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PERSONAL LETTER from Alexander Declouet, Sr. in St. Martinville,
to his son, Paul Declouet at Brookland School in Greenwood Depot, Virginia.
St. Martinville, June 14, 1859

My dear Paul,

I have just learned through a letter from Clouet (Alexander, your brother) to your uncle (Jean Baptiste Benoit) that you seem to have made up your mind to spend your vacations in Greenwood with the firm resolve to use that time to make up for the loss of time during the last vacations. I must tell you that I was very happy to learn about such a good decision and now I feel some regret for having perhaps contributed to weaken this decision by offering you the temptation to leave with your brother and your friends. In my last letter to Clouet (informing him about a \$250 check I was mailing to pay for what you owe and cover your travelling expenses) I told you that I was leaving you the choice to come or to remain. Now, my dear son, if this message reaches you on time and if you do not suffer too much to see Clouet and your friends leave, in spite of the pleasure seeing you would give us, my good sense tells me that it would be better for you to stay in school. Should, like last year, illnesses or other impediments happen, you might lose two or three months, and your studies and education would be practically ruined. Therefore, my dear son, pick up all your courage, by working seriously drive away sorrow or homesickness so, by using well your two months of vacations, you will have the satisfaction of beginning your regular school year with a good chance of success. Such is my advice. However, I leave you free to decide yielding to you all responsibility in this matter.

Nothing new. We just had a perfect rain after a drought which lasted over a month and endangered our crop. Your mother (Louise Benoit Declouet)

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(con't.)

and sisters are well, the day before yesterday they returned from Tonton's (Josephine Declouet de l'Homme) where everybody also felt well. The house is getting ahead, within a week, I think, all workmen will leave with the exception of the painters and one carpenter. Deo gratias! We had enough!

Goodbye, my regards to Mr. Dinwiddie (principal of Brookland School) and (if you stay) do not fail to write to us often. If you don't come home, I shall do my best to go to see you before the grinding season.

Your father and best friend,

Alexander Declouet