

**C. Edwards Lester, "Sunlight Paintings," October 1858**

(keywords: Jeremiah Gurney, 349 Broadway, Charles Edwards Lester, 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 P8580004**

---

Published in:

*Democratic Age: Statesmanship, Science, Art, Literature, and Progress* (New York) 1:1

(October 1858): vi–vii. This text is one of a series of sketches appearing under the

header, "Illustrations of the Democratic Age."

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.

[End of text.]

---

**EDITOR'S NOTES:**

In this text, editor Charles Edwards Lester borrows from a previous text regarding Gurney. See Charles Edwards Lester, "Sunlight Paintings," *Glances at the Metropolis: A Hundred Illustrated Gems* (New York: Isaac D. Guyer, 1854): 75. Much of the content featured in this series ("Illustrations of the Democratic Age") are—in part or in whole—from *Glances at the Metropolis*.

Two other notices regarding Gurney appear in *Democratic Age*. See "Progress of the Daguerrean and Photographic Art," 1:4 (November 1858): xxxiii–xxxiv;<sup>1</sup> "A Festival of Art," 1:3 (January 1859): 249.<sup>2</sup>

Only six numbers of this periodical were issued.

1. [http://www.daguerreotypearchive.org/texts/P8580005\\_PROGRESS\\_DEMO-AGE\\_1858-11.pdf](http://www.daguerreotypearchive.org/texts/P8580005_PROGRESS_DEMO-AGE_1858-11.pdf)

2. [http://www.daguerreotypearchive.org/texts/P8590004\\_GURNEY\\_DEMO-AGE\\_1859-01.pdf](http://www.daguerreotypearchive.org/texts/P8590004_GURNEY_DEMO-AGE_1859-01.pdf)

#### **EWER ARCHIVE P8580004**

URL: [http://www.daguerreotypearchive.org/texts/P8580004\\_GURNEY\\_DEMO-AGE\\_1858-10.pdf](http://www.daguerreotypearchive.org/texts/P8580004_GURNEY_DEMO-AGE_1858-10.pdf)

Document author: Gary W. Ewer

Creation date: 2009-08-13 / Last revision (proofread): 2009-08-17

Citation information: *Democratic Age* (New York) 1:1 (October 1858): vi–vii.

Prepared from: imaged original text from *Google Books*.

(<http://books.google.com/books?id=gXsAAAAAYAAJ>)

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>

---