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PERSONAL LETTER from Alexander Declouet, in Richmond,
Virginia, to his son, Paul Declouet, in Virginia.

Richmond, August 2, 1861, 5 A.M.

My dear Paul,

I am just now about as mad with myself as a man can well be. Yesterday whilst at dinner a card was handed to me by the servant who stated that the gentleman had left. It was your friend Schaumberg. A few words were written on the card which I read and inadvertently did not notice that he promised to call again. Immediately after dinner I started and went around the Spotswood, American & Exchange hoping to find him at one of those hotels. He was not registered in any of them. At the Exchange I examined the card again and discovered my oversight. I hurried back to Benjamin's and missed him by 4 or 5 minutes to my great regret and mortification. With the hope of finding him at the Va. Central R. R. depot I am up at this early hour. If I have the good luck to meet him and to guess at him it will be all right and he will hand you this letter. If not you will receive it from Staunton, forwarded by Mrs. Gay to whom I will enclose it. I cannot well say how vexed I am by this little mishap. I had just answered a letter which Mr. Schaumberg had written to me from Nashville and from his warm and intimate friendship with you and Alex (Alexander Declouet, Jr.), you may well imagine with what pleasure I would have pressed the hand of one who being as a brother to my sons would have been welcomed by me with feelings of fatherly friendship. But let that pass not without the hope, however, that I will be more fortunate another time. In my letter addressed to him at Nashville I informed him that it was not in my power to accomplish any thing for him here. The President and War Department are overwhelmed by applications for appointments in the

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army - and the inflexible rule is previous military service, military acquirements or antecedents. And now with the age of 21 is a sinequor non. I suppose and I am overjoyed at the supposition that Mr. Schaumberg goes to U. Va. to enlist in your company. Plus on est de fous plus on ritz - the more the merrier. It is a great consolation to me to know that you are surrounded by good friends and gentlemen, and I know and trust that you will be to them as they are unto you. So far I have received here but one letter from you (of the 17th July) and the news from Western Virginia not being very satisfactory I cannot but be somewhat uneasy. I hear that Gov. Wise has fallen back from Charleston to Ganley's Bridge and may still retreat until reinforced. And I hope and think that if not already reinforced he will soon be. In my last letter I told you I think that I sent 20 dollars to Mrs. Gay to supply you with any little things you may need. Mr. Revis inquired of me yesterday whether you had received the sixty dollars which I have remitted to him for you at Montgomery. I could not tell him. You have never said anything to me about it. I have yet to learn whether you received in time a certificate of deposit for \$75 from Darby & Tremoulet in lieu of the check on York which you sent them back. I hope you have not suffered for want of money. If crisis, I enclose at all event ten dollars not wishing to risk more by mail until I am certain that it is safe to send money in that way. My last letter from home was Clouet's (Alexander Declouet, Jr.) letter which I sent you but by a letter of your Cousin Nee of the 25th July I had the sad and melancholy intelligence of the death of his sister Lise (Mme. Alfred Nee) in Paris on the 12th of June last! That's a severe and cruel blow for our good and worthy Tante Claire - your mother (Marie Louise Benoit) too will be very much affected. I expect

1861 letters from home by todays' mail and was very much disappointed for several
Aug. 2 days past in not hearing from them or from you.
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Farewell, my dear Paul, it is time for me to go to the railroad.
God bless and protect you is my ardent, daily and I may my hourly prayer.

Your father and friend,

Alexander Declouet