

stable as empty and bare as that which our Lord lived in when he became man, and under present circumstances, you find yourself the somebody of somebodies, a queen clean and complete?"

"It is true I am a queen. But I die of sadness, when from the throne I look back and see nothing of what other queens see. For instance, the Queen of Spain sees a series of great and glorious kings, named Recaredo, Pelayo, San Fernando, Alonso the wise, Isabel the Catholic, Ferdinand the Catholic, Charles V., Phillip II., Charles III.,—and those kings had blood of hers, and seated themselves on the throne, and loved and made great the people that she loves and makes great."

"You are right, wife, but you wish to do what is impossible, and that God alone can do."

"Well, then, those impossibilities are the very things that tease and exasperate me. What is the use of being a queen if even in the most just desires one sees herself constrained and unable to realize them? It is a fine afternoon, for instance, and I begin to get ready to go out for a walk in the palace gardens, but a wretched little cloud appears in the sky, as though to say to one, "Don't get ready," and when one wishes to go out, that insolent cloud begins to pour down water, and one is obliged to stay at home, disgusted and fretting. What I want is to have power enough to prevent a miserable little cloud from laughing at me."

"But, woman. don't I tell you that this power God alone can have?"

"Then I want to be God."

Juan made the sign of the cross on himself, filled with shame and horror at hearing his wife give utterance to such a thing; her head was undoubtedly turned by the demon of ambition. But he did not wish to exasperate the poor crazed being with lessons which, had she been in her right senses, she would have deserved.

"But don't you know, child," he said to her with sweetness, "that the fulfilment of that desire is as impossible as it is foolish? The emperor has granted us whatever we have asked, but what you want now he cannot grant."

"Still, I want you to go and see him, and speak to him; for perhaps between him and the Pope they will be able to manage it."

"But if there is, and never can be more than one God, how can you be made God?"

"I have always heard say that God can do everything. If the emperor consults with the Pope, and the Pope has recourse to God, then you'll see if God, who can do everything, will disappoint them both."

"But if God cannot?"

"Hold your tongue, Jew, and don't say such awful things; God can do everything."

Juan thought it would be more prudent to abstain from contradicting his wife any further, so he retired and summoned the chief physician of the court, in order to lay before him the new and extraordinary phase which the moral malady of the queen displayed.

The king returned soon after to the chamber of his august spouse, who, the moment she saw him, became a perfect wasp.

"How, Sire?" she exclaimed, "So you are the first to disobey my orders?"

"How disobey?"

"Yes, sire! Did I not tell you that I want you to go and see the emperor and implore him to place himself in communication with the Pope in order to see whether between them they could so manage that I might be God?"

"Yes, you told me so, but——"

"There are no buts for me. If you ruffle my feathers I'll send you off to be hanged as soon as look at you."

"Come, child, don't be angry, you shall be obeyed instantly."

"Remember, none of your pranks, now! And listen! go and tell that health-killer whom you seem to have made one of your council, that if you don't go to see the emperor, and perform in every point the commission which I charge you with, he shall serve you as partner in your dance in the air."

The king withdrew, and when he reported to the chief physician what his wife had just said to him, the physician insisted more on pleasing the august invalid in everything. So the king set out on his journey to the imperial court.