

## MARCUS CURTIUS.

BY ELLEN FREEMAN.

'Twas night in Rome,—a thousand stars  
Lit up the Tiber's wave,  
And mingled with the liquid light  
The misty moonbeams gave.

The glorious sky of Italy,  
Had never seemed more fair;  
And yet it bent above a scene  
Of bitter anguish there.

A yawning gulf had opened wide  
Within the heart of Rome,  
And sent its noxious vapors forth,  
O'er temple, tower and dome;

The pestilential breezes swept  
The proud patrician halls,  
And breathed amid the clust'ring vines,  
That decked plebeian walls.

Then rose a cry from every heart,  
From noble and from slave,  
Imploring all the Olympian gods  
To close the yawning grave.

They prayed the cloud-compelling Jove,  
But still no answer came,  
Though from his smoking altar fires  
High rose the incense flame.

To Juno, queen of heaven, they poured  
Full cups of rosy wine,  
And every god of Rome adored,  
In many an olden shrine.

At length the Oracle's dread voice,  
Reveals the will of Heaven,  
The glory of the Roman state  
Must to the Shades be given.

Then gazed the Fathers silent round,  
For none would dare to say,  
What formed the glory of their state,  
And gave her regal sway.