

1857
July 13

PERSONAL LETTER from Charles de l'Homme in Attakapas, to
Alexandre Declouet, Jr. at Brookland Academy in Greenwood Depot,
Virginia.

Attakapas, July 13, 1857

My dear Clouet,

T. B. FAVROT
COLLECTION

I have been intending for a long time to write to you, but have been too lazy or have not found the time until today. Knowing that laziness is a very poor excuse I can only ask your forgiveness for this negligence. This slight fault affecting many correspondents accept this excuse just the same. I shall be grateful to you and in turn will be lenient toward you. I am afraid I am talking too much about a subject of such little interest, so I hasten to put an end to it.

Your mother has been ill, as you probably know. She was suffering quite a lot, but when I saw her a few days ago I found her feeling better. I went to your father's with aunt Tonton and Mrs. Billon who was here, Noemi was staying here with her children, she was not feeling well enough to make a long trip, she too has been sick and is feeling very weak. She is better now however and we intend to go to see your father soon. Our children are well thank God, Alexandre promises to be as devilish as Paul. He turns away from pigs and sheep and plays with marbles. He is beginning to read well, but is sometimes lazy. Thali is always the same, he gets mad for the least thing and often speaks disrespectfully to his father, I am perhaps too indulgent towards him. Louis is learning well and is not walking yet but speaks enough to make himself understood. Paul is big and fat and has two teeth! I hope I am not boring you with all the news of my family, but as long as I am writing you I thought I would get you up to date. And now I

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return to your family about which I had started writing. Christine (your sister) is completely recovered from the illness occasioned by swallowing the seed, which had lodged in her windpipe, and there is hardly any scar now where they had to make the incision, and soon it will disappear altogether. A few days ago she spent two days here with Aunt Tonton. Gabrielle (your sister) is still pretty and sweet, she loves to talk. I can not tell you anything about Ninise (Blanche Declouet) because she is still in the convent.

I have seen the sugar refinery at your father's. They are getting along with it and it will be a magnificent building, it will be completed about the end of September. It will be a pleasure to work there to bring the cane crops to such a beautiful refinery and even spend evenings there, I know you will be pleased with it when you see it. For it and for Aunt Tonton's I keep on making bricks and expect to put up the furnace tomorrow, there will be 300,000 bricks. I will be glad to get it finished, as there is not more tedious work than making bricks! We will be using the refinery next year, the sugar cane is beautiful and very promising. As for the cotton it is not doing so well on account of the cold spells we have had recently. Last week we had some very cold north winds such I do not remember ever having before in July. We had to sleep under woolen blankets, so I will be glad to see the warm weather again.

Aunt Tonton is in good health, she complains a lot of pains but I think it more the results of fatigue than anything else. You know that she never stops to rest, even now.

I forgot to tell you about St. Clair. Mrs. St. Clair is not well just now, but I do not think it is anything serious, but she was not able to come

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to dinner last Sunday as she usually does. St. Clair was here yesterday afternoon. His crops are good this year from what he tells me, I have not seen them. Henri is growing fast and is always full of devilment.

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We have gone hunting for wild cats the last few nights, and have killed two of them. That is becoming stylish as tomorrow night Messrs. Betourney and Michel Bourdin are coming to supper and we will go hunting afterwards. St. Clair will join us. I like hunting those wild cats as they eat the corn. I am sure that Paul (Declouet) would like to come with us, but he might do too well and not leave us a chance to deserve praises.

We now have a parish priest at Pont Breaux, he is an ex-army officer from Algeria, very nice looking and French. They say he is very severe, that's what it takes sometimes provided that he does not give me a penance. I hope he does not propose a pilgrimage on foot to Jerusalem. His presence at Pont Breaux permits us to go to mass on Sunday instead of Tuesday as heretofore, and it is more convenient. Mr Fry has stayed with Abbe Jean, and I think they get along together. I hope that Mr. Jean likes him well enough not to offer him to our parish priest. I fear that on New Year's Day this might happen.

Aunt Tantine tells me to ask you to be very good and reasonable, but I am sure it is not necessary to give you this advice. I do so only to keep my promise. She and Noemi join me in sending you all our love, not forgetting Paul (Declouet).

Always yours,

Charles de l'Homme

Handwritten in French. In 1980 original owned by Mrs. Marty Sims of Nederland, Texas.