

Owen's relationships were such that once the need arose, he was able to mobilise friends and associates to search for the additional materials required. When William Martin, newly appointed New Zealand's first Chief Justice, went out to the Colony in April, 1841, he almost certainly carried with him Owen's commission to do what he could to provide additional specimens of the great bird, still known only by a single fragment. Martin, only three years younger than Owen and with a similar provincial background, probably became acquainted with Owen when both were young professionals in practice and in residence in Lincoln's Inn Fields—Owen at the Hunterian Museum of the Royal College of Surgeons with a small medical practice among the lawyers nearby and Martin as a young barrister called to the bar in 1836 and working in chambers from 1838. The letters from 'my esteemed friends', the Martins, particularly those from Mary Martin to Caroline Owen, reflect an intimacy between the young couples which persisted long after Martin's retirement from his New Zealand position.¹⁵ Stationed as he was in the newly established centre of government at Auckland, and with interests much more akin to the spiritual welfare of the Maori than to the world of nature, present or past, Martin was not able to provide any particular information: the Martins wrote more of government gossip and, optimistically, of missionary successes than they did of natural history. Even Bishop Selwyn, who went out as the first Bishop of the Church of England in New Zealand was suggested by an official at Court as a potential supplier of additional Moa remains;¹⁶ but his concern too was more with the saving of Maori souls than with the preservation of Moa bones.

But it was the naturalists, few though they were, upon whom Owen depended the most. He had already in England established a pattern of relationships with local collectors for whom he became the authority in the description and identification of the fossils which formed their collections. It was an easy step to extend that pattern from the provinces to the colonies. Another of Owen's Lincoln's Inn lawyer friends, William Swainson, who sailed out with Martin as first Attorney General of the Colony, suggested that Ernest Dieffenbach might be helpful.¹⁷ Just appointed as naturalist to the New Zealand Company, Dieffenbach went out to the Colony on the *Tory* in 1839 to make a natural history survey and gather the collections which were to have formed the basis of a planned New Zealand Museum.¹⁸ Although he left before the Moa was identified, he carried with him not only Owen's 'kind advice' but also his commission to collect specimens; and upon his return almost certainly discussed with him the result of his survey and its impending publication.¹⁹