

Mater Dolorosa

A WINTER SONG

BY NORA CHESSON

EARTH takes but little pleasure to remember—
Being a widow now, that was a wife—
How sweet May was, how bountiful September,
What wayward music April's chanter blew.
Her leaping fires of life
Burn down beneath the fall of frosty dew,
And dwindle slowly to the last red ember
That is December.

She knows not how it went, the Linus-song
Whose burden the brown reapers bore along
As they brought home the sheaves.
Nay, though the thistle yielded figs, from thorn
Though purple grapes were born,
She would not wonder. She is past surprise;
The certainty of grief is in her eyes,
And that she once was glad she scarce believes.

She dares not pray for summer to return.
Against her eyelids burn
The tears that fall not,—for what use are tears?
Above her head a naked plane-tree rears
Wild arms of all despair,
Reaching out blindly through the frosty air
For its beloved leaves that rotting lie
Where Winter with his *manie* has passed by.

Under the touch of their empoisoned spears,
The fair and gallant wood
That all the summer-time green-coated stood,
Stands naked to the bone, and wrings its hands
Above the altered lands.
Earth watches while her little children die—
The frozen wasp, the starving butterfly—
She has no tears for them, but in her heart
Knife-edged the Seven Sorrows wake and start.

A Double-barrelled Detective Story

BY MARK TWAIN

IN TWO PARTS.—PART I

*We ought never to do wrong
when people are looking.*

I

THE first scene is in the country, in Virginia; the time, 1880. There has been a wedding, between a handsome young man of slender means and a rich young girl—a case of love at first sight and a precipitate marriage; a marriage bitterly opposed by the girl's widowed father.

Jacob Fuller, the bridegroom, is twenty-six years old, is of an old but unconsidered family which had by compulsion emigrated from Sedgemoor, and for King James's purse's profit, so everybody said—some maliciously, the rest merely because they believed it. The bride is nineteen and beautiful. She is intense, high-strung, romantic, immeasurably proud of her Cavalier blood, and passionate in her love for her young husband. For its sake she braved her father's displeasure, endured his reproaches, listened with loyalty unshaken to his warning predictions, and went from his house without his blessing, proud and happy in the proofs she was thus giving of the quality of the affection which had made its home in her heart.

The morning after the marriage there was a sad surprise for her. Her husband put aside her proffered caresses, and said:

"Sit down. I have something to say to you. I loved you. That was before I asked your father to give you to me. His refusal is not my grievance—I could have endured that. But the things he said of me to you—that is a different matter. There—you needn't speak; I know quite well what they were; I got them from authentic sources. Among other things he said that my character was written in my face; that I was treacherous, a dissembler, a coward, and a brute without sense of pity or compas-

sion: the 'Sedgemoor trade-mark,' he called it—and 'white-sleeve badge.' Any other man in my place would have gone to his house and shot him down like a dog. I wanted to do it, and was minded to do it, but a better thought came to me: to put him to shame; to break his heart; to kill him by inches. How to do it? Through my treatment of you, his idol! I would marry you; and then—Have patience. You will see."

From that moment onward, for three months, the young wife suffered all the humiliations, all the insults, all the miseries that the diligent and inventive mind of the husband could contrive, save physical injuries only. Her strong pride stood by her, and she kept the secret of her troubles. Now and then the husband said, "Why don't you go to your father and tell him?" Then he invented new tortures, applied them, and asked again. She always answered, "He shall never know by my mouth," and taunted him with his origin; said she was the lawful slave of a scion of slaves, and must obey, and would—up to that point, but no further; he could kill her if he liked, but he could not break her; it was not in the Sedgemoor breed to do it. At the end of the three months he said, with a dark significance in his manner, "I have tried all things but one"—and waited for her reply. "Try that," she said, and curled her lip in mockery.

That night he rose at midnight and put on his clothes, then said to her,

"Get up and dress!"

She obeyed—as always, without a word. He led her half a mile from the house, and proceeded to lash her to a tree by the side of the public road; and succeeded, she screaming and struggling. He gagged her then, struck her across the face with his cowhide, and set his blood-hounds on her. They tore the