

had been told that it would be impossible to penetrate into the interior of the South Island.³³

Slightly more than two years later he was able to gather the important collection, from the same area which Williams had exploited, which was to stimulate a renewed and systematic attack on the Moa problem. His letters express both the excitement of the discovery and his own fears that what he was able to accomplish was too little to satisfy his father and to raise himself in his estimation. On February 3, 1847, his father's birthday, he began a letter

I have just returned from my Moa bone hunting expedition and although I am extremely tired having had since daybreak this morning a long, solitary and very fatiguing walk through the forest at the back of the Mountain I cannot go to rest without announcing my arrival on this very appropriate day and wishing you many happy returns of it. I have been sufficiently fortunate. Five "boys" are staggering toward with their scientific burdens, three of whom I left this morning in the bush, and two coming by the coast...

Two months later, he provided more details of his discovery:

Some days passed before all the boys whom I mentioned above reached New Plymouth with their osseous fossils during which time constant occupation was found in unpacking and arranging those which came up with me by the mountain road. Then when all had arrived and reached me followed the long task of sorting, rejecting, cataloguing and packing under difficulties.... Grey arrived & stayed a week.... The 2nd day after his arrival he called at the Hua unexpectedly—after a little talk called for the bones. I shewed him those which I had not packed and as a finale the fragments . . . of the eggshells.... The Governor gone, I immediately set to work at packing the remainder of my bones (about 200) and my traps and that done I at once . . . started . . . to search again for bones.... At Waingongora [Waingongoro] . . . I only found a few toe bones & claws and a few more fragments of egg shells. My travelling companion Charles Nairn whom the Colonel had engaged as interpreter had been directed by him to collect on the way as he the Colonel had promised some bones to Prof. Owen but has as yet been unable to fulfil his promise. He was as unsuccessful as I. I trust [the case of bones] will reach you in safety and that with the unique egg-shells it should repay you for the attendant expense. As you tell me that such specimens have been much overrated I shall, until I hear from the result, value them only at £25 for which I must draw to repay my expenses on them.... [Grey] tells me that from S. Australia he sent a quantity of . . . bones to Prof. Owen which were not acknowledged. Prof. O. by the bye will not receive any of the specimens of *Dinornis* at present from Col. W. as he has none to send.³⁴

The complaint of the lack of personal acknowledgement for the specimens sent was to become an increasingly common one as the collectors came to regard themselves as equal partners in a common scientific enterprise.

The receipt of this unexpected bonanza resolved for the moment