SUNLIGHT PAINTINGS.

We have bridled the lightning, enchained the sun, and laid the cable. Not long ago, one of our greatest artists said, on leaving Gurney’s Daguerrean Gallery, 349 Broadway, that he was amazed to see the taste and artistic discrimination displayed in the arrangement, light, shade, and draping of the pictures. Painters once alleged that the Daguerreotype and the Photograph are too mechanical to admit of high artistic developments. But here, as elsewhere, it is the man who makes the art. For all practical— not ideal—purposes, the Daguerreotype accomplishes in hours, what art in its higher forms only achieves in years. The Daguerrean artist of talent and research, brings to his aid the subtlest secrets of science. In grouping and draping his figures; in softening or intensifying light; in subduing minor parts, by well chosen masses of dark; and in the atmosphere which corresponds delicately and effectively to all these, he has a field in which competition soon shows the difference between the mechanic and the man of sentiment. This word sentiment reveals much of all art; for without it the feelings are not touched. Hence, Cimabue and Fra Angelica, who were “the resurrection and the life” of art in the Middle Ages, by the magic power of devotion and sensibility breathed through their works, recall scenes the devout witnessed, when God’s fire descended to light the flames of his own sacrifices.

All this has much to do with the Daguerreotype; for no man has any right to call himself an artist, unless he feels what art is. In this respect Gurney claims admiration. He lives in his atelier, studying the effects of his art in every impression the sun paints for him; and dots down his observations like a philosopher and an artist. This patient course of practical study, accounts for his being at the head of the Daguerrean Art. Let our readers, in passing though his superb gallery, not forget to look at his Imperial Photographs, his life-sized Photographs taken on canvass, and above all his Oil Colored Photographs, which in every attribute of art seem to surpass the finest reflections of the human face yet given to the world.


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