

determined to improve your mind and establish your faith on the unchangeable principles of Christianity'. He would have been gratified to hear that Susan found Sarah Ellis's *Women of England*, an advice book on the duties of women, 'a beautifully written book and full of Instruction'.<sup>41</sup>

Early rising, work in the garden ('a delightful healthy occupation'),<sup>42</sup> more exercise and less procrastination were other habits and improvements Donald urged on Susan. What little advice Susan gave Donald was directed at his welfare, on which her happiness had come to depend. He was to take care of himself in bad weather, not to sleep in the damp, and not to travel by ship. There was however one major area of potential conflict in their lives. Donald was a country person, Susan a town person. Many of her pleasures were social and urban—churchgoing, her friendships with other women, visiting, dinner parties and balls. Donald could only feel his 'intellect' clearly when he could 'breathe the country air and enjoy the relaxation and ease it affords'. Bush scenery and bush life, with their stimulating effects on mind and body, were, in his view, far superior to the 'more civilized state of society, where late luxurious meals and dainties are imperceptibly killing the frame and injuring the mind'; the 'sweet solitude of the river side with its lovely placid stream' far outstripped the social attractions of the town.<sup>43</sup>

Donald's attempts to persuade Susan to accept the bush life were an exercise in asserting his dominance in their relationship. Before their marriage he wrote:

I have greater hopes than ever of your making a "gude wife" for the bush and you may even arrive at the wonderful distinction of being an excellent highly accomplished dairy maid, when decorated off in your white short gown and Grey petticoat with sleeves tucked up and fat arms slapping away among cream cheese butter and all the niceties of the dairy.

And to persuade her he was serious he added 'do not laugh at this because I intend it in reality'.<sup>44</sup>

After their marriage this image of Susan as a 'bush wife' recurs repeatedly. The 'bush' would be a transforming agency for Susan. Once Donald got her to the bush 'then I am certain she will be quite a model wife for affection and obedience'; he explained her reluctance to go the bush in terms of his failure to treat her as well as he should 'but I know you are becoming more obedient & more affectionate every day'; once she got to the bush 'I shall expect you to work a little more than you do at present. . .'.<sup>45</sup> Susan expressed no opinion on these bush 'fantasies'; her mind was much more on the immediate problems she had to deal with than on what might or might not happen some years hence. Nevertheless it is clear from