

The weird grandeur of the Hot Lake district and the exquisite beauty of the terraces are fast becoming known as "the sight of the world", and anything tending to bring the unique scenery of our island home under the notice of people at home and on the Continent will help to bring about this desirable result There is no doubt Mr Blomfield in a quiet way is doing a great deal to advertise New Zealand as a favourite resort for the tourist and the traveller. His pictures are intensely realistic and true in form and colour, and to people at home give an accurate idea of the Lake scenery. These pictures are already being well distributed, orders having been received and executed from tourists hailing from London, France, Germany, America, Australia, and other places.¹²

All this was extremely good for business, as Blomfield's financial records indicate. 'Picture Sales' declares an income for 1885 of £434 14s., of which no less than £308 4s. comes from the sale of terrace paintings. This income is significantly up on 1883 (£257 15s.) and in 1884 (£219.10s), and a dramatic improvement over earlier years such as 1878 (£53 1s.) and 1879 (£30).

In the period before the eruption of 10 June 1886, sixty terrace paintings appear in the sequence titled 'Pictures Sold', to which we can add the fourteen he sent to the Indian and Colonial Exhibition. The production of yet more pre-eruption terraces is recorded in a separate sequence of 'Pictures Sent away for Sale'. Here under July 1885 we find eleven terrace paintings 'sent to Hot Lakes on exhibition', a consignment each to the Lake House, Pallace [sic] Hotel, and Rotomahana Hotel. Through such industry and entrepreneurship, Blomfield secured his position as the most successful landscape painter in Auckland during the 1880s.

However, this obsessive copying of his own work inevitably led to a degradation of Blomfield's reputation. The sheer quantity of the replicas—painted on canvases, panels, cardboard, and shells—almost overwhelms the possibility of grasping a wider oeuvre. That is, Blomfield made his name virtually synonymous with the terraces. The popular idea that works bearing pre-eruption dates are in some sense the 'real' terraces, while the later ones are merely 'fantasies', is an understandable response in the face of such a host of pictures. Yet such a notion cannot adequately deal with the later masterpieces, and it also disguises the true nature of Blomfield's entire project.

Although they were painted largely in response to a perceived demand by tourists, Blomfield's terrace pictures rarely admit any indication of tourist activity at Rotomahana. The lake and the terraces appear tranquil, populated sometimes by a few Maori figures, but more often devoid of any human sign. The delicate tendrils of Te Tarata's basins are fixed in a state of pristine glory more comparable to early watercolours such as Heaphy's celebrated view, than to the actual state revealed by photographers contemporary to Blomfield. Despite the ideology of truth to nature that