

They got through the meal somehow, but certainly none of them, at the end of it, could have told what they had been eating.

When the girls rose to go upstairs Cyrus Rodney crept away to his own chair in the corner of the morning-room to smoke his after-dinner pipe and to try to digest all that had been told him of this wonderful happening.

He was not sure that he really felt quite so glad as he ought to have done. It was an obvious fact that the whole tenor of their lives would be altered, and he did not exactly know where and what his place would be in the new scheme of things. As he observed the change which the mere prospect of coming into the money had wrought on his wife, his imagination quailed at the prospect of the transformation that she might achieve, if further investigation and inquiry should prove that the fortune was a substantial reality.

Next morning the Rodneys all departed their several ways at the usual time—all except the master of the house, who had to accompany his wife to Bloomsbury instead of making his customary journey into the City.

He had wanted to rise early and go down to business first, but she would not permit him.

"Nothing of the sort, Cyrus. I know precisely what would happen if you went. That dingy old hole of a shop would swallow you up, and I should see no more of you till night."

"That is not a very respectful way to speak of the business that has supported us so long, mother," he ventured to remonstrate mildly.

"I'm not throwing any slur on it. I'm simply pointing out what usually occurs when you go there."

"And John Glide won't be able to understand why I don't come," said Mr. Rodney, ignoring his wife's remarks. "I assured him last night that he might expect to see me this morning as usual."