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PERSONAL LETTER from Alexander Declouet, in St. Martinville,  
to his son, Paul Declouet, at Brookland School in Greenwood Depot, Virginia.  
December 8, 1860

My dear Paul,

Yours of the 26th Nov. came to hand yesterday and you may well imagine that it was received with unfeigned pleasure and some pain; with pleasure on account of your entirely satisfactory explanation and with pain that I should have committed an involuntary error which has been to you a source of unpleasant feeling and sorrow. It was nothing but one oversight, a misunderstanding on my part. I read the word "never" alone without coupling it with the heading word of the column "absent" and understood "never in class". That's all and I hope, my dear son, that this little occurrence will be recollected by you only as an additional token of my paternal love and of the deep interest and solicitude which I feel in your advancement and welfare. But enough of this.

I returned yesterday from a short visit to our good Aunt Tonton  
l'Homme  
(Josephine Declouet de) and to your Uncle (Benoit) St. Clair whom I found all in good health, as well as Charles Delhomme and his interesting family. Your cousin Nee was here a few days ago and has gone to Opelousas (with Gaspard as groom). We expect him back here today or tomorrow.

Everything is quiet and going on well here; you would scarcely recognise your dear little Corinne (Declouet). She improves everyday and is as fat and plump as a little thing of her kind can well be. In fondling her, how often we are reminded of you and regret that you have not your share!

We are this morning, Miss L., Blanche and Christine (Declouet) preparing to pay a visit to Dauterine and I cannot write to you at any length.

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(con't.)

He is about to get through rolling and I have heard that he would make about 170 hogsheads. My aunt Mrs. LeBeom is on a visit to Attakapas and we may probably find her at Dauterine's.

I received a letter from Clouet (Alexander Declouet, Jr.) on the 5th inst. (dated 9th of Nov.). In a previous letter he had asked my consent to his remaining in France until August or Sept. '61 but in his last he appears to be undecided. I have written to him and left it to his own decision. The news of the election may probably change his views and although I advise to stay, I would not be astonished to see him return before the time agreed upon. Supposing that you will hear from him by the time you get this letter, I will say nothing of the contents of his last letters.

I have not time to say any thing of the momentous crisis in political and in financial affairs. My views coincide exactly with yours! God save the country from rash counsel and precipitate action. If we cannot save the Union! let us at least have a perfect union of the South. Unanimity of sentiment and action of all the southern states! United we stand, divided we fall - but I cannot continue - the theme is one which fills my mind. With the deepest sincerity. The news received today from Washington are somewhat less discouraging and it is yet permitted to hope.

We have had at last enough rain to leave some water on the land, in the pastures, etc. My plantation work is going on finely. My seed cane is sown and this afternoon I will have 260 arpents planted (on this side). I expect to plant from 600 to 700 arpents. If the season is in the least favorable with 200 or 300 arpents of stubble and 700 of plant cane, I may probably make up next year for the failure of the last.

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(con't.) family believe me your best friend and father,

Farewell, my dear son, write often and with the love of all the

Alexander Declouet