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PERSONAL LETTER from Alexander Declouet, Jr., in Florence,  
Italy, to his brother, Paul Declouet, at home in St. Martinville, La.  
Florence, June 7th, 1860

My dear Paul,

It was with the greatest pleasure that I received a while ago your letter of the 12th of last month, and I hurry to answer it whilst I have nothing to do.

This instead of finding you at Greenwood, will find you in a much more agreeable place, you shall be at home, enjoying yourself in the midst of those whom we love and cherish the most in this world. How much do I envy your happiness. How many a pleasant moments you all will spend at your arrival at home. It will be the first time that you'll reach our home by yourself alone, all the other times I parted that pleasure with you, and this time I'll be far off in one of the foreign countries of the old world. We arrived here this evening at 2 o'clock; and on our way we stopped several hours at Pisa to see the leaning tower. Although I am in Florence all my thoughts are back in Rome. Never in my life shall I forget that place, and if I have another chance I certainly shall visit Rome again. The old senate chamber in which the ancient orators displayed so much eloquence is no more in existence; there is a capitol there but it is not the same capitol mentioned in history. It is built on the same grounds where the old capitol stood. If you read the two last letters I wrote home you will have a discription of my stay in the eternal city and it will save me the trouble of discribing it another time. In Sciarra's gallery in Rome I saw Pompey's statue which used to be in the old senate and at whose feet Caesar was killed. The Colliseum by moon light is the grandest sight I ever saw. It is perfectly magnificent. That

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old amphitheatre on whose arena thousands of braves perished, and which used to be the spot upon which most blood was shed in ancient times, was one of the monuments I visited with the greatest interest while I was in Rome. The evening before we left, we went to take a farewell look at St. Peter's Church, and it looked by far grander and more magnificent than the first times I saw it. We stayed in that church as long as possible and were all very sorry to go out of it. Schaumburg kissed the toe of a bronze statue of St. Peter which stands near the main altar. That toe has been kissed so many times that the end of the foot begins to wear out.

We made while we were in Rome the acquaintance of the American Consul and his sister, who is the greatest case I ever saw. She paints her face up with red paint and puts so much of it that if she was to put on a pair of pantaloons and a jacket, she would look exactly like a clown. Her dress is so long that it sweeps all the mud and dust in the streets, her name is Pink, she has red hair, she paints her face red, and wears a dress with a tail 4 feet long. With this description you can imagine what kind of a character she is. If Miss Laurent and Ninise (Blanche Declouet) were to see that dress, they never would have any more made like those they wore last summer.

I was very much astonished to see that there were negroe priests in Rome. I saw several of them; one especially was as black as the devil and the wool on his head was so thick and curly that it seemed to raise him off the ground. There are not as many beggars in Rome as in Naples, but they are however very troublesome.

June 8th - As I was very tired last night I could not finish my letter and had to put it off for today. We stopped here at the Hotel Royal de la

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Grande Bretagne, it is situated right on the bank of the Arno river. There are great many bridges over the river and one of them a little above this hotel has a row of houses on each side of it. You never would imagine that it was a bridge if you didn't know it. This morning we visited the Palazzo Titti, a very fine palace in which there is a very fine gallery of paintings. We also visited the museum which is well worth seeing. It is not yet decided how long we shall stay in Florence. We intend to go from here to Venice. As I have nothing more to tell you, let me inform you all about my financial matters. I left Paris with 8.500 francs and I took 600 francs in Naples and 500 in Rome, which makes 1100 francs I took from my letter of credit. Now I have 7400 francs left and I am not certain if it will be enough to finish my trip; so tell Father (Alexander Declouet) to send me another letter of credit of 500 dollars on Messieurs Borde & Co. in Paris, in the case that the 7400 francs should not be enough to finish my tour, they will certainly last me until the other letter comes. Father must think that I am spending a heap of money but I assure you that it does not cost nothing to travel in Europe. Everything is pretty dear. I am as economical as possible and never spend a cent unless I am obliged to do it. Well goodbye, kiss them all at home for me and write often; direct all my letters in Paris. Schaumburg sends you his best love.

Your fond and affectionate brother,

Alexander Declouet, Jr.

P. S. My best respects to Miss Laurent and Mr. John and his family.