

XIII – Some Good Taste Still Exists in France

Ninon de l'Enclos to Saint-Evremond:

My dear friend, is it possible for you to believe that the sight of a young man gives me pleasure? Your senses deceive you when it comes to others. I have forgotten all but my friends. If the name “doctor” had not reassured me, I should have replied by the Abbé de Hautefeuille, and your English would never have heard of me. They would have been told at my door that I was not at home, and I would have received your letter, which gave me more pleasure than anything else.

What a fancy to want good wine, and how unfortunate that I cannot say I was successful in getting it! M. de l'Hermitage will tell you as well as I, that de Gourville never leaves his room, is indifferent to taste of any kind, is always a good friend, but his friends do not trespass upon his friendship for fear of worrying him. After that, if, by any insinuation I can make, and which I

do not now foresee, I can use my knowledge of wine to procure you some, do not doubt that I will avail myself of it.

M. de Tallard was one of my former friends, but state affairs place great men above trifles. I am told that the Abbé Dubois will go to England with him. He is a slim little man who, I am sure, will please you.

I have twenty letters of yours, and they are read with admiration by our little circle, which is proof that good taste still exists in France. I am charmed with a country where you do not fear ennui, and you will be wise if you think of nobody but yourself, not that the principle is false with you: that you can no longer please others.

I have written to M. Morelli, and if I find in him the skill you say, I shall consider him a true physician.