

in the kingdom.⁵ Thus the burden of providing for the expenses of the state fell with increased heaviness on the commons. Alienations in mortmain formed the subject of one of their earliest remonstrances after Philip's accession, but without effect; and, though the same petition was urged in very plain language at almost every succeeding session, the king still answered that it was not expedient to make any change in the existing laws. Besides his good will to the ecclesiastical order, Philip was occupied with the costly construction of the Escorial; and he had probably no mind to see the streams of public bounty, which had hitherto flowed so freely into the reservoirs of the Church, thus suddenly obstructed, when they were so much needed for his own infant institution.

While Philip was thus willing to exalt the religious order, already far too powerful, he was careful that it should never gain such a height as would enable it to overtop the royal authority. Both in the Church and in the council,—for they were freely introduced into the councils,—theologians were ever found the most devoted servants of the crown. Indeed, it was on the crown that they were obliged to rest all their hopes of preferment.

Philip perfectly understood that the control of the clergy must be lodged with that power which had the right of nomination to benefices. The Roman see, in its usual spirit of encroachment, had long claimed the exercise of this right in Castile, as it had done in other European states. The great battle with the Church was fought in the time of Isabella the Catholic. For-

⁵ Lafuente, *Historia de España*, tom. xiv. p. 416.