

turned their attention once more to the development of their commerce, but they discovered that the conditions were entirely changed from what they were a hundred, or even fifty, years previously. The whole of the Atlantic and East Indian trade was divided between the English and the Dutch, and such of the Mediterranean trade as was not also in their hands was in those of the Venetians. The Ragusan merchant navy had been for the most part lost in the service of Spain or captured by pirates, and a large proportion of their seamen killed in battle or drowned. Their shipping was therefore reduced to little more than a few coasting vessels, and the Republic's only resource was now the land trade with Bosnia and the Herzegovina. But that too was less brisk than it used to be, as the general trade of the Balkans was tending more and more to follow the Budapest, Belgrad, and Sofia highway to Constantinople instead of the Adriatic routes. Decadence was setting in throughout Dalmatia, and the halcyon days of the Republic of Ragusa had passed away. The Italian trade now consisted of little more than the transport of grain necessary for the feeding of the inhabitants, and the Italian colony was very small. Few families from Italy, or even from other parts of Dalmatia and the Herzegovina, came to settle at Ragusa as heretofore. The old families were declining in wealth and activity, while a few newer ones from the neighbourhood monopolised the little trade that survived. On the other hand, luxury increased, public and private festivities became more frequent and more magnificent, so as to hide the symptoms of decadence, and the old accumulations of wealth were gradually