

# **HYACINTHE; OR, THE CONTRAST**

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Hyacinthe; Or, the Contrast by Mrs. Grey

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**MRS. GREY**

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OR,

## THE CONTRAST.

BY MRS. GREY,

AUTHOR OF "ALICE SEYMOUR," THE "BELLE OF THE  
FAMILY," "THE GAMBLER'S WIFE."

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"What is our duty here? to tend  
From good to better—theance to best;  
Grateful to drink life's cup,—then bend  
Unarmouring to our bed of rest."

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LONDON:  
T. C. NEWBY, 72, MORTIMER STREET.

1845.

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### CHAPTER I.

' O friendly to the best pursuits of man,  
Friendly to thought, to virtue, and to peace,  
Domestic life in rural pleasure pass'd !'

IN a retired village in Monmouthshire lived Farmer Wilmot and his wife. They were industrious, worthy people, and resided on a neat little farm, which was at once their means of subsistence, and a constant source of occupation and pleasure.

Although their resources were very limited, their wants were proportionably small, for children were not among the blessings which had been bestowed upon them ; and this was a drawback to their happiness ; as although, had they been possessed of offspring, their labours must have been much heavier, and many a hard strug-

gle would they have had to support a family ; still regrets would mingle themselves with those feelings of gratitude with which they viewed their peaceful situation, and all the tranquil happiness it afforded them. Placed in a sphere of life, where the world, and what is falsely termed the world's pleasures, fail to fix and captivate the mind, the heart looks with more ardent longing for those objects of natural affection on which to lavish that tenderness and love inherent in every virtuous bosom ; and it was with many a sigh that Jane Wilmot contemplated the blooming children of her neighbours ; at times inwardly exclaiming, ' Oh ! if it had pleased God to have blessed me with a child, what happiness it would have been to me, to have worked—to have toiled unceasingly for it ; no exertion, no labour could have been irksome with so dear an inducement !'

However, notwithstanding these occasional murmurs, Jane Wilmot was too right-minded and pious to give way to a spirit of repining at the divine will of Him who appoints all things ; she felt that every event was arranged by an Almighty hand, and therefore submitted to her fate with cheerful meekness, recalling to her thoughts, with gratitude, the many blessings she already en-

joyed. Indeed, she was a happy woman ; happy in the possession of an excellent husband, with good health and strength to assist them in their labours ; and, although they were poor, hitherto they had never been in need.

Jane Wilmot had formerly been in the service of a lady of high consideration, on whom it was her peculiar duty to attend ; besides being employed in offices, which evinced the confidence her integrity merited. Her good qualities had quickly gained for her the esteem of her mistress, who manifested the interest she had excited by zealously seeking to improve the natural intelligence of her mind ; and by inculcating those precepts of religion and piety without which she well knew her mental acquirements would be unprofitable. This excellent lady died very suddenly, and Jane was thus deprived of a sincere and valuable friend. James Wilmot had been many years her fellow-servant, and an attachment had long subsisted between them.

A legacy to each from their late mistress, and some savings of their own, enabled them to marry ; and, having stocked a small farm, though in a very limited manner, by unceasing industry and good behaviour this worthy couple contrived to live on with tolerable comfort and success.



Jane and her husband were always neat and respectable in their appearance, while their house, by its order and cleanliness, equally betokened the propriety of their ideas. The little garden surrounding their dwelling, arranged with the taste they had not failed to acquire in the service of their refined and lamented mistress, was a perfect paradise of sweets; and it was their dearest recreation to work in it, or with honest pride to display their garden treasures to their kind friend and frequent visitor, Mr. Neville, the clergyman of the parish.

The village of Fairbrook was particularly favoured in having for its pastor such a man as Mr. Neville, to whom his parishioners were his dearest objects of interest—their welfare, his heart's most fervent desire; and, while he sought by the earnestness of his precepts so to enlighten their minds and sanctify their feelings, that they might taste of that happiness which the world can neither give nor take away, he was not unmindful of their temporal concerns; and, with the advice his superior intelligence enabled him to afford, and the pecuniary assistance a well-economized income left at his disposal, he rescued many a grateful villager from the embarrassments incidental to an agricultural life.

Farmer Wilmot and his wife were perhaps the two persons of his humble flock for whom he felt the liveliest interest ; for it rejoiced his kind heart to witness such real worth—such true and simple piety : and after he had visited them in their quiet and pleasant dwelling, he would return home with that pleasurable feeling in his bosom, which a good man feels in witnessing conduct so praiseworthy, and hearts so pure.

Jane Wilmot was loved throughout the village ; and even the envy which at times finds a shelter in the breast of the rustic as of the courtier, was hushed and tongue-tied by her unfailing kindness and unassuming manners. Her love for children led her most frequently to those houses of her neighbours that were inhabited by those endearing beings, which her own heart told her every virtuous mother must regard as blessings. Attached by her tenderness, every child loved her ; and if sickness attacked any of them, Jane was always to be found by the sufferer's bed, assisting the mother and acting as the nurse. Farmer Wilmot used sometimes almost to chide her for thus spending so much of her time ; and would good-naturedly reproach her for employments which he fancied must take her from necessary occupations at home : but she would

always stop his chidings by saying, 'Oh ! James, you must only scold me when you find that I have neglected one single duty : ' and so scrupulous was she in fulfilling them all, that he was immediately silenced ; and only stifled a feeling of regret that the child upon whom she lavished her caresses was not her own.