

But, though Philip's suspicious nature prevented him from entirely trusting his ministers, — though with chilling reserve he kept at a distance even those who approached him nearest, — he was kind, even liberal, to his servants, was not capricious in his humors, and seldom, if ever, gave way to those sallies of passion so common in princes clothed with absolute power. He was patient to the last degree, and rarely changed his ministers without good cause. Ruy Gomez was not the only courtier who continued in the royal service to the end of his days.

Philip was of a careful, or, to say truth, of a frugal disposition, which he may well have inherited from his father; though this did not, as with his father in later life, degenerate into parsimony. The beginning of his reign, indeed, was distinguished by some acts of uncommon liberality. One of these occurred at the close of Alva's campaigns in Italy, when the king presented that commander with a hundred and fifty thousand ducats, greatly to the discontent of the emperor. This was contrary to his usual policy. As he grew older, and the expenses of government pressed more heavily on him, he became more economical. Yet those who served him had no reason, like the emperor's servants, to complain of their master's meanness. It was observed, however, that he was slow to recompense those who served him until they had proved themselves worthy of it. Still, it was a man's own fault, says a contemporary, if he was not well paid for his services in the end.*

* "Chi comincia a servirlo può tener per certa la remunerazione, se il difetto non vien da lui." *Relazione Anon., MS.*