



Donald McLean, from a carte-de-visite photograph. Photo neg. 32223¹/₂

allow us to recreate totally their experience, provide a fascinating glimpse into the minds and hearts of one very Victorian couple.⁴

Although Donald McLean, civil servant and politician, is a well-known figure in New Zealand history, Susan Douglas Strang is largely forgotten. This is not surprising. She died in childbirth at the age of twenty-four having done nothing to bring herself to the attention of the historian other than marry Donald McLean and write a number of letters. Yet in those letters Susan emerges as a complex person, finding her own way to deal with the major life course events—marriage, death and pregnancy—that she experienced within the space of a couple of years.

Susan Strang arrived in Wellington in March 1840 with her parents, Maria and Robert Strang, on the *Bengal Merchant*, an early New Zealand Company ship. Susan was almost twelve, an only