

It was a capital defect in Philip's administration that his love of power and his distrust of others made him desire to do every thing himself,—even those things which could be done much better by his ministers. As he was slow in making up his own opinions, and seldom acted without first ascertaining those of his council, we may well understand the mischievous consequences of such delay. Loud were the complaints of private suitors, who saw month after month pass away without an answer to their petitions. The state suffered no less, as the wheels of government seemed actually to stand still under the accumulated pressure of the public business. Even when a decision did come, it often came too late to be of service; for the circumstances which led to it had wholly changed. Of this the reader has seen more than one example in the Netherlands. The favorite saying of Philip, that "time and he were a match for any other two," was a sad mistake. The time he demanded was his ruin. It was in vain that Granvelle, who, at a later day, came to Castile to assume the direction of affairs, endeavored, in his courtly language, to convince the king of his error, telling him that no man could bear up under such a load of business, which sooner or later must destroy his health, perhaps his life.³⁷

³⁷ Gachard cites a passage from one of Granvelle's unpublished letters, in which he says, "Suplico á V. M., con la humildad que devo, que considerando quanto su vida importa al príncipe nuestro señor, á todos sus reynos y Estados, y vasallos suyos, y aun á toda la christiandad, mirando en que miserando estado quedaría sin V. M., sea servido mirar adelante más por su salud, descargandose de tan grande y continuo trabajo, que tanto daño le haze." Rapport prefixed to the Correspondance de Philippe II. (tom. i. p. li.), in which