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PERSONAL LETTER from Louise Declouet in St. Martinville, to her son, Paul Declouet at Brookland School in Greenwood Depot, Virginia.  
St. Martinville, March 3, 1860

My dear Paul,

I am coming to answer all the last letters left aside without any answer for a long time and I do hope, my dear child, that you will excuse me because since before our famous departure for the city, I have been in a mountain of worries you cannot imagine. At last, the worst is over and I am busy with the installation into the new house. The new pieces of furniture are all in their places. From the top to the bottom, the floors are covered with mats and I think that next week I shall move the old furniture to be used in the new house. I promise you to prepare your room nicely and your studio to be shared with Clouet (Alexander, your brother), so that we have both of you under the same roof, you will be obliged to be satisfied with the same apartment. I shall place all your belongings in the studio and your bed in the room with Clouet because of the chimney. Papa (Alexander Declouet) has chosen for you a pretty little desk with bookcase similar to Quaité's (Alexander, your brother) one and several other things for your studio. I would like to describe to you the house's furniture, but I am giving up, it would be too long. It will be newer for you when you arrive for the next vacation.

Clouet received your letter this morning but as he is away I did not open his letter. If he does not come back tomorrow, I don't know if I shall be able to resist any longer the temptation to open it and hear about you.

We arrived from town on Mardi Gras day. Miss Laurent and Ninise (Blanche, your sister) regretted a great deal to leave the city on the eve of that big day, Mardi Gras, because of the masquerade and the beautiful ball which was

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going to take place on that day, but you have to deprive yourself in this world to gain Heaven. In town, Gabi (your sister) was rather sick with a bad cold. That had even delayed our departure for several days, so that, as soon as she could travel we hastened to leave before another one among us might fall sick.

I announce to you the birth of Noemi's (de l'Homme) little boy. He is very well, so is his mother. I have not seen her yet. I am going over there soon. Ninise, Miss Laurent and Christine (your sister) went to call on her last week. For the last two Tuesdays we had a kind of deluge. The bayou is very high and splendid. Also we often see boats passing along, a mast passes every day. One day it goes up the next it goes down. Mr. John did today an enormous fishing. One went to the other bank of the stream Terence and brought back a huge cartload of big fish that Papa ordered to be distributed in the field. I think everybody will have some.

Miss Laurent is sending you her friendly greetings. She also tells you that her foot and her hands hurt and begs you to send her or indicate to her a remedy for them. We all want to see you and embrace you. Do not fail to bring your friend Shaumburg during the vacation if he is in America at that time. He will occupy Quaité's bed. Gabi and Titine send kisses. It is late and my paper is almost over. I should prefer writing to you less long but more frequent letters.

Goodbye, my dear Paul. Apply yourself. Goodbye.

Your mother,

L. Declouet