

charge him with sluggishness of mind. He was content to toil for hours, and long into the night, at his solitary labors.³⁰ No expression of weariness or of impatience was known to escape him. A characteristic anecdote is told of him in regard to this. Having written a despatch, late at night, to be sent on the following morning, he handed it to his secretary to throw some sand over it. This functionary, who happened to be dozing, suddenly roused himself, and, snatching up the inkstand, emptied it on the paper. The king, coolly remarking that "it would have been better to use the sand," set himself down, without any complaint, to rewrite the whole of the letter.³¹ A prince so much addicted to the pen, we may well believe, must have left a large amount of autograph materials behind him. Few monarchs, in point of fact, have done so much in this way to illustrate the history of their reigns. Fortunate would it have been for the historian who was to profit by it, if the royal composition had been somewhat less diffuse and the handwriting somewhat more legible.

Philip was an economist of time, and regulated the distribution of it with great precision. In the morning he gave audience to foreign ambassadors. He afterwards heard mass. After mass came dinner, in

³⁰ *Relazione di Vandramino, MS.—Relazione di Contarini, MS.—* "Distribuía las horas del día, se puede decir, todas en los negocios, quando yo lo conoçi; porque aunque las tenía de ocio ú ocupaciones forçosas de su persona, las gastava con tales criados elegidos tan à proposito que quanto hablava venia à ser informarse mucho, descanso en lo que à otro costara nota y fatiga." *MS. Anon. in the Library of the Dukes of Burgundy.*

³¹ *Dichos y Hechos del Rey Phelipe II., pp. 339, 340.*