

**MARIA; OR, REMINISCENCES OF
DOMESTIC SCENES AND
INCIDENTS, ILLUSTRATIVE OF
REAL RELIGION AS A LIFE, A
POWER, A WALK, A DELIGHT**

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Maria; Or, Reminiscences of Domestic Scenes and Incidents, Illustrative of Real Religion as a Life, a Power, a Walk, a Delight by James McCrie (Silvanus)

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JAMES MCCRIE (SILVANUS)

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OR

REMINISCENCES OF DOMESTIC SCENES AND INCIDENTS

ILLUSTRATIVE OF

REAL RELIGION AS A LIFE, A POWER,
A WALK, A DELIGHT.

By SILVANUS.



ABERDEEN: A. & R. MILNE. AYR: W. M. DICK.

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NOTE.

THE writer of the following Memoir deems it right to state that the papers MARIA left were found to be quite unfinished. The portions taken from them and engrossed in it have undergone a considerable measure of revision; which, however, has in general been extended only to the form of expression, where verbal inaccuracies, or obscurities, or uncouth arrangement seemed to require it—the sentiment enunciated or the opinion given being for the most part kept sacred. The views of the individual mind have thus been respected, whether approval of these could or could not be always unreservedly rendered.

L. V. L., 1872.

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MARIA;
OR,
REMINISCENCES OF DOMESTIC SCENES AND
INCIDENTS, &c., &c.

"Maria's urn still breathes the voice of love."—ROGER.

THE power and activity of a moral principle, whether good or bad, may, in some measure, be estimated by the variety, greatness, and continuance of its spontaneous operations and native effects. Thus the influence of an individual character, or an individual act, may be found to ramify, extend, and continue to extend, in all coming ages of duration. A single seed cast into the soil may yield a hundred-fold. Increase in this ratio would, in a few years, accumulate to an amount that could not well be numbered. Thus does moral principle develop itself. The moment a thought escapes one mind and passes into another, it becomes a living power that may come to have a place in myriad minds, and extend, without pause or limit, the sphere of its operation. See how it speeds its way, and widens its domain of action! It is so with what is bad. In the course of life, how manifold and pernicious are the results which arise from the single gratification of an evil desire! How its influence and bitter fruit augment in the myriads that, in successive periods, pass under its impulsive sway and imitate its manifestations! What an amount of iniquity and woe has sprung from Eve's ambitious aim and

impious act in eating the fruit of the interdicted tree ! Nor is it otherwise with what is good. The small spring becomes the rivulet—the rivulet grows into the stream—the stream swells into the river that increases and flows on without stay. So it is with the feeblest good desire, and the smallest good work. The little captive maid in Naaman's household thus expresses herself to her mistress on the matter of her master's illness : " Would God, my Lord were with the prophet that is in Samaria ! for he would recover him of his leprosy." How humble the mean ! but how important and vast the results ! Thence came the first ray of hope to Naaman as he sat in the darkness of despair. A new impulse is given to his efforts for recovery—a new course of action is resolved on. Eventually, on complying with the prophet's direction, disease is dislodged from his body, and salvation is conferred on his soul. Through him, what an amount of spiritual benefit may have come to his relatives—his household and nation ! How great may the influence of an individual life, when well regulated, and devoted to the well-being of fallen and woe-smitten man, become ! It is, in its sphere of action, as salt in the earth. It is as light in the world. So far as the individual man speaks aright and acts uprightly, what moral and beneficial influence continually emanates from him, and circulates around him. Thus his moral power, through those on whom he acts immediately or indirectly, waxes by a series of agencies in unknown succession, both in the number and variety of the objects, and the magnitude of the interests affected. Nothing that he does shall be done in vain. What delight shall fill the heart when the Lord shall hereafter discover to him the beautiful and fruitful plants that, under his special blessing, spring up in solitariness and obscurity from the good seed which, by words and deeds, he had largely dispersed ! Thus will he find that he has not lived in vain with regard to others ; and that his work, which no lapse or surge of time can sweep into oblivion, shall follow him into eternity.

This important fact in the history of man, and of the providential special superintendence of Jehovah over those who serve and trust in him, receives instructive illustration in the life of Maria, though in its sphere comparatively limited, and in its duration not extending to three score years—unfolding, as it does, unreserved consecration to God, and to the benefit of fallen and wretched men. The amount of good done does not depend on the length of life, but on the proper and earnest manner in which life is spent. A few years faithfully devoted to the securing of great spiritual ends, will yield better and more varied results than a period ten-fold longer, not so dedicated to Christ and to the elevation and happiness of those encumbered by sin and oppressed with woe.

Maria was the youngest daughter of parents who belonged to the middle walks of life, and were high in reputation for personal integrity and practical godliness. In his secular vocation—that of a gardener—her father was eager, inventive, enterprising. Failing health led him to quit the profession, in the prosecution of which he had evinced much enthusiasm, and to give himself to agricultural pursuits in the latter part of his life. For several years he held the office of land steward. Regular in his habits, and exact in the performance of his duties, he soon gained the confidence of his employer. In this situation it was expected that he should shew the visitors, who frequently came from the neighbouring city on the Lord's day, the agricultural experiments and improvements that were going on, and explain to them the various matters in respect to which they might be solicitous to obtain information. But he revered the day of God; and when directed to accede to this service, he calmly, but firmly, refused, reminding his master that the day was not his, but the Lord's, and set apart to be devoted to his special worship, citing the command—"Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour and do all thy work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath; in it thou shalt not do any work." This steadfast adherence to the sanctity of the