16 August

I wrote you last on the 7th inst. per Chesapeake. That day I left Government House and returned to my old quarters at Mrs. Roesch, where I have since then been alone with the Jamisons. By ourselves we get on admirably better; and though there is not much in them, they are not unpleasant. I have even found a way to make him loose all his gestures, which curiously enough he generally exhibits on account of his wife, though there is not the slightest reason for it. – I had a narrow escape of going to New Zealand after all, and I had the few days ago made up my mind to go, if I could; but then all the places were already given away, and so I took this as a hint that it was not to be. There are so many things to be said for it and so many against it, that it was quite embarassing to see my way clearly; but I think after all that I have done best to remain. Sir George was very cordial on taking leave; and I was deeply sorry to loose such a friend. It may be that I follow him afterwards to New Zealand; but this is a mere possibility. I am half afraid I shall never see him again. I shall continue to be of some service to him here, and at all events I shall constantly write to him. He sailed yesterday afternoon (15 Aug.) at 3½ o'clock in the Corvette "Cossack" Capt. Moorman. He is accompanied by his Private Secretary E. E. Layard & Mrs. Layard, and a very useful Clerk who has been with him these five years, Mr. Willis. He only told Willis to go last Saturday (10 inst.) believing at the time that I had no desire to go; and indeed I could not make up my mind to go but after the arrival of the Mail. For, I feared that Colonel & Mrs. Travers would arrive by the Mail, and in that case they would have accompanied the Governor. As I had, however, no inclination to go in company with Travers, for whom I have no very high opinion at all, this prospect formed one of the serious obstacles to my departure, though many others still remained. Yet I believed then the reasons for going to over balance a little those against it, and offered to Sir G. Grey to accompany him. He was exceedingly sorry, but the accommodation was so limited that no cabin could be found for me. I took it very quietly. I had just the day before seen the Layards half mad, on account of some obstacles which seemed to prevent their accompanying Sir George, and in fact, if the Traverses had come, they could not have gone. They are not uninteresting people (the Layards), but rather vulgar, though they both are very proud of their descent and connections. The Natal Mail has just arrived per Albatross. I had a letter from Dr. Callaway, and one from the Bishop. If the latter's letter has made me on many accounts anxious to go and see him and have a long talk with him, it contains on the other hand sufficient reasons to make it incumbent upon me to stay here. All my sympathies draw me to Natal, but my duty seems to retain me on this spot. In a few days I must decide; for, on Monday the Waldensian is going. I have indeed got twelve months leave of absence. This is the only thing which the Governor did for me, before he left. – 19 August I shall stay here some time longer, at least till I hear from my present Chief (Gen. Wynyard) who is at Grahamstown. If he allows me to set to work to compile a Comparative Grammar of South African Languages (a work which I long intend to write), I shall stop here. Otherwise I go to Natal by the first opportunity, probably by the "Volunteer," expected here at the beginning of next month. As it is, I intend to pay a visit to Natal, before the Bishop leaves it, and go perhaps in November for a month or two. For, it is a matter of great consequence not so much to myself as to the Bishop that I should see him, and have a long talk with him. – Have you seen the article in the Westminster Review of July number on "The Life and Letters of Schleiermacher"? If you can get the book (translated from the German by Frederica Rowan) itself, please read it. I think it is among the books sold out of Mudie's Select Library. – I have been reading among other books also Anderson's "To be, or not to be?" which I think rather stupid. I wanted to tell you such numbers of things still, but I am since yesterday not quite well, and to day (21st inst.) the Mail closes soon; and I cannot think at all of what I wanted to write to you. I have to day no power of consentration of idea. This is mostly owing to the physical effects of a small dose of sugar of lead which I took yesterday, which has always a half stupefying effect upon me. – I feel here very lonely now. After all the Jamisons will never be more than acquaintances; and with regard to the Roeschs, I shall not be in a boarding house, where they cared less to make me feel at home than here. – On Monday I paid a visit to Mrs. Livingstone, who arrived here by the last Mail Steamer, and is waiting for an opportunity to go up the Coast to join her husband. A Scotchman, Mr. Stewart, is accompanying her, to look about there, whether he can find a place fit for a Mission Station. He is then to return and come out again with Missionaries. – But forgive me now, & I close this letter, and believe me, my dear friend,

in brotherly love,

your faithfully attached

W. H. I. Bleek

BC 151 C4/4

Government House, Capetown, 15 August 1861

My dear friend — Day before yesterday arrived your dear letter of 4 July (you dated it "June"), and a few hours afterwards I received your note from St. Helena, which had arrived only that day by a direct vessel. — I can not but say that I was a little disappointed not to hear a longer account of your doings; but of course I can only find fault with the circumstances which deprived me of this pleasure. I know indeed that you as little as I can give a collected statement in a hurry, and very hurried you must then have been. Besides I should not wish in the least that you should ever write a line, when you do not feel strong enough to do so. Do merely write then to say how you are; and I will take the will for the deed. I am indeed very grateful for what you have written this time; and good accounts in general they are. How glad I am that you are at least somewhat better, and that the Dr.'s account is in general so satisfactory; and that you had good news from home. — I had letters from my mother, one of my brothers and my youngest sister at Bonn, all full of good news; and my eldest sister sent me a letter full of the greatest happiness on account of her engagement having received my mother's consent. To amuse you I send you one of two cards which she enclosed in her letter. Now do not fancy they are married. By no means, they are not to marry for many months to come; and if they were married, she would write Auguste von Post, geborne Beck." Is it not (according to English ideas) very funny to send ~~wedding~~ announcements of the mere engagement? But in Germany it is quite customary, and you cannot take up a German newspaper without seeing a number of such advertisements. The difference is, however, merely in making a formal public announcement in the one country of a matter which is in the other country told only privately to friends. Perhaps soon your dear friend will have to tell me of a similar event having befallen you; and although I have neither a right to be consulted on such an occasion, nor even to be informed, yet I cannot help feeling the greatest interest in the future welfare of you, my dearest sister, and hope that if it should be your lot to have soon a male adviser and help, who stands you nearer than either father or brother, that you have one in whom you can entirely rely and confide, and who would make you happier and better. I do not suppose that it would be quite necessary for the purpose that he should share your own religious ideas; but I do think his views ought to be broad enough ~~to allow~~ not to be offended by a free communication of your persuasions. Forgive me this (I had almost said) intrusion upon your privacy. It is perhaps a subject which I ought not even allude to; but one cannot help liking to give advice to those in whom one is interested, and nothing indeed would make me gladder than to know that anything had happened to add to your happiness. Therefore excuse my having such ideas, and still more my expressing them! But I know you will say, if I were English, you might take it ill; but a poor ignorant foreigner cannot be supposed to have such nice notions of propriety, as a wellbred Englishman. Well I should like to have seen your face when you read all this nonsense. It is a pity that our telescopes are not yet made to see to that distance. I hope you will allow yourself to be photographed at that moment, and send me the photograph.