gen, and Friesland—formed, for the purpose of an improved defence, the Union of Utrecht. Therewith there was born into the world a new state, the Dutch Republic, for which the articles drawn up at Utrecht served as a constitution.

The Union of Utrecht, 1579.

The new Republic did not entirely renounce the sovereignty of Philip until 1581. That was, however, after the bold act of Utrecht, a mere formality, and does not affect the statement that the Dutch nation was born in 1579. The Union of Utrecht, like many another constitution uniting a number of jealously independent states, had some signal defects. It did not create a sufficiently powerful executive, and did not give the central legislative body, called the States-General, free control of taxation. For the present, however, the personal ascendancy of William, who was made Stadtholder or governor of the most important provinces, made up for the inefficient federal arrangements.

The new Dutch Republic.

Thus the struggle went on, William, with a foothold in the north, against Parma, with a foothold in the south, while between them lay the rich Flemish provinces of Flanders and Brabant, which, flattered and assaulted by both sides, wavered irresolutely, and might fall either way. However, the skill of Parma, backed by the resources of Spain, now began to tell. City after city in the neutral zone had already yielded to the Spaniard, when there happened a calamity which seemed like the verdict of fate against the cause of liberty. Philip and Parma had long reasoned that if death would only remove William from the scene the insurrection would collapse. Finally, since fate seemed reluctant, they resolved to come to its assistance, and in 1580 Philip published a ban against his rebellious subject, offering gold and a patent of nobility to whoever would remove him from the living. William justified himself against Philip's charges in a pamphlet called the "Apology," wherein he drew a stinging portrait of the patron of assassins. Nevertheless, the

The ban and the "Apology."

The murder of William, 1584.

ban was William's death-warrant. Many abortive attempts had already been made upon his life, when Balthasar Gérard, a Frenchman from the Franche Comté, and one of those unflinching fanatics in which the age abounded, pierced his breast with a bullet. The murder occurred on July 10, 1584, on the stairway of the prince's palace at Delft. The victim's last thoughts turned toward the struggle in which his country was engaged. "Lord have pity on my soul," he said, "and on this poor people." Gérard was executed amid atrocities against which every act of William's life was a protest, while Philip exulted in the deed and rewarded the heirs of the murderer according to his promise.

The Dutch Republic appeals for help to France and England.

William's death could not have come at a more inauspicious time, for Parma's fortunes just then were mounting to their zenith. In 1585 the great city of Antwerp fell into his hands after a long and memorable siege, and now only Holland and Zealand remained to be conquered. What were the weary Dutch to do? Their dead leader had held that their independence could only be conquered with the help of foreign powers, and had long directed passionate appeals for assistance to France and England. But these states, fearful of the power of Philip, had hesitated. Although Elizabeth occasionally sent secret encouragement in the form of money, she would not commit herself openly. France, too, vacillated, but, at one time, just before William's death, went the length of sending the duke of Anjou, brother of the king, to the aid of the insurgents. Anjou was offered the crown of the Netherlands on the understanding that he would rid the country of the Spaniards, but he proved a broken reed, intrigued, quarrelled with everybody, and left the country in disgrace in the very year of William's tragic end. There was now no chance of help except from Elizabeth, and the Dutch, at the end of their tether, made her a pressing tender of the young Republic. Although



the prospect was inviting, moved by her customary caution she declined the dangerous honor. Nevertheless, she could no longer with due regard to her own safety refuse to grant substantial help. Spain and England had already begun to clash upon the sea, and the sentiment of the English people had declared vehemently for the hard-pressed Protestants of the Netherlands. For years Sir Francis Drake and others had been engaged in piratical raids, which they called singeing the beard of the king of Spain. Philip was nursing a just grievance in silence, but if ever he recovered the Low Countries, it was certain to go hard with England. Ungenerous as Elizabeth was where others were concerned, she had a sharp eye for her own interests, and therefore in December, 1585, signed a treaty with the Dutch, whereby she promised to send 6,000 soldiers to their aid.

Elizabeth takes the Dutch under her protection 1585.

When the Englishmen came, under the command of the earl of Leicester, the queen's favorite, they did perhaps more harm than good, for Leicester shamefully betrayed the people he had come to serve. His entrance upon the war none the less marks an epoch, for by this step England definitely took sides in the struggle, and Philip was made to see that the conquest of the island-kingdom was an unavoidable preliminary to the reduction of his revolted provinces. Therefore he began to collect all his resources for an attack upon the English. In the year 1588 his Invincible Armada spread sail for England, only to be ruined by Elizabeth's valiant fleet and scattered by the tempests. Almost at the same time the Protestant Henry of Navarre succeeded to the French throne (1589), and Philip, alarmed at this new peril, resolved to move heaven and earth to save the neighbor kingdom for Catholicism. Thus fate, or chance, or a too unbridled ambition led him to direct his power on enterprises which carried him far afield and obliged him to relax his hold upon the Netherlands. The

Philip's attack diverted against England and France.

ensuing wars with England and France weakened him to such a degree that he never returned to his attack upon his rebel subjects with his early vigor. Moreover, his great general, Parma, died in the year 1592, while the Dutch, who had hitherto reaped nothing but misfortune upon the battle field, put themselves under the command of a gifted leader in the person of Maurice of Nassau, William's son and heir, who had a special genius for conducting sieges, and who won back place after place, while the hardy Dutch sailors swept home and foreign waters clear of Spanish fleets. It was the Spaniards now who were pressed in their turn. When, in 1598, Philip was nearing his end, his cause among the Dutch had become hopeless; still, too proud to acknowledge defeat, he stubbornly fought on, and his son Philip III. persisted in the same wasteful and impracticable course. Only when utterly exhausted did he humble his pride sufficiently to agree, in the year 1609, to a Twelve Years' Truce.

Maurice of Nassau.

The Twelve Years' Truce, 1609.

It was not the end, but as good as the end. When the truce was over (1621), the Thirty Years' War was raging in Europe, and although Spain tried to make the confusion serve her purposes, and again attacked the Dutch, the firm resistance of the hardy little nation rendered the second effort at subjugation even more vain than the first. When the Peace of Westphalia (1648) put an end to the long German war, Spain at last declared herself ready for the great renunciation, and acknowledged the unqualified independence of the Dutch Republic.

Renewal of the war and Peace of Westphalia.

But abundant as was the harvest of glory which the young Republic gathered in its eighty years' struggle with Spain, it was not saved the shocks and sorrows which are the common lot of life. A source of very constant trouble lay in the loose confederation of the seven provinces. It has been stated that the Union of Utrecht did not create a strong central authority and left the provincial governments prac-

Troubles of the young Republic.



tically in control. As a result the Republic seemed frequently on the point of going to pieces, and was maintained largely by the fact that Holland, being more important than the other six provinces put together, could impose her will on them. This is the federal difficulty under which the new Republic labored, but no less disturbing was what we may call the Orange problem. Maurice had contributed immensely to the ultimate success of the Dutch, and thus what his father had begun well he had ended brilliantly. The hearts of a grateful people turned to him; they made him Stadtholder or governor; they gave him the command on land and sea. There were those, however, who believed his position incompatible with republican tradition, and Maurice, who nursed a vast ambition, must be acknowledged to have lent some color to their suspicions. It was murmured in secret that he wished to make himself king. To any such ambition the rich burgher class, who by reason of a narrow franchise dominated in the government of city and province, were bitterly opposed, as likely to interfere with their monopoly of power, and under their able leader, John of Barneveldt, they began to organize in opposition to the House of Nassau. Thus the burgher and Orange parties, representing respectively oligarchical and monarchical principles, stood face to face. They clashed for the first time with violence in 1619, when Maurice by a very high-handed act seized Barneveldt and had him executed. Therewith the Orange party acquired an ascendancy which lasted till the middle of the century, when the burghers once more got the upper hand. In fact, the whole seventeenth century is marked by a continual fluctuation of control from Orangists to burghers and back again. Although Spain hoped much from these dissensions, they benefited her nothing, and hardly impaired, even momentarily, the marvellous Dutch development.

Weakness of the Confederation.

Republicans and Orangists.

The progress of civilization.

In fact, the commercial and intellectual advance of the Republic during the course of the war remains the most astonishing feature of the period. It was as if the heroic struggle gave the nation an irresistible energy, which it could turn with success into any channel. The little seaboard state, which human valor had made habitable almost against the decrees of nature, became in the seventeenth century not only one of the great political powers of Europe, but actually the leader in commerce and in certain branches of industry; contributed, beyond any other nation, to contemporary science; and produced a school of painting the glories of which are hardly inferior to those of the Italian schools of the Renaissance. Such names as Hugo Grotius (d. 1645), the founder of international law; Spinoza (d. 1677), the philosopher; Rembrandt (d. 1674) and Frans Hals (d. 1666), the painters, furnish sufficient support to the claim of the United Provinces to a leading position in the history of civilization. At the bottom of the unrivalled material prosperity was the world-wide trade of the cities lining the coast. It was particularly extensive with the East Indies, and here were developed the most permanent and productive of the Dutch colonies, although there were others planted in Asia, Africa, and America. The city of Amsterdam, in the province of Holland, was the heart of the vast Dutch trade, and, much like London to-day, performed the banking business and controlled the money market of the entire world.

The decay of the southern provinces.

It was a tragical fate that awaited the southern provinces, which had remained Catholic and had more or less docilely submitted to the Spanish tyranny. They had to pay the inevitable penalty of resigning the rights with which their fathers had endowed them; henceforth their spirit was broken. Flanders and Brabant, which had once been celebrated as the paradise of Europe, fell into decay. The



touch of intolerant Spain, here as everywhere, acted like a blight. It is a relief to note that in one branch of culture, at least, the inhabitants continued to distinguish themselves. The names of the great painters Rubens (d. 1640) and Van Dyck (d. 1641) witnessed that the old Flemish spirit occasionally stirred in the tomb where it had been laid by Alva and Philip, and justified the hope that the future would perhaps see a resurrection.