

more loose stories. Jack Dane shall give us a discourse on true love. Silence for the man who knows an honest woman ! ”

“ Whose fault is it you don’t, Harry ? ” said Jack Dane.

“ Egad, I never could tell ! And, of course, if I had met your flame—— ” he paused.

“ The better for you, ” said Jack quietly.

“ And the worse for her, ” growled Mr. Russell. Jack Dane flushed, and Twyford and Wharton seeing it, struck in together to keep the peace :

“ But I say, Tom Wharton, to come to business—— ”

“ But, Harry, what is this tale of—— ”

They both stopped, laughing at each other, and the large and stolid Earl of Laleham broke in deep-voiced : “ Now you are choking, here is my chance. Wharton, have you heard about Windsor Races ? ”

“ Damn it, Dick, that’s my story, ” spluttered the Earl of Twyford.

“ Old Dick Marston—— ” Laleham began.

“ He’s as fat as a hog—and as bristly, ” cried Twyford——.

“ Set his heart on the Stock Plate——. ”

“ And the Whigs have won it the last ten years——. ”

“ So he means to run his ‘ Zenobia ’——. ”

“ And the deuce of it is she’ll win ! ”

“ Be damned if she shall ! ” cried Mr. Wharton at once.

“ Huzzah ! Send down ‘ Drawcansir ’ ! ”

“ Or ‘ Careless ’ ? ” said Laleham.

“ Bah ! Let the fool win, ” Mr. Russell growled. The wine was bright in his eyes. “ We’ll not beat ‘ Black James ’ at Windsor Races, gentlemen, ” he said sharply. Mr. Wharton jerked a nod at him and laughed.

“ Ned o’ the Scowls, ” said he. “ Be damned to politics ! Here’s to ‘ Careless, ’ gentlemen—a curst good mare if I say it ! And a curst good toast for good fellows ! ‘ Careless ! ’ ” They drank that in bumpers.

The wine went round and round. Louder and looser grew the talk. The flood of Burgundy washed away Mr. Russell’s