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PERSONAL LETTER from Alexander Declouet, Jr., in Munich,
Germany, to his brother, Paul Declouet, at home in St. Martinville, La.
Munich, July 15, 1860

My dear Paul,

Yours dated June 11th was received yesterday and read with the
utmost pleasure. We arrived here day before yesterday in the evening, and
intend to leave for Vienna day after tomorrow, Tuesday.

The last time I wrote home I was in Geneva and I must now describe
to you the trip I took from that place here. On the fourth of July we went over
to Chamounix to see the mer de glace and Mont Blanc of which Alex Dumas
gives an excellent discription in his impressions de voyage. We came back to
Geneva from Chamounix and left on the 7th inst. went as far as Vevey at a
short ride from there, we visited the celebrated old Chateau de Chillon
situated at the extrimity of lake Geneva. Spent all last Sunday in Vevey and on
Monday morning we left for Fryburg at which place we arrived at 3 o'clock P.
M. We had the chance of hearing the organ in the cathedral of Fryburg. It is
the finest and largest organ in the world and I have never heard anything more
powerful than that. It immitates human voice very well. From Fryburg we
went to Berne by rail. There we saw the Swiss parliament in session. We
went in the house, which corresponds to our house of representatives; they
were about 150 in number. Some of them spoke Dutch and others French, the
chairman was an old grey headed fellow. The parliament house is a very fine
building. We also saw the bears in Berne; it would not do at all to go there
without seeing them. From Berne we went to Thun (Toon) and from Thun to
Interlaken by boat. There we had a pretty good view of the Jung-Frau. At
Interlaken there are the most beautiful collections of wood carving I ever saw

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Came back to Thun and took the cars (railroad) for Lucerne. There is nothing to be seen there but a lion cut in the solid rock on the side of a hill. It is 28 feet long and 18 high. The lake of Lucerne is very pretty. On the morning of the 12th we left Lucerne and that night at 5 o'clock we arrived at Schaffhausen at a small distance from Schaffhausen are the falls of the Rhine which are nothing at all, after you have seen Niagara. I was very much disappointed with them. I don't think it is worth going there to see them. We left Schaffhausen on the 13th in the morning and at 1 P. M. took a boat at Roman-shorn and at 2 P. M. we entered Bavaria. Of course there we had our trunks and passports examined. A short while after we started off in the cars and at 10 o'clock that night we arrived in Munich after a long and tiresome day's traveling having a strong rain pretty nearly all the time.

The day after our arrival here visited one of the galleries of paintings in which there is a very good collection. Also visited St. Boniface' Church and some others but none of them can be compared to those we saw in Rome. Mr. Hutchinson, one of Schaumburg's friends who was at the U. of V last year, is now traveling with Capt. McKinstry and his party who have been traveling with us since we left Paris, got disgusted of the country and started to go back to Paris.

Munich is entirely a modern city, the streets are laid out very regularly and are very wide, the buildings in general are very handsome indeed. The "Genius of Bavaria" a bronze monument at a short ride from the city is a very splendid thing, it represents a woman (somehow like the goddess of Liberty we saw in the capitol at Washington) with a lion on her right side and the left arm is raised up holding a wreath of laurel in the hand

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It is the largest statue I have ever seen. This morning Schaumburg and I were up in its head which can hold eight persons easily. The nose is much longer than my arm, from the elbow to the wrist it is more than ten feet long, and two men of the size of Mr. John could stand very easily in the arm. It is so hot in there that we could not let our hands rest on the bronze at all. This evening we took a long ride on the fashionable square but there were not many people. Last night Schaumburg, Mr. Hutchinson and I went to the royal beer house and saw one of the greatest sights going. Crowds of people were collected in that house all drinking beer out of jugs which would hold about five of our large glasses, and some of them had three jugs constantly going as not to get out of beer. There you can see men of all ranks and of all nationalities. When you get in that room you must get your jug yourself, go to the fountain, wash it yourself, and get the beer yourself. There is nobody there to wait on you, everyone has to take care of himself. All three of us drank our jug full of beer and were a good deal heavier than when we went in. The beer is very good indeed and you could drink five gallons of it that it would not make you drunk. In that room there were such a dense cloud of smoke that you could hardly distinguish a man from one end of the room to the other. Two or three hundred barrels of beer are opened daily for the consumption of the amateurs. If ever you come to Munich you must not miss going to that house to see how much beer a human being can put on his conscience.

Well this is about all the news I can give you. Will write again to one of you when I get in Berlin.

I bought two beautiful watches in Geneva for Miss Laurent and Ninise (Blanche Declouet), will get the chains in Paris.

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Good night, kiss all the family for me and my best respects to

Miss Laurent and Mr. John.

Your affectionate brother,

Alexander Declouet, Jr.

P. S. Schaumburg sends you his best love and says he wrote to you and you have not answered his letter.