

“The Photographic or Daguerreotype Miniatures,” 24 March 1841

(keywords: Richard Beard, Alexander Wolcott, history of the daguerreotype, history of photography.)

THE DAGUERREOTYPE: 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 N8410001

Published in:

Times (London) No. 17,626 (24 March 1841): 6.

THE PHOTOGRAPHIC OR DAGUERREOTYPE MINIATURES.—Yesterday, at the Polytechnic Institution, Cavendish-square, the adaptation of the French or American discovery in miniature taking by the reflection of light, known by the various titles of the “Daguerreotype type,” the “Electrotype type,” and “the Photographic system,” was publicly witnessed for the first time in the metropolis. The discovery of this very extraordinary and ingenious device, by which limners stand a fair chance of being ruined, is claimed by different scientific individuals of different countries, and the principle of its application has been long known to the world, but the attempts generally which have been made effectively to adapt it to its intended use have hitherto been a failure. Owing, however, to the enterprising energy of Mr. Beard, the patentee of Mr. Walcott’s [Wolcott] apparatus (the latter of whom we believe is an American), the principle has been so far perfected as to be almost incapable of further improvement. The novelty attendant upon the fact of being furnished in the short space of five seconds with a more correct miniature likeness than the most accomplished artist could paint on ivory, after days of laborious study, coupled with the fineness of the weather, drew together a host of curious fashionables, so many indeed, that notwithstanding the short period of time occupied in the operation, the room was crowded for hours together by parties anxiously waiting their turn. The apartment appropriated for the magical process—for so it may be termed—is well calculated for the object desired, being on the highest story of the institution. From the roof, which is constructed of blue glass of about a quarter of an inch thick, a very powerful light is obtained, and it is so ingeniously contrived as to revolve with the sun. In a portion of the room, nearly in the centre, an elevated seat is placed, on which the party whose likeness is to be taken sits with his head reclining backwards. In this position the sitter is told to look into a glass box, in an opposite direction, about five feet from him, in which is placed the metallic plate to be impressed with the portrait. Having done so for a few seconds, he descends, and in a few minutes afterwards a faithful likeness is presented to him. The likenesses which we saw were admirable, and closely true to nature, beauties and deformities being alike exhibited: therefore those who are ashamed of the personal appearance had better keep from the influence of the electrotype.

[End of text.]

EDITOR’S NOTES:

This text appears the day after the 23 March 1841 opening of Richard's Beard first studio atop the Royal Polytechnic Institute.

EWER ARCHIVE N8410001

URL: http://www.daguerreotypearchive.org/texts/N8410001_BEARD_OPEN_TIMES_1841-03-24.pdf

Document author: Gary W. Ewer

Creation date: 2008-11-17 / Last revision: 2009-05-26

Citation information: Times (London) No. 17,626 (24 March 1841): 6.

Prepared from: imaged original text provided by the online resource, *Times Online / Archive* (<http://archive.timesonline.co.uk/tol/archive/>. Subscription required for full text.)

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>
