

*Translation of a very curious note, found among the papers of M. D. la Harpe, one of the French Philosophers, after his death, from the "METHODIST MAGAZINE," for October 1807.*

"It appears to me as if it were but yesterday; and it was, nevertheless in the beginning of the year 1788; we were at the table of a brother Académicien, who was of the highest rank and a man of talents. The company was numerous and of all kinds; courtiers, advocates, literary men, académiciens, &c. We had been, as usual, luxuriously entertained; and at the desert, the wines of Mauvoisin and the Capo, added to the natural gaiety of good company that kind of a social freedom which sometimes stretches beyond the rigid decorum of it. In short, we were in a state to allow of any thing that would produce mirth. Chamfort had been reading some of his impious and libertine tales, and the fine ladies had heard them, without once making use of their fans. A deluge of pleasantries on religion then succeeded; one gave a quotation from the Pucelle d'Orléans; another recollected and applauded the philosophical distich of Diderot,

Et des Boyaux du dernier Pêtre,  
Screeza le Coa du dernier Roi.

And of the last Priest's entrails form the string  
Around the neck of the last King.

A third rises, and with a bumper in his hand, "Yes gentlemen," (he exclaims) "I am as sure there is no God, as I am certain that Homer is a fool."—The conversation afterwards took a more serious turn, and the most ardent admiration was expressed of the revolution which Voltaire had produced; and they all agreed that it formed the brightest ray of his glory. "He has given the ton to his age, and has contrived to be read in the chamber, as well as in the drawing room." One of the company mentioned, and almost burst with laughter at the circumstance, that his hair-dresser had said, while he was powdering him, "Look you, Sir; though I am nothing but a poor journeyman barber, I have no more religion than another man." It was concluded that the revolution would soon be consummated, and that it was absolutely necessary for superstition and fanaticism to give place to philosophy. The probability of this epoch was then calculated, and which of the company present would live to see the Reign of Reason. The elder part of them lamented that they could not flatter themselves with the hope of enjoying such a pleasure: while the younger part rejoiced in the expectation that they should witness it. The Academy was felicitated for having prepared the grand work, and being, at the same time, the strong hold, the centre and the moving principle of Freedom of Thought.

"There was only one of the guests who had not shared in the delights of this conversation; he had even ventured, in a quiet way, to start a few pleasantries on our noble enthusiasm. It was Cazotte, an amiable man, of an original turn of mind, but unfortunately infatuated with the reveries of the Illuminati. He renewed the conversation, in a very serious tone, and in the following manner: "Gentlemen," said he, "be satisfied, you will all see this grand and sublime revolution. You know that I am something of a Prophet, and I repeat that you will all see it." He was assured by the common expression, "It is not necessary to be a great conjurer to foretell that."—"Agreed; but, perhaps, it may be necessary to be something more, respecting what I am now going to tell you. Have you any idea of what will result from this Revolution?—What will happen to yourselves, to every one now present; what will be the immediate progress of it, with its certain effects and consequences?" "Oh," said Condorcet, with his silly and saturnine laugh, let us know all about it; a Philosopher can have no objection to meet a Prophet."—"You, M. Condorcet, will expire on the pavement of a dungeon; you will die of the poison which you will have taken to escape from the hands of the executioner: of poison, which the happy state of that period will render it absolutely necessary that you should carry about you."

At first there appeared a considerable degree of astonishment; but it was soon recollected that Cazotte was in the habit of dreaming while he was awake, and he laughed as loud as ever.—"M. Cazotte, the tale which you have just told is not so pleasant as your *Diable amoureux*. But what devil has put this dungeon, this poison, and these dang-

men in your head! What can these things have in common with Philosophy and the Reign of Reason?"—"That is precisely what I am telling you. It will be in the name of philosophy, of humanity, and of liberty; it will be under the reign of Reason, that what I have foretold will happen to you. It will then, indeed, be the reign of reason: for she will have temples erected to her honour. Nay, throughout France, there will be no other places of public worship, than the temples of Reason."—"In faith," said Chamfort, with one of his sarcastic smiles, "you will not be an officiating priest in any of these temples."—"I hope not, but you M. Chamfort, you will be well worthy of that distinction: for you will cut yourself across the veins with twenty-two strokes of a razor, and will, nevertheless, survive the attempt for some months."—"They all looked at him and continued to laugh."—"You, M. Vicq d'Azyr, you will not open your veins yourself, but you will order them to be opened six times in one day, during a paroxysm, of the gout, in order that you may not fail in your purpose, and you will die during the night. As for you, M. de Nicolai, you will die on the scaffold; and so, M. Bailly, will you; and so will you, M. Malesherbes."—"Oh heavens," said Roucher, "it appears that his vengeance is levelled solely against the academy: he has just made a horrible execution of the whole of it; now tell me my fate in the name of mercy!"—"You will die also upon the scaffold."—"Oh," it was universally exclaimed, "he has sworn to exterminate us all."—"No, it is not I who have sworn it." Are we then to be subjugated by the Turks and Tartars?"—"By no means; I have already told you, that you will then be governed by Reason and Philosophy alone. Those who will treat you as I have described, will all of them be Philosophers; will be continually uttering; the same phrases that you have been repeating for the last hour, will deliver all your maxims, and will quote, as you have done, Diderot and Pucelle."—"Oh," it was whispered, "the man is out of his senses;" for during the whole of the conversation, his countenance never underwent the least change. "Oh no," said another, "you must perceive he is laughing at us; for he always blends the marvellous with his pleasantries."—"Yes answered Chamfort, "the marvellous, with him, is never enlivened with gaiety. He always looks as if he were going to be hanged. But when will all this happen?"—"Six years will not have passed away, before all which I have told you shall be accomplished."

"Here, indeed, is plenty of miracles," (it was myself, says M. de la Harpe, who now spoke) "and you set me down for nothing."—"You will yourself be a miracle as extraordinary as any which I have told. You will then be a Christian."

Loud exclamations immediately followed. "Ah," replied Chamfort, "all my fears are removed; for if we are not doomed to perish till La Harpe becomes a Christian, we shall be immortal."

"As for us women," said the Duchess de Grammont, "it is very fortunate that we are considered as nothing in these revolutions. Not that we are totally discharged from all concern in them; but it is understood that in such cases we are to be left to ourselves.—Our sex."—"Your sex, ladies, will be no guarantee to you in these times. It will make no difference whatever, whether you interfere or not. You will be treated precisely as the men; no distinction will be made between you."—"But what does all this mean, M. Cazotte? You are surely preaching to us about the end of the world." I know no more of that, my lady Duchess, than yourself: but this I know, that you will be conducted to the scaffold, with several other ladies along with you in the cart of the executioner, and with your hands tied behind you."—"I hope, Sir, that in such a case, I shall be allowed, at least, a coach, hung with black."—"No, Madam, you will not have that indulgence: Ladies of higher rank than you, will be drawn in a cart as you will be; with their hands tied as yours will be; and to the same fate as that to which you are destined."—"Ladies of higher rank than myself? What, Princesses of the blood?"—"Greater still."

Here there was a very sensible emotion throughout the company, and the countenance of the master of the mansion wore a very grave and solemn aspect: it was, indeed, very generally observed, that this pleasantry was carried rather too far. Madam de Grammont, in order to disperse the cloud that seemed to be approaching made no reply to his last

answer, but contented herself with saying, with an air of gaiety, "You see he will not even leave me a Confessor."—"No, Madamo, that consolation will be denied to all of you. The last person led to the scaffold who will be allowed a Confessor, as the greatest of favours, will be——" Here he paused for a moment. "And who then is the happy mortal who will be allowed to enjoy this prerogative?"—"It is only one which will be left him; it will be——the King of France."

The master of the house now rose in haste, and his company were all actuated by the same impulse. He then advanced towards M. Cazotte, and said to him, in an affecting and impressive tone, "My dear M. Cazotte, we had enough of these melancholy conceits. You carry it too far; even to the compromising the company with whom you are, and yourself along with them." Cazotte made no answer, and was preparing to retire; when Madam de Grammont, who wished, if possible, to do away all serious impressions, and to restore some kind of gaiety among them, advanced towards him, and said, "My good prophet, you have been so kind as to tell us all our fortunes, but you have not mentioned any thing respecting your own." After a few moments' silence, with his eyes fixed on the ground, "Madam," he replied, "have you read the siege of Jerusalem as related by Josephus?"—"To be sure I have, and who has not? But you may suppose, if you please, that I know nothing about it."

"Then you must know, Madam, that during the siege of Jerusalem, a man, for seven successive days, went round the ramparts of that city, in the sight of the besiegers and besieged, crying incessantly, in a loud and inauspicious voice,—'Woe to Jerusalem!' and on the seventh day he cried, 'Woe to Jerusalem, and to myself!' At that very moment, an enormous stone thrown by the machines of the enemy, dashed him in pieces."

M. Cazotte then made his bow and retired.

Thus far M. de la Harpe: those who recollect the melancholy exit of all the characters above mentioned, during the reign of the Terror in France, must be astonished at the exact fulfilment of this remarkable prediction, so unlikely to be accomplished at the time it was uttered. That M. de la Harpe was capable of imposing falsehood on the world, in the last moments of his life, will, I believe, be suspected by few, and I have never heard the authenticity of the Note called in question.

## RULES OF PRUDENCE.

All children should have some instruction given them in the conduct of human life, some necessary rules of prudence, by which they may regulate the management of their own affairs, and their behaviour towards their fellow-creatures. Where all other sorts of knowledge are conferred upon children, if this be wanting, they make but a contemptible figure in the world, and plunge themselves into many inconveniences.

Some of these rules of prudence are of a general nature, and necessary at all times, and upon all occasions; others are more particular, and proper to be used according to various occurrences of life.

If I were to enquire what are the foundations of human prudence, I should rank them under these three heads:

1. A knowledge of ourselves. Here every one should be taught to consider within himself what is his temper and natural inclination; what are his most powerful appetites and his prevailing passions; what are his chief talents and capacities, if I have any at all; what are the temptations and dangers that attend me; what are my circumstances in the world; and what my various relations to mankind round about me; what are my constant, and what my occasional duties; what are the inward or outward advantages that attend me, or the disadvantages under which I labor. A wise and just survey of all these things, and keeping them always in mind, will be of unspeakable use to us in the conduct of life that we may set our chief guard upon our weak side, and where our greatest dangers lie; that we may employ our talents aright, and seize all advantages to improve them for the best purpose, and proceed in the shortest way to piety, usefulness, and peace.

2. The knowledge of mankind is also necessary to acquire prudence. And here young persons should not only be taught what is the general nature and