

lining the quays watching the ships entering the harbour, each vessel trying to be the first to drop anchor, so as to receive the small gift of one *ipperpero* awarded by the State for the achievement."¹ On Christmas Eve all the sailors of the ships which happened to be in port that night carried a block of wood (*ceppum*)² to the castle, singing songs (*kolende*), and placed it on the Count's hearth. The Count in return gave them each a cup of wine and two *ipperperi pro kolendis*. They also received two *ipperperi* from the Salt Commission, and two more from the Cathedral treasury.³ All ships, whether Ragusan or from cities with whom the Republic had a commercial treaty, "qui navigant more Raguseorum," coming into port were exempt from the *stata* or harbour dues, and only paid a small tax to the Count, the Archbishop, and the Cathedral treasury. With the proceeds of the latter the new Cathedral was built, declared by De Diversis and other writers to have been the finest church in all Illyria. Ships from countries with whom there were no treaties paid the *arboraticum* and the *stata*.

The weakening of Venice in consequence of the Hungarian wars, although acceptable to the Ragusans for political reasons, produced a very deleterious effect on their commerce, as piracy revived; Ragusan unfriendliness was also punished on occasion by exclusion from the Venetian ports. Shipbuilding had declined to such an extent that in 1329 the Venetian Senate ordered the Ragusans to construct an arsenal where ships could

¹ *Istituzioni Marittime e Sanitarie*, p. 16.

² The custom was an Italian one, and the word *ceppo* is still used for Christmas box, or even for Christmas itself.

³ Gelcich, *op. cit.*, p. 17.