

habit of keeping Holy Week not far from the scene of his present labors, at the convent of Guisando. In his present monastic retreat he had the additional interest afforded by the contemplation of the great work, which seemed to engage as much of his thoughts as any of the concerns of government.

Philip had given a degree of attention to the study of the fine arts seldom found in persons of his condition. He was a connoisseur in painting, and, above all, in architecture, making a careful study of its principles, and occasionally furnishing designs with his own hand.²⁰ No prince of his time left behind him so many proofs of his taste and magnificence in building. The royal mint at Segovia, the hunting-seat of the Pardo, the pleasant residence of Aranjuez, the alcazar of Madrid, the "Armeria Real," and other noble works which adorned his infant capital, were either built or greatly embellished by him. The land was covered with structures, both civil and religious, which rose under the royal patronage. Churches and convents—the latter in lamentable profusion—constantly met the eye of the traveller. The general style of their execution was simple in the extreme. Some, like the great cathedral of Valladolid, of more pretension, but still showing the same austere character in their designs, furnished excellent models of architecture to counteract the meretricious tendencies of the age. Structures of a different

²⁰ "Tenia tanta destreça en disponer las traças de Palacios, Castillos, Jardines, y otras cosas, que quando Francisco de Mora ni Tio Traçador mayor suyo, y Juan de Herrera su Antecessor le traian la primera planta, assí mandava quitar, ò poner, ò mudar, como si fuera un Vitrubio." *Dichos y Hechos de Phelipe II.*, p. 181.