

The sustained interest in the *Pictorial Illustrations* . . . throughout 1848 and 1849 doubtless encouraged him to do the Panorama.

In the work of transcribing Brees's striking but often seemingly unfinished watercolours into the sharp, crisp lines of the final work the key man was the engraver, Henry Melville, of whom with his son, Harden Melville, we at the moment know much less than we need to. Harden Melville was associated with W. A. Brunning, J. Zeitter and other artists in the painting of the 1849 panorama done as the title page to the *Guide* . . . claimed 'under the immediate superintendence' of Brees himself. The description, of what was a panorama in motion, invited the viewer to 'commence reading the following description from the end, when the Panorama commences moving from that extremity.'²⁵ Brees was in attendance at midday 'to give information to parties desirous of proceeding to the Colony'.

It appears to have been first exhibited on Christmas Eve 1849. The *Times* in a lengthy review²⁶ referred to the opening in Miss Linwood's gallery at No 6 Leicester Square. 'The subjects . . . are described in a series of paintings, executed in the first style of the scenic art, and with an accuracy and truth which might well be expected, when we consider that the original drawings were not the work of a mere artist, but of a surveyor.' The comment described the applause from 'several gentlemen who had been in New Zealand, and who manifested their delight every now and then as the sight of some well known building, or bit of scenery broke on their view.' It was clear from later comment that the scenes were confined to Wellington. The *New Zealand Journal* in strongly recommending a visit, pointed out that the Panorama was not 'a mere daub, like some of the American productions which have been the fashion of late, but . . . is, in the strictest sense of the term, a work of art'.²⁷

Not everyone approved. Charles Hursthouse junr wrote to the *New Zealand Journal*²⁸ criticising the representation of every living creature as magnified to nearly twice its natural proportion. Consequently '... the ferocity of aspect and Brobdignagian proportions of the natives' had discouraged some lady visitors to the Panorama who were considering emigrating to either New Zealand or the United States. Brees in his reply²⁹ denied that the figures were out of proportion. On his first visit Mr Hursthouse had applauded the scene 'more than usual.' 'I entertain a high opinion of New Zealand, and have sacrificed more for the colony in my time and money than perhaps any man, but . . . there is nothing gained by deceiving. Tell the truth, what New Zealand is, and what it is not. New Zealand need not fear exposure.'

A stronger and more lengthy editorial criticism appeared in the *Journal* a fortnight later³⁰ criticising its restricted nature and the fact that it was really a series of quite separate scenes and not a true panorama.