



Mary King (nee Chilman), 1818-1911. Portrait by an unknown photographer, taken probably in the 1860s, in the Library's Jolicoeur Collection (ref. no.: PAColl-0541). *ATL Picture ref.: F- 115745-1/2-*

circumstances. The letters chronicle his growing disillusionment with the world of politics, his homesickness particularly for his wife, but also for his children, and his despondency at the problems imposed by the distance, by his inability to return to his home, to talk over matters by their 'own quiet fireside'.³²

The move to Auckland did not begin auspiciously. 'I have got a horrid, bilious headache – in fact I have not been well since I left.'³³ It was initially, however, a place of wonder. His letters are a curious mix of sentiment and objectivity and served many functions. They informed her of what he was doing; he meticulously stated the number of hours he sat in the House or in committee, and who he had talked to and breakfasted with. This was both to inform and placate, for Mary clearly had not wanted her husband to go, a fact that Thomas acknowledged. To be busy, when Mary was busy and alone, was therefore important. Thomas King decided to enter the