

lentine. If Gerald had not fallen in love with her, things would have been different. He'd have taken Holy Orders, and he'd have been ordained for the curacy of Jewsbury-on-the-Wold, and then he need never have gone away. Oh, I hate—I detest to think of the rectory without Gerald."

"Oh, Liliass," replied Marjory, "you really are—you really—you really are——"

"What, miss? Speak out, or I'll shake you, or pinch you, or do something malicious. I warn you that I am quite in the mood."

"Then I'll stand here," said Marjory, springing to the other side of a great glowing bed of many-colored sweet-williams. "Here your arm can't reach across these. I will say of you, Liliass Wyndham, that you are without exception the most contradictory and inconsistent person of my acquaintance. Here were you, a year ago, crying and sobbing on your knees because Gerald couldn't marry Valentine, and now, when it's all arranged, and the wedding is to be the day after to-morrow, and we have got our promised trip to London, and those lovely brides-maid dresses—made by Valentine's own express desire at Elise's—you turn round and are grumpy and discontented. Don't you know, you foolish silly Liliass, that if Gerald had never fallen in love with Valentine Paget he'd have met someone else, and if he was father's curate, those horrid Mortimer girls and those ugly Pelhams would have one and all tried to get him. We can't keep Gerald to ourselves for ever, so there's no use fretting about the inevitable, say I."

Liliass' full red lips were pouting; she stooped, and recklessly gathering a handful of sweet-williams, flung them at her sister.

"I own to being inconsistent," she said, "I own to being cross—I own to hating Valentine for this night at least, for it just tears my heart to give Gerald up."

There were real tears now in the bright, curly-fringed eyes and the would-be-defiant voice trembled.