

kind from these were planted by Philip along the frontiers in the north and on the southern coasts of the kingdom; and the voyager in the Mediterranean beheld fortress after fortress crowning the heights above the shore, for its defence against the Barbary corsair. Nor was the king's passion for building confined to Spain. Wherever his armies penetrated in the semi-civilized regions of the New World, the march of the conqueror was sure to be traced by the ecclesiastical and military structures which rose in his rear.

Fortunately, similarity of taste led to the most perfect harmony between the monarch and his architect in their conferences on the great work which was to crown the architectural glories of Philip's reign. The king inspected the details, and watched over every step in the progress of the building, with as much care as Toledo himself. In order to judge of the effect from a distance, he was in the habit of climbing the mountains at a spot about half a league from the monastery, where a kind of natural chair was formed by the crags. Here, with his spy-glass in his hand, he would sit for hours and gaze on the complicated structure growing up below. The place is still known as the "king's seat."²²

It was certainly no slight proof of the deep interest which Philip took in the work that he was content to exchange his palace at Madrid for a place that afforded him no better accommodations than the poverty-stricken village of the Escorial. In 1571 he made an important change in these accommodations, by erecting a chapel which might afford the monks a more decent house of

²² Lafuente, *Historia de España*, tom. xiii. p. 253.