

Finch & C^o



A COLLECTION OF TWELVE PHOTOGRAPHIC ALBUMEN PRINTS OF CHINESE DAILY LIFE AND RITUAL

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CIRCA 1870'S

APPROX 21CM X 27CM

LITERATURE

IN THE SECOND HALF OF THE 19TH CENTURY A TASTE FOR DISCOVERIES OF EVERY KIND, PARTICULARLY FOR NEW PEOPLES AND EXOTIC PLACES DEVELOPED AND WAS REINFORCED BY THE PREVAILING TASTE FOR THE PICTURESQUE AND BY COLONIAL EXPANSION. PHOTOGRAPHIC EXPLORATION WENT HAND IN HAND WITH THE NEW GROWTH INDUSTRY OF TOURISM. PHOTOGRAPHIC STUDIOS OPENED IN CITIES THAT HAD BECOME TOURIST CENTRES AND WITH THE ADVENT OF PHOTOGRAPHIC PUBLISHERS AND DISTRIBUTORS THE WORLD BECAME A MORE MOBILE AND LESS INSULAR PLACE.

HOWEVER, THIS ALSO MADE THE WORLD BOTH A MORE DIVERSE PLACE AND A MORE SOCIALLY AND ECONOMICALLY CHALLENGING ONE, BUT THE QUEST TO DOCUMENT THE WORLD AND CONQUER IT WITH PHOTOGRAPHS DID NOT DIMINISH THE PHOTOGRAPHERS AESTHETIC CONSIDERATIONS WHO NEEDED TO PLEASE THEIR INCREASINGLY 'MIDDLE CLASS' PUBLIC AND TO ANTICIPATE ITS TASTE.

JUST AS THE EAST INDIA COMPANY HAD, IN THE 18TH CENTURY, USED ENGRAVINGS TO DOCUMENT THE TOPOGRAPHY. IT WAS THE DISASTROUS OPIUM WARS THAT OPENED CHINA UP TO ANGLO FRENCH TRADE. BY 1840 THE COASTAL TOWNS FROM AMOY TO SHANGHAI WERE OPENED TO TRADERS, SOLDIERS, MERCHANTS AND PHOTOGRAPHERS. BY THE 1870'S PHOTOGRAPHERS WERE DOCUMENTING THE CHINESE IN PEKING.