

sible for Mantell to send a wide range of specimens of geology and natural history back to his father who proudly published them in the interests of both his son and himself.⁴⁶ Still receiving materials from others, some of which came from the South Island and still working through the original Mantell collection which had been bought by the British Museum and made available to him for study and publication, Owen plodded on with memoirs; but to impose some classificatory order now required skeletal material with some *in situ* articulation and geological associations. Again the need was satisfied by Walter Mantell in 1852. The new collection was of major importance. It was enough to satisfy the most avaricious wishes of the father. His excitement, as that with his Waingongoro find six years earlier, virtually breaks through the limits of the paper on which he recorded the details. On 7 January 1853, just after returning to his office in New Munster from a long and difficult trip to the South, he began the last of his letters to his father:

How I wish you were here . . . to do well what I can only do ill if at all and enjoy yourself in a comparatively anatomical way over the mass of bones which I have brought from my own sunny district. . . . In a drawer before me 25 or more skulls of all sorts—in paper & grass tops still packed in the rough way which alone was in my power in the remote place where I spent my Xmas. . . . I have taken possession of the late Registrar's office & made it into a wilderness of dry bones though only a fourth part of the baskets in it are unpacked. Boxes of new tertiary shells—limestone fossils—lignite from newly discovered veins—freshwater fossils—cetacea from limestone—Eggshells in astonishing fragments—are all round the place.

And in series of monthly postscripts to the still unsent letter, he adds descriptive detail of the rich collection which he intended as another birthday present for his father. Finally on 21 March, he sent his grand collection packed up in seven cases. 'Remember,' he concluded, 'should these reach you first they are only the rank & file the bijoux are to come.'⁴⁷ Although this long report was to be continued, there was no continuation. Four months before the letter was sent, Gideon Mantell had died, this last birthday gift from his son never received.

Mantell's collection was acquired by the British Museum during his long-delayed visit 'back home' in 1856. Although he had lost interest in Moa remains with the death of his father—his major objective was to complain to the Colonial Office, but to no avail, of the abuses in the Government's land acquisition policy in New Zealand—he met on friendly terms the scientists in London whose names had peppered his father's letters. Owen, about to be appointed Superintendent of the Museum's Natural History Depart-