1858 to 1890; Colonel Keppell, a retired soldier and now a politician; Robert Meads, a college friend of the Prince and a civil servant of considerable charm and much practical sense; Dr. Minter, who would act as the party's physician; Dr. Stanley, later Dean of Westminster, who was the Prince's spiritual advisor and who was to act as a tour guide. Stanley had previously travelled throughout Egypt and the Holy Land ten years previously, a tour which led to his Sinai and Palestine (1856) perhaps the most widely popular of his writings. Dr. Stanley was a reluctant companion. He only agreed to accompany the Prince after the Queen had assured him that her husband had specifically requested that he should be their son's guide. The stories of frivolity and sinfulness surrounding Bertie had filled the ears of the quiet sincere devout minister. He dreaded such a long, close relationship with the young scallywag. But the Royal wish overruled Stanley's objections. He departed alone for Egypt, planning to meet the Prince on his arrival.

The rest of the party left London by means of the South Eastern Railway, on Thursday, 6 February 1862. Bedford, no doubt, was worried about any forgotten items in his photographic impedimenta. His short notice of the tour and his necessary hasty preparations would have irked the meticulous photographer.

The logistics of organizing enough glass and chemicals for a five-months expedition into unknown climatic conditions and transporting such fragile materials all over the Middle

East "by every mode of transit" were formidable enough. He left England with an overabundance of cameras and chemicals, in fact he assured success by taking duplicate sets of apparatus and a chemical "army of reserve". Most of the heaviest items had already been dispatched by way of the Peninsular and Oriental Company to Alexandria, (9) where the photographer would collect them and begin his picture making.

The party journeyed straight to the Mediterranean where H.M.S. Osborne was waiting to convey them to the Holy Land. Then the expedition began in earnest. They boated on the Nile, wandered over Palestine to Jerusalem, and visited temples and ruins of antiquity.

The Prince was affability itself, and the life and soul of the party - but obviously bored silly at the endless classical and biblical sites to be explored in a perfunctory manner. Bertie much preferred to float down the Nile shooting crocodiles. When he was urged off the boat to see a temple he "treated the pillars, and the sculptures with the most well-bred courtesy, as if he were paying a visit to a high personage", (10) complained Stanley.

After several weeks of attempting to enthuse the fun-loving Prince with the spiritual delights of old ruins, Stanley was depressed. He wrote:

"It is hardly possible to over-estimate the difficulty of producing any impression on the mind with no previous knowledge or interest to be awakened I cannot bring myself to pour out words into unwilling or indifferent ears". (11)

But the Prince's charm, good nature, and easy friendliness broke down Stanley's prejudice where intellectual responses had failed. By the time the party reached Jerusalem, Stanley admitted that "It was impossible not to like him". If Stanley was having his human difficulties, Bedford was struggling with technical obstacles. Rapid travel from site to site permitted:

"no opportunity for the examination and selection of localities, points of view, or conditions of light he never had the opportunity of going twice to the same view, such selection as he could make at once, under conditions of light as might then exist, was alone possible". (12)

But there were compensations. Under the patronage of Royalty, Bedford obtained ready permission to photograph in many places not otherwise accessible to artists. In addition, Stanley's extensive knowledge of the topography and historical associations of

the scenes were of special benefit. The Prince frequently interrupted the progress of the company to allow Bedford the opportunity of making a photograph of any particular spot which Stanley's familiar acquaintance with the region might suggest as worthy of a picture. The Prince also suggested subjects for photography. (13) Of course this was a mixed blessing. It was gratifying that his Royal Highness took such an interest in Bedford's work, but it was also doubtless irksome for an artist to be told what to photograph since a Prince's suggestion has the flavor of a command.

At Hebron, the Prince asked Bedford to remain behind to finish his photography and insisted on a guard of fifty soldiers to keep the photographer and his equipment from harm, (14) and to help with the transportation problems. From Palestine the Royal entourage travelled to Syria, Constantinople, Athens, and several of the Mediterranean islands. Bedford's time was largely occupied loading and unloading his equipment onto mules and into boats, with frustratingly little time to make pictures which were taken in haste so as not to delay the Royal Progress.

It must have been encouraging for Bedford that the Prince of Wales "manifested a deep interest" in his success and made daily enquiries as to the result of his work.

Extracts from a diary (15) kept by Albert Edward, Prince of Wales, during his tour of the near East, reflect his interest in Bedford's work:

13 March "...The ruins of Philae are beautiful and most interesting and Mr. Bedford the photographer, who came from England with me and our party took some very good views...."

14 March "...Mr. Bedford (the photographer who accompanied us from England) took some very successful views of the temple (at Edfoo)".

21 April "... We lunched under a figtree at 12 o'clock on the site of where once the city of Capernaum is said to have stood, + Mr. Bedford photographed us 'en groupe'."

4 May "At about 10 we left our camp to lionize thoroughly the fine temple (at Baalbec) + we were much pleased with what we saw. We remained about two hours going over it; Mr. Bedford took some excellent views of it, which will be a great addition to his collection of photographs...."

The Prince's interest in Bedford's work did not stop at selecting views and writing diary entries - he made daily enquiries as to the success of the day's operations and made

occasional attempts at some of the manipulations. (16) But successes were not obtained without struggles. Undoubtedly, the major problem inherent in operating the wet-plate process in desert conditions was the heat, which tended to dry out the collodion before it could be developed. The sun was kept off the darkroom tent by erecting over it a white sheet supported by poles. When sufficient water was available, the sheet was wetted so that evaporation would keep it cool. Even so, it must have been inconvenient, to say the least, to coat and develop the plates in an airless, ether-filled tent.

Bedford's emulsions were a stock of Ponting's collodion and a stock of Thomas' bromo-iodised. The former was found very sensitive but, owing to the glaring sunlight, solarized (or tended to reverse its tonal relationships) very easily. The use of bromo-iodised emulsion obviated this difficulty and was used for the bulk of the work. Bedford did take with him a stock of Dr. Hill Norris's newly introduced dry plates which produced good negatives during the early part of the journey, but "some trying changes of temperature having rendered them doubtful, Mr. Bedford, not having time for experiment, confined himself in future to the wet process ". (17)

Dr. Hill Norris of Birmingham had patented his plates in 1856 and they were in great demand, mainly by amateurs. The plates could be kept up to six months before exposure, and were supplied ready-sensitized which obviated the use of a darkroom tent on location. However, professionals felt them to be unreliable, and their slow speed compared with the wet-plate process was a distinct disadvantage.

Even though the desert conditions produced plenty of available sunshine, Bedford found that he had to give unusually long exposures in order to record detail in the dark shadow areas. His average exposure was 10 to 12 seconds. (18) The 10 x 12 in. plates were developed in a *weak* pyrogalllic acid developer to reduce contrast. The lenses used were a single Ross and a Grubb; his favorite lenses for English landscapes.

Other difficulties encountered by Bedford on this toUr were less photographic but equally annoying. He complained that it was not unusual for swarms of small flies to fill the camera during exposure, and sometimes embed themselves all over the sticky surface of the collodion plate. Another problem was the rapid travel over difficult terrain by every mode of transport. Each time the packs were unloaded and reloaded there was the risk of breakage. His chemicals were placed in a tin case covered up with sawdust and were relatively safe. The most serious casualty was to a camera which was smashed by an Arab during his negotiation of a large rock.

"Mr. Bedford had much to contend with in all the difficulties incidental to Eastern Travel. Heat, dust, rain, agitation and exposure to a blazing sun on the backs of mules and constant travelling, are not particularly conducive to a perfect balance of such sensitive agents as photographic chemicals, and made it no small matter to keep them under control and prevent them from breaking out into open insurrection". (19)

News of the expedition trickled back to London at infrequent intervals. The Times correspondent reported that "the cavalcade was successfully photographed (at the pyramids) before its return to Cairo". In May, The British Journal of Photography reported that:

"Amongst other scraps of information we gathered was one that Mr. Bedford's tour in Egypt and Syria is as satisfactory in a photographic point of view as otherwise. He has already secured 80 interesting negatives, of which upwards of 50 are views of the banks of the Nile". (20)

Punch in June 1862 published an amusing cartoon depicting a photographer (obviously meant to be Bedford) with camera comparing the negative he had just taken of the Sphinx (with the face of the Prince) with the original subject. The caption reads: "The great difficulty in photography is to get the sitter to assume a pleasing expression of countenance. Jones thinks that in this instance he has been extremely successful".

The Royal party arrived back in England on 14 June. The Prince to make his peace with his mother; Dr. Stanley to court the sister of Gen. Bruce, his travelling companion; Gen. Bruce to die, from a fever contracted during the tour; and Bedford to make prints from his 200 10 X 12 in. plates.

The Queen was temporarily delighted at the "improved" Prince, looking so bright and healthy. She admitted his merits for a while because he was anxious to please her and play the dutiful, acquiescing son. Also, his forthcoming marriage to Princess Alexandria of Denmark had been announced and the inevitable flood of cartes-de-visite of the elected bride swamped England. The Daily Telegraph - commented on these pictures:

"Photography, with all its beauties, is harsh, dark and intractable in its deviations from truthfulness, especially in the harmonies of tint, and although it had favourably impressed the world with the aspect of the fair lady, it has failed to mirror the real brightness, freshness and grace of her appearance: while it needs much more than black glass to give the 'charm' of her manner, or the truly amiable qualities of her nature". (21)

According to this newspaper these portraits appeared "in every other shop window". The marriage ceremony was performed with much pomp and ceremony on 10 March 1863 in St. George's Chapel, Windsor - the first Royal wedding to be held there since that of Henry I in 1122. The Queen took no part in the ceremonies. Francis Bedford was waiting at Gravesend in order to photograph the Royal couple as they left England for their honeymoon. (22)

The Prince of Wales continued his interest in photography, becoming the President of the Amateur Photographic Association (July 1862) and Patron of the Photographic Society (January 1863).

Francis Bedford returned to his home/studio in Camden Road, London, and selected 172 of his plates from which to make albumen prints. One month after his return, on 18 July 1862, Bedford was invited to Osborne to show the photographic results of the expedition to the Queen. Before his audience with Her Royal Highness, Bedford had an informal meeting with Dr. Stanley, Robert Meade, Major Teesdale, and the Prince who "manifested the most lively interest, and expressed his entire satisfaction in the display" (23)

Final prints were made from these plates and prepared for exhibition at the German Gallery, Bond Street, London. The show opened around the 20th of July for a private view by Bedford's friends. As soon as the photographs were seen by the photographic critics they rushed into print with columns of praise. The British Journal of Photography was ecstatic: "... perhaps the most important photographic exhibition that has hitherto been placed before the public, whether we regard it as an aid to history or as a collection in which unity of design has been a ruling principle in the artist's mind". (24)

After a long paragraph of praise for the pictures - "highly creditable", "judgement and skill", "admirable results", "faultless", "faithful transcripts", "high degree of artistic skill", "exquisite neatness", etc. - the magazine reminds us that such one-man shows were a rarity in these early days of the medium:

"Although the present is not quite the first instance in which the works of a single photographer have formed an entire exhibition - Mr. Fenton's Crimean photographs having enjoyed priority in this peculiarity - we may fairly assert that never before has so large, so harmonious, so fine, and so intimately connected a series been collected together".

The Photographic News (25 July 1862) made the same point:

"The occupation of a gallery, and formation of a complete exhibition with the works of one photographer, is a novel thing in this countrywe leftfeeling very proud of photography; proud of its capabilities, of its progress, and of the recognition it was beginning to receive".

Irrespective of image quality, Bedford's production of 172 albumen prints by the wet-plate process from a single expedition of a few months' duration is a feat of heroic proportions. He was well aware that many would ultimately view his pictures for historic, as opposed to aesthetic, reasons. In the corner of his plates, Bedford scratched not only his name but the date on which the picture was made, producing a visual diary from which it can be seen the precise day on which the Royal party visited the depicted site.

As expected, the photographic press concentrated on technical information - admiring the way in which Bedford had introduced clouds into the sky areas, how he had coped with the extreme contrasts of the subjects, the problems of distortion when the camera is tipped away from the horizontal, the composition of the views, the perils of operating the wet-plate process in desert conditions, and so on. The critics who had earlier doubted whether Bedford was the right man for the job felt it their duty to eat their words and admit, "How all these vaticinations have been falsified", by the successful results.

The national press also gave the exhibition good coverage, The Times concluding:

"History informs us that in all memorable journeys the functions of the secretary have not been least important. Even the Japanese, on their late entrance into Society, were everywhere accompanied by this indispensable functionary. The works of Mr. Bedford go far to prove that another state officer must shortly be created." (25)

The conservative Art Journal considered that "Mr. Bedford is among the best, if not the best, of our English landscape photographers" and that his photographs "are of the very highest merit". (26) In an earlier issue (1862, p. 211) the Journal went so far as to state that "the series is, perhaps, the most interesting ever offered to the Christian and the Scholar". But Francis Bedford's photographs did cause considerable problems for one painter, a Mr. Selous. This artist exhibited at M'Lean's Gallery, Haymarket, two large paintings of Jerusalem. The art critic of The Illustrated London News was incensed: "It is our duty to say that they cannot rank above clever, but untrustworthy, scenic panoramic paintings, executed to meet a popular demand". Citing one of the works, the critic continued:

"either it is in many respects inexact, or the photographs of Mr. Bedford (which lie before us) are untrue to the great leading facts of the sky, the soil, the vegetation, and much besides, which gives the actual aspect of the Holy City and its environs The pictures are, doubtless, showy and taking, and it would not be fair to doubt that the artist has been at much pains to secure accuracy; yet the superficiality, artifices and exaggerations of a facile scenepainter are everywhere apparent. Severe criticism would go further, and affirm, with much truth, that most of the class of pictures "got up" for a purpose, as these, belong to a sort of art analogous to the lower kinds of sensationalism in literature; and that they seem obviously to aim not so much at simple actual truth or unsophisticated probability as at imposing on vulgar, uneducated taste". (27)

Painters did not have this problem before photography; their public were willing to trust the artists' integrity, particularly as they had no choice, since few could visit the places depicted. Photography provided an objective, portable, reproducible standard of truth against which to match the accuracy of the painter. It is little wonder that so many artists fled the conflict into historical academecism, or into impressionism and later abstraction, directions in which it was difficult for the photographer to follow.

Photography still had the advantage of multiplicity, however, and many identical (for all interests and purposes) originals were available. Francis Bedford's Royal tour prints were issued to the public as albumen prints, published by W. Day and Sons. The entire series of 172 pictures was published in 21 parts, each containing eight or more prints. These prints were divided into sections, consisting severally of the Holy Land and Syria, of Egypt, and of Constantinople, and the Mediterranean. The cost of the entire series was 43 guineas. This was a handsome sum in those days - a lot of workers would have been happy if it was their annual income.

Copies of these pictures were later published, in reduced form, and edited (48 prints) in The Holy Land, Egypt, Constantinople, Athens. etc., etc., with a descriptive text and introduction by W. M. Thompson. (28) This was the poor man's set of prints; specially designed for those who could not afford the high cost of the large complete series. It is stated in the introduction that these prints were "reproduced on a smaller scale by Mr. Bedford", but not the technique employed. Sun-illuminated enlargers (or reducers) were available by this time but they were exceedingly slow and tedious in use, and their results were rarely satisfactory. The fact that Bedford was *reducing* the size of the original plate would have speeded up the exposure times but any projection printer would dramatically increase the time over straight contact printing. Since this was to be an inexpensive publication, printing speed, and convenience was vital,

otherwise the costs would soar to the level of the larger series. It is reasonable to assume, therefore, that Bedford solved the problem by making new 4x5 in. negatives, which he could print by contact, by copying (29) photographs from the original set.

Twelve of Bedford's reduced prints were also used to illustrate The Stones of Palestine. Notes of a Ramble through the Holy Land by Mrs. Mentor Mott. (30)

It is interesting that Bedford's work was appealing not only to the laymen purchasers of his commercial views but also that the same pictures were admired by his peers in the photographic world of exhibitions. Perhaps the most important exhibition in which his photographs were seen was at the Paris Universal Exhibition of 1867. One critic wrote:

"Most noticeable, perhaps among all the pictures of the British photographers is a large and nationally creditable display made by Francis Bedford. He shows only landscapes, all of one size (12 x 10), which are all hung together, occupying an entire screen. Many of these pictures are as well known as the name of the accomplished artist. A photographic amateur remarked, while I was looking at them, that Mr. Bedford had no need to exhibit any but gems, he has such a comprehensive collection to choose from. Out of the large number of pictures he took in the East, when he accompanied the Prince of Wales, he only shows four: and only one view of the Holy Land out of the series he published of that ever interesting land. Yes, such veterans can make, we had almost said, a matchless display by choosing one or two pictures from each season's work. Some old photographers, however, who were once famous, can neither honour themselves by what they now produce nor by falling back on former spoils. Mr. Bedford's pictures are all well printed, and show no signs of fading, which will be found almost exceptional". (31)

Francis Bedford was awarded a silver medal for his views.

When photographing in England, away from the once-only opportunities and pressures of a Royal tour, Bedford began to rely more and more on the convenient Dr. Hill Norris's dry plates, manufactured by the Patent Dry Collodion Plate Company of Birmingham, and which he had taken to the Middle East. Dr. Norris had increased the speed of his plates, which were now equal to that of wet collodion, and in addition, they were guaranteed to keep up to one year. "Norris's Extra Quick Dry Plates" were discontinued in 1869 and Bedford must have been using them, for at least some of his topographical work, at the time that he implied that they were only suitable for "clever amateurs" because of their "uncertainty".

Now an internationally known and respected photographer Francis Bedford did little to capitalize on his fame. He seems content to return to his home and garden in Camden Road, attend the weekly discussions at the Photographic Society, and to tour the British Isles for his growing documentation of the English landscape.

Notes and references:

1. Letter from Queen Victoria to the Princess Royal, 27 December 1861.
2. The Frenchman was Louis-Desire Blanquart-Evrard, who had established a photographic printing establishment at Lille. Although he refused to sell his printing process, in July 1855 Thomas Sutton of Jersey published a pamphlet on a printing process which he claimed was permanent. Prince Albert encouraged Sutton to open a printing establishment at St. Brelade's Bay, Jersey. Strangely, Blanquart-Evrard joined forces with Sutton and their printing firm was opened late in 1855. Their advertisement read "Founded at the suggestion of, and patronised by His Royal Highness, Prince Albert Prints so produced do not fade but IMPROVE BY TIME. The more they are exposed to light and air, the better"
3. Interested readers are referred to: Helmut Gernsheim, Victoria R., p. 256 - 266, for a concise précis of the Royal interest in photography.
4. The Illustrated Magazine of Art, Vol. II, No. 61, (1854), p. 338. This article, 'Photography as a Fine Art' is an interesting and unusual defense of photography by an establishment art journal. It stated:
"It is said that photography is hated by artists, but if so, it can only be by those who are unworthy of their calling. An inferior mechanical artist may be jealous of such a rival but the artist with a true genius for his calling welcomes photography as a friend and ally."
5. The British Journal of Photography, 1 January 1861, p. 17.
6. *Ibid.*, 1 June 1860, editorial.
7. These photographs are in the Royal Archives, Windsor Castle, together with Dr. Becker's notice of delivery and payment - Ref. R. A., p. 2 - 7, 4840.
8. The Photographic Journal, 15 August 1862, p. 102.
9. The British Journal of Photography, 15 February 1862, p. 66.
10. Hector Bolitho, Victoria: The Widow and Her Son, D. Appleton, Century Company, New York, and London, 1934, p. 13.
11. *Ibid.*
12. The Photographic News, 25 July 1862, p. 352.
13. W. M. Thompson, The Holy Land, Egypt, Constantinople, Athens, Etc. London, n.d., p. 2-3.
14. H. Baden Pritchard, The Photographic Studios of Europe, London, 1882, p. 10.

15. This diary is in the Royal Archives, Windsor Castle. Extracts are quoted with the gracious permission of the H. M. The Queen.
16. The Photographic News, 11 July 1862, p. 336.
17. Ibid.
18. The British Journal of Photography, 11 December 1868, p. 595. It should be noted that The Photographic News, 25 July 1862, p. 352, stated "about thirty seconds being an average exposure."
19. The British Journal of Photography. 1 July 1862, p. 257.
20. Ibid, 1 May 1862, p. 162.
21. The Daily Telegraph, September 1862.
22. As far as I have been able to ascertain these photographs are no longer extant, or else they were issued under the name of a different publisher.
23. The British Journal of Photography, August 1862, p. 297.
24. Ibid., 1 August 1862, p. 288.
25. The Times. July 1862. Quoted in The Photographic News, 25 July 1862, p. 360.
26. The Art Journal, 1862, p. 82.
27. The Illustrated London News, 27 January 1866, p. 86.
28. Published by Day and Son, London, 1867,
29. Personally I think the 48 prints in this small version *look* like copy prints.
30. Published by Seeley, Jackson, & Company, London, 1865.
31. The British Journal of Photography, 23 August 1867, p. 399.

[Note. This article is an extract from a much longer study of the life and career of Francis Bedford which constituted a dissertation, illustrated with many Bedford images, for the University of New Mexico, 1974. It has not been published in its entirety, although copies have circulated, and many subsequent historians have used the contents without credit for their own writings about Bedford.]