

Henry Howe, "America at the World's Fair . . . 1851," published 1858

(Keywords: Henry Howe, Mathew B. Brady, Martin M. Lawrence, John A. Whipple, Charles R. Meade, Henry W. M. Meade, Meade Brothers, Oliver B. Evans, 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 B8580001

Selected text published in:

Henry Howe, *Adventures and Achievements of Americans* (Cincinnati: Henry Howe, 1858): 608.

AMERICA
AT
THE WORLD'S FAIR,

HELD IN THE CRYSTAL PALACE, LONDON, IN 1851 . . .

DAGUERREOTYPES were extensively shown. Those from the United States were conceded to be superior in general effect, to those from any other country. BRADY & LAWRENCE, of New York, each received a Prize Medal—and one was awarded to a Mr. Whipple, of Michigan, for a daguerreotype of the moon. There were several other exhibitors whose pictures were very superior. Those of Evans, from Buffalo, were much admired, as were those of Meade & Brothers, New York. The following article, from an English literary journal, shows in what estimation our exhibition was held.

“Daguerreotypes are largely displayed by the French, as might have been expected, that country being proud of the discovery; but the examples exhibited by the Americans surpass, in general beauty of effect, any which we have examined from other countries. This has been attributed to a difference in the character of the solar light, as modified by atmospheric conditions; we are not, however, disposed to believe that to be the case. We have certain indications that an increased intensity of light is not of any advantage, but rather the contrary, for the production of daguerreotypes; the luminous rays appearing to act as balancing powers against the chemical rays. Now, this being the case, we know of no physical cause by which the superiority can be explained, and we are quite disposed to be sufficiently honest to admit that the mode of manipulation has more to do with the result than any atmospheric influences. However this may be, the character of the daguerreotype executed in America is very remarkable. There is a fullness of tone, and an artistic modulation of light and shadow which, in England, we do not obtain. The striking contrasts of white and black are shown decidedly enough in the British examples exhibited in the gallery—but here are coldness and hardness of outline. Within the shadow of the eagle and striped banner we find no lights too white and no shadows too dark; they dissolve, as in Nature, one into the other, in the most harmonious and truthful manner—and the result is more perfect Pictures.”

[End of selected text.]

EDITOR'S NOTES:

Howe plagiarized this entire text from *Report of Benj. P. Johnson, Agent of the State of New-York, Appointed to Attend the Exhibition of the Industry of All Nation, held in London, 1851* (Albany: C. Van Benthuysen, 1852): 116–17.¹

The text contains a geographical error; the daguerreotypist John A. Whipple was from Boston (not Michigan, as stated).

1. http://www.daguerreotypearchive.org/texts/B8520002_JOHNSON_LONDON-1851_1852.pdf

EWER ARCHIVE B8580001

URL: http://www.daguerreotypearchive.org/texts/B8580001_HOWE_1851_WORLDS_FAIR_1858.pdf

Document author: Gary W. Ewer

Creation date: 2008-09-26 / Last revision: 2009-10-01

Citation information: Henry Howe, *Adventures and Achievements of Americans* (Cincinnati: Henry Howe, 1858): 608.

Prepared from: an original volume. Also available from the online resource, *Sabin Americana*. (Sabin 33297. Subscription required; available at many higher learning institutions.) 1859 edition available from Google Books. (<http://books.google.com/books?id=yCwJ5xoKSWMC>)

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.

© 2008, Gary W. Ewer. <http://www.daguerreotypearchive.org>
