

“Statue to Daguerre,” September 1883

(keywords: Louis Jacques Mandé Daguerre, history of the daguerreotype, history of photography)

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STATUE TO DAGUERRE.

IN the oppressive heat of a sultry sun, the monument to the memory of the best known of the inventors of photography was inaugurated on Sunday last at Corneilles-en-Paris. The natal village of Daguerre for some days past had lived a life of excitement, and the principal street was ornamented with Venetian masts and gay flags to commemorate the work of one who has made the little place famous.

The official train from Paris was timed to start at five minutes past noon, so as to bring down visitors to Corneilles in plenty of time for the inauguration, which was fixed at 2 P.M.; but many ladies and gentlemen drove over from the metropolis. M. Letellier, the President of the Societe Francaise des Archives Photographiques, was the executive officer in command, and among those who assisted at the demonstration were M. Hemant, of the Ministry of Fine Arts; Baron Cottu, the Prefect of the Department; the civil authorities of Corneilles, together with most of the leading photographers of Paris.

The statue, raised by voluntary contributions collected from all parts of the world, was erected on a small open space opposite the house where Daguerre was born, which little spot, in his honor, has now been called the Place Daguerre. The memorial consists of a pedestal some six or seven feet in height, surmounted by a bust in bronze, the work of the well known sculptor, Capellaro; it has been exhibited during the season at the Salon, and has frequently been commended as an excellent work of art. On the pedestal were the dates 1789—the year of Daguerre’s birth—and 1883.

The ceremony of unveiling was a very short one. The visitors were received about half-past one by the municipal officers of Corneilles, and, preceded by the Orpheonists of Franconville, marched to the mairie, or town hall, where a *vin d’honneur* was offered by the town. Thence the procession made its way to the Place Daguerre, where the Orpheonists commenced proceedings by chanting a cantata of M. Louis Lebey. M. Letellier then unveiled the bust, making a speech in honor of Daguerre and his work, which was frequently interrupted and applauded by the large gathering around.

Other official speeches followed, but the heat of the day somewhat interfered with the progress of events, for many of the visitors, unable longer to stand the glare and oppression of the sun—which was there in full force to do honor to the invention of “sun drawing”—moved away to the hospitable refreshment shelters, to slake their thirst and enjoy the welcome shade.

A banquet followed the ceremony at six o’clock, after the drawing of a tombola and the distribution of commemorate medals to the Orpheonists and other visitors of the

spectacle. Altogether the affair proved very successful, albeit, at one time, a discordant element seemed to threaten the harmony of the proceedings; this was no less than the publication, by a grandson of Niepce, of the old agreement entered into between Niepce and Daguerre on the subject of their work, and with which our readers are already familiar. In this partnership arrangement the process of photography is alluded to as “invented by Niepce, and improved by Daguerre,” and this statement is brought forward to prove that to the former, and not to the latter, is honor due. No one more than ourselves would be ready to acknowledge the great work of Nicephore Niepce; but, for all that, Cormeilles has reason to be proud of its statue to Daguerre, who is certainly entitled to rank as one of the greatest pioneers in photography.—*Photo. News*.

[End of text.]

EDITOR'S NOTES:

The bust of Daguerre may be viewed on the web site, *Wikipedia Commons*.¹

The editor would welcome additional information regarding the commemorative medals mentioned in this text.

1. http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Cormeilles-en-Parisis_32_Daguerre_monument.jpg

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