

**“Mattakeesett”, “The skill of the artist, Mr. Vance. . .,” 26 April 1851  
(letter dated 12 March 1851)**

(keywords: Robert H. Vance, California, 1851 Great Exhibition, London Crystal Palace, history of the daguerreotype, history of photography)

---

**THE DAGUERRETYPE: AN ARCHIVE OF SOURCE TEXTS, GRAPHICS, AND EPHEMERA**  
*The research archive of Gary W. Ewer regarding the history of the daguerreotype*  
<http://www.daguerreotypearchive.org>  
**EWER ARCHIVE P8510021**

---

Selected text published in:

*Spirit of the Times: a Chronicle of the Turf, Agriculture, Field Sports, Literature and the Stage* (New York) 21:10 (26 April 1851): 114. Two paragraphs from a full column of text are provided.

LATE FROM CALIFORNIA.

SAN FRANCISCO, March 12th 1851

California is about to send specimens of native production and art to the great exhibition in London. The first will be a huge lump of quartz rock, richly studded with gold. I wish, in addition, some person would send a sample of the beets, onions, and potatoes, that grow about these diggings. The most monstrous “monster vegetable” that was ever exhibited at an Agricultural Fair in the Eastern States is not equal to the ordinary productions of the soil of this State.

The other specimen is a series of daguerreotype plates, representing the whole of this city. They are eight in number, and taken in sections from nature; of the truthfulness of their representation there can be no doubt, of course, and the skill of the artist, Mr. Vance, formerly of Boston, Mass., is apparent from his work. From these impressions a person can form a correct idea of this place, and those who think we live in shanties among sand hills will discover their mistake.

Truly yours,

MATTAKEESETT.

**[End of selected text. All content related to photography herein provided.]**

---

**EDITOR'S NOTES:**

This notice is perhaps the earliest mention of Vance's intent to exhibit daguerreotypes of California at the 1851 Great Exhibition in London.

Vance's intent to exhibit daguerreotypes in London is confirmed in a review of Vance's exhibition of California daguerreotypes which opened early October 1851 in New York :

A collection of Daguerreotypes on exhibition at 349 Broadway, taken by R. H. Vance in various parts of California, is well worth a visit. The views are some three hundred in number, and were intended to be taken to the World's Fair; but from an interruption to the Artist's work, from one of the San Francisco conflagrations, they could not be got together in time. This is to be regretted, for they would have proved of decided attractiveness, not merely in the gratification of curiosity, but from their artistic value.<sup>1</sup>

This set of eight daguerreotypes likely were destroyed in the major San Francisco fire of 4 May 1851.

1. *Literary World* (New York) 9:246 (18 October 1851): 311. See [http://www.daguerreotypearchive.org/texts/P8510003\\_VANCE\\_LIT\\_WORLD\\_1851-10-18.pdf](http://www.daguerreotypearchive.org/texts/P8510003_VANCE_LIT_WORLD_1851-10-18.pdf)

#### **EWER ARCHIVE P8510021**

URL: [http://www.daguerreotypearchive.org/texts/P8510021\\_VANCE\\_SPIRIT-TIMES\\_1851-04-26](http://www.daguerreotypearchive.org/texts/P8510021_VANCE_SPIRIT-TIMES_1851-04-26)

Document author: Gary W. Ewer

Creation date: 2009-06-09 / Last revision: 2009-06-09

Citation information: *Spirit of the Times: a Chronicle of the Turf, Agriculture, Field Sports, Literature and the Stage* (New York) 21:10 (26 April 1951): 114.

Prepared from: imaged original text from *American Periodical Series Online* (ProQuest.) (Subscription required; available at many higher learning institutions.)

Original spelling/punctuation/grammar generally maintained without correction. Any in-text corrections are bracketed.

The *source text* is Public Domain and may be freely quoted. As noted below, this document is copyright.

If citing directly from this document, please reference the Ewer Archive number and provide the following citation credit:

Gary W. Ewer, ed., *The Daguerreotype: an Archive of Source Texts, Graphics, and Ephemera*, <http://www.daguerreotypearchive.org>

#### **THE NECESSARY DISCLAIMERS:**

The document creator has made every effort to insure the accuracy of the transcription. However, the information provided in this document is provided without warranty, either express or implied. The document creator will not be liable for any damages caused or alleged to be caused directly, indirectly, incidentally, or consequentially by the information provided by this text.

The document creator assumes no responsibility for accuracy of fact; the text is prepared "as found." Factual inaccuracies of the original text are generally **not** noted by the document creator. If this text is used in academic papers, accuracy should be confirmed by consulting original sources.

The document creator also assumes no responsibility regarding the correctness, suitability, or safety of any chemical or photographic processes that may be described by this text. Many of the chemicals used in early photographic processes are extremely toxic and should not be handled without a **thorough** knowledge of safe use.

The opinions expressed in this text are solely those of the original author and are not necessarily those of the Archive editor. Some texts may contain derogatory words. Any such word is certainly one that would not be used today. The words remain in the transcription, however, to maintain truthfulness to the original text.

© 2009, Gary W. Ewer. <http://www.daguerreotypearchive.org>

---