

prejudice to his sovereign lord. . . . In the year of our Lord (1190), in the month of February, on the day of St. Blaize (the 3rd), the Assembly having been summoned by Gervase the count to the sound of the bell, we decided," &c. Document xxiii., dated June 13, 1190, is a treaty between this same count of Ragusa and Miroslav, Prince of the Serbs, in which Gervase promises that the latter should receive hospitality at Ragusa if he ever required it, *salvo sacramento domini nostri regi Tancredi*.

The occupation of Ragusa by the Normans is evidently an episode in the wars which they waged against the Eastern Empire, and the town was probably seized merely as a basis for further operations. Gervase, who ruled the whole time, does not seem to have been an absolute despot, as the consent of the Assembly was required for all the acts of the Government. Norman rule in Dalmatia did not survive the death of Tancred and the consequent collapse of the Sicilian kingdom in 1190. In documents of a date posterior to this, such as the treaty with Fano in 1199,<sup>1</sup> with Ancona<sup>2</sup> of the same year, with Bari of 1201,<sup>3</sup> and with Termoli of 1203,<sup>4</sup> no mention either of Venetian or Norman counts is made, so that we may conclude that for the time being Ragusa enjoyed freedom from foreign rulers.

But Venice was preparing to re-occupy the whole of Dalmatia, and the Fourth Crusade of 1202 provided her with the desired opportunity. The Crusaders began their expedition to the Holy Land by storming and sacking Zara, where they wintered. In 1204 they captured Constantinople, subverted the Greek Empire, and set

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, xxvi.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, xxvii.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, xxviii.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, xxix.