

## *XII – Age Has Some Consolations*

*Saint-Evremond to Ninon de l'Enclos:*

**I**t gives me a lively pleasure to see young people, handsome and expanding like flowers, fit to please, and able to sincerely affect an old heart like mine. As there has always been a strong similarity between your tastes, your inclinations, your sentiments, and mine, I think you will be pleased to receive a young Chevalier who is attractive to all our ladies. He is the Duke of Saint Albans, whom I have begged to pay you a visit, as much in his own interests as in yours.

Is there any one of your friends like de Tallard, imbued with the spirit of our age, to whom I can be of any service? If so, command me. Give me some news of our old friend de Gourville. I presume he is prosperous in his affairs; if his health is poor I shall be very sorry.

Doctor Morelli, my particular friend, accompanies the Countess of Sandwich, who goes to France for her health. The late Count Rochester, father of Madame Sandwich, had more spirit than any man in England, but Madame Sandwich has more than her father. She is generous and spiritual, and as amiable as she is generous and spiritual. These are a portion of her qualities. But, I have more to say about the physician than about the invalid.

Seven cities, as you know, dispute among themselves, the birthplace of Homer; seven great nations are quarrelling over Morelli: India, Egypt, Arabia, Persia, Turkey, Italy, and Spain. The cold countries, even the temperate ones, France, England and Germany, make no pretensions. He is acquainted with every language and speaks the most of them. His style, elevated, grand and figurative, leads me to believe

that he is of Oriental origin, and that he has absorbed what he found good among the Europeans. He is passionately fond of music, wild over poetry, inquisitive about paintings, a connoisseur in everything – I cannot remember all. He has friends who know architecture, and though skilled in his own profession, he is an adept in others.

I pray you to give him opportunities to become acquainted with all your illustrious friends. If you make him yours, I shall consider him fortunate, for you will never be able to make him acquainted with anybody possessing more merit than yourself.

It seems to me that Epicurus included in his sovereign good the remembrance of past things. There is no sovereign good for a centenarian like me, but there are many consolations, that of thinking of you, and of all I have heard you say, is one of the greatest.

I write of many things of no importance to you, because I never think that I may weary you. It is enough if they please me; it is impossible at my age, to hope they will please others. My merit consists in being contented, too happy in being able to write you.

Remember to save some of M. de Gourville's wine for me. I am lodged with one of the relatives of M. de l'Hermitage, a very honest man, and an exile to England on account of his religion. I am very sorry that the Catholic conscience of France could not suffer him to live in Paris, and that the delicacy of his own, compelled him to abandon his country. He certainly deserves the approbation of his cousin.