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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, May , 1860

My dear Paul,

I received a few days ago your letter of April 27. We have not yet received any news from Clouet (Alexander, your brother) since his departure from New York. I find this time eternal. I would like to know he has arrived and especially arrived safely. I hope that before long I shall have news and details about his voyage. You were right to give your slippers. I was almost sure they would be too small for me but what can you expect? It is this silly Joseph's mistake. During the vacations, you should make him take your exact size.

At last, we have moved, that is to sleep only. We still eat in the little shack or Derousselle house because of the flies that invade us still more than last year. We are going to use my former bedroom as dining room. It will be larger and fresher than in the little house.

We are expecting Tonton (Josephine Declouet de l'Homme, your aunt) any day. She announced her visit since last week. Poor Tonton, she is quite alone now and must be bored because Noemi (de l'Homme, her niece) definitely moved away. She left with all her belongings eight or ten days ago. Her new house is almost finished. They don't live in it yet but will do so soon. I am her last boy's godmother. They call him Louis Albert Alexandre. His brother is godfather. Your uncle (Jean Baptiste Benoit) is supposed to leave for the city soon. I think he is going to get Mimi (Henriette Lebreton Benoit, his wife). I must tell you that Gabi (your sister) is still waiting for your answer with impatience and says she will not write to you until she received it. This morning

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when the sack of mail was open she gave a big sigh and said: "Paul writes to every one except to me.". At the present time, we have two persons waiting for answers: Miss Laurent and Gabi, especially the former is furious as nobody has been writing to her for a long time. She sends her greetings and waits for your vacations almost as impatiently as we do.

Do you realize that the end of June is arriving quickly? It seems to me that this year flew away quicker than the others. It will be strange for me, my dear Paul, to see you arriving alone without your brother whom I wish to see almost as eagerly as I want to see you. Probably distance and separation give me this feeling. To know that he is so far away from us very often renders sad and unhappy. Write to him as often as possible as you know he is never reluctant when it comes to writing and give him news from us.

Young Duclozel, Mr. St. Maurice's son, called on us with his father. He is a nice young man. You should renew acquaintance with him during the vacations. He spoke to me of you and the time you were at Mr. RemouDET. He is a dentist and filled one of Marie's teeth lately.

I do not remember if I told you that Douce Landry is leaving for France on the 20 of this month. He went with his uncle Charles to have dinner and say goodbye to Tonton. All of us are feeling well and embrace you. Write oftener. In your next letter, tell me if you want the cuffs of your shirts similar to the last ones I had made for you during the vacations on Albert Ferry's pattern. Are they too small or are they right because I could still have them started before you arrive. Farewell, my dear child, I have no more paper. Your mother,

Louise Declouet

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