

CORRODING GOLD

It was intended, of course, to represent the golden fleece of which the garments offered within were supposed to be made.

The quaint conceit pleased Cyrus Rodney, as it had pleased the little apprentice, John Glide, who had risen from the position of errand-boy to be first assistant in the shop. In fact, he was now the only assistant.

Several people wondered why Rodney's son, Cyril, the eldest of the family, did not occupy that position. But Cyril was too ambitious to be satisfied with that post, or even with a share in the City Road business; he had inherited more of his mother's acumen and foresight than of his father's dreamy, old-fashioned notions, and he had decided quite early in his career that the City Road premises in the natural order of things were doomed.

He aimed at bigger things—at nothing less, indeed, than becoming, if at all possible, a partner in some large wholesale house for the supply of goods to such businesses as theirs, a house in which fortunes could with certainty be made. With that end in view he had got his father to speak for him to a firm in St. Paul's Churchyard, and had entered their extensive place of business when he was sixteen years of age, after having served only a very brief term in the City Road shop.

He had now been eight years in his present employment, and was traveller for a certain district in England—a post which necessitated frequent and lengthy absences from home. He was a successful traveller, possessing, as he did, all the qualities essential to that somewhat difficult calling, and he was looking forward to the day when he should have a share in the business and so be able to set up a home of his own.

He had been engaged for four years to a girl who was a member of the chapel which he attended with his parents, and though Carrie Bygrave would willingly