

**HEALEY; A
ROMANCE; IN THREE
VOLUMES, VOL. II**

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Healey; A Romance; In Three Volumes, Vol. II by Jessie Fothergill

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JESSIE FOTHERGILL

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HEALEY: A ROMANCE

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H E A L E Y

A ROMANCE

BY

JESSIE FOTHERGILL

*' Hope nothing, if I thus may speak
To thee, a woman, and thence weak.
Hope nothing, I repeat. . . .*

*Farewell all wishes, all debate,
All prayer for this cause, or for that I
Weep, if that aid thee, but depend
Upon no help of outward friend ;
Espouse thy doom at once, and cleave
To fortitude without reprieve.'*

—WORDSWORTH

IN THREE VOLUMES

VOL. II.

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1875

251. b. 831.



HEALEY: A ROMANCE.

CHAPTER I.

'Harken, oh harken ! let your souls behind you
Turn, gently moved.
Our voices seek along the Dread to find you,
O lost, beloved !'

—*A Drama of Exile.*

GHTRD EARNSHAW sat alone one evening in the early September. He was wondering what Katharine would do if Wilfrid remained away much longer without sign. The strike at the mill was over ; the Cornish girls had withdrawn, and then the Lancashire hands returned to work. That was all right, and if only the master were at home, an arrangement might soon be made with the colliers also.

He then turned towards the table, and, still thinking of business, opened a bundle of papers which he was to look over. They had been put into his hands, by Katharine, with the words, 'I don't know whether they are all there, for they were tumbled into a drawer in my davenport, but they are all dated. You must tell me to-morrow if any are missing. I want to know the prices from May to September in——.' She named several successive years.

He turned to his task, and presently opened a paper similar to all the others in appearance. He spread it open, but it had neither dates nor figures. It was a large sheet of blue paper, covered on two sides with a compact and legible handwriting. Naturally he glanced at it; the words arrested his attention; they astonished him, and he read on.

"The old days," said she, "seem to be here again, do not they?"

'For an instant I was cheated, and said,

"Yes, indeed;" but after I had spoken, something seemed to whisper to my heart, "No, they never will return again;" and aloud I said, "What was it I said just now? The old days? oh, never, never more!"

'My friend sighed. "Alas! I fear not!" she acquiesced. "We are older now, and sadder; and when part of what made the old days is gone, how can we live them over again?"

"True," I replied; "we will not strive after them. They are dead and buried. Let us do the best we can with these new ones. If we fill them with earnest, steady, holy work, they will not seem so like a hollow echo of what we rejoiced in *then*."

'Then, with all the sun veiled from our eyes, and all the light gone from our faces, we walked on, arm in arm as before; nature, the irrevocable, around us; the water plashing in our ears, and the sky blue and bright above us. All was as it had been, but we knew that

when we reached a certain house, our destination, there would meet us merely a great void, which refused to be filled up; and despite our calm words and resolute promises, we felt the truth, and could not meet each others' eyes. We approached the house; as we drew nigh our courage failed; we could not enter.

"The sun is still high," we said; "we will not go in yet; let us stroll over the hill and upon the moors, and return when dark comes on."

'We turned aside from the gates without demur, and went our way up the winding road, and presently came to a farm placed high upon a hill. That we passed. It was the end of June; the haymakers in the sloping field were merrily singing and calling one to another, and tossing up the fragrant grass. Evening scents began to steal in the air; evening sounds to pervade space. The sun was lower than we had supposed. He was already yellowing, and each figure stood out soft, yet clear, and "dark against day's golden