

D. P. Kidder, "Augustus Morand the Daguerrean Art," February 1851

(keywords: Augustus Morand, Jr., Rev. Daniel Parish Kidder, James R. Chilton, Junius Brutus Stearns, Tithonotype, 132 Chatham, Henry Inman, history of the daguerreotype, history of photography)

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Aug. Morand Digitized by Google

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AUGUSTUS MORAND AND THE DAGUERREAN ART.

BY REV. J. P. KIDDER [D. P. Kidder—ed.]

ACCORDING to an expressed intent of the "PHOTOGRAPHIC ART-JOURNAL" its readers are in this number presented with a brief Biographical sketch of one who stands confessedly among the first in the now extensive list of Photographic artists.

Augustus Morand was among the very few who in its inception, hailed the advent of this new art with enthusiasm, grasping with welcoming hand the new record of Truth, as it traversed the broad Atlantic.

With the warmth of a kindred sentiment he began immediately experimenting and developing this infant conception of the beauty and power that had lived surrounding yet unknown to man, since the creation.

It is well known, that as late as 1839, Daguerre and Neipce [Niepce—ed.] had never yet been able to apply their discovery to the delineation of the human countenance. This development was left to the Western World, and beautifully has she fulfilled her destiny in promoting this wonderful art. To Professors Draper, Morse, Chilton and others, are we indebted for the successful application of Daguerre's discovery to the taking of portraits in this country, and it was with pleasure that Daguerre himself acknowledged the fact of the farther evolving of his own idea, by the "practical operative American mind."

The Portrait embellishing our present number will to the eye of those skilled in physiognomy, indicate a character whose love for the ideal would tempt him to the acquirement of an Artistic Profession. Indeed, the field of action opened before him by this new branch of art allured him from mercantile engagements to which his early life had been devoted, and gave him an opportunity for displaying all those high qualities which are essential to success in new and difficult undertakings. It is a task of no little difficulty in sketching a notice of one still dwelling in our midst, to give the just eulogium without appearing to transcend the limits of propriety. It is our intention not to express more in this instance than the simple truth. Personal acquaintance with Mr. Morand fully justifies the expression of the deepest admiration for his qualities of heart and mind, and unquestionably, the purity of purpose which he brought to his investigation and practice, has been a prime element of success in his endeavor to promote the art of Photography.

His long course in the profession has by necessity closely associated his name and fame with the progress of the art itself, and his prosperity beneath the depressing influences of a feeble constitution and impaired health, and the consequent necessity of removal from his labors, affords abundant proof that he has not been unappreciated among us. Whenever as the result of long and tedious experiments Mr. M. has succeeded in accomplishing discoveries or improvements; abandoning the narrow minded wish of exclusive benefit, he has freely imparted to his brother artists the knowledge he had acquired. Many are the young experimenters who have received from him the most valuable information without price. To enlarged views and liberal feelings as well as to research and skill, we attribute the honorable position Mr. Morand at present occupies in the profession and before the public.

As early as 1840, with the aid of a camera and such other apparatus as could then be procured, he experimented long earnestly, in order to lessen the time of operation, and when it is remembered that from ten to fifteen minutes were then found necessary for the production of a picture, we may well perceive some of the difficulties to be here overcome—few persons have that command of muscle and nerve necessary to remain

quiet the length of time then required by the process, and correct likenesses of children were almost wholly unattainable.

When we now assert Mr. Morand's power to produce the most harmonious and life-like miniatures, of exquisite finish, almost instantaneously, we may readily suppose that his investigations proved not in vain.

Another point of progress consisted in the use of blue glass as a medium to intercept or neutralize the transmission of the red and yellow rays of light, that were found so often to perplex the various experiments.

From the year 1841 until 1847 Mr. Morand had in constant use a frame so constructed and placed above the head of the sitter as not only to effect the desired object, but also to relieve the subject from the glare of light, so often even at the present time the subject of complaint. To Doctor Chilton, the eminent chemist, perhaps more than to any other persons connected with the art, was he indebted for various suggestions made during his frequent visits to his laboratory, which have by practical experiment led to such beautiful results as we now witness in Mr. Morand's daily practice as a Daguerrean artist.

About the time he first became interested in the Photographic art, it was his good fortune to make the acquaintance of the lamented "Inman." With this truly great artist, he made many interesting experiments in the effects of light and shade—both arriving at the conclusion, that the only light suitable for producing an artistic effect, was a "Sky Light," so constructed as to introduce the rays at an angle of about forty-five degrees, and removed from the sitter sufficiently far to preserve the middle tints, so seldom obtained in the ordinary way. Also to J. B. Stearns, Esq., the Secretary of the National Academy of Design, with whom he also frequently experimented, was Mr. M. indebted for valuable suggestions in reference to position. In fact every spare moment was spent by him in the society of those who could in any way contribute to his thirst after knowledge. He remained for some time at the corner of Broadway and Chambers street, where the "Irving" House now stands, a place endeared to him by many cherished associations of a scientific and friendly character.

Mr. Morand has always avoided and disclaimed a position of antagonism with those laboring in the same vocation. The endeavor of the Photographic Art-Journal to elevate the character of the profession, and to promote harmony and cooperation among those engaged in the same beautiful pursuit, was as truly gratifying to Mr. M. as to any other artist. The results of true and harmonious combinations may be proven in this department of Science and Art as well as in all other branches of industrial occupation.

The continued attention given by Mr. Morand to his experiments, to the neglect of active exercise, finally so impaired his health that a southern voyage was deemed by his medical advisers essential to his recovery.

Circumstances favored the selection of South America as the place of his destination. In 1842 he embarked for Rio de Janeiro, taking with him the necessary apparatus to continue his experiments in a different atmosphere, with a different light and beneath a tropical sky.

Having letters of introduction to several of the most influential persons in Brazil, he was received with hospitable welcome. He had been in Rio but a short time when the emperor of Brazil, Don Pedro the 2nd. requested his presence at the palace to witness the operation of the art. For the space of nearly five months he was almost in constant attendance upon the Emperor, either in taking views of the beautiful scenery in the vicinity of the Imperial Residence at "San Cristovam," about four miles from the city, copying portraits in the Royal Gallery of Paintings, or in Daguerreotyping the Members

of the Imperial Family at the Court of Brazil. He also took several likenesses of Donna Francisca the youngest sister of the Emperor, who is now the wife of the Prince De Joinville, son of the late Louis Philippe, King of the French.

One of the most interesting specimens perhaps ever produced by the Photographic art, was taken by Mr. Morand at Rio; it was the custom of the Emperor to visit, every Saturday morning, his Palace in the city. One of these occasions he conceived to be an excellent opportunity for producing a fine picture of the Emperor with his body guard and splendid equipage. Having prepared his plates at an early hour, he awaited their arrival.

At the usual time the guard drew near in advance of the Emperor's carriage; the instant it halted, and while the Emperor was in the act of stepping out of his carriage, Mr. M. exposed his plate and in a second of time, procured a picture truly beautiful.

The body guard composed of 40 horsemen, were with but one or two exceptions all perfect, also the "Major Domo" in the act of kneeling to kiss the Emperor's hand as he stopped from the carriage. The likeness of the Emperor himself was very correct.

The whole time consumed in taking, finishing, and framing the picture was less than forty minutes from the time he arrived at the Palace. The Emperor doubted the fact, until his attention, was called to the carriage in the plate, when he immediately assented, for it was the one presented to him by Queen Victoria, and one that he had not used for several months previous. The Emperor was in raptures with the picture and ordered that it should be hung in the Imperial Gallery, where it now remains, a testimonial of the enterprise and skill of our American artist. Mr. M.'s studio was enriched by many views taken from the most beautiful sites around Rio de Janeiro—and but for feeble health, a complete Daguerrean Panorama would have been the result of his abode within the tropics.

The following from the Court Journal at Rio, gives somewhat of an idea of the opinion held of his merits, as an artist, even at that early period:

Journal do Commercio, Rio Janeiro.—That able artist in Daguerreotype, Mr. Augustus Morand, from the United States, of whom we have had occasion to speak heretofore, has merited the honor of being called to the palace to take the portraits of his Imperial Majesty and of the august Princesses: also some views from the windows of the Palace at San Cristovam. We have seen also a beautiful copy of the portrait of the late Imperador Don Pedro I. (the founder of the Empire,) which hangs in the Reception Chamber of the Palace, we could not help admire the perfection of the copy.

In April of 1843 Mr. M. again set sail for his native place, having been disappointed, in the expectation of recovering his health by an intertropical residence.

The voyage home had the happy effect of entirely restoring his health. Almost immediately after his return he commenced experimenting in order to reproduce pictures from Daguerreotype likenesses. In this he employed the process now termed Tithonotype by means of the electrotpe. This process deposits on the surface of the original picture a second plate of copper, which when separated, presents a perfect counterpart of the original. The specimens he produced thus early elicited well merited praise for their beauty and accuracy of finish. Subsequently Mr. M. travelled in our Southern States for the benefit of his health. During his travels on the Mississippi, the Missouri and the Ohio Rivers, he labored for the advancement of his profession as indefatigably as before; visiting the rooms of all similarly engaged and exchanging courtesies with many a brother artist. Upon his return he made arrangements to commence operating at 132 Chatham-street, N. Y., where he still remains. An inspection of his arrangements will afford to the visitor the most ample testimony in favor of his continued perseverance and

skill. The perfect working of the Daguerrean art depends upon so wide a field of culture, that the artist may well pause e'er he venture within the sacred vestibule as the exponent of all the mysteries of this beautiful discovery. So many contingencies have to be compassed by the thought of the operator, that a knowledge of chemistry—of optics—Natural Philosophy and the proper understanding of the intricate laws of taste—are equally essential to the successful education of an artist. These acquirements combined with uniform self-possession and a persevering kindness and courtesy of demeanor to high and low, have combined to give to Mr. Morand the position he so truly deserves as one among the first of his profession.

Two corrections to this text are noted in 1:5 (May 1851): 317:

—We have also to apologize to Mr. Morand for the misplacement of a line in his biography. Feeling sure that the error was not in the proof sheet sent us, we examined it, as also the *revise*, and we there found all correct. There is, therefore, but one way to account for it, and that is by attributing the alteration to the unpardonable carelessness of the pressman, in misplacing the lines after the form went to the press-room. In the same article *Rev. J. P. Kidder* should read *Rev. D. P. Kidder*. It is very annoying to be obliged to make these apologies, but in all these cases the errors were placed beyond our control by the neglect, in one instance, of the compositor, and in the other by the design, apparently, of some one whom we shall endeavor to discover.

[End of text. The original compositing error of one line of misplaced text has been corrected.]

EDITOR'S NOTES:

Although well-respected in his time, Morand is rarely mentioned in the literature of photographic history. Few examples of his work are extant.

For additional information regarding the daguerreotype in Brazil, and Morand's activities in Brazil, see Sylvie Pénochon, "The History of the Daguerreotype in Brazil," *Daguerreian Annual 2002–2003* (Pittsburgh: The Daguerreian Society, 2004): 317–331. The article illustrates a quarter-plate daguerreotype which the article's author attributes to Morand. See also Gilberto Ferrez, *Photographic in Brazil 1840–1900* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1984).

Morand also is briefly mentioned in Marcus Aurelius Root, *The Camera and the Pencil; or the Heliographic Art* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, 1864): 360.

This article is the fourth of eight biographical sketches of eminent daguerreotypists appearing in the journal's first year of publication. Each profile is accompanied by a full-page lithographic portrait, six of which are by the lithograph artist, Frances D'Avignon. (D'Avignon also provided the lithography for *The Gallery of the Illustrious Americans*.) Other articles in this series are C. Edwards Lester, "M. B. Brady and the Photographic Art," 1:1 (January 1851): 36–40;¹ S. D. Burchard, "Martin M. Lawrence and the Daguerrean Art," 1:2 (February 1851): 103–106;² S. J. Burr, "Gabriel Harrison and the Daguerrean Art," 1:3 (March 1851): 169–77;³ A. D. Cohen, "George S. Cook and the Daguerrean Art," 1:5 (May 1851): 285–87;⁴ R. W. Keyes, "Luther Holman Hale and the Daguerrean Art," 1:6 (June 1851): 357–59;⁵ M. Grant, "John A. Whipple and the Daguerrean Art," 2:2 (August 1851) 94–95;⁶ J. W. Tracy, "D. D. T. Davie; First President of the Association of Daguerreotypists," 2:3 (September 1851): 164–65.⁷

An editorial note about the biographies and portraits provides this information:

—To those desiring the publication of their biographies and portraits in the Journal we will state that it will be necessary to communicate with us on the subject as early as possible in order that we may assign to each his month, there generally being several engaged ahead, and we are obliged to adopt the very good practice of serving applicants in the order of their application. We deem it necessary to state this much that there may not be any misunderstanding in the matter.⁸

A subsequent editorial response to correspondence provides additional information:

—W. T. [William H. Thomas?] of S. C.—In answer to your question we will say that you have been misinformed in regard to the matter. We make no charge for the insertion of portraits and biographies, although it is generally customary, among periodicals, to do so. The reputation of an operator as an artist must be good, in order to secure the privilege of placing his portrait in our Journal, but as it is undoubtedly of far more advantage to the artist than ourselves, we think it not more than right that he furnish the illustration free of expense to us. As to the style and cost of the portrait, we leave that entirely to the judgment and taste of the operator, requiring only, that the work be executed as nearly perfect as possible. Steel plates are decidedly the least trouble, and much preferable, as finer impressions and more uniform printing can be obtained from them. Lithographic drawings will not always print well, and we have had much trouble with them on that account. With one or two exceptions those who have inserted their portraits have purchased one hundred copies of the number containing it.⁹

The author of this text, Daniel Parish Kidder (1815–1891), appears to have travelled similarly to Morand. See Daniel P Kidder, *Sketches of Residence and Travels in Brazil: Embracing Historical and Geographical Notices of the Empire and its Several Provinces* (Philadelphia: Sorin & Ball, 1845); Daniel P Kidder and James C Fletcher, *Brazil and the Brazilians Portrayed in Historical and Descriptive Sketches* (Philadelphia: Childs & Peterson, 1857). See also Daniel P Kidder, *Mormonism and the Mormons: a Historical View of the Rise and Progress of the Sect Self-styled Latter-day Saints* (New York: G. Lane, 1844).

Additional information regarding the tithonotype is found in S. D. Humphrey, *A System of Photography* (Albany: C. Van Benthuysen, 1849): 94–96.

1. http://www.daguerreotypearchive.org/texts/P8510010_BRADY_PAJ_1851-01.pdf
2. http://www.daguerreotypearchive.org/texts/P8510013_LAWRENCE_PAJ_1851-02.pdf
3. http://www.daguerreotypearchive.org/texts/P8510012_HARRISON_PAJ_1851-03.pdf
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5. http://www.daguerreotypearchive.org/texts/P8510009_HALE_PAJ_1851-06
6. http://www.daguerreotypearchive.org/texts/P8510015_WHIPPLE_PAJ_1851-08
7. http://www.daguerreotypearchive.org/texts/P8510016_DAVIE_PAJ_1851-09
8. *Photographic Art-Journal* (New York) 1:5 (May 1851): 319
9. *Photographic Art-Journal* (New York) 2:5 (November 1851): 319.

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