

"Daguerre," 3 March 1851

(keywords: Louis Jacques Mandé Daguerre, Charles Richard Meade, history of the daguerreotype, history of photography)

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DAGUERRE.—The New York *Sun* gives the following account of a recent visit by an American to Daguerre:

The improvements which have been made in the Daguerreotype art have mainly been effected in this country. The moment the discovery was made public in France, it quickly traveled to the United States, was taken up instantly by ingenious chemists and improved, until now American Daguerreotypes are acknowledged far to surpass either English or French. It is said that the atmospheres of London and Paris are so smoky that Daguerreotypes cannot be taken as well there as in New York. Daguerre himself, however, gave the preference to an American artist, for recently he was visited at his chateau, in France, by one of the Messrs. Meade, of this city, who took several likenesses of the old gentleman. Daguerre pronounced them the best specimens of the art he had ever beheld, and evinced the greatest pleasure that the discovery, of which he was the humble originator, should have been brought to such an astonishing perfection.

Mons. Daguerre is now in his 59th year. His mind is still very active, and he carries on his chemical experiments daily. His gray head, and open, intellectual countenance, form a very handsome picture. The curious may see his daguerreotype any day at the Messrs. Meade's rooms in Broadway. Daguerre resides at his chateau, Brie Sur Marne, not far from Paris, and is passing the evening of his life in quiet content. The French government awarded him a pension of \$1000 a year for his art, which sum he still receives.

[End of text.]

EDITOR'S NOTES:

It was the brother, Charles Richard Meade, who made the daguerreotypes of Daguerre. A contemporary provides additional details:

It may not be generally known, that Daguerre had so strong an objection to having his portrait taken, that he never (it is believed) sat to but one photographer; and this was our countryman, Charles R. Meade, of the firm of Meade Brothers, in New York. Mr. Meade being in France, in 1848, visited Daguerre's Chateau, at Brie-sur-Marne, for the purpose of taking his portrait,—not being aware of Daguerre's objection to being thus represented. Mr. Meade's request was politely but firmly negatived, as had been the request of many others,—among them two artists from the United States. Eventually, however, through the urgent persuasion of his wife and niece, Daguerre was induced

to sit, and five or six daguerreotypes of him were taken by Mr. Meade, from which numerous copies were afterwards produced in the various modes of representation. The artist also took a daguerreotype of Daguerre's Chateau at this time.¹

The Meade portraits of Daguerre are discussed in Rita E. Bott, "The Daguerre Portraits by Meade—A Review and a Discovery," *Daguerreian Society Newsletter* 22:1 (January—March 2010): 6–10. Matthew R. Isenburg also discussed the Meade portraits of Daguerre in the lecture, "The Many Faces of Daguerre," presented during PhotoHistory XIV—The 14th Triennial Symposium on the History of Photography, 2009, and also presented during The Daguerreian Society Symposium, 2009.

One of the Meade daguerreotypes of Daguerre is viewable on the web site of the J. Paul Getty Museum.²

Three illustrations of Daguerre, derived from the portraits by Meade, are among the graphics provided in this web site.³

The editor would welcome a reference copy of the original text from the *New York Sun*.

1. M. A. Root, *The Camera and the Pencil; or the Heliographic Art* (Philadelphia: M. A. Root, 1869): 385.

2. <http://www.getty.edu/art/gettyguide/artObjectDetails?artobj=39402>

3. <http://www.daguerreotypearchive.org/graphics-portraits.html>

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