

CORRODING GOLD

to Estelle Rodney, though it had crossed her mind that he might be a lawyer.

She removed a large and particularly hideous sofa blanket in worked wool which was displayed on the most comfortable arm-chair, drew the latter forward, and asked him to sit down, while she summoned her mother.

"It is my mother you wish to see?" she paused at the door to ask. "My father, of course, is at business in the City Road, and does not usually get home until about seven o'clock."

"My business is with Mrs. Rodney," he repeated with slight emphasis on the name.

Considerably mystified, Estelle went out quickly and closed the door. It was now dark enough to have all the lights turned on, and Estelle lit the gas in the hall and began to draw off her gloves.

She thought of sending in Julia, the little maid, to ask her mother to come out and speak to her, but, after a moment's consideration, she decided that that might be looked on as ostentatious and might give offence to some of the chapel ladies.

She knew them all, and could have numbered and named them on her fingers at the moment. Estelle did not share her mother's love for church activity, for she had made up her mind that such things have very little place in the system of religion. Such activity served merely as a sort of social chain, she thought, to bind numerous incongruous units together in imaginary oneness of purpose, and Estelle would have walked a long way round to avoid a working-party! In the oft-times hard way that youth has of judging, she dismissed it all rather contemptuously, without ever bestowing a thought on the real kindness, self-sacrifice, and comradeship which make such combined effort a blessing to church life.