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"Gumeridge isn't a man I've a great deal of use for," remarked the citizen with the protruding waistband. "I've only met him a few times, just when you've brought him in to lunch, but I'm free to confess I don't like him. You know I never beat about the bush. If I like a man I like him and if I don't I'm as liable to tell him so as I am to tell anybody else. I know he's a friend of yours, or you think he is; but he makes me tired, and that's all there is to it."

"Why, what's the matter with him?" asked the thin man with the bushy black beard. "I never heard of anybody who had any particular fault to find with Gumeridge. I think he's one of the finest fellows that ever stepped. I've known him for twenty years and I've never seen anything wrong with him."

"No, I don't suppose you have," said the citizen of circumstance. "Still, I should think you'd have got sick of it in that time."

"Sick of what?"

"Taffy, soft soap, flattery; that's what I mean. That's what I don't like about him. He puts it all over you with a spade. That sort of thing sickens me."

"I didn't notice him putting it all over you. He seemed to be pleasant, as he generally is with everybody, but I don't think he flattered you."

"No, he didn't flatter me. He was flattering you."

"Gumeridge?"

"Yes, Gumeridge. Take it at lunch the last time. 'Let Billy order,' he says. 'I think Billy can order a lunch a little better than anybody I know of. If Billy wasn't a corking good business man he'd have made the bulledest kind of a head waiter. When I want something extra good, just the right kind of combination of eatables,

I tell you I put my trust in Billy every time."

"Well," said Billy, "I guess I do know a thing or two in that line."

"There are others," said the large man. "I've got a sneaking sort of notion that I'm pretty good in that line myself. But you were a corking good business man 'as well."

"Well, I'm not generally regarded as a slouch," said the thin man with the bushy black beard.

"Perhaps not. Mind you, I don't say you are. I don't think I'm any slouch as far as that goes, but I don't want a man going around in front of me with a trumpet proclaiming it. 'Billy's a good fellow,' 'Billy always was a good deal of a ladies' man,' 'You can't fool Billy on a diamond,' 'You couldn't get Billy to go into any crooked deal of that kind,' 'That's one thing I can say about Billy; I always know just where to find him. He'll stand by his friends. Billy will.' 'When I'm in doubt I always ask Billy's opinion,' and so on."

"I don't see anything particular for you to take exception to in that," said the bearded man.

"You don't?"

"I certainly do not."

"You like a man who flatters you, do you, then?"

"I don't see why you would call it flattery. I may have a few good qualities and Gumeridge may have discrimination enough to recognize them, but I hope that isn't any hanging offense. For the matter of that, he was a good deal taken with you and I heard him cracking you up no end the other day to some of the people at the club."

"Well," said the stout citizen with a slightly mollified air, "of course I may be mistaken in him. I wouldn't want to judge a man too hastily, and in other respects he struck me as a nice fellow. What did he say about me, Billy?"

—Chicago Daily News.

NEW LEASE OF LIFE FOR TOGO'S FLAG-SHIP.



A JAP ENGINEERING TRIUMPH: THE RAISING OF THE MIKASA.
 The Japanese never consider a vessel lost. All the battered hulks of the Russian navy have been recovered from the mud of Port Arthur, and are now efficient members of the Mikado's navy. Togo's flagship, the Mikasa, which took fire and sank in the harbor of Sasebo, has now, after months of patient engineering effort, been refloated. The hull was boarded up, all leaks stopped, and the water pumped out. The vessel rose to view mud-covered and rusty, but still capable of refitment, and very soon the admiral will be on his old bridge again. The fire is now known to have been due to spontaneous combustion caused by the decomposition of chemicals.

A Picked-Up Living.
 A convict's complacent acceptance of life's possibilities is shown in a dialogue between the criminal and Captain Spencer, senior missionary of the English Church Army. To a question of the captain's as to what he did when out of prison, he replied:

"Well, in spring I does a bit of pea-picking, and in the summer-time I does a bit of fruit-picking, and in the autumn I does a bit of hop-picking."

"Oh!" said the captain. "What happens after that?"

"Well, now, mister," replied the convict, "I may as well be honest, and tell you that in the winter time I does a bit of pocket-picking!"

The missioner furrowed his brow in amazement, asking finally, "And what happens then?"

The convict answered laconically, "Why, here I am doing a bit of oakum picking."

Both Suspicious.
 Baron Hubner went one evening to call upon President Thiers, who was then at the head of the French republic. The baron found the door of the house open and walked upstairs. In the dim light a man crept stealthily

toward him. Knowing that the president went in fear of his life and, unwilling to die a martyr in a cause not his own, the baron hurriedly explained, "I am not M. Thiers." "I know that you are not M. Thiers," answered the mysterious stranger, "but I want to know who you are." Before answering the baron insisted upon knowing the identity of his companion. "Oh, I am M. Thiers' butler," was the answer. Hubner declared himself. "Ah!" said the butler, with a sigh of relief, "I have your name first on the list of visitors." Each had taken the other for an assassin.

It Seems that Way.
 "Say, ps," asked Willie, "what is a 'nonagenarian,' anyway?"

"A nonagenarian, my son," replied Willie's ps, "is usually a man who has or has not used tobacco all his life."—Philadelphia Press.

From the present prospect, the woman with a new fur coat is going to get more enjoyment out of life this winter than she did last.

To err is human—to lie about it is more human.

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