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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, April 17, 1860

My dear Paul,

I have received your last letter with a great deal of pleasure. Gabi (your sister) is requesting an answer. She is telling you that it took her two days to write and it was not too much. Already a great many things came up during the short time since the almost sudden departure of my dear Clouet (Alexander, your brother): anxiety about the voyage, your meeting in Washington or New York. I think I will hear from you from New York tomorrow at the latest and I suppose that my letter will find you back in Greenwood since several days and very busy with your classes in order to make up for your absence.

Have you been happy to see us? Which one cried with joy? I am sure it is you. Has Clouet rejoined the Schaumburg family? Finally, I shall know all that, so I am hoping, tomorrow or a little later. Gabi is telling you that at the present time she will not be able to write such long letters because her secretary left. You know, without doubt, that it was Clouet. Write often to Clouet and when you write to us do not fail to let us know about him, and take note of his letters' dates. Papa (Alexander Declouet) wrote to him several days ago so that he can have news when he arrives in Paris. His departure did not cheer up the house, I assure you. His room is always closed, I cannot see it open. It seems to me that I must always see him in there. All his belongings are just as he left them. His bashed in hat, all this gives me a heavy heart when I pass in front of his door. His three young dogs are splendid and make me think of him any moment.

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(con't.)

Speaking of dogs, I have a sad piece of news for you. Your poor Farceur (your dog) became rabid. He bit and devoured everything he could see and pass. We kept him closed in for several days to see if he would not get better but unfortunately it was the real rabies. One night, having escaped from his enclosure, he went to Mr. Allison and bit everything he could see, then Mr. John shot him in the head. It was the only thing which could be done. It was so frightening to see him with his ferocious look. Poor animal. You could not imagine how bad we felt.

Another misfortune to announce to you is Mr. Colas's (our dog) disappearance. The only satisfied person is Miss Laurent because the fear he gave her increased every day. So now she is reassured about this poor animal. The little girls discovered that it was in the field that he was killed. Gabi said that Marcel or Felix told her that Pas Jacob had killed a screech owl.

I believe I have spoken long enough about beasts. I am running short of paper. I have only the time to kiss you a thousand times for me and the whole family without forgetting Miss Laurent. It has been raining since yesterday. It came on time as we had not seen any rain since February. It will be beneficial to the crop. Papa is making bricks and brings cartloads of posts made on the other side of the Catahoula. Goodbye.

Your mother,

Louise Declouet