you would not be shy to confide the inmost thoughts of your heart) to consider with you (not as a lover who woes you, but as the husband who is at once your first friend) the whole of the position upon which we intend to enter, in as calm and impassionate a way, as the solemnity of the subject and the sacredness of the obligations it lays upon us, requires. I know I can have that trust and confidence in you that you will not feel shocked at my speaking here somewhat plainly, and in such a way, as only husband and wife should talk together, and are required to talk about it by their relative position. If, therefore, you should not at the time of reading this feel as really belonging to me, as my real wife in intention &c, — I know you will feel yourself in duty bound to lay at once this letter down, and rather burn it than read on what is only intended for my future wife. Not that I have the least belief of the possibility of this, — otherwise I would not write a word further on of what I think I am only bound to tell her who in spirit already feels herself one with me.

To this oneness it is that we both look as the ideal to be realized as much as possible in the married state, and no marriage can be one in the highest sense where this is missing. But besides this spiritual union, there is also a natural necessity for the married state, the conditions of which ~~must~~ cannot be overlooked with impunity by any one entering upon it. It is an instinct in human nature to satisfy which has indeed been declared for lustful by many, e.g. by the greater part of the Christian Church, and continence has been recommended as a superior state. But this is an unnatural not only, but sinfull, and therefore entirely wrong notion (though shared by St. Paul &c.) For as without food the individual would die, and therefore not abstinence but the right use of food is real virtue, — so without the right and proper satisfaction of the sexual instinct, our race would die out. It is, therefore, for the right provision for the continuance of mankind, of human ideas, human love and all human virtues, that marriage is instituted, and it is for this higher and holier purpose even than the half selfish of mutual selfgratification, that we must be prepared to enter upon this holy state. Whether, however, when we do so, we shall really have this highest blessing of married life, is of course out of any body's power to know beforehand. But as a possible contingency, this consequence of the married state

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My own dear wife,

So I hope to be able to call you according to your and mine joint intention, after the receipt of your next letter. I want to have some conversation with you in regard to a passage in your February letter, in which you give me the full right to say all things to you which I should wish and feel right in saying to her who feels herself my future wife. If I did at the time not fully recognise and gratefully at once avail myself of this privilege to a greater extent – it was partly, because having (in the meantime already) given you a very plain and candid statement of the circumstances which had made me hesitate so long before I told you what you were to me and might be, – I did not find it right to enter more fully upon this matter, before an answer would show me in what light you saw it. But now expecting to get this answer by next Mail, I think I am called upon (particularly as you have no mother to whom you could pour out your doubts, and in whose loving trustworthy confidence you

state must also by us be looked fully and conscientiously in the face. I mean, with my infirm state of health, it is most probable that any children which we might have, would not be very strong, and quite healthy. Yet if I look at many persons, (whose parents were not better in health than I am) and who though they may not reach an old age, or be ever quite healthy, yet manage to do a great deal of good (perhaps more than most healthy people) and enjoy life in their own quiet way, – I mean in the face of this (as little as I could wish that those people were never born) I do not see anything utterly forbidding a marriage with me. But of course I should with you most seriously to consider this possible consequence, and if you should not feel quite equally cheerfully afterwards to undergo such trials as might hereby be brought upon you, you know you must tell your friend exactly this, – and trust him to advise you, in what manner we both may act rightest towards each other. – You know, I believe, that I am consumptive, and that, therefore, I can never expect to be entirely right, though I may get temporarily stronger. Some people consider this infectious; I have seen too much of this among married people where the one party continued in the best health, to believe this, – otherwise of course I should never have asked you to be my wife. Yet you must also

you to understand (nor will you suppose me, I am sure, to do so) that I had the slightest or faintest idea that possibly you would marry for any such purpose, as mere sensual enjoyment — which is all very well in its way, and is as the mere consequence of the holy purpose of such an intimate union not to be despised, like as it is not a wrong thing to enjoy our meals, though the purpose of life does not consist in eating and drinking. So neither is the purpose of the marriage bond the mere sensual indulgence, and it is the more fortunate that the happiness of the married state is not necessarily (I mean not at all except with very course people) dependant from this, as many women are naturally so constituted that what is pleasure to most, is to others quite indifferent, and to some even actually painful. Others again are so hurt by it in their health, that it must be entirely forbidden to them. So at least medical authorities have assured me. Such things can of course generally in every individual case only been found out by actual experience; and, when found out, though cohabitation may have to be given up, they can of course not divide husband and wife, I mean their congress in all other things. Yet of course if they were known before entering into this holy bond, I should think it wrong (excepting always individual cases of a peculiar nature) for man or woman, who knew they were naturally unfit for the married state, to enter upon it.

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A woman can as far as I know, be judged unfit mainly in cases of such natural deformity by which for example the birth of a child might be expected to endanger her life. Any medical man could easily ascertain this; and if ever a woman should have the least doubt about this her natural fitness, she ought (in justice to herself and others) not be shy to submit herself to such an examination as would satisfy her doctor on this point. — I merely speak of this, in order to lay the whole case as candidly as possible before you, — not as if I had the slightest doubt regarding this your natural fitness (the structure of your frame seeming to be not in the least deformed), nor that even if that were the case, it would alter the state of my feelings and intentions towards you in the least; though it would become a serious question for us both what under such circumstances would be rightest for us to do. — But as there is not the remotest chance of such a painful question arising, we need not puzzle ourselves here with this possibility.

Now, my dear wife, one as you wish with me, and as I long to be entirely with you, — you will I know not misunderstand anything what I have here tried to say as plainly as possible regarding circumstances arising out of those realities of life, of which I hardly can think you to be entirely ignorant, — thrown about with so many different people, and among so primitive and rather stages of civilization (I mean in Natal, with Kaffir servants, &c) as you have been. In fact I rather consider ignorance of these matters as more injurious than otherwise, and that it may lead frequently unconsciously to much self inflicted misery, and even to actual wrong. I believe every body would best be told all this

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a proper manner by his or her natural guardian. I do not know whether you have been told in this way, though possibly some motherly friend may have done so. At all events, you will you have that trust in your husband that you consider him the first person to whom you (motherless as you ~~have~~ little wife are) can confide everything, and who will try as purely and holily, as it is possible for his weak human nature, to help you to do what it is for the real best. But one thing we must before all things avoid, that is brooding over any such matter. This is as truly injurious, and ruinous to the healthiness of body and mind. It is best to try only to understand the actual case and its particulars, and from them to decide our line of action. To pave the way to this, I thought it right and necessary to give you this statement, which you will I am sure, receive as simply and honestly as it is given, and meant. And if cases should arise, where I felt it my duty to speak even plainer and more in detail, you will not be shocked, but consider it as one of the requirements of that oneness of thought and ideas and feelings to which we aspire. And you will I know respond to this confidence, and refer to me all what may in any way be desirable for me to know, and not be restricted ~~that~~ in this by mere maidenly shame, if a higher duty should demand plain spoken words. Do not fear my misunderstanding you. I do not think you have found me doing so before; at least I do not think you ever told me that I had. I do not know, how it is, but I believe, those whom I love I could read their inmost souls and their most hidden thoughts, and I do not fear their misunderstanding me either

either, and at very temporarily, and this me less the more ~~we~~ great interest, clearer and affectionate knowing.

also yourself fully consider this, and not feel any ~~[illegible]~~ reluctance on its account. I believe however, if persons ~~[illegible]~~ have a strong natural tendency to consumptiveness then living with consumptive persons would facilitate the developement of this seed of evil. But I believe you are entirely free from this. How far my disease has progressed I am unable to say, having been last examined in October (or September) 1860. Then the lungs were only slightly touched, and the doctors told me not to despair. They told me (or rather he, it was old Dr. Wolff) not to marry for two years. And if I continued well, I might live. I do not know (though it is) I have a confidence somehow, not that marriage would exactly set me all right, but that even with regard to the state of my health it would not be an injurious measure, but that under the care and nursing of a good wife I had the best chance of doing as well with my poor body as is possible under the circumstances. Of course any overexcitement must be most carefully avoided, as anything which would tend to propel the blood strongly towards the heart must be avoided; but of course it is not for the abuse but merely for the use of our natural faculties that we must permit our instincts to lead us. But the difference is that what ~~would be wrong~~ playfulness would be probably most legitimate ~~[illegible]~~ from a strong and healthy husband would be unallowable license from one who is so weak and shaky. I do however not seen you