

### *III – Why Love Grows Cold*

In despite of everything I may say to you, you still stick to your first sentiment. You wish a respectable person for a mistress, and one who can at the same time be your friend. These sentiments would undoubtedly merit commendation if in reality they could bring you the happiness you expect them to; but experience teaches you that all those great expectations are pure illusions. Are serious qualities the only question in pastimes of the heart? I might be tempted to believe that romances have impaired your mental powers. Poor Marquis! He has allowed himself to become fascinated by the sublime talk common in conversation. But, my dear child, what do you mean to do with these chimeras of reason? I willingly tell you, Marquis: it is very fine coin, but it is a pity that it cannot enter into commercial transactions.

When you wish to begin housekeeping, look for a reliable woman, full of virtue and lofty principles. All this is becoming to the dignity of the marriage tie; I intended to say, to its gravity. But at present, as you require nothing but a

love affair, beware of being serious, and believe what I tell you; I know your wants better than you yourself know them. Men usually say that they seek essential qualities in those they love. Blind fools that they are! How they would complain could they find them! What would they gain by being deified? They need only amusement. A mistress as reasonable as you require would be a wife for whom you would have an infinite respect, I admit, but not a particle of ardor. A woman estimable in all respects is too subduing, humiliates you too much, for you to love her long. Forced to esteem her, and even sometimes to admire her, you cannot excuse yourself for ceasing to love her. So many virtues are a reproach too discreet, too tiresome a critic of our eccentricities, not to arouse your pride at last, and when that is humbled, farewell to love. Make a thorough analysis of your sentiments, examine well your conscience, and you will see that I speak the truth. I have but a moment left to say adieu.