

Venice may have meditated uniting her Dalmatian possessions by occupying Ragusa.

The situation of Ragusa towards Hungary was thus considerably altered, as the Hungarians were no longer on her borders. The Republic from this date assumes a still greater degree of independence than before, but from the despatches to the King of Hungary it appears that it still recognised his suzerainty to a certain extent. Hungary was, however, no longer able to afford it valid protection, and the Venetians it did not trust; this explains its subsequent attitude towards the Turks, whom it was now obliged to conciliate, lest it should suffer the fate that was soon to befall its neighbours. But its dependence on the Sultan amounted to little more than the payment of a tribute.

As we have seen, the one important alteration brought about by the exchange of Hungarian in the place of Venetian overlordship was the establishment of the Rector, elected by the city council. This form of government lasted unchanged until the fall of the Republic. Its character tended to become more and more oligarchic, and although the "Specchio," or Golden Book, was not compiled until 1440, all save the nobles were practically excluded from any share in the government. A new high court of justice was formed, consisting of five judges, who remained in office for one year. Beyond this there is no important constitutional or administrative change to record.

Various measures were taken to improve the general conditions of the city. Lepers were confined to a spot