

tunately, the sceptre was held by a sovereign whose loyalty to the Faith was beyond suspicion. From this hard struggle she came off victorious; and the government of Castile henceforth retained possession of the important prerogative of appointing to vacant benefices.

Philip, with all his deference to Rome, was not a man to relinquish any of the prerogatives of the crown. A difficulty arose under Pius the Fifth, who contended that he still had the right, possessed by former popes, of nominating to ecclesiastical offices in Milan, Naples, and Sicily, the Italian possessions held by Spain. He complained bitterly of the conduct of the councils in those states, which refused to allow the publication of his bulls without the royal *exequatur*. Philip, in mild terms, expressed his desire to maintain the most amicable relations with the see of Rome, provided he was not required to compromise the interests of his crown. At the same time he intimated his surprise that his holiness should take exceptions at his exercise of the rights of his predecessors, to many of whom the Church was indebted for the most signal services. The pope was well aware of the importance of maintaining a good understanding with so devoted a son of the Church; and Philip was allowed to remain henceforth in undisturbed possession of this inestimable prerogative.⁶

The powers thus vested in the king he exercised with great discretion. With his usual facilities for information, he made himself acquainted with the characters of the clergy in the different parts of his dominions.

⁶ Lafuente, *Historia de España*, tom. xiii. p. 261.—Cabrera, *Filipe Segundo*, pp. 432, 433.