

None traced her steps, nor marked the course she took,
But ere o'er yonder distant mountains broke
The orient dawn, she with her maiden train
Had passed the city gates.

Ahasuerus. Gone forth to exile, lonely and un-
cheered!

d Ye gods, forgive my sin! But as for thee,
False, cruel man! 't is thou hast wrought this deed,
And wrought it with a calm demoniac joy,
As now thou break'st these tidings to my ear.
Yea, thou dost revel in thy monarch's wo,—
I see it in thy eye, and hear it breathed
In the low accents of thy treacherous voice.
Go,—rid me of thy presence, which I loathe—
Since *thou* art false, there 's none whom I may trust.

Memucan. (falling at his feet). My lord! my king!
kill not thy slave with words

Unkind as these,—words which he ill deserves.
Reflect one instant, ere thou dost pronounce
Such sentence harsh,—and if thou canst recall
One act disloyal, or one treacherous deed,
That ever blackened Memucan's fair fame,
Then, and then only will he bow resigned
To thy displeasure stern, and deem it just.

Ahasuerus. Nay, rise my lord,

I feel I am unjust. Despair and wo
Are busy at my heart, to turn its blood
To gall. Thou hast been ever true; most true
And firm, till now, and zealous to perform
My slightest wish. 'T is pity that thy zeal
Should e'er o'erstep thy love. Else might the hand,
Which erst has poured the balm of woman's love
Into my thirsting soul, still minister
To all its wants, and soothe my ruffled mood,
When chafed by cares that often line the crown,
Gorgeous with gems and gold.

Memucan. Thy pardon, gracious king;
If I have erred, 't was through desire to serve
Thy righteous cause, and vindicate thy fame,—
And not to gratify one selfish thought.
And yet I pray thee, mourn no more for her
Who spurned thy love, and with such rash disdain