

“Cheap Daguerreotypes,” 18 April 1851

(keywords: fifty-cent daguerreotypes, Levi L. Hill, history of the daguerreotype, history of photography)

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CHEAP DAGUERREOTYPES.—There seems to be a very spirited competition, just now, in the Daguerrean business, and “fifty cent miniatures” can now be procured at a half dozen “galleries” about town. We took a look at some specimens of these cheap productions, a day or two since; and were quite surprised at the handsome manner in which they were executed, on (apparently) fine quality plates. We presume, however, that this extraordinary cheapening of the Daguerrean prices is induced by the anticipated revolution which the introduction of the process discovered by the Rev. Mr. Hill, of taking photographic pictures with all the colors, must surely produce. The art Daguerrean will then become obsolete. Well, hurrah for the age of progress!

[End of text.]

EDITOR’S NOTES:

The fifty-cent daguerreotype was the offering of the “cheap” operators. This reduction of price (and cheapening of the product) was decried by many gallery owners who felt that the art had been degraded. See “By the Editor” [Henry Hunt Snelling], “The Daguerrean Art; its Present State and Future Prospects,” *Photographic Art-Journal* (New York) 2: 2 (August 1851): 99–101¹; “Daguerrean Convention,” *Photographic Art-Journal* (New York) 2:2 (August 1851): 122–23.

See also an advertisement by one of the “fifty cent” operators, J. W. Thompson, “A Short Tale is Soon Told,” *New-York Daily Tribune* 11:3245 (11 September 1851): 2.²

1. http://www.daguerreotypearchive.org/texts/P8510006_SNELLING_PHOTO-ART-JOURN_1850-08.pdf

2. http://www.daguerreotypearchive.org/advert/N8510037_THOMPSON-AD_NYD-TRIB_1851-09-11.pdf

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