

the law of probability. The Roman poet set before him a far more difficult task than the other, and accomplished it.

Both poets have essayed a description of night. The occasion in the *Argonautica* is the first night. Medea has promised her sister to give Jason drugs to tame the bulls, but even yet her mind is not made up. "Then did night spread darkness o'er the earth, and they who were at sea, the mariners, looked forth from their ships toward the bear and the stars of Orion; and now did every wayfarer and gatekeeper long for sleep; and o'er every father, weeping for her children dead, fell the pall of deep slumber; no more did dogs howl through the town: no more was heard the noise of men, but silence wrapped the darkling glade. Yet not at all did sleep shed its sweetness o'er Medea."

This is a scene made up mostly from city life, but it is not entirely consistent. The mariners and gatekeepers are not resting. By negative expressions much noise is suggested. Virgil, on the other hand, has confined himself to nature, and gives a consistent picture. His sympathy with nature guided his thought in choosing the details of his scene. The occasion is the night before the departure of Aeneas and the death of Dido. The contrast is between the restfulness of nature and the wild storm that raged in Dido's heart. In Bowen's version the lines run:

Now was the night. Tired limbs upon earth were fabled to sleep,
Silent the forests and fierce sea-waves; in the firmament deep
Midway rolled heaven's stars; no sound on the meadows stirred;
Every beast of the field, each bright-hued feathered bird
Haunting the limpid lakes, or the tangled briary glade,
Under the silent night in sleep were peacefully laid:
All but the grieving queen.²

The very language is restful. There is not a word that suggests sound or motion, except the noiseless progress of the stars. Instead there is night and weariness and peaceful sleep. Below is reproduced the Latin with the suggestive words in italics. Almost every word of the language that denotes rest or silence is here present:

*Nox erat, et placidum carpebant fessa soporem
corpora per terras, silvaeque et saeva quierant
aequora, cum medio volvuntur sidera lapsu,
cum tacet omnis ager, pecudes pieaeque volucres,
quaeque lucus late liquidos quaeque aspera dumis
rura tenent, somno positae sub nocte silenti.*
at non infelix animi Phoenissa.

-522-529.

This is all harmonious. There is no jarring thought, no mention of barking dogs, of the noise of men, or the weeping of women.

¹*Argon.* III., 743 ff.

²*Aen.* IV., 522 ff.