

**THE GAGE OF HONOUR; A  
TALE OF THE  
GREAT MUTINY, VOL.  
II, IN THREE VOLUMES**

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The Gage of honour; a tale of the great Mutiny, Vol. II, In three volumes by Anonymous

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**ANONYMOUS**

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# THE GAGE OF HONOUR.

A Tale of the Great Mutiny.

BY  
THE AUTHOR OF 'THE EASTERN HUNTERS,' &c.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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# THE GAGE OF HONOUR.

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## CHAPTER I.

‘Love sought is good, but given unsought is better.’

*Twelfth Night.*

THE monsoon season had passed into the cold weather, and the year 1856 rolled into that eventful one following, which was destined in its course so terribly to affect the English in India.

And with the progress of time came no amelioration in the terms subsisting between Mr Atherton and his wife. Indeed, passive dislike was fast developing

into active hate ; and whether or no he wished her to commit some foolish act from which there could be no retreat, he certainly took the most effective means of rendering such possible.

Hand in hand with her passionate anger at her husband's treatment was growing a sense of reliance on another, unswerving faith in him, and a deep, unchecked feeling of gratitude and pity.

All the undisciplined forces at work within her had culminated in a passionate yearning to make amends for what she had thought and said.

A complete explanation had taken place between her and Douglas after the restoration of the ring, and it had been followed by an entire change in her demeanour. From being exacting, easily

dissatisfied, haughty, she had bowed her nature, and become gentle, almost submissive, in her intercourse with him. She believed that he would have sacrificed everything to defend her and her good name; that he had repaid her taunts with his devotion; and in the natural impulse of a not ungenerous nature, she exaggerated in her own mind both the cause and effect.

Such was the state of their domestic affairs when, one morning, Mr Atherton addressed his wife at breakfast—a meal usually passed by her in as silent a manner as she could make it:

‘Let me see,’ he said. ‘This is the third of January. In another ten days we shall have been married two years. What a delightful retrospection!’



She made no observation, and he continued with a coarseness which was now very frequent :

‘That was a black day in the calendar for me. I never made a greater mistake in my life, not even when I heavily backed Conqueror for the Derby of the year before. However, as we must give a dinner-party soon, we may as well mark the day by that formal recognition. I hate dinner-parties.’

‘Thank you,’ she calmly answered. ‘But I rather wonder at your wishing to commemorate a mistake for which you have only yourself to blame.’

‘It certainly would be more appropriate to spend it in sackcloth and ashes,’ he retorted, ‘but neither will exorcise regret.’

‘Then you wish to banish regret?’ she calmly inquired, and in a tone as if the answer were quite immaterial.

‘I wish it, but it is impossible. And, remember, as I do not choose that any particular elements of pleasure should be introduced for yourself alone, you will be good enough to omit Mr Douglas’ name in your list of invitations.’

‘Certainly. Have you any farther commands or observations to make?’ she asked, outwardly quite unmoved.

‘Yes!’ he returned coarsely, annoyed at her impassibility. ‘I have to observe that much as I wish your relative’—and he spoke the word with a sneer—‘had occupied my place on the day we intend to celebrate, I have objections to his now occupying it; at least,’ he continued

with a harsh laugh, 'I would rather he did not.'

She bit her lips and clenched her hands tight; but beyond that and the flashing of her eyes, gave little outward display of her emotion, as she said, in the same calm, constrained voice,

'I would recommend you to apologize for that ungentlemanly language. Though I fear asking you to have any respect for either yourself or me is useless.'

'I certainly, at any rate, do not intend to apologize for anything I have said,' he replied, still more rudely, as he left the room. 'You must make the best of it.'

Would he have been contented thus to treat her could he have foreseen the effect of his coarse observations?—could he have seen her a few minutes later