

APRIL'S LADY.

"Must we part? or may I linger?
Wax the shadows, wanes the day."
Then, with voice of sweetest singer,
That hath all but died away,
"Go," she said, but tightened finger
Said articulately, "Stay!"

CHAPTER I.

"Philosophy triumphs easily over past and over future evils, but present evils triumph over philosophy."

"A LETTER from my father," says Mr. Monkton, flinging the letter in question across the breakfast-table to his wife.

"A letter from Sir George!" Her dark, pretty face flushes crimson.

"And *such* a letter after eight years of obstinate silence. There! read it," says her husband, contemptuously. The contempt is all for the writer of the letter.

Mrs. Monkton taking it up, with a most honest curiosity, that might almost be termed anxiety, reads it through, and in turn flings it from her as though it had been a scorpion.

"Never mind, Jack!" says she with a great assumption of indifference that does not hide from her husband the fact that her eyes are full of tears. "Butter that bit of toast for me before it is *quite* cold, and give Joyce some ham. Ham, darling? or an egg?" to Joyce, with a forced smile that makes her charming face quite sad.

"Have you two been married eight whole years?" asks Joyce laying her elbows on the table, and staring at her sister with an astonished gaze. "It seems like yesterday! What a swindler old Time is. To look at Barbara, one would not believe she could have been *born* eight years ago."