

MARCUS CURTIUS.

BY PERCY A. GAHAN.

WOULD you hear a wondrous story,
Hear a legend of the past,
Shining bright through all the ages,
Still to shine while ages last.
How a mighty yawning chasm
O'ed within the Roman wall,
And the city's deep foundations
Tattered to their sudden fall.

Terrible, and black, and awful,
Lay the fearful chasm there;
From the city's seven hill-tops
Went a cry of dark despair.
And the Romans sobbed in anguish,
And besought their gods to save
Rome, the proud, the noble city,
From so terrible a grave.

And the winds from Mount Olympus,
Bore to Rome the gods' decree;
Told the Romans how their city
From its peril might be free.
Told the noble city rulers
They might yet preserve their home,
If they cast into the chasm
The most precious thing in Rome.

Then the Romans sought their treasures—
Gave them freely to the state,
To select the thing most precious,
And avert the awful fate.
"But a noble Roman soldier,
Marcus Curtius," says the tale,
"Smiled in scorn upon the jewels,
And declared them no avail.

"Smiled and said the thing most precious
In the city, proud and free,
Was not gold or earthly treasure,
Earthly dross it could not be.
Shame," he cried, "that noble Romans,
Kings and rulers of the earth,
Treasure in their hearts such folly,
Deem themselves so little worth.

"Deem a base and sordid metal,
Worthier than noble man;
Slaves to passion, and not Romans,
Rome should fall beneath a ban.
Learn ye proud, yet groveling Romans,
Man is priceless, man is great.
O ye gods receive this offering,
And avert impending fate."

Then he girt him in his armour—
Leaped upon his war-steed white—
Galloped straightway to the chasm—
Plunged to death and endless night.
And the gods received the offering,
And the chasm closed above,
And brave Marcus saved the city
By his wisdom and his love.

And the Romans loved brave Marcus,
And his name they cherished long,
And his deed was told for centuries,
Both in story and in song.
And well might the Romans love him,
For he gave his life to save
The brave Romans and their city
From an awful living grave.

And ofttimes in centuries after,
When fierce foemen gathered near,
And the city's walls were leaguered,
And all Rome was filled with fear,
Then the thought of noble Marcus
Nerved the Romans for the fight,
And they marched to die in battle,
With a smile of calm delight.

Did you ever think, dear children,
Of the awful gulf of sin
That lay open in the world,
And all men were rushing in.
Black and terrible and awful,
Lay the yawning chasm there,
And none prayed it might be closed,
And none sought to shun the snare.

But the Son of God eternal,
From his heavenly throne of light,
Came to bless and succour mortals,
And to guide their steps aright.
Came to earth and shame and sorrow,
From his Father's throne above,
Came to bless and heal and comfort
Foes, because of boundless love.

Then when dangers gather round us,
Or the storm-cloud bursts above,
Let us think of lowly Jesus,
And his wondrous works of love.
Let us think of dark Gethsemane,
And Golgotha's ghastly sight,
They will give us strength and courage—
Make our heaviest burdens light.

WEMBLEY, ONT.

MADELINE AND THE WOLF.

AWAY in France there dwelt long
years ago a young girl, who from early
childhood had been kind and good to
every one, especially to those who were
still poorer than herself.

Her daily work was to watch the
cattle in the fields, to drive them to
their sheds at night and forth again in
the morning, taking her meals with
her; but her heart was so full of
tenderness that she could not help
showing whatever she had with any
hungry child who chanced to come
that way.

We know that either good or bad
habits begun when we are young be-
come stronger as we grow older; this
habit of kindness and unselfishness,
then, became stronger as Madeline
grew into a tall young girl, so that
every one in trouble came to her as to
a good friend.

At about a mile and a half's distance
from her cottage home there dwelt a
widow who was quite blind, yet had no
one belonging to her but a poor idiot
daughter. Every day for fifteen years,
and in all kinds of weather, Madeline
Saunier walked there to clean and
sweep and set the little dwelling in
order. We may imagine how the
blind woman and her child watched
for that welcome step, and when she
had to leave them were cheered by
knowing that Madeline would surely
come again on the morrow.

About as far off, but quite in an
opposite direction, there lay a poor
girl the victim of such a terrible dis-
ease that every one abandoned her.
No one but Madeline Saunier would
visit the wretched hovel wherein she
lay; none other of all the people near
would bring her food, speak kindly to
her, and last of all, utter good words
to cheer her in the moment of death.

In that part of France the cold is
sometimes very severe, and sometimes
wild animals are driven by it to
abandon their hidings in the distant
forests, and approach the dwellings of
men.

One night this gentle woman was
keeping watch over a very poor dying
person, when she heard a noise on the
low roof. Then the weak door sud-
denly gave way, and she saw the form
of a wolf trying to get in.

She must have been very frightened,
yet with a rapid bound she reached the
door, closed it, and held it fast; the
angry wolf was striving his utmost to
force it open, and every minute she
expected to see the weak barrier give
way, but at last he grew tired of the
struggle and went away defeated.

You may be quite sure that Made-
line's name was known and loved for
many a mile beyond her cottage home,
but her good deeds were destined to
be made more public, so that the
memory of them should last long after
she had passed away.

The fame of her goodness and self-
devotion reached the ears of the queen
of France. This was good Queen
Amelie, wife of Louis Philippe, who
spent many of the later years of her
life in England. She was so much
pleased with what had been told her
about Madeline Saunier that, as a
mark of personal esteem for so much
excellence, she sent her a valuable
present. The Monthyon-Prize was
also presented to her. This was a sum
of money, about four hundred and
sixteen pounds, which was left by the
Baron Monthyon, to be presented to

the poor French person who had per-
formed the most virtuous action in the
course of the year.

So the prize of money became hers
one year, and every one was glad.
We do not know how she spent it, but
we may be sure that some of this
money would be used for the poor she
loved so much.

THE PRINTER BOY.

ABOUT the year of 1725 an Ameri-
can boy, some nineteen years of age,
found himself in London, where he
was under the necessity of earning his
bread. He was not like many young
men in these days, who wander around
seeking work, and who are "willing
to do anything" because they know
how to do nothing; but he had learned
how to do something, and knew just
where to go to find something to do;
so he went straight to a printing office
and inquired if he could get employ-
ment.

"Where are you from?" inquired
the foreman.

"America," was the answer.

"Ah," said the foreman, "from
America! A lad from America seek-
ing employment as a printer! Well,
do you really understand the art of
printing? Can you set type?"

The young man stepped to one of
the cases, and in a brief space set up
the following passage from the first
chapter of John:

"Nathaniel said unto him, Can there
any good thing come out of Nazareth?
Philip saith unto him, Come and see."

It was done so quickly, so accu-
rately, and administered a delicate
reproof so appropriate and powerful,
that it at once gave him influence and
standing with all in the office. He
worked diligently at his trade, refused
to drink beer and strong drink, saved
his money, returned to America, be-
came a printer, publisher, author, post-
master-general, member of Congress,
signer of the Declaration of Independ-
ence, ambassador to royal courts, and
finally died in Philadelphia, April
17th, 1790, at the age of eighty-four,
full of years and honors; and there
are more than 150 counties, towns,
and villages, in America, named after
the same printer boy, Benjamin Frank-
lin, the author of "Poor Richard's
Almanac."

THE TIME TO BEGIN.

THEY who begin in their early years
to serve the Lord are in possession of
the best riches. They are quite sure to
have the best education, to secure the
best of human friendships, to be placed
in the best positions for service, and to
find the very best enjoyments for head
and heart. The fear of the Lord is the
beginning of wisdom, and wisdom is
the principal thing. Whosoever has
the almighty power of God and the
infinite love of Christ to show the way
of life will make few mistakes, however
many his years, or keen his disappoint-
ments, or bitter the sorrows to be
encountered. Life is indeed worth the
living, through all changes, if the
Christ of God be secured as the Friend
who never forsakes, and the Saviour
who can and will save to the uttermost
all who trust him and walk in his
ways.

On the other hand, a godless youth
is usually followed by a vain and dis-
honourable career. No tree can stand
up against the summer storm if its

roots have been cut and w...ed by
the insidious worms that creep beneath
the surface of the ground, under the
tufts of green st grass, and around
bulbs of the fairest and most fragrant
flowers.

Youth is the time to serve the Lord,
The time to insure the great reward

Nearly all biographies of great, good
and useful people, whether contained
in the sacred Scriptures or in purely
human literature, prove that early
piety is of unspeakable value. Without
it as a foundation no education can be
complete.

Such, indeed, is the invariable test
mony of the ages. Hence the chief
care of all parents and teachers is to
train the young in the nurture and fear
and service of the Lord. The great
and enlarging work of the Church is
happily in our day directed to the
wants of the young, and hence the
increasing multitudes of serious composi-
tions, in prose and poetry, to persuade,
encourage and guide boys and girls to
enter upon the paths of life without
delay.

THE USE OF THE TONGUE.

"God made the tongue, and, since
he never makes anything in vain, we
may be sure he made it for some good
purpose. What is its good purpose?"
Thus spoke a teacher one day in her
class.

"He made it that we may pray
with it," answered one boy.

"To sing with," said another.

"To talk to people with," said a
third.

"To recite our lessons with," re-
plied another.

"Yes; and I will tell you what he
did not make it for. He did not make
it for us to scold with, to lie with, or
to swear with. He did not mean that
we should say unkind, or foolish, or
impudent words with it. Now think,
every time you use your tongues, if
you are using them in the way which
pleases God. Do good with your
tongues, and not evil. It is one of
the most important members in the
whole body, although it is so small.
Serve God with it every day."

THE MAINE LAW.

The editor of *Harper's Weekly
Magazine*, a well known journal,
George William Curtis, tells us what
he did, for he purposefully tried. By
means of nods and winks, and other
mysterious signs, he got it known
to the persons at the hotel where he was
staying that he wanted some spirits,
whereupon he was taken off, like a
convict by a turnkey, down stairs,
through long corridors into a cellar,
then to a cellar beyond that, and then
the doors were locked and he found
himself in the presence of a variety of
dusty looking bottles, and mouldy
glasses. He said to the turnkey: "Is
it under these circumstances I must
drink?" The turnkey replied: "I
do not say it is exactly gay," and he
drank the liquor himself which Mr.
Curtis refused; and then they returned
(so said Mr. Curtis) like a couple of
convicted malefactors, and with jollity
they had retraced their steps and came
again into the light of day. If that
is the kind of way in which drink is
obtained in Maine, I think we shall
agree that the Maine liquor law is
not such a dead letter as some people
represent it to be.