

DECLOUET LETTERS  
1811-1917

Translated  
under the direction  
of  
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1811  
Nov. 8

UNSIGNED LETTER from Etienne Chevalier Declouet to his wife,  
Aspasie Fuselier Declouet. This letter was written on the day he fought in a  
duel in which he was killed.

*fatally  
wounded*

*October*  
Opelousas, November 8, 1811

My dear friend,

This letter will bring a fatal blow to you, my poor father (Alexander Joseph Declouet) and my dear sisters (Catiche, Josephine and Arthemise) and finally all the family. But all of you know that this rascal (the man he is duelling) had slapped me. The desire I had to live, my good friend, to work for you and my dear and beloved Lisima (our daughter), object of my tenderness. Such thoughts did not abandon me since what happened between myself and this young man. But my honor always was placed above my wise thoughts and I preferred to risk a chance rather than to live with such a dirty stain.

You should, my sweet friend, find consolation from your dear daughter. Spare yourself for her sake, you can weep over your poor husband. You cannot doubt the affection he had for you. I am repeating to you to take care of yourself for your dear Lisima and for the one, boy or girl, whom you will bring to life as I am sure that you are pregnant. If it is a boy, he will have my father's name, if it is a girl your name or the name of her aunt Catiche (my sister). I am leaving this to your choice, dear heart. I dare believe, my sweet friend and I am convinced because of the friendship you always showed for me since I enjoyed the happiness we shared with one another, that you will respect my memory enough to accept the requests I have to make to you.

First: never abandon my poor father, nor cease to consult him about everything you have to do. I warn you against others who might not try to act in your favor.

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(con't.)

A guardian will be appointed for the child and the future child if you have the happiness to bring it to life. You must admit, my dear heart, that papa will take care of your properties in the way which will be the most profitable for my dear Lisima, of whom I cannot think without shedding tears. I recommend to my poor and afflicted father and also to you, my heart, not to neglect anything for this dear and interesting child's education. If unfortunately, my father should die before this dear little girl has been reared and married, a guardian should be appointed, having been trusted by him and by you, my sweet friend. If you happen to have a boy, urge papa to give him a fuller education than to a girl.

Finally, my dear friend, it would require too much time to let you know how your fate and this dear child's fate has occupied me and made me regret life. But I lack expressions to convey this. Show this letter to papa to make him able to see how much I trust him to be your support and my dear child's help. Keep D (a servant) for your service; four of my horses: Grain Blanc, Rouleaux, Cotrale, (torn) who is a very gentle horse. I recommend to you not to ride Cotrale because he is not tame or does not let any stranger ride him. All my other tame horses will be sold and the profit will be for my dear Lisima.

If you accept, my sweet friend, to remain with papa and my poor sisters, as I already asked, always keep Camilien to serve you. But if you happened to leave home depriving papa and all the family of your dear daughter, then papa will keep him to put him to work for this dear child's benefit.

Goodbye, my sweet friend. I am dying to know that this double alarm will not afflict papa and my poor sisters. At least, give them the satisfaction of this dear child, so that all of you can find consolations in cherishing her,

1811 also the grandmother (Louise Favrot Declouet) and the poor aunts who will find  
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(con't.) in her the object of their consolation.

(Unsigned)

NOTE: On June 9, 1812, Aspasia Fuselier Declouet gave birth to Alexander  
Etienne Declouet.

Handwritten in French. Original on file in Dupre Library at the University of  
Southwestern Louisiana in Lafayette, La.