

The rowers had their members laid to rest
Beside their oars on the hard seats, oppressed :
When Somnus,* gliding soft from lofty sky,
The dark air parted, made the shadows fly,
Thee seeking, Palinurus, fatal dreams
Bearing to thee innocent. Phorbas seems
The God, and sat him down on the poop high,
And thus proceeded straight to colloquy.
Safe, O Palinurus, the sea bears the fleet ;
Staid breezes blow ; the hour for rest is meet ;
Lay down thy head, from toil steal tired eyes,
Myself, the while, in thy stead will suffice.
To whom Palinurus, scarce raised his head :
Dost thou commend me to ignore, he said,
The look of placid sea and waves tranquil ?
Of such portent wouldst confidence instil ?
Wherefore Æneas to false winds commit,
So oft deceived by calm sky's counterfeit ?
He spoke, and clinging firm to helm attached
Ne'er quitted hold, and the stars constant watched.
Lo ! the God a spray, with dew Lethean† wet
And Stygian‡ lymph imbrued its power to whet,