BLESSINGS on the Englishman who hit upon the idea of finding out why the most of us have two eyes instead of one. For to him, after all, are we indebted for the Stereoscope. Any one who has once looked through the little lenses, and then sits down and stolidly makes a bargain for a daguerreotype, must be an old fogy of the stalest stamp. The daguerreotype is a very flat and far-off suggestion of a friend, but the Stereoscope places the “said friend” actually before you. There he is—always excepting the actual flesh and blood. We know of but one respect, indeed, in which the daguerreotype has the advantage over the Stereoscope. If your lady have the former, she can (“not to put too fine a point on it,” and with an apologetic cough behind our hat) place the actual thing she has been looking at to her lips. But the Stereoscope will not admit of any such little attentions (pardonable, perhaps, if they be paid when one is all alone.) For she peers through the lenses and beholds a wonderful apparition behind them—a little solid gentleman; but when she looks over them, strange to say, he isn’t there. It is truly provoking. She takes another look, and there he is sitting as though he were actually before her, and (“not to put too fine a point on it” again) holding still;—the gloved hands are plump—the folds of the neck scarf are standing out, as though it were nature itself; and she can actually see ten or fifteen feet behind him—away somewhere to the further side of the room. She lifts her eyes peeps over the lenses again, and tries to catch him, but as quick as thought, he has vanished and in his place are nothing but two miserable little pictures of him, taken at different angles. The very philosophy of the thing—physics we should say—drives away the anticipated kiss, and the Stereoscope is—not laid down on to the table—but put to the eyes once more, that the fair one may at least take a good long gaze at—all but—the “dear kind soul” again. If the reader desires to see Stereoscopes as are Stereoscopes, he will find them at Shew’s Daguerrean Gallery on the corner of Sacramento and Montgomery streets. We can recommend them.

[End of text.]
Exhibition in London. (Priority is generally given Sir Charles Wheatstone for being the first to demonstrate stereopsis with his 1833 mirror stereoscope.) In the United States, however, the stereo-daguerreotype was often fashioned after the patented design (1853) of John F. Mascher. For a description and illustration of Mascher's design, see Scientific American (New York) 8:37 (28 May 1853): 292.