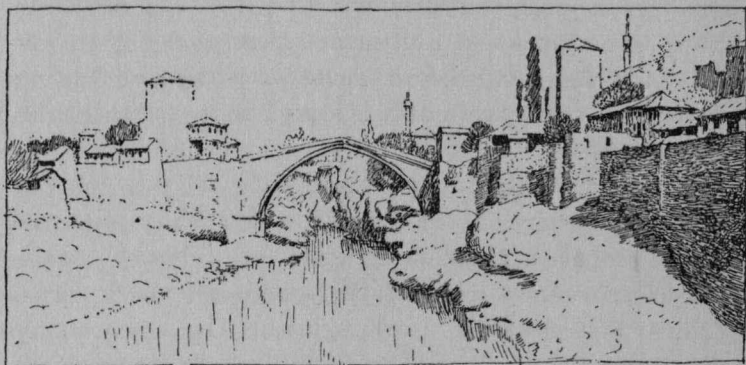


on their own ventures, even when it does not actually compete with them ; for they dread even potential rivalry. Hence their system of exclusion, for they prefer to be absolute masters of very little rather than share a few benefits with people who are not their slaves. Above all, they imagine that the French, being sharper than other people, see the viciousness of their rule, the injustice of their administration, and the absurdity of



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their pretensions ; they blush for very shame, and wish to be isolated so as to avoid being exposed to criticism. It is their sensitive spot. One may well be circum-spect, but they have too much intelligence not to know their own defects, but too much obstinacy and pride to wish to correct them, and to suffer other witnesses of their conduct than those who are forced to applaud it. One may say that Ragusa is less a State than a private house, of which both masters and servants