

THE MARTYR'S VISION.

MORNING dawns on fair Italia.
 From the blue-robed, Adrian deep
 Climbs the golden car of Phœbus
 Up Albano's glittering steep.
 Far above the gray Campagna
 Greets the sun one mighty dome
 Gleaming in colossal splendor, —
 Coronet of papal Rome.

Hark! what sounds within the city
 On the matin breezes swell,
 Chilling with their slow vibrations? —
 'Tis a martyr's funeral knell!
 While on Nature's glowing canvas
 Morning's loveliest colors vie,
 From his cell, by priests attended,
 Comes a hero forth to die.

Firmly and with brow uplifted
 Walks the victim thro' the throng;
 In a smile his lips are parted,
 As by notes of voiceless song;
 All unmindful of the tumult,
 With self-poised, majestic mien,
 Wrapt in Thought's sublime abstraction,
 Bruno contemplates the scene.

They have reached the broad Piazza,
 Bound him to the fatal pyre,
 And th' unfeeling crowd watch breathless
 For the cruel tongues of fire.
 Yet the peaceful smile still lingers

On the lips of him they slay,
 And a light illumines his features
 Like the deepening flush of day.

"See, he moves his lips blaspheming!"
 Shout th' attendants standing near;
 But the whispers of the martyr
 Fall upon no mortal ear!
 None can catch the wondrous vision
 Which the dying hero sees;
 None can trace his spirit's triumph,
 As he murmurs thoughts like these: —

"Church of Rome, Truth's worst opponent!
 You may crush me by your might,
 But you will not thus extinguish
 Heaven's advancing waves of light!
 Can you quench the dawn, whose glory
 Crowns Frascati's silvered crest?
 Just as little can you smother
 Truths which glow within this breast!

"Tho' no 'martyr's crown' awaits me
 In a world beyond the grave,
Consciousness of Right elates me;
 'Tis enough! No more I crave.
 All your curses do not reach me,
 For I walk with Truth sublime,
 And my perfect vindication
 I with calmness leave to Time.

"For as yon bright day is breaking
 O'er this gloom-enshrouded earth,
 So the age of Truth is destined
 Here ere long to find its birth!
 Resting on a sure foundation,
 Based on proven facts alone,
 Freed from trammels of tradition,
Reason then shall rear its throne!

"Burn, then, Giordano Bruno!
 Give his ashes to the wind!

You can never crush the freedom
 Of a Truth-inspired mind !
 While my body writhes in anguish
 Shall my soul with rapture swell
 At its vision of the future !
 Age of darkness, — priests, — farewell !”

Lit is now the ghastly pyre ;
 Lurid are the flames that rise ;
 Loud the Church's exultation
 As the man of science dies.

Ah ! but from those hallowed ashes
 Springs a power which ne'er can die ;
 For the dawn of Bruno's vision
 Gilds the portals of the sky !

JOHN L. STODDARD.

CURRENT LITERATURE.

1. — *Natural Law. An Essay in Ethics.* By EDITH SIMCOX. Boston : J. R. Osgood & Co. 1877. pp. 361.

“HUMAN consciousness is beyond doubt a something distinct and unique, but it is still an open question whether we are to class mental processes on one side and every other natural phenomenon on the other, or whether we should look on man as only the chief and most interesting among the many marvellous products of natural evolution.” This is the “open question” of questions, which the work before us attempts, — not to close, perhaps, for the writer seems too true a philosopher to dream of extinguishing philosophy by that final solution at the present stage of human self-inquiry, — but rather to set out in such aspects as may reconcile men to the solution which positive philosophy anticipates. The attempt is no new one, either in aim or plan, but it has never been made by a bolder mind, nor with keener originality of thinking, nor with a broader comprehension of all that the undertaking involves. Accepting no formulas in thinking from any school, the author holds her rationalistic creed quite equally independent of any authoritative name behind her own. She represents the positivism of Comte, reinforced by the evolutionism of Herbert Spencer, and by the physio-psychology of Lewes and Bain ; but it is neither as a follower of Comte nor as a follower of Spencer that she enters these vast fields of speculation. Their methods have led her quite wide of the “religion of humanity” which gained a prophet and a ritualist in the one, and quite beyond the halting doctrine of “the unknowable” at which the other paused. She has conceived, in fact, a philosophical system that is quite her own, and she traverses it, in this book, with as firm-footed logic, at least, as that of any among the adventurous explorers of the present day, who bring reports from that chartless realm wherein the very possibilities of longitudinal reckoning have just begun to be known.