

Visitor—It's not altogether that, sir...

Minister—Well, well, then be quite frank... To begin with, your face pleases me.

Visitor—Oh, sir!

Minister—And, besides, in the three offices that I have been in, you are the only clerk I have found at his desk; that alone merits a reward (solemnly): M. Gobergeois, I am going to do something for you. Come to my office to-morrow morning at ten o'clock.

Visitor—I ask nothing better... but why?

Minister (delighted to produce his effect)—I appoint you my private secretary!

Visitor (dumbfounded)—Me!!!

Minister—Yes, you, Gobergeois. You are astonished, aren't you?

Visitor—Well, rather!

Minister—I'm like that. All for merit, no favouritism; I don't know you, and you haven't been recommended by any one.

Visitor—I certainly haven't!

Minister—But I find you at work while the others have skipped out, so as I need someone, I take you! There, it's understood, is it?

Visitor—Certainly, sir; I'm delighted, but I'm not...

Minister—Not another word. But you would probably like to know the conditions. To begin with, 100 dollars a month, that's more than you are getting now?

Visitor—Oh, yes!

Minister—And then there is 'the cheese.'

Visitor (not understanding)—'The cheese'?

Minister—Yes, 'the cheese,' the what do you call 'em, your prospects. When I give up my portfolio in a few years I'll find you a collectorship or make you a deputy minister!

Visitor—But you are too good, sir; it is too much, a great deal too much...

Minister—Not at all, not at all; I've already told you that I am the

same sort of chap Haroun-al-Raschid was. I surprise the lazy, the guilty, those that pilfer and steal, and I reward those that work! I delight in making people happy. So much the better for the lucky ones. I shall sleep well to-night, thinking how unexpectedly I have brought happiness to a humble home. Good-day, Mr. Gobergeois, (gives him his hand) To-morrow at ten!

Visitor—At ten to-morrow, sir. (The Minister goes out on the run. To messenger): Well, what do you say to that?

Messenger—I'm still dizzy from it. Ah! at last here comes Mr. Marescot.

Marescot (rushing in)—Good-day, Augustus, sorry to have kept you waiting, old man.

Gobergeois—You don't need to apologize. I haven't lost my time.

Marescot (looking at his desk)—Ah! I see! you've been doing up your correspondence; it is comfortable here.

Gobergeois—My friend, it is so very comfortable that I have decided to remain.

Marescot—How is that? You have decided to remain?

Gobergeois—Yes, the Minister has just appointed me his private secretary.

Marescot—You?

Gobergeois—Yes, me! 100 dollars a month and 'the cheese.'

Marescot—When does this wonderful appointment date from?

Gobergeois—About five minutes ago. The Minister came in, found me at your desk occupied in writing my letters, whereupon he complimented me, asked me my name, told me he was the same sort of chap as Haroun-al-Raschid, and gave me an appointment at his office to-morrow morning at ten o'clock.

Marescot—What does this fool yarn mean?

Messenger—It's the solemn truth, Mr. Marescot.

Marescot—Get along with you, the Minister found you at my desk and