

there are no known paintings extant from the Straits Settlements period—which is a pity, since Weld's governorship there involved travelling through much of the interior of the peninsula.

As with so many of his cultured contemporaries, paintings were for Weld an additional means of conveying to those at home something of the environment that the distant colonist was experiencing. Weld was no creative artist; for him it was an enjoyable form of relaxation. Yet he also regarded it as an important accomplishment. As he had written in his influential *Hints to Intending Sheep Farmers in New Zealand*, music and painting were vital resources when one lived an isolated existence. In moments of 'gloom and despondency, of vain regrets for the past, or useless longings after the future', these interests could provide a cheerful and soothing influence on the mind.⁷ Weld's artistic approach was therefore that of a competent amateur seeking to convey impressions of the landscape as accurately as possible. He painted in watercolours and on a small scale, the average size of his paintings being that of a standard A4 sheet of paper. He had no formal artistic training; his upbringing had been in a family where the arts were appreciated but not actively pursued. His older brother, Charles, to whom Weld was most attached, gradually amassed a collection of art books and this library Weld inherited along with the Chideock estate in 1885. Whether a study of such resources influenced Weld's approach is not known since there are no paintings available from the 1880s and early 1890s.

In the broad field of cultural pursuits, Weld enjoyed handling both pen and paintbrush. His paintings were far more successful than his mawkish verse. Fortunately his habit of writing nostalgic poetry did not last much beyond the 1840s. An interest in the arts generally was the hallmark of a well-educated English gentleman, as was an involvement in the natural sciences, geology in particular. Weld, however, translated his considerable scientific curiosity into practical terms when he established the Geological Survey for New Zealand in 1864 with James Hector as Director. He also encouraged the foundation of the Colonial Museum in Wellington in 1865. Yet Weld's interest in these fields was more than just a typically Victorian trait widely shared with colonists of comparable education. Inextricably interwoven with his appreciation of the landscape and the features within it was his faith. To Weld the landscape was God's handiwork. It was man's duty to notice and to record it as faithfully as possible, hence the extremely detailed nature of his expedition reports in New Zealand. Even his tours of inspection in the colonial territories under his jurisdiction led to painstakingly compiled accounts being sent home for Colonial Office edification. Weld did not make these efforts for his personal