

expounding on their spiritual state and the hereafter at the slightest opportunity.

A fourth factor of significance in Susan and Donald's courtship was position. Robert Strang had a good position in Wellington and it could not be disputed that Donald was an up and coming man in the service of the government. This was not a marriage where status would be compromised.

Lastly we must consider money. Did wealth, actual or anticipated, influence either partner in their choice? And if not did any other financial considerations have a role to play? Susan brought no immediate dowry into her marriage; nor was Donald a wealthy man. All he had, and he added it up before his marriage, he had accumulated while in New Zealand. His assets consisted of property at Wanganui and Taranaki worth some £590, stock scattered round the country which he valued at £742, his salary, and roughly £150 owed to him by various friends and acquaintances. In total he reckoned he was worth nearly £1,500, enough to get married on but no great fortune.<sup>26</sup>

Although love ruled, money was not to be ignored when choosing a wife. McLean had a chance to reflect on this when he received a letter from a friend, William Halse, telling him of the arrival in Taranaki of a wealthy settler with two eligible daughters. Halse considered that if McLean were 'not too deep with Miss S. you may depend on Miss R. and money, which in spite of all that is advanced against it, is a necessary ingredient in the cup matrimonial'.<sup>27</sup> However Donald was not motivated by actual wealth. Much more to the point, in his view, were Susan's careful habits. In telling his aunt of his marriage to Susan he commented:

I do not get much property with her but she is entitled to some annuity at her mothers death, but from her careful prudent habits she will be a great saving to me even if she had not a sixpence . . .<sup>28</sup>

And so it proved to be. Susan, perhaps because of the awful lesson of her father's early financial troubles, extracted a promise from her suitor 'to become more economical after marriage' and by 1852 Donald claimed she had cured him of 'all extravagant habits'. On her part Susan spent hours sewing as she could not 'bear to spend more than I can help of my dear husband's money he works so hard for it'.<sup>29</sup>

It is usually argued that by the mid-nineteenth century parents in England and other western countries had little control over the marriages of their children. They had given up trying to choose marital partners and dictate the timing of marriages, although they might still make some attempts to regulate the pre-marital envi-