

detail in his business. His conservatism was, indeed, an immense granite wall on which the persuasive, gentle wave-lap of John Glide's keener perception in business matters made not the smallest impression.

Sometimes the problem of his own future rather appalled John Glide, for he was virtually wasting his virile years in the City Road shop, learning nothing fresh and advancing himself by not a single step.

But, as has been said, the relation between these two was idyllic, and did not admit of being subjected to the usual tests.

"People have laid in their winter stocks," he observed at last, though quite conscious of the futility of this plea. "We can't expect to do much better now till the turn of the year, when customers will begin to require thinner things."

"Ah, yes; of course there is that to be thought of," assented Rodney, trying to speak more cheerfully. "And we must take the fat with the lean—eh, John?"

"Yes, of course; but, sir, have you thought any more about the suggestion I made last year—do you remember? I suggested that we might open a ladies' department for gloves and pretty neckwear, and even for blouses. I am sure there's money in these trifles, and there is no shop near us selling anything of that kind."

Rodney looked the strong disapproval that he felt.

"I should dislike doing that very much, John; it would be undignified. Rodneys have been men's mercers since the beginning. I should like them to continue so until the end."

Glide was on the point of saying that in that case the end could not possibly be far off, but out of consideration for his master's feelings he refrained.

"And besides, who would buy the articles you suggest?" continued Mr. Rodney. "Ladies do not come to the City Road to shop."