

**C. Edwards Lester, "Progress of the Daguerrean and Photographic Art,"  
November 1858**

(Keywords: Jeremiah Gurney, 707 Broadway, 349 Broadway, Charles Edwards Lester, history of the daguerreotype, history of photography)

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Published in:

*Democratic Age: Statesmanship, Science, Art, Literature, and Progress* (New York) 1:2  
(November 1858): xxxiii–xxxiv. This text is one of a series of sketches appearing under  
the header, "Illustrations of the Democratic Age."

PROGRESS OF THE DAGUERREAN AND PHOTOGRAPHIC ART.

THE Art which was discovered by the great Frenchman, and which will carry his name through the future ages, although it had its birth in Paris, has had its development in New York. That development is yet in its infancy, but we see some flashes of light over the future, that begin to tell us how grand a part this sunlight painting will have, in the history of future civilization.

The Americans carried away the Gold Medals from the whole world at the Great Fair in London, in several things; but chiefest among them were Iron Safes and Daguerreotypes, where many of our eminent artists struggled so nobly, and where they all seemed to deserve to win. This Daguerrean Art has gone through many interesting and beautiful transitions, from one stage of gradation to another. We have now almost ceased to be surprised, when we look at one of Gurney's full-length Photographs, cast by sunlight direct upon the canvas. But there is one thing in connection with this art which, a day or two ago surprised us, and it was an indication of what the art of Dagurre will shortly become, in the genial atmosphere of this Metropolis. Up Broadway, (number 705 we think), [707 Broadway—ed.] the passers-by have for some months seen a beautiful marble building going up, which unlike those around it does not count its fourth and fifth, and sixth, and seventh stories; but which furnishes two floors above the street, and hundred and thirty feet long, constructed artistically for MR. GURNEY, for the sole purpose of having an *atelier* dedicated exclusively to the business of perfecting the Photographic Art. It is the first building that we have ever known, that was designed and constructed exclusively for this high artistic purpose. The objection almost universally raised to his old gallery, and to all the galleries we are now acquainted with, of the Daguerrean Artists, has been that sitters were obliged to mount story after story, and staircase after staircase, until they lost all the glow of connotation, in the fatigue of mounting up to the sunlight. But here, one flight of stairs above the street, brings the sitter into a broad and magnificent gallery, where he can sit with a full glow of light from above, and from the North where the intensity of the rays is softened just enough to equalize the light and give perfection to the experiment. There are several of these skylight-rooms, with others, embracing all the luxuries that belong to a perfectly arranged institution of art and taste. Some of Gurney's fine pictures went down in that mass of

ruin, covered by the falling dore of crystal, which scattered to the winds the hopes of a thousand artists. But he had only to transport the pictures of one of his smaller rooms at his old gallery (349 Broadway), to illuminate his Palace of Art, at 705. But, when he threw into that great and magnificent gallery his choicest selections, it left his gallery without a rival, in beauty, on either side of the Atlantic.

The Building itself is a work of art, and the arrangements seem to be perfect. We know not what the Photographic art may some day become, They are talking now about a great stride in the invention, by which short-hand writers will be dispensed with, and an instrument placed before a man which will record in type, from every respiration of the speaker's lungs, the very intonation as well as the letter of every sentiment and word that falls from his lips. Gurney's experiments, in this respect, may shortly become known to the public, But in speaking not so much of him (for many other men have done well in that line, too) as of his taste and artistic conception of what a great Daguerrean *atalier* should be, we ask our readers to go and look for themselves.

**[End of text.]**

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**EDITOR'S NOTES:**

Editor Charles Edwards Lester misstates Gurney's new address. It is correctly stated as 707 Broadway.

The publication includes two other notices regarding Gurney. See "A Festival of Art," 1:3 (January 1859): 249;<sup>1</sup> "Sunlight Paintings," 1:1 (October 1858): vi–vii;<sup>2</sup> In the latter article, Lester freely borrows from his text in *Glances at the Metropolis*.

Only six numbers of this periodical were issued.

For a related 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*.

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

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

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Document author: Gary W. Ewer

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

Citation information: *Democratic Age* (New York) 1:2 (November 1858): xxxiii–xxxiv.

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

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

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