gained ground and restored the regent of Savoy, whom the Spaniards had expelled. Finally, more important than all, the alliance with Holland gave France the superiority by sea. The destruction of a great Spanish fleet in the Downs, where it had taken refuge under the neutral flag of England, made it almost impossible to send reinforce­ments from Spain to Brussels. By striking at the points of connexion, Richelieu was breaking the unwieldy Spanish empire to pieces. At this moment his task was immensely facilitated by the outbreak of internal dissensions.

Olivares had been inspired by the success of his great rival with the idea of strengthening Spain by a vigorous policy of centralization. The monarchy consisted of a number of scattered provinces, each ruled by a separate council at Madrid, and each possessed of its own separate institutions. They were held together only by the pre­dominance of Castile and by religious unity. This system Olivares determined to abolish by elevating the royal power to equal absolutism in all the provinces. The dangers from foreign enemies were to be met by forming Spain into one indissoluble whole. But the spirit of pro­vincial independence was still strong, and it was artfully encouraged by the intrigues of Richelieu, who wished to absorb the attention of Spain in its domestic affairs. An edict ordering all able-bodied men to arm for the war, under penalty of confiscation, provoked a revolt in 1640 among the Catalans, who were jealously attached to their old privileges, and whose proximity to the French frontier had already exposed them to intolerable hardships. The Castilian troops were driven from the province, and Catalonia formed itself into a republic under the protection of France. This event exerted a magical influence upon Portugal, where Richelieu’s emissaries had also been active, and where the antipathy to Castile was national rather than provincial. In December 1640 a revolution was successfully accomplished in Lisbon, and the crown was assumed by a native noble, John of Braganza, in whose veins ran the blood of the ancient kings. These disasters were fatal to Olivares, to whose system of government they were not unnaturally attributed. In 1643 he was compelled to resign his post, and Philip IV. announced his intention of ruling alone.

The revolt of Catalonia and Portugal, together with the undisguised discontent shown by several of the other provinces, could not but hamper Spain in the conduct of the European War. The conquest of Roussillon in 1642 enabled the French to give effectual assistance to the Catalans, who acknowledged Louis XIII. as count of Barcelona. The successive deaths of Richelieu (1642) and Louis XIII. (1643) made no difference to the policy of France, which was directed by Mazarin under the regency of Anne of Austria. The French had now completely made up the military inferiority which had foiled their efforts at the beginning of the war. In 1643 Enghien (afterwards the great Condé) won the first of a brilliant series of victories at Rocroi, and his success was the more important because it placed the domestic authority of the regent upon a firm footing. The disasters of Spain were increased by the formidable rising of Masaniello in Naples (1647), which was carried on by the duke of Guise and was suppressed with difficulty in 1648. This was fol­lowed by the loss of the Austrian alliance through the treaty of Westphalia. As it would have been impossible for Spain to contend single-handed against the hostile coalition, the opportunity was seized to make terms with Holland. This was only achieved by consenting to great sacrifices. Not only did Spain surrender all claims to sovereignty over the northern provinces, but it also ceded to them the northern districts of Brabant, Flanders, and Limburg, with the strong fortresses of Maestricht, Her­

togenbosch (Bois-le-Duc), Bergen-op-Zoom, and Breda. The Dutch retained all their conquests in America and the Indies, and secured themselves from the rivalry of Ant­werp by a clause which enjoined the permanent closing of the Scheldt. This marks the final recognition of the United Provinces as an independent state, and also the transference to the northern powers of the maritime supremacy hitherto claimed by Spain.

France and Spain were now left face to face with each other. For the next four years the disturbances of the Fronde gave the Spaniards a great opportunity, of which they were not slow to avail themselves. In the Nether­lands they recovered Gravelines, Ypres, and Dunkirk, while Don John of Austria, a natural son of Philip 1V., took Barcelona and reduced the Catalans to submission. But the triumph of Mazarin in 1653 enabled France once more to devote itself to the war, although at the same time it drove the great Condé into the Spanish service. The military operations now reduced themselves to a duel in the Netherlands between the rival generals Condé and Turenne. The old tactics, which were adhered to with Spanish obstinacy, were now out of date, and the once invincible infantry was almost useless against the quick movements of light-armed troops which had been intro­duced by Gustavus Adolphus. The struggle was finally decided by the intervention of England. Both powers had earnestly sued for the support of Cromwell. The rapid advance of the French power was a cogent reason for England to assist Spain, but the religious bigotry that still prevailed at Madrid made the alliance impossible. At last Mazarin gained over the Protector by promising to banish the Stuarts from France and to cede Dunkirk. Reinforced by 6000 Ironsides, probably the best soldiers in Europe, Turenne was irresistible. Dunkirk was re­duced after an obstinate defence and handed over to the English, to the great scandal of Roman Catholic Europe. One after another the fortresses of Flanders fell into the hands of the French, and, though the death of Cromwell lost them the support of England, it was impossible for Spain to continue the war. In 1659 Mazarin and Don Luis de Haro, the successor of Olivares, met on a small island in the Bidassoa, and there arranged the treaty of the Pyrenees. Spain had again to make great sacrifices. Besides Artois and several fortresses in the Netherlands, Roussillon and Cerdagne were ceded to France, and thus the Pyrenees were fixed by law as the boundary between the two countries. Louis XIV. was to marry the infanta Maria Theresa, who was to receive a large dowry, but was to renounce all eventual claims to the Spanish crown. The only concessions made by France were the pardon of Condé, the recognition of Catalonia as a province of Spain, and the promise to give no more assistance to the Portuguese.

Now that Spain was freed from external hostilities, it seemed possible that the reduction of Portugal might be at last accomplished. But the alliance of France was speedily replaced by that of England, and Catherine of Braganza was married to Charles II. Louis XIV., too, tried to obtain from the Spanish Government an acknowledgment of his wife’s claims to the succession, and failing in this he continued to send secret assistance to the Portuguese. A French general, Schomberg, defeated Don John of Austria in 1663, and two years later routed the Spanish forces at the battle of Villa Viciosa. This final disaster crushed the declining energies of Philip IV., who died on September 17, 1665. As his son Charles II. was only four years old, he bequeathed the government to his widow Maria Anna of Austria, with a special junta to advise her in the conduct of affairs. As the Spanish monarchy had declined, its