

art, in one particular he resorted almost exclusively to foreigners. The oil-paintings and frescos which profusely decorated the walls and ceilings of the Escorial were executed by artists drawn chiefly from Italy, whose schools of design were still in their glory. But, of all living painters, Titian was the one whom Philip, like his father, most delighted to honor. To the king's generous patronage the world is indebted for some of that great master's noblest productions, which found a fitting place on the walls of the Escorial.

The prices which Philip paid enabled him to command the services of the most eminent artists. Many anecdotes are told of his munificence. He was, however, a severe critic. He did not prematurely disclose his opinion. But when the hour came, the painter had sometimes the mortification to find the work he had executed, it may be with greater confidence than skill, peremptorily rejected, or at best condemned to some obscure corner of the building. This was the fate of an Italian artist, of much more pretension than power, who, after repeated failures according to the judgment of the king,—which later critics have not reversed,—was dismissed to his own country. But even here Philip dealt in a magnanimous way with the unlucky painter. "It is not Zuccaro's fault," he said, "but that of the persons who brought him here;" and when he sent him back to Italy he gave him a considerable sum of money in addition to his large salary.²⁶

Before this magnificent pile, in a manner the creation of his own taste, Philip's nature appeared to expand, and to discover some approach to those generous

²⁶ Stirling, *Annals of the Artists of Spain*, tom. i. p. 211.