

similar means to procure information that might be of service in making appointments to ecclesiastical and civil offices.

In his eagerness for information, his ear was ever open to accusations against his ministers, which, as they were sure to be locked up in his own bosom, were not slow in coming to him.<sup>26</sup> This filled his mind with suspicions. He waited till time had proved their truth, treating the object of them with particular favor till the hour of vengeance had arrived. The reader will not have forgotten the terrible saying of Philip's own historian, "His dagger followed close upon his smile."<sup>27</sup>

Even to the ministers in whom Philip appeared most to confide, he often gave but half his confidence. Instead of frankly furnishing them with a full statement of facts, he sometimes made so imperfect a disclosure that, when his measures came to be taken, his counselors were surprised to find of how much they had been kept in ignorance. When he communicated to them any foreign despatches, he would not scruple to alter the original, striking out some passages and inserting others, so as best to serve his purpose. The copy, in this garbled form, was given to the council. Such was the case with a letter of Don John of Austria, containing an account of the troubles of Gerona, the original of which, with its numerous alterations in the royal handwriting, still exists in the Archives of Simancas.<sup>28</sup>

<sup>26</sup> Ranke, Ottoman and Spanish Empires, p. 33.

<sup>27</sup> See *ante*, vol. ii. p. 493.

<sup>28</sup> Lafuente, *Historia de España*, tom. xiv. p. 44.—The historian tells us he has seen the original letter, with the changes made in it by Philip.