

penditure was unwise or even useless that it was a case of maladministration. In any case, it sets money circulating; and in France, of all countries, stagnation in trade is fatal, because the profoundly illogical habit of hoarding coin is so prevalent in the provinces, and so much gold is kept out of circulation as it is——"

THE DEPUTY (*who has been listening to des Lupeaulx*). "But it seems to me that if Your Excellency is right, and if our witty friend here" (*taking des Lupeaulx by the arm*), "if our friend is not wrong, what are we to think?"

DES LUPEAULX (*after exchanging a glance with the Minister*). "Something must be done, no doubt."

DE LA BRIERE (*diffidently*). "Then M. Rabourdin is right?"

THE MINISTER. "I am going to see Rabourdin."

DES LUPEAULX. "The poor man was so misguided as to constitute himself supreme judge of the administration and the staff; he wants to have no more than three departments."

THE MINISTER (*interrupting*). "Why, the man is mad!"

THE DEPUTY. "How is he going to represent the different parties in the Chamber?"

BAUDOYER (*with an air that is meant to be knowing*). "Perhaps, at the same time, M. Rabourdin is changing the Constitution which we owe to the King-Legislator."

THE MINISTER (*growing thoughtful, takes de la Brière by the arm and steps aside*). "I should like to look at Rabourdin's scheme; and since you know about it——"

DE LA BRIERE (*in the cabinet*). "He has burned it all. You allowed him to be dishonored; he has resigned. You must not suppose, my lord, that he entertained the preposterous idea, attributed to him by des Lupeaulx, of making any change in the admirable centralization of authority."

THE MINISTER (*to himself*). "I have made a mistake." (*A moment's pause*). "Bah! there will never be any scarcity of schemes of reform——"

DE LA BRIERE. "We have ideas in plenty; we lack the men that can carry them out."