

1861
Sept. 19
(con't.)

that Paul after all the hardships he has encountered has kept his health and that you are safe and well. Would to God that you could get Paul away from that miserable country and that our dear boys would never have to return to it. I am afraid you have not received the letters I have forwarded. I enclosed the first a few days after you left to Charley if Paul got that letter open it. Mr. Gay enclosed another to Paul and I sent the third to Mother Tuesday to be sent to you - all from your home. Tell Paul he must use the contents of trunk. He will (find) some of the boys drawers thicker than his, which he must use also, socks, undershirts etc.

Mr. Gay joins me in much love to you both.

Yours in great haste,

M. L. Gay

1861
Sept. 24

PERSONAL LETTER from Blanche Declouet in St. Martinville, to
her brother, Paul Declouet in Virginia.

St. Martinville, September 24, 1861

Dear Paul,

I have received with great pleasure your letter of August 30, as I had just written to Papa (Alexander Declouet), I delayed, perhaps a little too long, answering it. You must have heard through Papa (who must not be with you) that Mama (Marie Louise Benoit Declouet) had been very sick during her stay at Tonton's (Josephine Declouet de l'Homme). She has not quite recovered yet, without having a real fever, every other day she feels ill at ease and I am afraid this may continue still for a long time as she refuses anything which might make her feel better. Corinne (our sister) has a rather serious cold but it does not tire her too much, moreover, she is much better now.

There are still many sick negroes. This fever which is prevalent is very difficult to stop, some relapsed three and even four times. We are hoping to find out soon, through one of Papa's letters, whether he is coming back soon. Our hearts are divided, we wish that he stays with you and at the same time we would like him to come here, even for a short visit. It will be so sad to begin the grinding without him. Quaité (Alexander, our brother) wants him to come back for all sorts of reasons, but especially to bring to his senses this fat Mr. John who ignores Quaité on the plantation and becomes furious against the negroes of the main yard or the workmen who come to receive orders from Quaité. He threatens to beat them and worse. I assure you that sometime Quaité is exasperated by his attitude. We do not want to speak to Papa about this as it would worry him. It will be time enough to relate all that to him when he returns.

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I believe that Maria's love for you is on the decline. She hardly comes to see us. You imagine that we act in the same way and that such an estrangement does not make us feel very sad.

Last Saturday, Mr. Tertron's company paraded in the streets of St. Martin. Mr. Charles came to look for Quaité and Little Uncle (Jean Baptist Benoit) with trumpets blowing. I am at the present time Corinne's guardian and I hardly know what I am writing. She is sitting at my feet putting her doll to sleep. She mumbles from time to time and pulls on my dress for me to take her in my arms.

Last Saturday, Miss Laurent attended the amateur's theater. The profit derived from it being destined to the volunteers. She had a good time. Mr. Sabatier and Arthur Simon are the best actors. Miss Laurent cannot get over her physician's funny antics. He sings little comical songs which make people laugh. Mr. Page, the theater's manager, has composed a polka dedicated to Mr. Alcibiade Deblanc, it will be sold for the volunteer's benefit. I am learning at the present time the Beauregard or Fort Sumter March which is very pretty. I think you must have learned that Mr. Octave Lejeune, our supervisor, left to go to Virginia. He is still in New Orleans, he could not obtain a passport and joined a company which has not been completed yet. It is said now that no soldier will be allowed to leave the State as one fears for the city and Berwick Bay. Goodbye, dear Paul, keep writing to us as often as you can. We kiss you tenderly. Miss Laurent also. Believe in the affection of your sister who cherishes you,

Blanche Declouet