

ESTHER.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*A Pavilion in the court of the palace.
Ahasuerus sitting at the banquet, surrounded by the
princes and nobles of his empire.*

Ahasuerus. Princes and nobles, hail! assembled
powers

Of fertile Media, and of Persia fair,
Again I greet you with a sovereign's love,
And bid you welcome to my palace courts.
One hundred days and fourscore have passed on,
With swift and noiseless wing, since here ye came,
And to your wondering eyes have been revealed
Our kingdom's wealth, our splendor, power, and
might!

No idle boast, no glittering pageantry,
To cheat the dazzled sight have we displayed;
But pomp, and wealth, and majesty, at which
Earth's kings, ay, e'en its proudest ones, might bow
The knee, and sicken with pale envy.

(*All shout.*) Hail, mighty king! Long live our
sovereign lord!

Ahasuerus (bows his head). Receive a monarch's
thanks, and grant him yet

For one brief moment's space your patient ear.—
Swift as an arrow's flight, seven days have sped,
Since with gay hearts, unscathed by care's rude hand,
Or grief's corrosive touch, ye here have sat