

"She doesn't seem to like him, my dear chap; runs him down when I mention him. Between you and me, she says he's a fool."

"Well, he is a fool, I suppose," said the fool's father, "and we've managed to spoil him between us. However, he's a good sort, really, and you know it."

"I think he's a splendid example of the typical young Englishman," said Clarendon, warmly.

Bexley smiled.

"I think so myself, my dear boy. But he's running a bit wild in town now, and that's why I came over to see you. I wish he was married, Tom."

"I shouldn't wonder but what it would be a good thing. I was wild myself before I married. It steadied me wonderfully; gave me something to do. To look after and guide a young and innocent woman is a steadier, I can tell you. My wife never had a thought apart from me, John, not a thought. I guided her through life, and, though she has gone, I couldn't be wild now," he sighed.

"No more could I," sighed the baronet. "Don't you think it would be a good thing if Cecilia married, Tom?"

Clarendon's jaw fell.

"I couldn't get on without her. She knows it, and has refused ten offers wholly on my account."