

scientific study and authorship 1815-1840. The third phase, pioneering in New Zealand, 1841-1855, was about to begin. He had joined H.M. Customs at fourteen, then transferred to the Commissariat of the Mediterranean Army at seventeen because of the opportunities to travel and study natural history. This was during the Napoleonic wars. When he retired on half-pay at the age of twenty-six he had served in Malta, Italy, and Sicily, had visited Greece and was shortly afterwards to go to South America. He knew many eminent naturalists and at the beginning of this new phase of his career was elected a Fellow of the Linnean Society, and shortly afterwards, on the recommendation of Sir Joseph Banks, a Fellow of the Royal Society. Other honours followed. He studied lithography and began publishing his *Zoological Illustrations* and other works, and presently turned to professional authorship mainly in association with the firm of Longman, Orme, Brown & Co, for whom he produced the *Cabinet Cyclopaedia* series on natural history.

Perhaps prodigious labour which included drawing illustrations on wood and devising his own theory of the classification of animals had begun to outweigh the charm of this occupation. At any rate by 1839 William Swainson, who had been a widower since 1835, was planning to emigrate. The only reason he gave in his *Autobiography* was that he wished to bring up his five children in simplicity, virtue and religion, and that 'it is to accomplish *such* objects that I am about to transplant myself and them to a new soil, in the southern hemisphere ...'

His first choice was Australia. Letters passing between his father-in-law John Parkes and his brother C. L. Swainson indicate this as early as 26 January 1839.⁴ In Australia he had prospects of supplementing his half-pay of £130 per annum by an appointment from Lieutenant-Governor La Trobe and the agency of a property.⁵

On 10 June 1839, however, William Swainson's name was entered as No. 43 on the New Zealand Company's Register of Applications for Land.⁶ On 8 July 1839 his name appeared as a member of the Committee of the First Colony of New Zealand,⁷ a development which alarmed his brother, who thought it 'something more than the greatest imprudence to venture the planting of a young family in a spot where not even protection from our Government is secured.'⁸ In the following February, William Swainson's father-in-law wrote of his grandchildren, '... from the moment they leave England, I shall consider the grave as closed over them ...'⁹

For a time it was planned that the Swainsons would go to Hokianga to settle on land bought from Lieutenant Thomas McDonnell, whom William Swainson had met in London and who had offered Hokianga land to the New Zealand Company. A quantity of effects, including doors and windows for a dwelling, were despatched there in the *Patriot*.¹⁰ On 21 March 1840 Swainson wrote to the Church Missionary