

## Introduction

I am pleased to welcome you to the second issue of *AJVS* for 2025. It has turned out to be one where the articles are all focused on our part of the world – Australia and New Zealand – while connections with British culture and modes of thinking remain salient.

We open with a study of three portraits by mid-nineteenth-century artist John Michael Crossland which represent notable men associated with Adelaide: Judge Charles Cooper, explorer Charles Sturt, and cleric Thomas Quinton Stow. Stephen Valambras Graham shows how the artist adapts and innovates on traditional modes of painting men in public life, thus offering a less formal and possibly more revealing impression of his subjects' characters.

Alfred R. Bunn, who wrote in the last issue about the Mt Tarawera eruption of 1886 in New Zealand and the fate of the Pink and White Terraces, returns to this event from another perspective. He investigates the mortality statistics for the eruption, as these have been estimated over the years, and argues that the accepted figures underestimate the number of Māori casualties. This outcome has a number of causes and implications.

Another aspect of Victorian New Zealand emerges in Jamie Ashworth's article on verse fables by New Zealand writers. She considers in particular William Golder's *The Pigeons' Parliament* and the later *The Bird and the Idol* by Thomas Bracken, and explores how they demonstrate the colonial writers' very troubled engagement with both the indigenous inhabitants and the New Zealand landscape.

The articles section concludes with Nicole Anae's wide-ranging analysis of how the Polar Star and the Southern Cross figure in nineteenth-century Australian poetry. The shift in focus from the former to the latter celestial presence expresses writers' increasing engagement with the new environment. The Southern Cross, too, became an important political symbol, and much poetry reflects this development.

I would like to thank the reviews editor, Helen Blythe, for organizing the contributions for this issue. As usual, our reviewers cover a fascinating variety of topics: acoustics in nineteenth-century literature and science; working-class British people's experience of being, and taking in, lodgers; the ethics of Victorian optics, especially as regards disability; Walt Disney's adaptations of Victorian texts as animations; the woman who became the 'Manchester Mummy'; photography pioneer Julia Margaret Cameron in her colonial context.

Joanne Wilkes

Editor

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