

that interest, the Ragusans enjoyed virtual independence. On the mainland they found themselves continually at loggerheads with the rulers of those regions; quarrels in which Venice took little or no part, but which were of vital importance to the Ragusans. And hence began that system of tributes whereby the Ragusans, with remarkable ability, succeeded in preserving their independence face to face with Hungarians, Bosniaes, Serbs and Turks. Venetian influence, if not domination, lasted from 1205 to 1521, when, by the peace of Zara, she lost all her possessions in the Quarnero and down the Adriatic coast. The mainland of Dalmatia and preponderating influence over the islands passed to the Crown of Hungary, then worn by Lewis the Great. Ragusa freed herself from a Hungarian governor by agreeing to pay a tribute, and the virtual and effective independence of the Republic was secured. The constitution was autocephalous and autonomous; the Senate elected the Rector; commerce flourished; the traffic with the Serbian and Bosnian hinterland,—which had always formed the vital source of Ragusan prosperity, and had led to the development of the Ragusan merchant-marine, with its “Argosies”, Ragusan craft, to be found in the distant waters of