

There would assuredly be room for doubt
Even to wonder, did not the safe word
Of Scripture hold supreme authority.

"O animals of clay! O spirits gross!

The primal will,¹ that in itself is good,
Hath from itself, the chief Good, ne'er been moved
Justice consists in consonance with it,
Derivable by no created good,
Whose very cause depends upon its beam."

As on her nest the stork, that turns about
Unto her young, whom lately she hath fed,
Whiles they with upward eyes do look on her
So lifted I my gaze; and, bending so,
The ever-blessed image waved its wings,
Labouring with such deep counsel. Wheeling round
It warbled, and did say: "As are my notes
To thee, who understand'st them not; such is
The eternal judgment unto mortal ken."

Then still abiding in that ensign ranged,
Wherewith the Romans overawed the world,
Those burning splendours of the Holy Spirit
Took up the strain; and thus it spake again:
"None ever hath ascended to this realm,
Who hath not a believer been in Christ,
Either before or after the blest limbs
Were nail'd upon the wood. But lo! of those
Who call 'Christ, Christ,'² there shall be many found,
In judgment, further off from him by far,
Than such to whom his name was never known.
Christians like these the Æthiop³ shall condemn:
When that the two assemblages shall part;
One rich eternally, the other poor.

¹ *The primal will.*—The divine will.

² *Who call "Christ, Christ."*—"Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven."—Matt. vii. 21.

³ *The Æthiop.*—"The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it."—Matt. xii. 41.

"What may the Persians say unto your kings,
When they shall see that volume,¹ in the which
All their dispraise is written, spread to view?
There amidst Albert's² works shall that be read,
Which will give speedy motion to the pen,
When Prague³ shall mourn her desolated realm.
There shall be read the woe, that he⁴ doth work
With his adulterate money on the Seine,
Who by the tusk will perish: there be read
The thirsting pride, that maketh fool alike
The English and Scot,⁵ impatient of their bound.
There shall be seen the Spaniard's luxury;⁶
The delicate living there of the Bohemian,⁷
Who still to worth has been a willing stranger.
The halter of Jerusalem⁸ shall see
A unit for his virtue; for his vices,
No less a mark than million. He,⁹ who guards
The isle of fire by old Anchises honour'd,
Shall find his avarice there and cowardice;
And better to denote his littleness,
The writing must be letters maim'd, that speak
Much in a narrow space. All there shall know

¹ *That volume.*—"And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works."—Rev. xx. 12.

² *Albert.*—"Purgatory," canto vi. 98.

³ *Prague.*—The eagle predicts the devastation of Bohemia by Albert, which happened soon after this time, when that emperor obtained the kingdom for his eldest son Rodolph. See Coxe's "House of Austria," 4to. ed., vol. i., part i., p. 87.

⁴ *He.*—Philip IV. of France, after the battle of Courtrai, 1302, in which the French were defeated by the Flemings, raised the nominal value of the coin. This king died in consequence of his horse being thrown to the ground by a wild boar, in 1314. The circumstances of his death are minutely related by Fazio degli Uberti, "Dittamondo," lib. iv., cap. 19.

⁵ *The English and Scot.*—He adverts to the disputes between John Baliol and Edward I., the latter of whom is commended in the "Purgatory," canto vii. 130.

⁶ *The Spaniard's luxury.*—The commentators refer this to Alonzo X. of Spain. It seems probable that the allusion is to Ferdinand IV., who came to the crown in 1295, and died in 1312, at the age of twenty-four, in consequence, as it was supposed, of his extreme intemperance. See Mariana, "Hist.," lib. xv., cap. 11.

⁷ *The Bohemian.*—Winceslaus II. "Purgatory," canto vii. 99.

⁸ *The halter of Jerusalem.*—Charles II. of Naples and Jerusalem, who was lame. See note to "Purgatory," canto vii. 122, and xx. 78.

⁹ *He.*—Frederick of Sicily, son of Peter III. of Arragon. "Purgatory," canto vii. 117. The isle of fire is Sicily, where was the tomb of Anchises.

His uncle¹ and his brother's² filthy doings,
 Who so renown'd a nation and two crowns
 Have bastardized.³ And they, of Portugal⁴
 And Norway,⁵ there shall be exposed, with him
 Of Ratza,⁶ who hath counterfeited ill
 The coin of Venice. O blest Hungary!⁷
 If thou no longer patiently abidest
 Thy ill-entreating: and, O blest Navarre!⁸
 If with thy mountainous girdle⁹ thou wouldst arm thee.
 In earnest of that day, e'en now are heard
 Wailings and groans in Famagosta's streets
 And Nicosia's,¹⁰ grudging at their beast,
 Who keepeth even footing with the rest."¹¹

¹ *His uncle*.—James, King of Majorca and Minorca, brother to Peter III.

² *His brother*.—James II. of Arragon, who died in 1327. See "Purgatory," canto vii. 117.

³ *Bastardized*.—"Bozze," according to Bembo, is a Provençal word for "bastardo e non legitimo."—*Della Volg. Lingua*, lib. i., p. 25, ediz. 1544. Others have understood it to mean, "one dishonoured by his wife."

⁴ *Of Portugal*.—In the time of Dante, Dionysius was King of Portugal. He died in 1325, after a reign of nearly forty-six years, and does not seem to have deserved the stigma here fastened on him. See Mariana, lib. xv., cap. 18. Perhaps the rebellious son of Dionysius may be alluded to.

⁵ *Norway*.—Haquin, King of Norway, is probably meant; who, having given refuge to the murderers of Eric VII., King of Denmark, A.D. 1288, commenced a war against his successor, Eric VIII., "which continued nine years, almost to the utter ruin and destruction of both kingdoms."—*Modern Univ. Hist.*, vol. xxxii., p. 215.

⁶ *Him of Ratza*.—One of the dynasty of the house of Nemagna, which ruled the kingdom of Rassia or Ratza, in Selavonia, from 1161 to 1371, and whose history may be found in Mauro Orbino, "Regno degli Slavi," ediz. Pesaro, 1601. Uladislans appears to have been the sovereign in Dante's time; but the disgraceful forgery adverted to in the text is not recorded by the historian.

⁷ *Hungary*.—The kingdom of Hungary was about this time disputed by Carobert, son of Charles Martel, and Wincellaus, prince of Bohemia, son of Wincellaus II. See Coxe's "House of Austria," vol. i., part i., p. 86, 4to edit.

⁸ *Navarre*.—Navarre was now under the yoke of France. It soon after (in 1328) followed the advice of Dante, and had a monarch of its own. Mariana, lib. xv., cap. 19.

⁹ *Mountainous girdle*.—The Pyrenees.

¹⁰ *Famagosta's streets and Nicosia's*.—Cities in the kingdom of Cyprus, at that time ruled by Henry II., a pusillanimous prince. Vertot, "Hist. des Chev. de Malte," lib. iii. iv. The meaning appears to be, that the complaints made by those cities of their weak and worthless governor may be regarded as an earnest of his condemnation at the last doom.

¹¹ *The rest*.—"Wise Poet!" thus Landino concludes his commentary on this canto, "to whom the human race owes obligations for having thus severely reprehended the faults of princes; since these are not, like the errors of private persons, harmful to one or a few only, but injure all the country which they govern; and a single one frequently causes the ruin of whole nations." Much to the same effect is a memorable sentence in Xenophon's "Agesilaus," that excellent manual for princes: καὶ τὰς μὲν τῶν ἰδιωτῶν ἀμαρτίας πρῶτος ἔσθ' ὁρᾷ, τὰς δὲ τῶν ἀρχόντων μεγάλας ἡγε, κρίνων, τοὺς μὲν ὀλίγα, τοὺς δὲ πολλὰ κακῶς διατρίβειν.—C. xi. 6. Compare also the opening of Demosthenes' second Speech against Aristogiton.



Before my sight appear'd, with open wings,
 The beauteous image; in fruition sweet,
 Gladdening the thronged spirits.

Canto XIX., lines 1-3.