

CORRODING GOLD

"Yes—at the end of next week. Your father is looking very well, Estelle. But so are you. Slumming seems to agree with you."

Estelle made no comment on these words, intended for a compliment. She could not make any pretence of liking her sister-in-law, and both found it expedient not to see much of each other.

"We start electioneering next week," said Clare presently. "Cyril was wondering which of you would be willing to come to East Breen with us and help. We shall need all the bolstering we can get."

"I won't come!" said Estelle decidedly.

"Why not? I don't call that sisterly, especially as I hear that you are developing quite a platform gift."

Estelle coloured.

"Who told you that?"

"Well, as a matter of fact, I believe it was Lord Allingham," said Clare, keeping her eyes narrowly fixed on Estelle's face, on the watch for any sign of self-consciousness or embarrassment. But she observed none.

"I can't imagine how Lord Allingham ever came to know such a thing, even if it were true," said Estelle. "All the speaking I have done is just a few words to my club girls and to the mothers at the Mission."

"Still, every little helps. I wish you would get Allingham to come down and give us a hand, Estelle. He has already refused me, but I'm sure he would come if you asked him."

Estelle turned her head and deliberately met her sister-in-law's gaze.

"I don't know what you mean by saying such a thing, Clare. I haven't any influence with Lord Allingham."

"Then it hasn't come to anything?"

"What hasn't?"

"Your mother told me ages ago—as far back as July—that he admired you."