

to a humble position, it is still the meeting point of many races. Italians, Bosnians, Herzegovinians, Montenegrins, Albanians, Turks, and Greeks throng its streets and piazzas on market days, filling them with brilliant costumes. Now that the railway from Mostar and Sarajevo has reached Gravosa, there is reason to hope that the ancient city of St. Blaize may once more become a trading centre of some importance. The prosperity of the hinterland which Austria-Hungary has reclaimed to civilisation cannot fail to have a favourable effect on Ragusa. Had not the Turkish invasion swept over the Balkans in the fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth centuries, Ragusa's position as a civilising influence would have been still more considerable. Later its rôle changed to that of intermediary between the Christian Powers and the Sultan, and in its history we see reflected on a small scale the vast struggle which convulsed Europe for four hundred years.

The second characteristic of Ragusa is its natural position. It is one of nature's fortresses, being surrounded by the sea on three sides, and the rocks on which it is built drop sheer down to the water's edge. It seemed indeed a suitable spot on which to erect a city, in days when security was the first, almost the only, consideration. As we approach Ragusa from the south, it stands out a mass of rocks rising up from the sea, crowned with towers, bastions, and walls, which have defied ages of storm and stress, still imposing, still beautiful.

A third feature intimately connected with the last is Ragusa's character as a haven of refuge. While all