

Defied the power she was most bound to obey.
 All praise the act which drove the aggressor forth,
 And call it wise, expedient, and most just.
 Then in a nation's loud approving voice
 Find comfort for thy loss, and let my lord,
 Take to his bosom soon another queen,
 Whose beauty shall delight, whose gentler soul
 Shall soothe his cares and hush his vain regrets.

Ahasuerus. Too well thou knowest, when first I
 thought to wed,

Of all that sought my love, 't was she alone
 Who fixed my wandering heart. Now she has gone !
 And where upon the habitable earth
 Dwells there another who can touch my soul,
 And charm it in such wise as she has done ?

Memucan. I know not where, but sure one may be
 found,—

'T were strange, indeed, if 'mong those radiant forms
 That bloom throughout our land, in pillared hall,
 Or in low dwellings by the fountain's side,
 Where clustering roses bloom, less bright than they,
 And odorous spices breathe, 't were strange, methinks,
 Were there not one could charm thy royal eye,
 One fair and graceful as thy banished queen,
 Though she, indeed, was beautiful as thought.
 Let then my king, if it shall please his grace,
 Send forth his servants throughout all his realm,
 Servants well skilled in choice of female charms,
 And from each vale and city of the land,
 Far as thy sceptre sways, let those bright maids,
 Whom the high gods have blessed with rarest gifts,
 Be gathered to the courts of Shushan fair,
 Where when the time allotted by our law
 For preparation meet, in the free use
 Of fragrant baths and purifying odors,
 Shall have passed, each shall be brought to thee,
 That thou mayest choose from out the assembled
 throng,

The maiden fair who pleases most thine eye,
 And seems by nature formed to fill the place
 Once graced by fallen Vashti.

Ahasuerus. Full well thy thought doth please,