

1861  
Dec. 16

1-15

PERSONAL LETTER from Alexander Declouet, Sr. in Richmond,  
Virginia, to his daughter, Blanche Declouet in St. Martinville.  
Richmond, December 16, 1861

My dear daughter,

As I did you an injustice by notifying you that I had received your first letter through an answer addressed to Christine (your sister), I am coming now to try to soothe your justified anger by offering excuses through my haste to answer your letter of the 5th which I read with a special pleasure since for a rather long time I had been deprived of your so appreciated news and I was beginning to feel uneasy. I was happy to hear that you took a trip to our dear Aunt's (Josephine Declouet de l'Homme) home and that you had a good time. You must continue to go out often, to call on our dear neighbors so as to obtain diversion and amusement. Your life is too sedentary and too quiet. Your health, I am afraid, will be affected by this (if it has not been affected already). For a long time, I should have required that you take more exercise and more diversion, but in the whirlwind of business and events which surrounded me for almost a year, my tender sollicitude for you, my dear daughter, has been, so to say, powerless, but had never ceased to preoccupy me. Youth flies away quickly you must take advantage of it, so, let it be understood that you must look for and even create chances to have a good time. Upon my return, perhaps I shall have the leisure to busy myself with that and we shall organize lovely little parties.

If you go to see Mrs. Olivier (you should) tell her that I often scolded you for not calling on her, but in my case, she is the one who owes me a visit, or rather a dozen visits and I expect she will comply with capital and interests. Remember me to Mrs. Balthazar and tell her I would like to have a little

1861  
Dec. 16  
(con't.)

quarrel with her.

Up to now, I have received only one letter from Clouet (Alexander, your brother), and according to what you told me, I am inclined to believe that his last letter has not reached me yet. Here enclosed is a little message for him. My dear Paul (your brother) wrote me only twice since I have been here and moreover his letters were dated a long time ago. In my letter to Christine I announced to you the good news that his Company had been broken up and that I had the hope to bring him with me. I thought that the Congress was going to adjourn at the end of this week and that, perhaps I could take the trip and arrive with him among you! But it was decided otherwise and now I do not know when I shall be able to escape from here.

Here is something else: in a letter from Paul dated December 1 and received only yesterday, he announced to me that he was called to serve as a Lieutenant in a Company (the McCulloch Rangers) and that the Captain and the men of that Company had offered him this grade. The offer seems to tempt him but he asked for my advice before accepting permanently. As I expected to see him any day, I did not answer him expecting to have a better understanding when we speak to each other and after we have obtained more information. I only know that it is a very fine Company and I understand that our young hero may be tempted, but what are Mama (Louise Benoit Declouet) and Tonton (Josephine Declouet de l'Homme) are going to say about that? If I had acted well, I would not have said anything but now "the cat is out of the bag" and it will be necessary to resign oneself if he accepts. As a compensation, I believe in such a case to be almost sure to be able to obtain a 40 or 60-day leave and we will have the joy to have him with us for a few weeks. I learned through Mrs. Gay who just

1861  
Dec. 16  
(con't.)

wrote to me on the 9th of this month that Paul and her son Charles were still at Meadow Bluff and they expected him at Stanton between the 13th and the 16th, that is to say now. So, he might arrive here any time, unless he followed the McCulloch Rangers up to Norfolk where I know this Company has received the order to repair. I shall leave my letter open until the arrival of the carts from Stanton. I often call upon the Macfarland family who is always charming to me. Yesterday evening, the young ladies made a delicious eggnog. The two little girls are not afraid of me and I caress them with happiness thinking of my own. I am glad to hear that Miss Laurent continues to feel better and I hope to find her big and fat.

Goodbye, my dear daughter, I must leave, asking you to give for me most affectionate caresses to Mama, sisters, brother, brother-in-law, sister-in-law, aunts and of course, all the friends,

With all my affection,

Alexander Declouet

P. S. I did not have time to write to Clouet. I have just received a letter from St. Marc informing me of poor Effy Ferry's death and Aunt Neuville's (Louise DeBlanc Declouet) illness. Another letter from Mrs. Gay announced to me that on the 12th Paul was at Lewisburg on the way to Richmond. Charles Gay who wrote this to her did not say anything about Paul's promotion to a Lieutenancy in another Company and now I doubt whether it took place.

Handwritten in French. Original on file in Dupre Library at the University of Southwestern Louisiana in Lafayette, La.