

A letter addressed to the king by his grand almoner, Don Luis Manrique, told the truth in plainer terms, such as had not often reached the royal ear. "Your majesty's subjects everywhere complain," he says, "of your manner of doing business,—sitting all day long over your papers, from your desire, as they intimate, to seclude yourself from the world, and from a want of confidence in your ministers."³⁸ Hence such interminable delays as fill the soul of every suitor with despair. Your subjects are discontented that you refuse to take your seat in the council of state. The Almighty," he adds, "did not send kings into the world to spend their days in reading or writing, or even in meditation and prayer,"—in which Philip was understood to pass much of his time,—“but to serve as public oracles, to which all may resort for answers. If any sovereign have received this grace, it is your majesty; and the greater the sin, therefore, if you do not give free access to all.”³⁹ One may be surprised to find that language

the Belgian scholar, with his usual conscientiousness and care, enters into an examination of the character and personal habits of Philip.

³⁸ "Habiendo en otra ocasion avisado á vuestra magestad de la publica querella y desconsuelo que habia del estilo que vuestra magestad habia tomado de negociar, estando perpetuamente asido á los papeles, por tener mejor título para huir de la gente, ademas de no quererse fiar de nadie." Carta que escrivio al Señor Rey Felipe Segundo Don Luis Manrique, su limosnero mayor, MS.

³⁹ "No embio Dios á vuestra magestad y á todos los otros Reyes, que tienen sus veces en la tierra, para que se extravien leyendo ni escribiendo ni aun contemplando ni rezando, si no para que fuesen y sean publicos y patentes oraculos á donde todos sus subditos vengan por sus respuestas. . . . Y si á algun Rey en el mundo dió Dios esta gracia, es á vuestra magestad y por eso es mayor la culpa de no manifestarse á todos." Ibid.—A copy of this letter is preserved among the Egerton MSS. in the British Museum.