

1857

Feb. 17.

T. B. FAVROT
COLLECTION

PERSONAL LETTER written this date in Parish of St.
Martin by Alexandre deClouet to his son Alexander at Brookland School
(a school for boys at Greenwood Depot, Va.).

Parish of St. Martin
February 17, 1857

My dear son

I had just written to Paul when your letter of the 4th of this
month arrived. I hurry to answer it by the first mail after its receipt.

Letter
by
Alexandre
deClouet
to his son
Alexander
at the
Brookland
School,
Va.

But I fear that these few lines will not reach you in time to reply to your
request. If in case you receive this in time I do not have any objections
to your short trip to Washington to attend the inauguration. But I insist
that you not stay more than two days. If Mr. Dinwiddie consents, Paul
may go with you. I must tell you nevertheless that I will not be without
concern for I know that there will be large crowds in Washington on that
day, such a mob that you won't know which way to turn and which will
probably make it difficult for you to find lodging. Get information and
take precautions before leaving and especially (if you do go there) be care
ful and be on your guard. Take only the money necessary to pay your
trip and the hotel. Upon your arrival I charge you to look for Mr.
Benjamin and Mr. Dimitry or Mr. Miles Taylor; they could perhaps get
you a good place to see the ceremony. I am exceedingly sorry not to be
able to take the trip I planned. But it is impossible. Since my trip to
Baton Rouge I have not even had time to have one day of leisure to go see
your sister at the convent. You must not forget to pay my respects to
Messrs. Taylor, Benjamin and Dimitry if you see them. You must tell
Benjamin that I received his letter with much pleasure and find out and
let me know if he will extend his stay in Washington after March 4. If he
does I will perhaps have a chance to meet him there. When you write me

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tell me how you are doing in your classes. What have you scheduled finally? Have you scheduled a private professor for mathematics as Mr. Maupin had advised you? What are you doing in English? Why did you take a class of French? It seems to me that it would have been more advantageous to have taken something else, no matter what--any course whatsoever which you could take and which would be easy for you and even interesting. I am afraid, my dear son, that the university courses might be above your ability. You can probably already judge, and in this case, wouldn't it be better for you (putting all pride aside) to enter (with Paul or somewhere else) a preparatory school for a month or a year? You could then be able to take the university courses more advantageously. Keep me up to date on all this, and take courage, my dear son. Don't let yourself be tripped up by a few difficulties. Here is the moment to strike the iron. Later on it will perhaps be too late and goodbye to your education! I can't reconcile myself to that idea! You will experience a very emotional humiliation one day in the future and you must believe that I will also experience one. Paul, according to his letters, seems to me to have taken up courage and determination in his two hands and I have felt a great satisfaction. Keep me informed of your experiences also. I don't know what to think of Paul, but you have not given me any information about what which concerns your situation. How long will the 400 piasters last? What arrangements have you made for your room, your meals, etc.? How much have you paid your professors? How much do you have? And many other little things that I would like to know. But I see that although my intention was to write a short letter on a short piece of paper, I have written four pages. I hope that you will imitate

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my example often. In your next one at least, answer all that I ask you to tell me. In my letter to Paul I give him considerable details about the farm (next line illegible) of sugar cane is ended since _____ of 500 arpents. If it comes along well I will have something to be proud of in my new sugar mill. Last week we started to take down the old one and tomorrow everything will be down. I will have to tear down the building in order to put another one on my saw mill. It will be a nice installation. I'm always waiting for the workman who is to construct my bridge and then I will begin my sugar house next month. I expect that Leeds will ship my mill at the end of March or in April. On my last trip to the city it was well advanced. It was something to see. When you return you will find many changes on the farm. I certainly have my soul in the improvements and the innovations, but it is also very expensive.

I am writing by the candle; Gabi is sleeping and Christine just jumped in my arms to ask me to kiss you for her. She talks about you often. Today Gavi was telling Farceur who was in the dining room, "Run and look at the picture of your master in Daddy's office". But it is time to go to bed. I will fall asleep talking to you and to Paul. Goodbye, I kiss you with my heart and mind.

Your father and friend

Alex. (Alexandre) deClouet