

Van Zandt
affairs
3 letters 15

Mr. W. P. Wood
St. Louis

Mr. J. B. ...
...

J. B. ...
...



[23 Dec 1843?]

(Copy)

Saturday

My Dear Mrs. Morrell

I was greatly surprised & deeply grieved on reading the letter which you sent me this afternoon, surprised that you should have perceived anything in my conduct sufficiently blameworthy to merit it & grieved that you should so far have mistaken my character and disposition as to think that I could be guilty of a dishonorable action & that towards a family from which I have experienced the most unvarying kindness and hospitality and which from my earliest childhood I have been taught to respect and admire.

The affection which I feel for your daughter was the natural

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Mrs. Jas. Morrell
Larwood.

consequence of her many high and noble qualities & its suddenness resulted entirely from the peculiar under which we were thrown together & the absence of those barriers which usually attend a first acquaintance. I have no more control over my affections than over my thoughts & consequently cannot blame myself for an attachment to a person every way so worthy of the deepest love. This however would not justify me in urging any step in disobedience to your ~~orders~~ wishes & I should despise myself could I act in any other than the most candid and open manner; a different course would be contrary to my nature contrary to my ideas of right, and contrary to my princi-

ples in every way. I beg then that you will do me justice and not allow the idea to remain for an instant upon your mind that I ever desired to be towards your family than as a friend; without your full knowledge and consent & allow me to add that even had the communication you have made me been necessary - I might have anticipated a kinder manner from my mother's most intimate friend. I hope most sincerely that the disagreeable feelings which have arisen from this unfortunate affair may soon be dispelled & that our former delightful intercourse may one day be renewed. Until then have no apprehension of being made unhappy by any acts of mine. These may be regulated according to your wishes although my feelings are far too deep to be easily controlled. Believe me &c. &c.