

such as this was addressed to a prince like Philip the Second, and that he should have borne it so patiently. But in this the king resembled his father. Churchmen and jesters—of which latter he had usually one or two in attendance—were privileged persons at his court. In point of fact, the homilies of the one had as little effect as the jests of the other.

The pomp of the royal establishment was imitated on a smaller scale by the great nobles living on their vast estates scattered over the country. Their revenues were very large, though often heavily burdened. Out of twenty-three dukes, in 1581, only three had an income so low as forty thousand ducats a year.⁴⁰ That of most of the others ranged from fifty to a hundred thousand, and that of one, the duke of Medina Sidonia, was computed at a hundred and thirty-five thousand. Revenues like these would not easily have been matched in that day by the aristocracy of any other nation in Christendom.⁴¹

The Spanish grandees preferred to live on their estates in the country. But in the winter they repaired to Madrid, and displayed their magnificence at the court of their sovereign. Here they dazzled the eye by the splendor of their equipages, the beauty of their horses, their rich liveries, and the throng of their retainers. But with all this the Castilian court was far from appearing in the eyes of foreigners a gay one,—

⁴⁰ Nota di tutti li Titolati di Spagna con li loro casate et rendite, etc., fatta nel 1581, MS.

⁴¹ Ibid.—The Spanish aristocracy, in 1581, reckoned twenty-three dukes, forty-two marquises, and fifty-six counts. All the dukes and thirteen of the inferior nobles were grandees.