

**“Daguerreotype Portraits,” 25 March 1848**

(keywords: history of the daguerreotype, history of photography)

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**THE DAGUERREOTYPE: AN ARCHIVE OF SOURCE TEXTS, GRAPHICS, AND EPHEMERA**

*The research archive of Gary W. Ewer regarding the history of the daguerreotype*

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**DAGUERREOTYPE PORTRAITS.**

Shade of Daguerre, we in invoke thee! Thy pencil was composed of sun-beams, and thy pallette was colored o'er only by golden tints. Thou had'st not the cerulean, the beautiful blue symbol of Hope—the signal so full of joy to the mariner, who, when in the desert of a stormy ocean, looks up to Heaven for relief and succor! Thou had'st not the purple—that color which tinges and makes apparent royalty of birth or accident; nor the red, which speaks to us in a sword-like tongue, and spirts forth narrow streams of blood. And last, but aye, *not* least, thou did'st not have the yellow—that loathsome color, the emblem of hate, anger, and revenge! Thy magnificent genius taught thee, oh Daguerre! to take down the semblance of men, women, and children, on thin sheets of metal, plated with thinner sheets of silver—but oh! how much brass we frequently see in their countenances. Daguerre, step-son of Phoebus, again we invoke thee! See some of the specimens of the work which thou has't wrought:

*Mrs. Jenkins.*—Mr. Doggertipe, I want me and my baby takin. You need'nt say nothin about the child's shoes and pynteletts, but merely do it as the picture-people say, at half length, leavin off the baby's legs and her stockins. As for me, I want you to take me as I am, with my child upon my knee, and my right hand claspin her around the waist. I want a sweet kind of smile painted on my features, and to have the baby danglin with its left hand in my hair.

*Hon. John Jones.*—How do you do, sir! I wish to have my likeness taken immediately. The fact is, (nobody is here, is there?) the President has sent for *me*, upon what business, however, I know not, but as I *may* be sent to Mexico, I would like my family to have some memento—you understand. [Here the Hon. John Jones hid his face behind his hat, for he was overcome with emotion.] Paint me with a large blue coat hanging over my left shoulder, my eyes looking to the Capitol, and if you can get it in, stick a gold-headed cane in my hand.

*Miss Snibbs.*—(The lady has a remarkably small bonnet, and a bewitching smile.) What do you charge, sir? Can you take me with gloves on, sir? Certainly Miss. Miss Snibbs seats herself upon a chair and undergoes the solar operation.

*Jack Thompson.*—Look here, old feller, how long will it take you to fetch me down. I sell horses and sometimes play cards. I want you to put me down by a table—stick a decanter by my side, and let Bowse, my big dog, put his nose between my legs. Git down, you cussed dog! don't you know you are goin' to have your'e portrate takin'?

*Albert Allbright.*—“My dear sir, I wish you to take my daguerreotype.” “How would you like to sit, sir?” “Oh, almost any way—but I would prefer that you would take me

with a small centre-table by my side, together with a few champagne glasses, and some dominoes, an by the bye, a few promiscuous cards would not be amiss. But above all things, sir, put a cigar in my mouth, and make the smoke as curly as possible!”

Oh golden shadow—thou bright phantom of art—thou sun-born child, “can such things be, and overcome us like a summer’s cloud!” Only think that the God of Day condescends to paint in his own radiant colors the lineaments of Mrs. Jenkins.

N. O. Daily Crescent.

[End of text.]

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**EDITOR’S NOTES:**

This fictional humor is akin to anecdotes related by Bogardus. See Abram [Abraham—ed.] Bogardus, “Thirty-Seven Years Behind a Camera,” *Photographic Times and American Photographer* (New York) 14:158 (February 1884): 73–78.<sup>1</sup>

1. [http://www.daguerreotypearchive.org/texts/N8480002\\_BOGARDUS\\_PHOTO-TIMES\\_1884-02.pdf](http://www.daguerreotypearchive.org/texts/N8480002_BOGARDUS_PHOTO-TIMES_1884-02.pdf)

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