

FROM PACKET TO SHOP WINDOW:  
JOHN EVERETT MILLAIS'S *THE PRINCES IN THE TOWER*  
AND KNOEDLER'S TRANSATLANTIC PRINT TRADE

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A suited man stands at the doorway, looking out to the photographer from his vantage point above the street level (fig. 1). The doorway gives egress to a dim interior whose business is signalled by the goods displayed in the large windows framing the door and wrapping around the corner of the building. The modified Doric column that anchors the corner and the elaborate shades above each window help to convey and protect the value of the displayed goods. Framed paintings and prints line the walls and lower-ledge interior to the windows, inviting passersby to peer within. The uniformed man at far right, with a case in his hand, hints at services offered by the business, the name and address of which – Knoedler 170 [Fifth Avenue] – is inscribed above the door.

While its original purpose is now lost, this photograph remains an important material trace of the commercial art trade at a key moment of its formation in the United States. To the right of the right door jamb, in the lower tier, is a large black and white object, presumably a framed print, that shows two figures standing close to one another. The image is easily recognized as a popular print from the time, *The Princes in the Tower* (*Richard, Duke of York and Duke of Norfolk, King Edward V*) after the painting by John Everett Millais, first exhibited at the Royal Academy of Arts in 1878 and now in the collections of Royal Holloway, University of London (fig. 2). The painting and its reproductive engraving depict the brothers King Edward V of England and Richard of Shrewsbury, Duke of York, who mysteriously disappeared after being locked in a tower by their uncle, the Duke of Gloucester (Richard III), who was serving as regent after the death of their father. William Shakespeare in *Richard III* pointed the finger at the Duke of Gloucester, who had the children murdered to retain his despotic hold on power.