

CANTO XIX.

ARGUMENT.

The Poet, after describing his dream, relates how, at the summoning of an angel, he ascends with Virgil to the fifth cornice, where the sin of avarice is cleansed, and where he finds Pope Adrian V.

IT was the hour,¹ when of diurnal heat
No reliques chafe the cold beams of the moon,
O'erpower'd by earth, or planetary sway
Of Saturn: and the geomancer² sees
His Greater Fortune up the east ascend,
Where gray dawn checkers first the shadowy cone;
When, 'fore me in my dream, a woman's shape³
There came, with lips that stammer'd, eyes aslant,
Distorted feet, hands maim'd, and colour pale.

I look'd upon her: and, as sunshine cheers
Limbs numb'd by nightly cold, e'en thus my look
Unloosed her tongue; next, in brief space, her form
Decrepit raised erect, and faded face
With love's own hue⁴ illumed. Recovering speech,
She forthwith, warbling, such a strain began,

¹ *The hour.*—Near the dawn.

² *The geomancer.*—The geomancers, says Landino, when they divined, drew a figure consisting of sixteen marks, named from so many stars which constitute the end of Aquarius and the beginning of Pisces. One of these they called "the greater fortune." Chaucer has imitated this in a description of morning ("Troilus and Creseide," b. iii.), for he did not find it in his original, Boccaccio's "Filosfato."

"But when the cocke, commune astrologer,
Gan on his brest to bete, and after crowe,
And Lucifer the dayis messenger
Gan for to rise, and out his bemis throwe,
And estward rose, to him that could it knowe,
Fortuna Major."

³ *When, 'fore me in my dream, a woman's shape.*
—Worldly happiness. This allegory reminds us of the "Choice of Hercules."

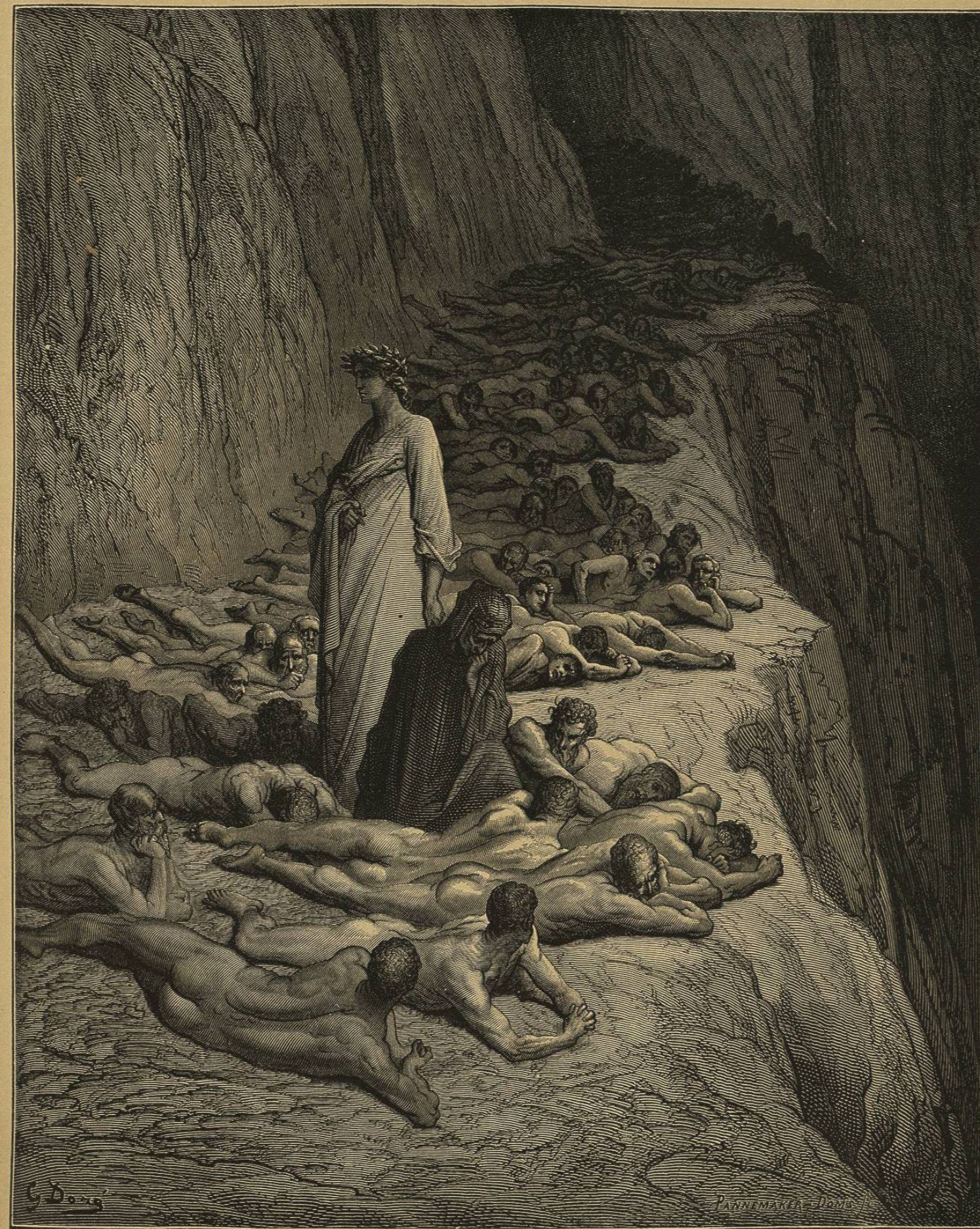
⁴ *Love's own hue.*—

"A smile that glow'd
Celestial rosy red, love's proper hue."

Milton, Paradise Lost, b. viii. 619.

"Facies pulcherrima tunc est,
Quum porphyriaco variatur candida rubro.
Quid color hic roseus sibi vult? designat amorem:
Quippe amor est igni similis; flammisque rubentes
Ignis habere solet."

Paligenii Zodiacus Vitæ, lib. xii.



"Up," he exclaim'd, "brother! upon thy feet
Arise; err not: thy fellow servant I,
(Thine and all others,) of one Sovran Power."

Canto XIX. lines 131-133.