

lutely unmoved. Yet Dante is too perfect an artist to make Farinata the mere impersonation of party-rancour. After the battle of Monteperto, "which died the Arbia red," he alone saved Florence from destruction. This, however, only seems to show how a man of noble instincts becomes the instrument of evil when he has chosen the path of theoretical and practical unbelief.

The seventh circle has three rounds. In the first are the violent against their neighbour. Tyrants like Ezzelino are immersed to the eye-brows in the river of blood; others, like Guy de Montfort, up to the throat, and still others with their head and breast above the horrid stream. In the second round are the self-murderers, changed into gnarled and twisted trees, and liable to be torn to pieces by hell-hounds. By these symbols Dante seeks to indicate the terrible self-torture which constitutes the mental state which leads to suicide. The blasphemers, i.e., those who deny divine providence, are punished in the third round. In the outermost verge of the seventh circle are the money-lenders and "speculators," whom Dante, in the usual medieval way, conceives as mere parasites who prey upon the wealth of the community without producing anything themselves. It was one of the principles of Canon Law that to receive interest was simply robbery, because the receiver gets more than he gave.*

The eight circle is devoted to the punishment of fraud in all its forms; here, in separate chasms or pits, are found seducers and panders, flatterers, Simonists, fortune-tellers, "boodlers," hypocrites, thieves, evil counsellors, schismatics and coiners. As we should expect Dante's indignation is especially strong against the Simonists. They have "made the house of God a den of thieves." Each is fixed in a narrow round hole, head downwards, as assassins were punished in those days, and the projecting soles of their feet are tormented with flames, which burn with an intensity proportioned to their guilt. At the very bottom of the chasm is Pope Nicholas the Third, who declares his own evil ways and that of his successors Boniface the Eighth and Clement the Fifth. Dante, who never loses an opportunity of enforcing his doctrine that the greedy ambition of the representatives of the Church is the source of all the evils of society, assails him with bitter irony: "Tell me how much gold our Lord required

* Bonar's *Philosophy and Political Economy*, p. 53.