

He was so accurate in his knowledge that he was frequently able to detect an error or omission in the information he received. To one who had been giving him an account of a certain ecclesiastic, he remarked, "You have told me nothing of his amours." Thus perfectly apprised of the characters of the candidates, he was prepared, whenever a vacancy occurred, to fill the place with a suitable incumbent.⁷

It was his habit, before preferring an individual to a high office, to have proof of his powers by trying them first in some subordinate station. In his selection he laid much stress on rank, for the influence it carried with it. Yet frequently, when well satisfied of the merits of the parties, he promoted those whose humble condition had made them little prepared for such an elevation.⁸ There was no more effectual way to secure his favor than to show a steady resistance to the usurpations of Rome. It was owing, in part at least, to the refusal of Quiroga, the bishop of Cuença, to publish a papal bull without the royal assent, that he was raised to the highest dignity in the kingdom, as archbishop of Toledo. Philip chose to have a suitable acknowledgment from the person on whom he conferred a favor; and once when an ecclesiastic, whom he had made a bishop, went to take possession of his see without first expressing his gratitude, the king sent for him back, to

⁷ Cabrera, Filipe Segundo, lib. xi. cap. 11; lib. xii. cap. 21.—*Relazione Anon.*, 1588, MS.

⁸ "Otras vezes presentaba para Obispos Canonigos tan particulares i presbiteros tan apartados no solo de tal esperanza, mas pensamiento en si mismos, i en la comun opinion, que la cedula de su presentacion no admitia su rezelo de ser engañados ó burlados. Eligia á quien no pedia, i merecia." Cabrera, Filipe Segundo, p. 891.