

## LITERATURE, &amp;c.

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## THERE ARE FAULTS ON BOTH SIDES.

A TALE.

By the late Mrs. James Gray.

PERHAPS there are no disagreements in which the contending parties are so hard to be reconciled as those designated 'family quarrels.' Why this is the case is a question involving a multitude of considerations, on only one or two of which we can briefly touch at present. It may proceed in some degree from the same principle on which is grounded the old adage, 'Familiarity breeds contempt.' 'He is my own relation; surely I have a right to advise him.' 'She is my cousin; it is hard if one cannot speak one's mind freely to so near a connexion;' forgetting that the very indissoluble nature of the tie existing between the parties is, as in a marriage, an extra reason for that forbearance which should ever be practised between man and man. Again, there are often in families clashing interests, requiring the exercise of justice, kindness and impartiality, to adjust them satisfactorily, and these qualities are by no means so common as less amiable ones. No small portion of the quarrels in families begin from this source. But if family quarrels are bitter and vindictive, there is another less open species of warfare perpetually going on in some families, which is not so easily defined or even so easily reconciled. 'A shyness,' 'a coldness'—these are the terms by which it is designated; and it consists in a thousand little uncharitable acts and feelings, in which both parties are generally pretty equally to blame. The fact of who was the original aggressor, or what the aggression was, is lost in the distance; but each has a multitude of complaints to make of the other, and this continued unpleasantness is thus kept up and fomented by the commission of numerous faults on both sides. In illustration take the following true story;

James and William Bolton were brothers, residing in a flourishing manufacturing town—the eldest and youngest of a large family, the intermediate branches of which were scattered through the four quarters of the world. James, the elder, had also passed a good portion of his early life abroad, and returning to his native country with considerable property, had been drawn by the strength of natural affection, first to visit, and secondly to settle, in the locality where his only near relative now in England was already residing. William had been married for two or three years, and was the father of two children, a boy and a girl. He had married a lady of small ready-money property, which had been very useful to him in a business requiring a more extensive capital than he had himself possessed; and she being what is usually called a 'clever manager'—a shrewd, active, domestic personage—it was considered that William Bolton had made an excellent match. Whether it was the sight of his brother's domestic happiness, or that he thought a house of his own would be preferable to the lodgings he now occupied, I know not, but before had been at home many months, James Bolton announced to his brother that he was disposed to marry; and within a year after his return to England, he led to the hymeneal altar a lady, not so young as to be denominated a girl, yet scarcely so old as to be reported of a certain age. Mrs William Bolton, who for various reasons, was not fully satisfied with the match, was quite sure that five years might without injustice be added to the thirty the lady owned to, and wondered she did not wear caps. 'It would look so much more respectable, my dear, considering your brother's age,' as she remarked to her husband.

Be this as it may, in the course of a few years Mrs James became the mother of a numerous and thriving family, whilst Mrs William's, with the addition of a little girl, born in the same year with Mrs James's second, remained unenlarged. But by time ten years of matrimony had gone over the head of the elder brother, one of the 'shynesses,' the 'unpleasantnesses,' so unaccountable, so apparently incurable, to which I allude in the beginning of this story, had arisen between the families, and seemed rather to decrease than to diminish with each succeeding year. Not between the brothers: their affection was undiminished; their greetings as kind and cordial as ever. But they seldom met; and, as if secretly conscious of the disunion amidst the allied powers, never alluded to the circumstance.

Mrs William Bolton was indeed a curious compound. She was, as we said, shrewd, managing and active; she was tolerably well informed; had been a good daughter to infirm parents, was an affectionate wife and a doting mother. Besides this she had a kind and warm heart, and would have given, to use a common expression, the very clothes off her back to succour the distressed for whom her feelings were interested. But she was full of prejudices, social, moral, and political, and given to express herself on many occasions far more strongly than the occasion warranted: this she called an honest speaking of her mind, while many considered it as rude and abrupt. She was of a good family; her husband, indeed was the only trader in it; they had all been in professions before, and she had rather a lowering idea of trade. She kept little company,—first, because she said a woman who had a family to look after, had something else to do than

gad about; secondly, because there were few in her own sphere whom she liked well enough to put herself out of the way to visit; and she had not the least idea of any duty she owed to society, which should make her spend her time with those she did not care for. There were, however, a chosen few, who ran nearly parallel to herself in prejudices, which they dignified with the name of principle; and these formed almost her only associates. Mrs James Bolton she never liked: her father, it turned out, had been a pawnbroker; and Mrs William affected a charitable hushing up of the circumstance whenever it happened to be alluded to, while at the same time she indulged in many a strong hint at upstarts and low-born people while in the presence of James Bolton's family—especially the elder children, who being, poor things, in blessed ignorance of their mamma's origin, could only vainly wonder at their aunt's vehemence. Then Mrs James was accused by Mrs Williams of being thoroughly idle; and that she was of a less active turn than her sister-in-law, nobody could deny. She was a fair, plump, composed looking dame, who took the world easily, trusted to washerwomen to darn stockings, and to servants to dress her children; and in the midst of a domestic Babel, which Mrs Williams would have talked and commanded into worse confusion in no time, might often be seen quietly lounging on a sofa, with her mind engaged with the last new novel. Then both James Bolton and his lady liked to keep a more sumptuous table than Mrs William approved of; were fond of high-seasoned dainties and so forth; and Mrs William choose to set them down as gluttons. 'I really dread asking your brother to dinner, my dear,' Mrs William would remark; 'one has to be so particular, and make such a fuss.' Now the truth was, that some soup, a good joint of meat, and a pudding, would have furnished quite a sufficient dinner for the occasion and all parties would have been satisfied; but Mrs Williams made her fatigue evident, as she sat down at the head of her well furnished board. The children, as little children, played together, but with the singular instincts of children, soon felt the coldness of their parents extending to themselves. Indeed their mamma did not spare their invectives on each other's progeny before their own. Mrs James pronounced Mrs Williams the rudest and most forward brats in the universe; Mrs William thanked heaven her children were honest and independent—she would not have them so artful and deceitful as their cousins for the world.

As the families grew up matters did not mend, for the daughters (Mrs James had four to Mrs William's two) were as distasteful to the latter as ever the mother had been. 'Empty, affected, artful creatures,' Mrs William designated them: 'to be sure what better could be expected from their bringing up?' Now the four Misses Bolton were neither better nor worse than the generality of young ladies: they were moderately good looking, moderately accomplished, reasonably fond of each other, and delighted in gaiety and dress, and beaux. Here Mrs William had a great triumph: her Jane was decidedly beautiful, her Millicent pretty and extremely clever—the only blot in her mother's eyes being, that she seemed to love her aunt, her uncle, her cousins, and all her relations next to her own parents, with the most perfect and childlike confidence; and they loved her. Millicent was as completely a family pet as ever was heroine of romance. She seemed to have come into the world without a spot in her mind where pride or prejudice could grow—loving her parents, her brother and sister supremely, yet with love enough to extend to all besides; a lovely, happy, loving creature indeed was little Milly Bolton.

Jane, the elder sister, was even more beautiful; her mind was well cultivated; her manners elegant; her nature extremely affectionate. But she inherited much of her mother's prejudice and pride, and in her the family dislike did not seem likely to be softened. Jane was exceedingly polite to her cousins, and was by them treated with politeness in return; but little loving Milly was their idol. If their mother would have permitted it, they would have had her amongst them every day, and all day long; but Mrs William was always ready with an excuse to prevent her going amongst them; and they delighted to tease their aunt by showing her every possible preference over her own pet Jane.

As the families advanced in age, new opportunities for difference and mutual censure arose. The four Misses Bolton of the priory—I should have said before that, some years previously, James had purchased a house and garden in the outskirts of the town which bore that dignified epithet, though the new mansion, built upon the site of an old monastic ruin, had as much resemblance to a priory as a county jail—the four Misses Bolton were all dressy, showy girls, inclined to be gay, and often as circumstances would permit, enjoying a ball, enraptured with a pic-nic, and flirting when opportunity offered. Mrs William did not allow dangles at her house; and when young gentlemen came there, it was not to sit by her daughters' work table, or hang over their harp; they came to dinner or tea, and saw the young ladies only in her presence. Some girls might have felt this as a restraint, but Mrs William's daughters did not. Jane had been so completely trained in her mother's way, and so thoroughly inherited her spirit, that she would have wished no other arrangement had a choice been allowed her; and besides that Millicent would never have dreamt of a rebellious thought, her heart was so far preoccupied by an unconscious love of her cousin Charles Bolton, the eldest of the priory flock, that she cared very little for any other. Her cou-

sin Sophia was her chief friend, a circumstance causing a good deal of annoyance to Mrs William, who, however, strove to counteract the influence of 'that giddy Sophia' by keeping Milly as much as possible away, and never allowing her to join in the parties which included her cousins when she could prevent it. She saw nothing of Milly's innocent attachment to Charles, for Charles did not like his aunt, and seldom visited her; but she was by no means blind to that which her own son Henry had formed suddenly and unexpectedly for Sophia. Henry had been absent from home except at short intervals; and having completed his college course, came home, as it seemed to Mrs William, just to fall in love with Sophia, whom of all the four Boltons, she disliked the most; but the young man was headstrong, and she knew too well the danger of opposition to his will. She contented herself with making little cutting remarks, and passing censure on Sophia whenever opportunity offered; a course of conduct which sometimes elicited a laugh from her dutiful son when he was in a good humor—when in an ill humour a surly contradiction. Meanwhile Sophia, who delighted to tease her aunt, encouraged Henry's attentions on all occasions, still declining to enter into a positive engagement with him, on the grounds that she was aware his mother disliked her—that she was above forming a clandestine engagement—that she would never marry into a family where she was not a favorite, &c., adroitly managing at the same time to keep the young man in play, so that if nothing better should offer within a reasonable time, he would still be a *dernier resort*. Though silent on the subject to her son, Mrs William exercised no such restraint amongst the few chosen friends to whom we have before alluded, representing Sophia as an artful girl, who under the guidance of a designing mother (poor Mrs James), had entrapped the affections of her beloved son. She forgot, in the heat of her anger, that, all things considered, the match would be a pretty equal one—that Sophia would have a small fortune; that Henry's expectations were by no means brilliant as to make him a peculiarly desirable match.

To Mrs William's mingled delight and vexation, she was soon delivered from her fears regarding her son; and she was annoyed at having to confess they were groundless. A coldness took place between the parties, arising in the attentions of a certain Mr Aldred to Sophia; and at length her public engagement to him being announced, put an end to one source of Mrs William's uneasiness. Mr Aldred was neither very young nor very handsome, nor was he immensely rich; but as Sophia was five and twenty, and not strikingly handsome, and as no other eligible offer just now shone in the horizon, she, and her mother, and her sisters agreed in full convulsion that he might do, and Sophia accordingly became his wife. A very good obedient wife she made after all, to a somewhat exacting and fretful husband; but as he allowed her to dress as handsomely as she pleased, and while he sometimes grumbled at her gaieties, did not prevent her entering into them, she, not being troubled by any killing sensibilities, managed to get along with him quite as smoothly as she could have expected to do.

Meanwhile Jane Bolton had attracted the regards of a young man of good family, who had lately entered into partnership with her father; and as he was a great favorite with her mother, somewhat aristocratic in appearance, and exceedingly in love, the lady surrendered, on condition that two years should elapse before they were married. 'My daughter,' said Mrs William, 'is not in such a hurry to make sure of her lover as certain young ladies she could name. She would not disgrace herself as some young ladies would do, by engaging themselves one month, and marrying the next.' But just at this crisis a new turn was given to the attention of the family in all its branches, by the receipt of letters from abroad, which informed James and William Bolton that their brother Charles, who had resided in Spain from his boyhood, and having married the daughter of a respectable English merchant who had settled there was dead, and that his widow and her only daughter intended to go to England early in the ensuing spring, that the latter might make the acquaintance of these relatives, to whose care she would naturally be consigned, should the decease of her mother, who was in delicate health, leave her otherwise unprotected. Letters of condolence and invitation were written, and despatched by both the family at the priory and at William Bolton's; and it was already beginning to be a matter of dispute and jealousy as to which invitation she would accept, or which family she would visit first, when an end was put to the controversy by the receipt of farther letters from the widow, who, after warmly thanking her relatives for their kind invitations, declined them *in toto*. 'If my friends will kindly exert themselves to procure me a small furnished house or comfortable lodgings, I shall be truly obliged to them; but as I feel that I shall have a better chance of securing their affection thus, than by becoming an inmate with either, I feel more at liberty to do as I please; and believe me, the habits of an invalid, to say nothing of those of a foreigner, do not add to the comforts of another person's establishment. I shall, on my arrival in London, which will be next month, wait there until I hear that such lodgings have been procured for me.'

Here, again, was farther cause for rivalry and disagreement. Aunt Helen had not appointed either branch of her family to act as her agents in the matter, but left it amongst her,

thinking, doubtless, good easy woman, that all would unite in endeavouring to find out the most comfortable *locale* for her and her daughter. What heartburnings, what stifled bickerings, were occasioned by her omission! Mrs William and Jane discovered spacious and airy lodgings: the very thing for the widow: so cheap too. The priory-misses hit on a love of a cottage, half a mile beyond their own, the prettiest and sweetest place possible in summer, and with no disadvantages to speak of—a stagnant pond, a want of proper furniture, and so forth excepted; these seeming to be but trifling drawbacks. In this emergency, fortunately, James and William did for once exert themselves—found a more eligible house than the young ladies, and jointly supplied what was wanting in furniture; and as the lady had declined their offered hospitalities, agreed to pay the rent between them, should it appear, on investigation, that the circumstances of the widow would render such attention acceptable.

The widow arrived in London; and her request that all would be assembled at her new home to receive her on a certain day, as she wished to make the acquaintance of all her husband's relatives at once, settled another delicate question of precedence, which had already begun to agitate the fair breasts of the contending parties. Even the last moment the spirit of rivalry prevailed; both parties brought certain necessary articles of provision; both went over all the rooms to see that nothing was omitted which ought to have been provided; and neither would, for one moment, trust to the other.

Mrs Charles Bolton, or aunt Helen, as we shall call the new comer, was one of the most prepossessing and lovely beings that could well be imagined. She had been married at sixteen, and her present age was not more than six and thirty. Her exceedingly slight figure, fair skin and blue eyes, made her appear still younger; and she looked far more like the sister than the mother of the beautiful girl who, all in the bloom of early womanhood, stood by her side. The deep mourning habits of the strangers, and the circumstance that dark hair and eyes predominated in the other members of the family, rendered them still more striking. Yet though no studied dress or attitude could have made them more picturesque, the widow Bolton and her daughter were the least affected and the simplest of human beings. They had lived much alone, and were friends and companions from the hour of Madeline's birth; for aunt Helen's own connexions abroad were either all dead or dispersed. The gentle stranger, born of English parents, had little in common with the ladies of Spain; and in her husband and daughter aunt Helen had found her world. She had read much, for she had undertaken, with some small assistance from masters, the education of her daughter herself; and teaching, had been herself taught. She dropt into the little world of her English relatives, with all their bickering and jealousies, like a creature from another sphere, prepared to love them all; and yet so simple, so guileless, so free from prejudice, that she might have put them to shame, as the presence of an angel would have done. They could not differ about aunt Helen. The had only to admire, and wonder, and love both her and the gentle loving girl, whose blue eyes looked as if asking to love her. Wonderful to say, for at least six weeks after her arrival at W— Aunt Helen gave no cause of offence to either party by any apparent preference for the other. The priory-misses, indeed, monopolised Madeline a good deal; but Mrs William was charitable enough to say that Madeline was not in fault. 'They had more idle time,' said she 'than Jane; and a poor simple girl like Madeline was not likely to see what they were, so long as they flattered and were kind to her.' She really did wonder, however at her sister-in-law allowing Madeline to be out so much with them—girls who were always showing themselves in public walks, and laughing, and flirting. She would soon tell Helen her mind, if it were not that she dreaded to make mischief. 'But never mind, she would find them out by and by. 'I wonder,' quoth Mrs James, 'how my sister-in-law can find pleasure in having that disagreeable Jane there so often? Clever indeed! Well I suppose Jane is clever; but Helen is so well informed, herself, I should not think Jane could teach her much.'

Twelve months passed by; and by the end of that time the widow's eyes were opened, not to find out the peculiar faults of each party, but to see and wonder at the ill feeling that, without any real cause, existed between them.

'My dear Mary,' said she to the second hope of the Priory, exalted by her sister's marriage to the title of *Miss Bolton*—'my dear Mary, why do you speak so slightly of dear Jane? And I cannot think you treat your Aunt William with all the respect due to her from her relationship. Excuse me speaking of these things—there is evidently something wrong amongst you. As a relation and a truly interested friend, may I inquire the cause?'

'Oh, Mrs William and her family know best: we have never given them any cause of offence. But mamma says, from the time of her marriage, Aunt William never seemed to be fond of her; and I suppose, for that reason, mamma did not like her. We never were favorites with her from childhood; and I do not see why we are to submit to be trampled on.'

'Nor I either; but I do not find that there has been any attempt to trample upon you.—Pray, my dear, did you or yours ever attempt to conciliate your aunt and cousins?—did you ever pass small signals? Strive not to be apt