

**“Daguerre’s Photogenic Paper, and Fixation of Images,” April 1839**

(keywords: Louis Jacques Mandé Daguerre, photogenic paper process, William Henry Fox Talbot, Jean-Baptiste Biot, history of the daguerreotype, history of photography.)

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*Railway Magazine, and Steam Navigation Journal* (London) 6:38 (April 1839): 180. The article appears under the section header “Scientific and Miscellaneous Intelligence.”

*Daguerre’s Photogenic Paper, and Fixation of Images.*—M. Daguerre has communicated to M. Biot, his recipe for the preparation of his paper for taking images by the action of light. Dip unsized paper in muriatic ether weakly acidified by the effect of the slow decomposition which it experiences by time; or, what is better, apply this liquid with a soft brush to the paper and let it dry in the air, or with a gentle heat. This is very essential. Take then a solution of nitrate of silver in distilled water, which solution is necessary to keep constantly from the light in a bottle well stopped, and dip the dried paper which has been impregnated with the muriatic ether. This liquid may also be put on with a brush, but M. Daguerre disapproves of this, in consequence of being obliged to lay on the liquid in successive rays, the places where the edges of these rays touch or overlap, are in different physical conditions and dissimilar electric states, and thence but little sensible to the light. It is better, therefore, either to soak the paper as before or pour equally over one face of it the liquid. He then recommends the paper to be dried in the dark, or if it be accelerated by heat it must be by a very weak heat; for he says the radiation from non-luminous hot bodies, will, like light, tend to discolour the paper. He rather recommends pressure, and drying the paper between the leaves of a portfolio, which would not only exclude the light but the circulation of the air. M. Daguerre describes this paper as excessively prompt and sensible in receiving impressions if used shortly after it is prepared; but the longer the time the less sensible it becomes. The process may be stopped, and the image fixed by taking up the nitrate not yet entered into combination. This is done by bathing the paper in water enough to wash it well; then when it is thoroughly dried without heat, it is insensible to the further action of light.

Mr. Talbot’s plan in this country is very similar to the above, but his process of fixation is different, but not so simple.

[End of text.]

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**EDITOR’S NOTES:**

Daguerre’s paper images are mentioned in various accounts written by those who visited Daguerre in early 1839, although sometimes the paper process and the daguerreotype process are discussed as if both were one process. See Richard Harlan, “Letter from Dr. Harlan,” *Medical Examiner. Devoted to Medicine, Surgery, and the Collateral Sciences* (Philadelphia) 2:24 (Saturday, 15 June 1839): 376–78.<sup>1</sup> See also the very early report from the Parisian periodical, *Constitutionnel*, translated in “Chemical and Optical Discovery,” *Journal of the American Institute, a Monthly Publication, devoted to the*

*Interests of Agriculture, Commerce, Manufactures, and the Arts* (New York) 4:5 (February 1839): 276–77.<sup>2</sup>

1. [http://www.daguerreotypearchive.org/texts/N8390001\\_HARLAN\\_MED\\_EXAMINER\\_1839-06-15.pdf](http://www.daguerreotypearchive.org/texts/N8390001_HARLAN_MED_EXAMINER_1839-06-15.pdf)
2. [http://www.daguerreotypearchive.org/texts/P8390001\\_JOURN\\_AM\\_INST\\_1839-02.pdf](http://www.daguerreotypearchive.org/texts/P8390001_JOURN_AM_INST_1839-02.pdf)

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