cases, feeling, as he does, that upon him
may have to rest such a responsibility
according to the course of action he decides
to pursue. You must have seen at Capetown
how greatly I cared for you, though I tried
to appear a quite indifferent, merely
brotherly friend. Also afterwards though
I tried hard to suppress any signs of
my real feelings, they must occasionally
have peeped through. I could not help feeling
that; and, following what I then considered
my duty, I thought I saw no other
course than to try to consider you as
another's, and to appear only in the
light of a brotherly adviser. This gave
rise to those remarks in my letter, which
so stunned you at first, and gave your
affectionate regard for me such a shock
that it directed into the course of mere
sisterly love. I know you have never sup-
posed, and have now long ago quite understood
that it was not playing fast and loose
or trifling with your affections which
made me behave in this manner, trying
as it must have been (as I now only can
see) to your truly affectionate heart.
But when one battles so hard within
oneself, one is hardly able to conceal
entirely all the signs of the struggle, and par-

particularly not in a correspondence of
such a nature as ours always has been.
You see, at last my affection conquered
over and dispelled that feeling of doubt,
whether it was right to ask you to be
more to me than a sister, and if you
do not find fault with this victory of
my affections, you cannot blame me angry
for a struggle, which at the worst rose
out of a mistaken sense of duty to you.
Oh! I so earnestly pray and desire to be
led right to do what is to your real best, and work
for wisdom beyond my reach to know what
are the real chances for your happiness. As
far as your own affection goes, I have no doubt
that by the time this letter arrives, you
will be quite clear regarding them, and as to
mine, — if you were not so very dear to me
and loved for yourself, you would become
so even through the mere recollection of the
hard struggle which you have cost me.
And of this terrible struggle I must tell
you something to make you really feel my point
of view, and if I hear speak plainer and more
to the point than I should otherwise be
warranted to do, you will not ascribe it to
any want of true delicacy, but to the necessity
of considering the realities of life, on which the
future happiness of our two lives are based.
It is not so much the fear of requiring
care and nursing, and wearying your
patience with troublesome and disagreeable
illnesses, — for as you say, if one really loved
each

BC151 C4.10

Capetown, 19 February 1862

My own dear love,

You can have no idea, how sweet your dear letter of the beginning of Jany was and is to me, – so very sweet, though puzzling at first, as long as I read only the mere forms of the words, and did not enter into the sense of the whole of the contents, and tried to read your inmost thoughts, and to make out why you doubted yourself. From this I feel so sure that your after thoughts will have quite convinced you, and made it clear to you, what way to decide. Yet I do not find fault with you for having referred the decision back to me, or at least have made me repeat it, and give you another three months time to consider it further. No, I think under the circumstances it was the best thing, the only right thing to do. But I am also sure that if at leisure now (as you know my real feelings) you read and reread my former letters, you will see what a hard struggle I fought on their behalf on the one side, and what myself, my affection on the other side, and I considered rightly or wrongly, I hardly know now even) my duty not to try to engage your affections, on account of my state of health, which seemed to forbid me to think of anything of the kind. You can hardly imagine what a terrible struggle a man has to fight in such cases,

~~each other~~ another, it would be the highest joy to be able to be of any help. No, what I was dreading and am still most dreading is that, from mere bodily weakness, it might frequently be physically impossible for me, to give to my wife that protection and comfort which from a husband she has a right to expect, and that, though she was my wife, yet – I would for all intents and purposes be frequently very little more to her than an invalid brother. This reflection was it which made the struggle so almost desperate for me. For, I was thinking what good could I do her by trying to debar her from receiving this protection and comfort from some one else who really may be confident to be able to afford it to her. But then I was thinking again, if she has a deep real love, she would care more for the mere presence of the beloved one, than for any other's most expressive marks of affection. And on the chance of meeting with such a return of my love, it was that I at length ventured to tell you my real feel-

within the reach of possibilities. And although I should of course value nothing higher than that you could be my comfort for the time that I am spared, yet nothing could be bitterer to me than ever to remark and become aware that this could not make you entirely happy if you should decide to do so. If you have, therefore, still the slightest doubt of really possessing that deep true all-sufficient love which you rightly believe, makes that relationship quite holy and happy and enduring, — oh! do only say so quite as candidly as you have done before; and I shall try to consider myself again merely in that former simple brotherly relation to you. Further than this you can not ask me to go when you wish that I should entirely decide for you. I may merely add the wish that in case you had only a slight doubt, you should merely leave the matter open till such that time that you can more decidedly see your way on the one side or another; for, however painful even such a suspense would be, it would be better than committing yourself rashly, though I always should hold you to be at liberty and even desire that you should do so, to abandon a mere engagement (when entered) if ever you should become doubtful that it would contribute to your own happiness or mine. Yet I know that such a giving up would be more painful than any delay in entering upon it, could be now. And particularly if at the time of the arrival of this letter, you should again feel that you were too inclined to modify ideas, defer answering this question, till after the departure of the Hall, you can leisurely think over it. — For as you tell me, you were not at all right when you wrote your January letter, I felt so grieved that I had added at that time to your excitement and even anxieties, though I hope that the real joy, which your say may letter gave you, will eventually have done you good. But I am really anxious about your health, and hope that good Dr. Russell will quite understand your case. You know I am rather prejudiced against Homeopathists. In case you went to Bonn, I should like you very much, dear Jemmie, to consult our family doctor, Dr. H. Wolff, of whom I have rather a high idea. That may be also prejudice. He is, however, certainly a clever man, and very renowned practician. I thank you so much for your candid outpourings of your heart, and honor you greatly for them. I think I have quite

BC 151 C4110

quite understood you. — I am quite of your opinion that nobody except Lucy (and perhaps my mother, but of that hereafter) should know anything of our engagement (if such should really now take place, i.e. if you think it right) before the very day is fixed at which it is to end. — Fancy, how very annoying! I had written a long letter to Lucy, and was about to post it, when I heard that the Mail for Natal had already left the day before in the Albatross. There had been no announcement in the newspapers, except that the Albatross would sail two days after the arrival of the English Mail, which took place on Sunday morning. Yet, on Monday afternoon the Albatross was dispatched. At no time it could have been so annoying to me; for besides that letter to dear Lucy, I had to send a farewell letter and some important papers to the Bishop of Natal, who will have sailed before the arrival of next month's Mail. Now I must try and send all this overland; but you know well how little one can at this season depend upon the regularity of this latter communication. What will both, Lucy and

feelings. And as you as openly, as I was persuaded you would, confess to me that you do not know that you possess that true although sufficient love which alone could enable you to sustain those trials of a married life. — I must certainly be the last to advise you to undertake its duties. But as on the other hand you can not exactly either decidedly say that you do not possess them, but only doubt yourself as yet, and as you in this state clearly and make me understand that, according to the true position of your sex, such a love ought rightly not to be nourished, except after you were sure of a return, I could not expect that, after I had so long treated you as a mere brotherly adviser, that after the first full declaration of my love, you could at once know your own heart, or feel towards me, as you think a wife ought to feel. And now again when you will be better able to make the state of your affections clear to yourself, I must implore you, seriously to consider all you undertake, in case you incline favorably to my repeated suit. There is no mistake, I am still really ill, and though my life may be prolonged, yet I do not think any entire recovery within

of the finances peremptorily required him. He, however, expressed his willingness to help me in what way he possibly could, and I have now patiently to wait the result, whether he can at least for the next five months provide for me; for then I trust Parliament will have settled the question with regard to the Lord G. Grey's Library, of which I told you last letter, I think, and as this has been promised me by the Trustees, and will be a permanent thing of at least £200 or £250 a year, to which I may hope to add a little by literary work, — I think I shall manage then to offer a home to a wife who will not be too expensive. As to your own money, dearest Jemmie, I must know the whole state of your family affairs better to decide what part of it we might rightly take for our own joint expenses, if such will be joined, as is my earnest hope. You see I cannot say ~~that~~ as yet anything further about the day, on which I might take my dear love home (pardon me, if I speak of a conditional future in so positive a way) — but in June perhaps I may be able, and she may hear from me at the beginning of August. If then ~~at the~~ in the course of that month or September or even October, she can come out, she would avoid the winter weather, — and I might make her at once my own and myself the happiest of men. But oh! this castle building! how I am afraid that there will something come between. But let us not indulge in a gloomy foreboding but make hope sustain us throughout the time

time of waiting. I must, however, thank you much for your confidence in stating exactly also your worldly position, and overcoming any embarrassing over-scrupulousness, though you said it in such a delicate way. It is necessary to see clear one's way even in those things. You really do not mean it when you even suppose in jest that your letters could be too long for me. My only fear is that in writing them you may have over fatigued yourself. I can quite easily read any of your writing. Only one word in all your long letter, I could not decipher. Your objections against using my Christian name I can quite understand. In fact, I do not myself care much being called by it. Of course at home my name was Wilhelm, and I should think it very funny you calling me perhaps by any other names which are Heinrich I manner, though if you should like it you may call me Henry or Harry. The first is my parents never called each other by their Christian names (my father's was Friederich and my mother's Augusta), but mainly Father and Mother, or some endearing name, for she would speak of him, or call him, with his family name; and I as the eldest son might quite have a right to this after my dear father's death. But whatever you may call me, it will always be sweet from your lips. May I call you dearest Jemmie, as your dear Lucy does. — You mention the subject of madness in your family. But dearest love, your instances are all such as you will find almost in any family, if you search carefully, and among such distant relations. Your dear aunt's case proves nothing, for there might be things which would drive the sanest man temporarily out of his mind. I think your father's proceedings may indeed be explained somewhat in that way, and this has been suggested to me before, as the not only most charitable

charitable but really true explanation, that
is that he was not quite responsible, e.g. in
money matters. But then you have nothing of
that all, and as you say the hard trials you have
gone through, would not have let you escape such
a very sensible person, if — but why pursue
this subject, as you already know intuitively
what I think of it. — Oh! how dear Louie's sad
history has interested me! Of course it is impos-
sible for me to say whether it was after all too morbid
sensibility, or not, which made her give
up her friends. Did he die long after? and
what did the poor fellow die of? — I have
read Max Müller's book, which is very well written.
My own Comparative Grammar is now
in the press, and subscription lists are circulating.
The Government has subscribed for the First
Part to the extent of £30, which will nearly
cover the costs, so that some surplus may
be expected to fall to my share from the sale
of other copies; and if I should retain strength
and health to finish the whole work, I may expect
to gain at least £150 by such sale —
I have now, as I think answered your
dear long letter fully, and explained all
what is necessary to explain, and I wished
to say to you about our position. One thing
I must, however, add that I have written
to dear Louie (in that unfortunate letter
which must now go overland) that all
events you should not be asked to enter into
an engagement, before you had consulted her
about it, and you two had thoroughly set your
minds at rest. ~~Always~~ You see what confidence I have in
the dear girl, unknown as she is to me, except by
your

BC 151 C4.10

and the Bishop think of my not writing
and that just now. I am glad, Lucy will
have seen the Sandersons with her;
poor thing I wished she was better.
Do you think, if my future was cast at Capetown
and you will share it, — that we can persuade
them (your sisters) to come and live with
us, — or are there circumstances in Natal
which make that not advisable? At all
events, one of them at least can be made to
come and stay with you. — How greatly I
was moved by what you told me of dear poor
Lucy's history! I can so easily understand
that kind of overstrained sensitiveness which
seems so peculiar not only to her, but I think also
a little to you, and to which you ascribe your
so-called moral cowardice and fear of ridicule.
I know you will entirely lose that when once you
can lay implicit trust in one (whoever he may be)
whom you have found worthy of it; so, if you
really have that loving confidence in me, I am
not the least afraid that you ever will again fear
me, even a little, and be shy, and as you say
coilly! — You must tell me more, however, now
also of the past, it will not be so distressing, I mean
not quite so distressing to you as to poor Lucy, whom I
have asked to tell me regarding the present
position of your family in Natal, so that I
may not be quite a stranger to them, and may
in case of need help them with advice or otherwise.
Regarding my own present worldly position
it is not at all encouraging, I mean so far as it lies
now, though my prospects are good. The first
act almost of our present Governor Mr. Wodehouse
was to dismiss me, which he told me was very
painful, but ~~not~~ which step to take the state
of

indicate it. – Oh! dearest! though for prudential reasons I advised you to defer your coming here, yet you have no idea how intense is my longing for you. And if the doctor should think you really might come away earlier, and your other ~~[illegible]~~ arrangements should allow it, – I should be so very glad (but that is a very poor word) to have you sooner with me; and I think it can be managed on my part even earlier, though I might not have to offer you that comfortable home which (single) is at all events it must be I hope to provide for ~~you~~. Do not be shocked at my being so positive in such a conditional case; but I am so frequently now afraid that even if you are willing, something may come to prevent it; and I sometimes blame myself for having told you ~~[illegible]~~ and tried to attach you to one in my poor state of health, so that your affection the deeper it is, may eventually render your grief the harder, when – but you see I am sometimes alone as I stand here without any real friend, so gloomy that I feel the darkest forebodings. Please! forgive that they have slipt in this letter. But what I wanted to say was that whatever the fate of us two may be, I think it cannot but add to the happiness of either of us, to have heard from the other the exact state of his or her feelings. I think it is sweet, if ~~[illegible]~~ and ennobling; and even if a sad end may follow, it is better to know one has been loved, than to continue in a mere indifferent friendship. You will see I am not well, not even comparatively well at this moment. – Different reasons, and particularly strong changes in the weather have

have contributed to it. I shall try and be very quiet for some days after the departure of the Mail. But not feeling quite strong, prevent me at present from telling my mother about you as I wished to do. You see until now my relations to you were so sweet and holy a secret that, except that I mentioned you in my letters when you were staying here, I never even wrote to my dear mother a word about you, – partly in order that by her suggestions and advise, my own feelings might not be interfered. ~~But now~~, therefore, I should have to write very fully about you, and very discreetly too; as I want to make her longing to see you, without embarassing you by any preconceived ideas on her part. I meant merely to introduce you now as a dear friend, whom I wished her to know, so that she should invite you, and you might then at your own will tell her whatever you liked of our relations towards each other. I mean, in any case, even if you should not think it right to become mine, – I should wish you to know her in the above quality. But this letter must now remain unwritten this time; I intend, however, to send it by next Mail; and as April is rather too rough a month for travelling, it will be early enough if at the beginning of May you can be made to go to Bonn. + I may perhaps also in my next letter to you, tell you a little more of our family, so that you feel less as a stranger among them.

But now farewell, dear love,

most affectionately & faithfully yours

Bleek

BC151 C4.10

your communications, — and although I quite agree with you about what you say regarding that two people in our position ought to be as careful as possible not to let others interfere between them, But there is such a oneness between your feelings and dear Louise, that I knew I could not do better than tell her all — I mean all as far as it was possible for me to do — not quite all as I have told it to you. So whatever further delay will arise out of this, — I will gladly bear it's suspense for the sake of being surer of being ultimately settled to the satisfaction of all of us. And remember, if in any way you doubt yourself, either regarding the strength of your affection, or your own disposition of mind and nerve to sustain cheerfully with me whatever trials may be in store for me, — there is nothing derogatory either for yourself, nor for me in stating this candidly, & I can easily understand that one may be most sincere friends without that exact feeling of oneness which makes one enter entirely into the other's individuality, and make him one's own other self, the Latin 'alter ego', as among our friends at Bonn the husbands used to designate their wives. — I know you quite understood me, when I said that nothing would be bitterer to me than to feel afterwards that I did not make you happy, — I did not mean any temporary uneasiness, as will at times come even to the most well regulated and thoroughly happy unions, and which you should not of course be made shy to conceal from him who ought to comfort you in them, but what I meant was only reference to that you ought in no way be made to regret a step which once taken, is irrevocable. — I express myself here very clumsily, as thoughout I fear, but I am sure you will read my intention even where my words hardly indicate