

Andrew Jackson to William Berkeley Lewis, September 10, 1829, from Correspondence of Andrew Jackson. Edited by John Spencer Bassett.

TO MAJOR WILLIAM B. LEWIS.1

1 N. Y. Pub. Lib., Ford MSS. This letter is in the handwriting of A. J. Donelson, along with a letter from Lewis to Jackson, dated at Washington, Sept. 8, 1829. In it Lewis said that he had heard that in 1824 Mrs. Timberlake complained to Jackson that Call had insulted her, and asked Jackson to give him an account of what happened. There is little doubt that Lewis's note to Jackson was written with Jackson's previous knowledge and consent, in order to get the General's account of the affair in written form. It should be remarked that the incident here related as happening in 1824 did not impair Jackson's opinion of Call from that time to 1829, as letters in the preceding volume of this work will show.

Washington, September 10, 1829.

D'r Sir, Your note of the 8th instant is before me. To the inquiry in your note whether, "in the Spring of the year 1824 at the time when myself Major Eaton and Genl. Call were boarding at Major ONeals, and before Congress adjourned, Mrs. Timberlake who lived at her fathers at the time, complained to me of being grossly insulted by Gen. Call etc. etc. I reply Mrs. Timberlake did, one day before Congress rose in the Spring 1824, come to me much agitated and overwhelmed in tears, and complained with much feeling and bitterness that Genl. Call had grossly insulted her, by making to *her and urging upon her* , very indelicate propositions, and attempting to inforce them by *great rudeness* , which she was compelled to extricate herself from, by seizing a pair of tongs, or shovel, etc. etc. I endeavoured to calm her into silence, by assuring her, I would speak to Genl. Call and put an end to a repetition of such conduct, etc. etc., on which she became calm and

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promised to be silent. Accordingly, the first opportunity I had, I did speak to Genl. Call, and *admonished him* upon the *great impropriety of his conduct* , and from that period Mrs. T. and Genl. Call, as far as I know, never spoke to each other. Before this happened, Mrs. T. and Miss Mary O'Neal, now Mrs. Randolph, alternately sat at the breakfast table, and dished out the coffee and tea, for us. After this, Mrs. T. never appeared at our table.

When I spoke to Genl. Call on this matter he did admit, that believing she was a woman of easy virtue and familiar with others, *whom he named* he had made the advance upon her, which she had firmly resisted, but *he believed* her resistance was merely from *mock modesty* , and not from a sense of virtue, on which, I gave him a *severe lecture* for taking up such ideas of *female virtue* unless, on some positive evidence of his own, of which he acknowledged he had none, only information, and I enforced my admonition by referring him to *the rebuff* he had met with, which I trusted for the future, would guard him from the like improper conduct.

Thus, the matter, as far as I was concerned, rested in my own bosom, until after my return to Tennessee in the Spring 1824, when you made certain inquiries of me about Major Eaton and Mrs. Timberlake, and after asking you wherefore you made the inquiry of me, and being informed by you that it was occasioned by information you had just recd. from Genl. Call, I then told you and have ever since repeated, that I had never seen or heard aught against the chastity of Mrs. Timberlake that was calculated to raise even suspicion of her virtue in the mind of any one who was not under the influence of *deep prejudice, or prone to Jealousy* . That I believed her a virtuous and much injured female, and upon your having communicated to me the intelligence given you by Genl. Call, I related to you the complaint made to me by Mrs. T. of the attempt upon and rudeness of Genl. Call to her, substantially as I have heretofore stated, and the admonition I had given him, by which I had calmed her feelings and kept Mrs. T. silent on that occasion, as she had threatened to expose him. From the time of that conversation with you, until the late cruel and unprecedented persecution by a combined few to destroy Major and Mrs.

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Eaton, I have never named it to any one, but lately, first by letter to Genl. Call, and then to yourself, and very lately to two or three individuals in confidence.

Yr. mo. obdt. servt.