

Let it be written fair, that all may read,
And with my signet seal. So be it known;
Such is our royal pleasure and command.

[Exit.

SCENE V.—*An apartment in the palace. The king and Memucan.*

Memucan. I did but do thy bidding, gracious king,
When with despatch I sent forth the decree
Of Vashti's banishment.

Ahasuerus. Ay, with most cruel haste,
Thou didst the deed. Thou fearedst lest I should
change;

Lest in a cooler hour, my angry mood
Should pass, and love return. Full well thou knowest
That the inebriate wine had fired my blood,
And paralyzed my brain,—else had thy words
Fallen powerless to the ground, as they deserved;
Thou didst not well to chafe me in such sort.
Because at home thou hast an angry wife,
Thou fain wouldst wreak the wrongs which she in-
flicts,

On all of woman-kind. Weak that I was,
To list thy cunning arts;—they've wrought me wo,
And desolation dire. My sun has set,
My bright resplendent sun, that shed its rays
Benignant o'er my path, and lighted up
My world with love, and hope, and ecstasy.—
But I will see her yet,—once more behold
Those peerless charms I have so long adored,
And at her feet confess my sin and grief.
Go, and bid Hatach warn her I approach,—
Nay, cease thy wiles, 't is vain for thee to speak,—
I am resolved to win her back again,
If so the gods permit.

Memucan. Great king, forbear thy wrath!
She has departed, whither none can tell.
Soon as she learned thy will, with fierce disdain,
And brow of angry pride, she called her slaves,
And bid them quick prepare to follow her.