

that care should be taken to have suitable accommodations provided at the inns for travellers.⁶³ With their usual fondness for domestic inquisition, they take notice of the behavior of servants to their masters, and, with a simplicity that may well excite a smile, they animadvert on the conduct of maidens who, "in the absence of their mothers, spend their idle hours in reading romances full of lies and vanities, which they receive as truths for the government of their own conduct in their intercourse with the world."⁶⁴ The books thus stigmatized were doubtless the romances of chivalry, which at this period were at the height of their popularity in Castile. Cervantes had not yet aimed at this pestilent literature those shafts of ridicule which did more than any legislation could have done towards driving it from the land.

The commons watched over the business of education as zealously as over any of the material interests of the state. They inspected the condition of the higher seminaries, and would have provision made for the foundation of new chairs in the universities. In accordance with their views, though not in conformity to any positive suggestion, Philip published a pragmatic

⁶³ Provision real para que los mesones del reyno esten bien proveidos de los mantenimientos necesarios para los caminantes, Toledo, 20 de Octubre de 1560.

⁶⁴ "Como los mancebos y las donzellas por su ociosidad se principalmente ocupan en aquello [leer libros de mentiras y vanidades], desvanecense y aficionan en cierta manera á los casos que leen en aquellos libros haver acontecido, ansi de amores como de armas y otras vanidades: y aficionados, quando se offrece algun caso semejante, danse á el mas á rienda suelta que si no lo huviessen leydo." Cortes of 1558, pet. 107, cited by Ranke, Ottoman and Spanish Empires, p. 60.