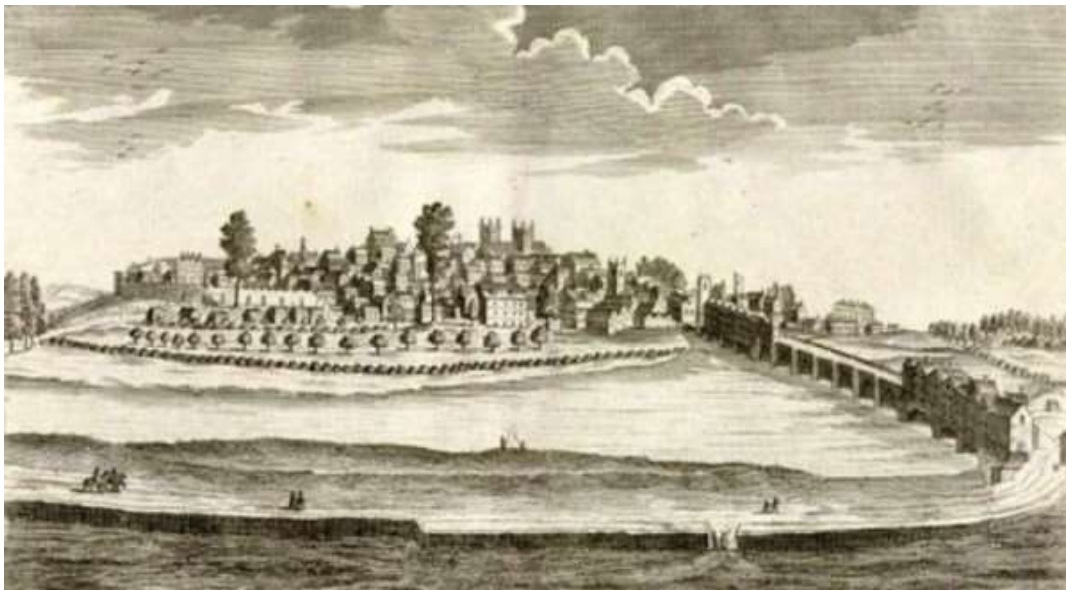


## The Print Trade

### Early National Antiquarian Surveys, 1720-1790

Works with Devon illustrations began to appear in the 1720s, but this formed part of antiquarian tours of Britain as a whole. Such were for example William Stukeley's *Itinerarium curiosum*, published in London in 1724, which included a prospect of Exeter (SC0924) and another entitled "Mordunum", a view of Seaton.



SC0924, Prospect of Exeter, William Stuckey, 1723

Some seventeen places in Devon were included in Samuel and Nathaniel Buck's *Antiquities, or Venerable Remains of Above Four Hundred Castles, Monasteries Palaces etc. in England and Wales* which appeared in five volumes between 1725 and 1752.



SC0925. The South-West Prospect of the City of Exeter, Samuel and Nathaniel Buck, 1736

Local maps and views also began to appear in the monthly magazines such as the *Gentleman's Magazine*, the *European Magazine* and the *Lady's Magazine* in the later 18th century. However, all these were published in London and formed part of works with a national scope.

### **Regional Tours and Local Histories, 1790-1815**

In the 1790s regional tours begin to appear. Their appearance at this time may be explained in part by the effect of the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars which effectively closed the continent to those who would formerly have made Europe the destination of the grand tour, but this only served to emphasise the growing attention already being directed to regions of England such as the Lakes, the Wye Valley and the south west through the picturesque movement. A prime exponent of this manner of viewing landscape was William Gilpin who had toured Devon and Cornwall in 1775, although his *Observations on the Western Parts of England Relating Chiefly to Picturesque Beauty* was only published in London in 1798.



SC2734, The Opening of the Tavey into the Tamar, 1798

Gilpin favoured the atmospheric aquatint, often in an oval format, to illustrate his descriptions, as did William George Maton whose *Observations Relative Chiefly to the Natural History, Picturesque Scenery and Antiquities of the Western Counties of England, Made in the Years 1794 and 1796* appeared in two volumes in 1797 with six Devon views.

There was also a growing interest in local historical writing. In 1790 Martin Dunsford's *Historical Memoirs of the Town and Parish of Tiverton* attracted 413 subscribers to 444 copies, 75% of them in the West of England. This was printed for the author by Thomas Brice in Exeter and contained three engravings. So secure was the market for such works that Richard Polwhele's *History of Devon*, a much larger compilation than any of the earlier historical surveys of the county, was printed by Trewman of Exeter for Cadell, Dilly and Murray in London in three folio volumes with 24 specially commissioned plates between 1793 and 1806. Here we see local printers and publishers joining the London trade in works with topographical prints.

### **The Earliest Local Print Publishers, 1780-1810**

But tentative local steps had already been made in the 1780s. In 1782 a set of oval line-engravings by B.T. Pouncey and J. Pye showing Plymouth waterfront scenes was issued by W. Hay in 1782 and at a slightly later date a number of engravings by Francis Jukes (1745-1812) were issued in Exeter. Jukes was a London based engraver, living mainly in the Fitzroy Square area, but he had a wide range of contacts, including business connections with Switzerland, which were severed by the French Revolution. His views of Exeter Cathedral, published in 1791 were after W. Davey while his views of the East Gate of Exeter, published in 1785 were after J. Hayman, presumably a relative of the Exeter born Francis Hayman (1708-76). In 1806 J. Hayman provided the drawings to illustrate Alexander Jenkin's work *The History and Description of the City of Exeter and Its Environs*.

An important local undertaking in these early years was the series of works by the landscape artist and portrait painter Thomas Hewitt Williams, resident first in Plymouth and later in Exeter, who published accounts of three series of excursions, illustrated by about 20 etchings: *Picturesque Excursions in Devonshire* (1801), *A Tour to the North of Devon* (1802) and *Picturesque Excursions in South Devon* (1804).



SC1644, View in the Valley of Stones, Thomas Hewitt Williams, 1802

Williams did not use a horse on these excursions, the better to become one with the landscape, but would carry his equipment on foot 20 miles or more a day, even in poor



weather. In 1827 Williams used the recently developed technique of lithography to illustrate the second edition of *Devonshire Scenery*, employing Thomas Bayly, the first lithographic printer in Exeter. The work, published by W.C. Pollard, bears the statement: "In consequence of the new lithographic establishment of Mr. Bayley, in Exeter, six drawings have been added".

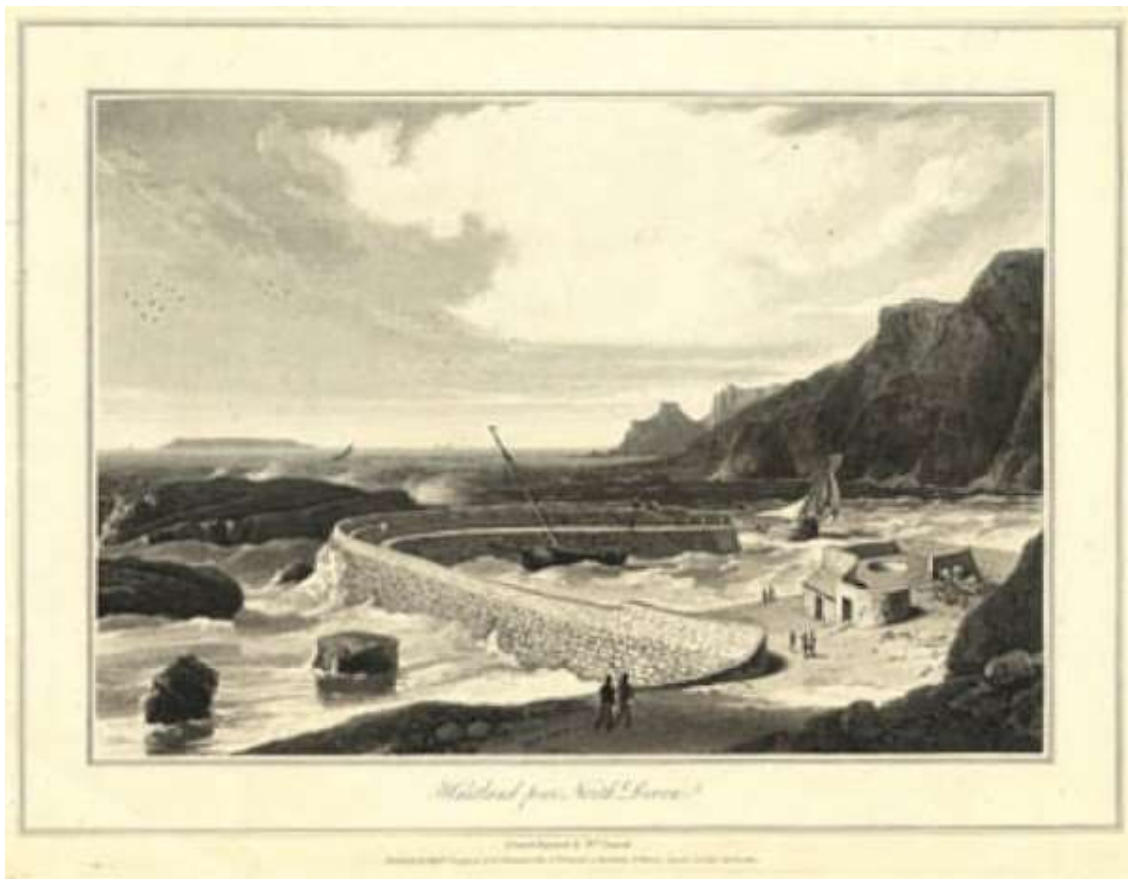
### **The Dominance of London Print Publishers, 1790-1825**

However in the first decades of the 19th century London artists and publishers retained an important role in the production of series of fine engravings of local scenes. The leading names in this were Plymouth-born Samuel Prout (1753-1852) whose soft-ground etchings of ruinous and picturesque buildings are widely collected ([SC0327](#)) and Frederic Christian Lewis (1779-1856) whose series of etchings of the rivers of Devon were published by subscription between 1821 and 1842.



[SC0327](#), Chagford, Samuel Prout, 1811

Other London print publishers in this period are William Daniells, who published his *Picturesque Voyage Round Great Britain* in 1814 ([SC1140](#)) and Rudolf Ackermann, publisher of the fashionable magazine the *Repository of Arts* ([SC3466](#)).



SC1140, Hartland Pier, William Daniell, 1814



SC3466, Nutwell Court, John Gendall, 1824

### **The First Local Print Publishers, 1810-1830**

It was not until the second decade of the nineteenth century that the first publisher appeared in Devon who was to make a feature of the publication of engravings and illustrated books. He set up business not in Exeter but in the infant coastal resort of

Sidmouth, where he established the Marine Library on the beach in 1809. The first publication of John Wallis, the proprietor of this establishment, dates from 1810 and was a guidebook entitled *The Beauties of Sidmouth Displayed, Being a Descriptive Sketch of its Situation, Salubrity and Picturesque Scenery. Also A Account of the Environs Within Fifteen Miles Round, Interspersed with Authentic Anecdotes* by the Rev. Edmund Butcher. It contains a folded aquatint after J.Nixon of the 'View of the Beach and Peak Hill, Sidmouth' and was a modest foretaste of the publications to come. It did however take pains to describe the publisher's establishment as:

A lounging-place in a conspicuous and pleasant situation, where articles of fancy, as well as information and utility, may be met with; where the news of the day may be collected and discussed, and an opportunity given to the saunterers at a watering-place to chat and gossip together. ... It is well supplied every day with the London and provincial papers. Several of the most popular periodical publications are to be found upon its tables. A variety of elegant toys and trinkets, and some articles of greater utility, occupy its shelves. Books of education, dissected maps, and a circulating library, to which new works are regularly added, complete an establishment which, with due encouragement, will be every season increasing in value and variety. The front part of the shop is appropriated to the readers of the newspapers and magazines; but, for the convenience of such as wish to do this with less interruption in the summer season, a convenient back room is also prepared.

Such thoughtfulness did indeed cause the Marine Library to flourish and the second edition of Butcher's guide, published in about 1820, contains eight aquatints and the third published a year or two later boasts no fewer than thirty-one, mostly by the Londoner Daniel Havell after the Sidmouth artist Henry Haseler. In the guidebook it was stated that Wallis had 'expended in excess of £900 in engraving, coloring, &c'. The most magnificent single print which Wallis produced was a panorama of the sea front at Sidmouth with Wallis's library proudly centre-stage. This was aquatinted by Daniel Havell after H.Cornish and was about 2.7 metres long. A clue to Wallis's origins can be found in the illustration of his circulating library in the panorama published in 1815.

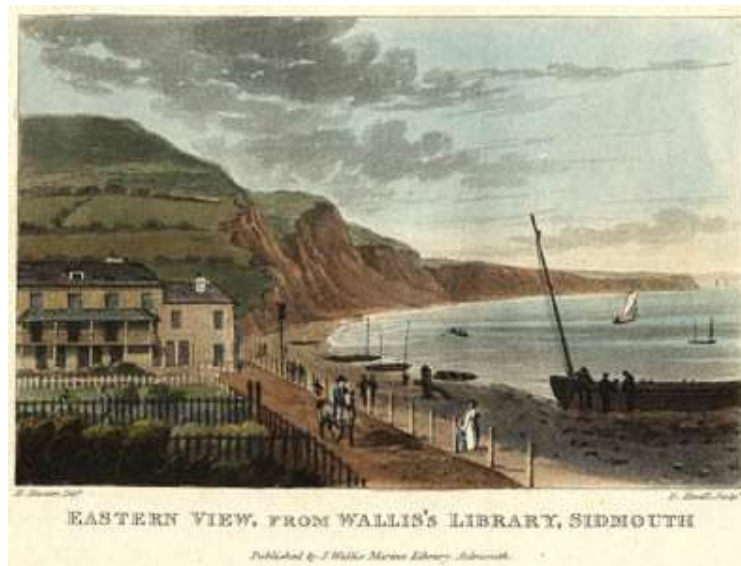


SC2473, Sidmouth Devon, R Havell, 1815

Its signboard reads 'Wallis's, the original circulating library & reading room, and at no. 42 Skinner's Street, London'. In fact the London business was at that time being run by John Wallis senior and his son Edward. John junior was born in about 1780 and apprenticed to his father in 1794, becoming a freeman of the London Stationers' Company on 4 February 1806. He ran his own business at 186, Strand for a short period before moving to Sidmouth. Wallis senior had been in business in London since 1775, moving to 42 Skinner Street in 1812 where his son Edward joined him as partner in 1813. Edward and John were joint publishers of the 1815 panorama. They built up an extensive trade as map and printsellers, publishing maps by John Cary among others. Beside many individual prints, including several views from his library, (SC2477) Wallis was responsible for several other books profusely



illustrated with coloured aquatints. He commissioned the earliest lithographic illustrations to appear in a Devon series. *Sketches From Nature* were produced by Ackermann & Co. in London in 1819/20.



SC2477, Eastern View from Wallis's Library Sidmouth, D Havell, 1819

In other resorts along the south and north coasts of Devon printers and booksellers catered with enthusiasm for the growing tourist market. Often a circulating library formed an important part of the service offered. Mr Gore ran such a library on the beach at Dawlish before the railway cut along the sea-front and in 1818 it even featured on an aquatint by Daniel Havell in Henry Haseler's *Scenery on the Southern Coast of Devonshire* published by Wallis in Sidmouth (SC0652). In 1831 the business was taken over by Miss Croydon, probably related to Edward Croydon of Teignmouth.



SC0652, Gores Library on the Beach Dawlish, D Havell, 1819

Croydon's Teignmouth business had been set up by 1806 but the firm's heyday starts from June 1815, at which date the Gothick style premises in Regent Place was opened. This survives in 2003 as W.H.Smith and Son (SC2826) .



SC2826, Croydon's Public Library, J Shury, 1817

Edward Croydon operated as a bookseller, printer, stationer and print and music warehouse. He operated a circulating library and provided billiard rooms for visitors. He clearly sought to act as an important social centre for the newly formed resort. In 1819 he was selling ball tickets, his circulating library kept the London and Exeter newspapers and, prior to the establishment of the *Teignmouth Arrival List* in 1849, he kept a listing of visitors at his circulating library for public consultation. He also published guidebooks. The 1821 *Guide to the Watering Places on the Coast Between the Exe and the Dart* boasted sixteen aquatints by Daniel Havell, including, needless to say, one of "Croydon's Public Library". The *Teignmouth, Dawlish and Torquay Guide* of about 1828 contains eight lithographs by L.E.Reed. Croydon's son, also named Edward, established a similar business in Victoria Parade, Torquay in the later 1830s.

On the northern coast one of the leading bookselling businesses was that of John Banfield in the High Street, Ilfracombe. Established by 1820, at which date he registered his press, he soon opened a circulating library and in 1830 published a guide to Ilfracombe, a second edition appearing in 1834. Benefitting from the nearness of such famous beauty spots as Lynton and Lynmouth, he became the leading publisher of illustrated guidebooks in North Devon in the period between 1830 and 1860. His *Scenery in the North of Devon*, issued in about 1837, included at least 32 lithographs by W. and P. Gauci, G.Hawkins and others which were made up into series of booklets in various combinations.





SC1195, The Lady's Bathing Cove Ilfracombe, William Gauci, 1835

He was still catering for the tourists in the late 1850s, when he started to publish *Banfield's Arrival List* during the season.

In Devonport the firm of Byers and Saunders published a number of series of illustrations between about 1828 and 1835 and other coastal towns, such as Dartmouth and Exmouth had similar establishments to Sidmouth, Teignmouth and Ilfracombe, demonstrating that the book trade throughout Devon was not slow in making the most of tourism, which was becoming the region's major industry.

#### **Some Local Artist Publishers, 1825-1850**

These publishers used the skills of local engravers and lithographers, some of whom set up in business independently of the other local booksellers, printers and publishers. As well as working for Wallis, Henry Haseler also published a series of twelve views of Sidmouth on his own account in 1825. But there are two local artist/publishers who dominated the scene. The first was George Rowe (1796-1864) whose earliest work *Forty-Eight Views of Cottages and Scenery at Sidmouth, Devon* was published in 1826 by Wallis in Sidmouth.



SC2555, Knowle Cottage Sidmouth, George Rowe, 1826

Born in Exeter, he worked first from 38, Paris Street from about 1826 and later from Saville Cottage, Mount Radford. He was the most prolific of Devon artist engravers and lithographers, being responsible for over 300 Devon scenes many of which he published himself. He moved to Cheltenham in about 1833, where he was in partnership as Rowe and Norman, lithographic, copperplate and general letterpress printers. He was also active there as a drawing master, finding time to continue his production of Devon views. In 1852, following financial setbacks, he departed for the gold diggings in Bendigo, Australia to recoup his fortunes. He returned to England in 1858, dying in Exeter in 1864.

In the 1840s William Spreat dominated the Exeter scene. Born in Exeter in 1816, the son of William Spreat, bookseller, he is recorded at Premier Place, Mount Radford in 1842, with business premises at 263 High Street from 1841 where his father had his bookselling premises, his widow Jane succeeding on William senior's death in 1847. Like Rowe he was a publisher as well as an artist, and is responsible for some 200 Devon scenes. One of the earliest of his publications was the *Picturesque Sketches of the Churches of Devon*, which came out in eighteen parts with 74 lithographs, being completed in 1842.



SC2685, Silvertown Church, William Spreat, 1842

Some of his works were after other artists, such as a series of scenes of the newly completed South Devon Railway after sketches by the engineer William Dawson, which appeared in 1848. He produced extensive series of views of north and south Devon, some of them numbered as two separate series. These appear to have been issued in collections in a bewildering variety of combinations. Spreat also published jointly with London publishers such as Ackermann and in 1844 a series of views of the river scenery of Devon was published by Spreat and Wallis, the latter being Henry John Wallis who was born in the West Indies and does not appear to be linked to John Wallis of Sidmouth.

### **The Continuing Importance of London, 1825-1835**

Nevertheless London continued to have make a major contribution to the production of Devon topographical prints. Perhaps the most remarkable example was the publication between 1829 and 1832 of two concurrent series of illustrated works. The first was Thomas Moore's *History of Devonshire*, published by Jennings and Chaplin and the second was John Britton's *Devonshire Illustrated*. Both works were illustrated by an engraved title page and 94 plates, both sets were steel line engravings of virtually identical format and there was a considerable overlap in subject coverage.





SC0952, View of Exeter from the Hill of Pennsylvania, William Le Petit, 1831



SC0953, Exeter from Pennsylvania Hill, J Henshall, 1832

At least one artist, W.H.Bartlett, and one engraver, Henry Wallis, even worked for both projects. However the results were a series of finely engraved plates which were very popular and reprinted on a number of occasions. Turner's *Picturesque Views on the Southern Coast of England* was also a London publication, appearing in 1826.



SC3424, The Mew Stone, W B Cooke, 1849

### The Steel Line-Engraved Vignette, 1840-1875

In the second half of the 19th century the scene is dominated by the small-scale steel line-engraved vignette. These were produced in large numbers and catered for the cheaper end of the ever-expanding tourist market.



SC2505, Explanade Sidmouth Devon, Kewshaw & Son, 1850

The earliest major publisher in this field was J. Harwood of London who between 1841 and 1854 published well over one thousand views in his numbered series *Scenery of Great Britain*, about 40 of them covering Devon. He was followed by Kershaw and Son who published a similar number of vignettes between 1845 and 1860. The most successful national publisher in this field was William Frederick Rock, a Barnstaple man who sought his fortune in London, and began his series in 1848. This would eventually include some 7,000 views, 260 of them of Devon scenes.

We owe the local production of steel line-engraved vignette views to Henry Besley, one of the most innovative printers in Exeter during the 1840s, who became the only significant Devon publisher in this field. Henry's father Thomas had established his printing office in South Street in the late 1790s. In about 1825 the elder Thomas took another son Henry into partnership and by 1828 had begun the series of trade directories of Exeter which continued until 1955, after which publication was continued by Kelly until 1973. In May 1834 Thomas senior relinquished his share in the business to Henry. Within a few years Henry began to exploit the growing tourist market resulting from the arrival of the railway in Exeter in 1844 and its extension to Newton Abbot in 1846 and Plymouth in 1849. He began the publication of a series of guide books to the western counties entitled "Route books" in 1844 and a similar series of "Handbooks" in 1846. Each guidebook included an account of the sights to be seen from the recently constructed railway lines, showing commendable initiative in promptly meeting a new local demand. It soon became clear that these guides would sell better if they were illustrated and so Henry Besley launched into the production of steel engraved vignettes.

In 1848, the same year as Rock began his series, Besley began to publish a series of larger vignettes, mainly by the local artist George Townsend (1818-1894) whose meticulous attention to detail more than compensated for any lack of artistic imagination. His pencil sketches were copied with the utmost fidelity by the un-named steel engravers, as comparison with original sketches shows very clearly. In the years to 1871 this ran to about 100 views of Devon and Cornwall. A smaller series was introduced in 1853. Both series were used in various collections. The large series was originally intended for a publication entitled *Illustrations of Devon*, to be issued in shilling parts, each containing three views and twelve pages of text. This project, advertised in *Besley's West of England Railway Companion No. 1* never seems to have materialised, but the prints were issued separately or gathered into various booklets containing four, six or twelve views, or into cloth-covered albums containing thirty or sixty engravings normally entitled *Views in Devonshire* or *Views in Devonshire and Cornwall*. The smaller series of vignettes was more versatile. Not only were they collected into booklets of six or more views with such titles as *Peeps at Exeter and Neighbourhood* or *Peeps at the Headlands of South Devon*, but they also served to illustrate the *Route Book of Devon* and the various handbooks or local guides that the firm produced from the 1840s to the 1870s. The prints were also sold separately, printed on paper or card, and were used on notepaper as letterheads. The smaller series was numbered, the Cornish vignettes being allocated numbers running from 1 to 99 but overlapping with Devon, which started at 100. The first 31 views of Devon appeared in 1853 and a further ten in 1854, but thereafter the pace slackened. In about 1865, when the numbering had reached the 170s George Townsend was replaced for a short period by J.W. Tucker (1808-69) and then by S.R. Ridgway. The last number known is 215, a view of Babbacombe after an un-named artist, produced in about 1875. The numbering may have helped to develop the fashion for collecting these vignettes and manuscript albums are known giving accounts of visits to Torquay and other resorts copiously illustrated by vignettes by Besley and others. Although the alteration of steel engravings is a difficult task, involving the careful burnishing of the steel plate before new detail can be added, Besley made several attempts to update the illustrations and plates are known in two or more states, for example the large vignette entitled *Exeter (N.W.)*, first published in about 1848, was twice altered to show changes to



St David's railway station (SC0948), (SC0948-2). Besley also experimented with tinted versions of the plates, often used in his "Route books".



SC0948, Exeter (N.W.), George Townsend, 1848



SC0948-2, Exeter (N.W.), George Townsend, 1862

### **The Decline of the Topographical Print, 1870-1890**

These engravings represented the final flowering of the medium. Wood engraving, with the advantage that it could be printed together with the typeset text, had made an appearance in such works as Thomas Shapter's *History of the Cholera in Exeter in 1832* (Exeter, 1849). Already photographers such as Francis Bedford were producing albums of photographic views. These were real photographs and were relatively expensive, so there was a market for the rather unsatisfactory sepia tinted lithographed screenfolds, printed on coated paper which were largely produced in Germany in the 1880s and 1890s. Photolithography made the publication of photographic albums of views a more viable possibility from the 1880s and the arrival of the picture postcard in the 1890s ensured that this method of reproduction became cheap and widespread. The use of etching, engraving, lithography and woodcut was now reserved for art prints - a different area of study from the use of these media to provide a topographical record before the advent of photography.