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

St. Martinville, December 7, 1861

My dear Paul,

For several weeks, every time the mail came we expected to receive a letter from you but yet we have not received anything. I think you must be so busy building your log cabin that it keeps you from writing.

I believe I had written to you that Papa (Alexander Declouet) had left the city on November 24, furthermore, he must have announced to you his arrival at Richmond, but we have not heard from him directly. Last week, we went to spend a few days at Tonton's (Josephine Declouet de l'Homme). She was well but still very sad like all of us. The great preparations that one made, so it was said, for Columbus, had worried her a great deal and, after all, it was only falsehood from these monsters, the Yankees, who never say anything but lies.

Little Uncle (Jean Baptist Benoit) expects a beautiful crop this year, but what is the use, he will not sell it or if he does it will be dirt cheap. His sugar is beautiful when you consider it is processed with lime only. His canes produce so much that soon he will be lacking wood. Mimi (Henriette Lebreton Benoit, our aunt) is very fat. She is almost as big as Mama (Marie Louise Benoit Declouet) but you must not praise her about this as she does not want it to be mentioned. Lately, magnificent sugar was made with the new equipment Papa bought to use sulphur, but unfortunately for us it broke down and Quaitte (Alexander, our brother) is unable to start it at all. He wrote to Mr. Laforest, responsible for the installation, and I think that a way to repair the machine will be sent. Four hundred boucauts have been gathered.

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(con't.)

Finally, Corinne (our sister) had a little tooth. She is very well with the exception of a little cold which does not make her sick at all.

We are feeling well, including Miss Laurent who was feeling much better, but for a few days she suffered a little more. She sends you many friendly greetings.

Goodbye, dear Paul, all the family is joining me to kiss you a million times. Believe in the sincere affection of your sister and friend,

Blanche Declouet