

*IV – Near Hopes are Worth as much as Those Far Off**Ninon de l'Enclos to Saint-Evremond:*

I sent a reply to your last letter to the correspondent of the Abbé Dubois, but as he was at Versailles, I fear it has not reached him.

I should have been anxious about your health without the visit of Madame de Bouillon's little librarian, who filled my heart with joy by showing me a letter from one who thinks of me on your account. Whatever reason I may have had during my illness to praise the world and my friends, I never felt so lively a joy as at this mark of kindness. You may act upon this, as you feel inclined, since it was you who drew it upon me.

I pray you to let me know, yourself, whether you have grasped that happiness one enjoys so much at certain times? The source will never run dry, so long as you shall possess the friendship of the amiable friend who invigorates your

life (Lady Sandwich). How I envy those who go to England, and how I long to dine with you once again! What a gross desire, that of dinner!

The spirit has great advantages over the body, though the body supplies many little repeated pleasures, which solace the soul in its sorrowful moods. You have often laughed at my mournful reflections, but I have banished them all. It is useless to harbor them in the latter days of one's life, and one must be satisfied with the life of every day as it comes. Near hopes, whatever you may say against them, are worth as much as those far off – they are more certain. This is excellent moralizing. Take good care of your health, it is to that everything should tend.