Caricature lithograph, “Le Daguerrotrappe,” 26 October 1839
(keywords: Le Daguerrotrappe, Jules Platier, J. Platier, history of the daguerreotype, history of photography.)

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CARICATURE DE LA MODE.

Les chef-d’oeuvre de la scène ont eu leurs parodies, le Daguerréotype devait avoir sa caricature, et le Daguerrotrape que nous donnons aujourd’hui prouve que, chez nous, on peut rire spirituellement des plus belles découvertes. Le patient qui s’est soumis à la torture de l’immobilité pendant dix minutes, pour avoir son portrait ressemblant, nous rappelle nos ministres du 12 mai, cher-chant à prendre un air digne devant les puissances du Nord, et ne faisant qu’une laide grimace.

[translation:]
CARICATURE OF LA MODE (“FASHION”)

As the masterpieces of the stage had their parodies, the Daguerreotype had to have its caricature, and the Daguerrotrape that we give today proves, here, one can laugh wittily of the most beautiful discoveries. The patient that submitted himself to the torture of immobility for ten minutes to have his portrait resemblance brings to mind our ministers of May 12, looking to take a dignified appearance before the Northern powers and doing only an ugly grimace.

[The last sentence references the 12 May 1839 insurrection by Blanquist’s “Society of the Seasons” which was suppressed by government troops.—ed.]

[ SEE NEXT PAGE FOR GRAPHIC ]
Oui, madame, avec le Daguerrotrappe nous attrappons le diable ! Voyez par tout, nous vous attrappons la Bourse, l'Académie, la chambre des Pairs, la Chambre des Députés et le Ministère de l'Intérieur. Nous faisons de tout sans artistes, de la gravure à la Vapeur et à la peinture qui se met tout seul comme un pot au-feu. Quant aux portraits ça va sur des roulettes, trois quarts d'heure sans boucher les paupières, sans éternuer ni hurler, et c'est fini vous êtes parfaitement attrapés.

[translation:]

Yes, madam, with the Daguerrotrappe we’ll catch the Devil! See everywhere, we’ve caught the Stock Exchange, the Academy, the Chamber of Peers, the Chamber of Deputies, and the Minister of the Interior. We do art without artists, engraving with steam, and the landscape which simmers itself all alone as pot-au-feu. [boiled meat and vegetables] As for the portraits, that goes like clockwork. [literally: “that goes on wheels”] Three quarters of an hour without moving the eyelids, without sneezing or yawning, and it is finished; you are perfectly caught.

[End of text.]

The graphic is also available in JPG format:


EDITOR’S NOTES:

This caricature lithographic is one of earliest graphics involving the daguerreotype and appears only two months after the 19 August 1839 disclosure of Daguerre’s process. Like the 9 December 1839 lithograph by T. Maurisset, “La Daguerreotypomanie,” the Platier caricature indicates the strong interest in the use of Daguerre’s process for portraiture (which at this time was not entirely successful.)

The artist is Jules Platier. Platier contributed to several Parisian publications including Le Charivari. He also contributed to the Italian caricature journal Il Fischietto under the name of “Giulio.”

This lithograph also is included in an album of Platier caricature lithographs. See Jules Platier, Les Jolis Petits Visages (Paris: Chez Aubert, nd. [ca. 1840s]). In that publication, the title “Le Daguerrotrappe” is replaced with the album title, “LES JOLIS PETITS VISAGES, No. 14.” Also, to the right of Platier’s lithographed signature, the La Mode publication information is replaced with “Chez Aubert gal Véro-Dodat.” All of the lithographs in the album are hand-colored. (Information courtesy of Sandra Stelts, Curator of Rare Books and Manuscripts, The Pennsylvania State University Libraries. Call number for the album is NC1499.P53A4 184X Q.)

The editor would welcome further comments regarding the political and social implications of this text and graphic.

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