

“A Good Idea,” (“rogue gallery”) 12 June 1851

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

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Daily Union (Sacramento) 1:74 (12 June 1851): n.p. (second page of issue).

A GOOD IDEA.—It has been suggested to us that, says the Post, should the City Marshal procure a daguerreotypist to take the likeness of each notorious criminal that comes under his charge, it would be of great service to the officers of justice throughout the State in the event of escape, as well as prove a terror to the criminals themselves.

[End of text.]

EDITOR’S NOTES:

The use of the daguerreotype as a tool in law enforcement accompanied the initial announcements of the daguerreotype:

What will become of the poor thieves, when they shall see handed in as evidence against them their own portraits, taken by the room in which they stole, and in the very act of stealing!

“New Discovery,” *Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine* (Edinburgh and London) 45:281 (March 1839): 384.¹

The idea of deterrence is carried even further:

There will be no safety for rogues. Every apple-orchard, store-house, and coat-pocket, will contain a self-regulating photographic machine faithfully performing *its* functions, while the depredator is executing *his*.

“Picture Pausing II.—Daguerreotypes,” *Christian Watchman* (Boston) 27:20 (15 May 1846): 77.²

This notice may have been prompted by the 10 June 1851 execution of John Jenkins by the actions of the [First] Committee of Vigilance.³

1. http://www.daguerreotypearchive.org/texts/P8390016_NEW-DISCOV_BLACKWOODS_1839-03.pdf

2. http://www.daguerreotypearchive.org/texts/P8460003_DAGS_XIAN-WATCH_1846-05-15.pdf

3. See “Secret Organization,” “Arrest of a Robber,” *Daily Alta California* (San Francisco) 2:183 (11 June 1851): n.p. (second page of issue); “The Execution of Jenkins,” *Daily Alta California* (San Francisco) 2:184 (12 June 1851): n.p. (second page of issue); “The Vigilance Committee,” “Organization of the Vigilance Committee,” *Daily Alta California* (San Francisco) 2:185 (13 June 1851): n.p. (second page of issue).

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