

the more humble suitors, and disgusted the great lords, who looked down with contempt on his lowly origin. They complained to the king of his intolerable arrogance; and the king was not unwilling to receive their charges against him. In fact, he had himself grown to be displeased with his minister's presumption. He was weary of the deference which, now that Espinosa had become a cardinal, he felt obliged to pay him; of coming forward to receive him when he entered the room; of taking off his cap to the churchman, and giving him a seat as high as his own; finally, of allowing him to interfere in all appointments to office. It seemed incredible, says the historian, that a prince so jealous of his prerogatives should have submitted to all this so long." Philip was now determined to submit to it no longer, but to tumble from its pride of place the idol which he had raised with his own hands.

He was slow in betraying his intention, by word or act, to the courtiers, still more to the unfortunate minister, who continued to show the same security and confidence as if he were treading the solid ground, instead of the crust of a volcano.

At length an opportunity offered when Espinosa, in a discussion respecting the affairs of Flanders, made a statement which the king deemed not entirely conformable to truth. Philip at once broke in upon the discourse with an appearance of great indignation, and charged the minister with falsehood. The blow was the more effectual, coming from one who had been scarcely ever known to give way to pas-

²² "Que en principe tan zeloso de su inmunidad i oficio pareció increíble su tolerancia hasta allí." Cabrera, Filipe Segundo, p. 700.