

Venetians survived all perils, and so did the lady, who had come to look on them with filial regard; but two of the three envoys, and a vast proportion of the suite, had perished by the way.* Arghún Khan too had been dead even before they quitted China; † his brother Kaikhátú reigned in his stead; and his son Gházán succeeded to the lady's hand. We are told by one who knew both the princes well that Arghún was one of the handsomest men of his time, whilst Gházán was, among all his host, one of the most insignificant in appearance. But in other respects the lady's change was for the better. Gházán had some of the highest qualities of a soldier, a legislator and a king, adorned by many and varied accomplishments; though his reign was too short for the full development of his fame.

22. The princess, whose enjoyment of her royalty was brief, wept as she took leave of the kindly and noble Venetians. They went on to Tabriz, and after a long halt there proceeded homewards, reaching Venice, according to all the texts some time in 1295.‡

They pass
by Persia
to Venice.
Their rela-
tions there.

We have related Ramusio's interesting tradition, like a bit out of the Arabian Nights, of the reception that the Travellers met with from their relations, and of the means that they took to establish their position with those relations, and

perhaps gives the precise date of the Lady's arrival in Persia (see *infra*, p. 38). From his narrative, however (*Gesch. der Ilchane*, ii. 20), March 1294 is perhaps too late a date. But the five months' stoppage in Sumatra *must* have been in the S.W. Monsoon; and if the arrival in Persia is put earlier, Polo's numbers can scarcely be held to. Or, the eighteen months mentioned at vol. i. p. 35, must *include* the five months' stoppage. We may then suppose that they reached Hormuz about November 1293, and Gházán's camp a month or two later.

* The French text which forms the *basis* of my translation says that, excluding mariners, there were 600 souls, out of whom only 8 survived. The older MS. which I quote as G. T., makes the number 18, a fact that I had overlooked till the sheets were printed off.

† Died 12th March, 1291.

‡ All dates are found so corrupt that even in this one I do not feel absolute confidence. Marco in dictating the book is aware that Gházán had attained the throne of Persia (see vol. i. p. 36, and ii. pp. 50 and 477), an event which did not occur till October, 1295. The date assigned to it, however, by Marco (ii. 477) is 1294, or the year *before* that assigned to the return home.

The travellers may have stopped some time at Constantinople on their way, or even may have visited the northern shores of the Black Sea; otherwise, indeed, how did Marco acquire his knowledge of that Sea (ii. 486-488) and of events in Kipchak (ii. 496 *seqq.*)? If 1296 was the date of return, moreover, the six-and-twenty years assigned in the preamble as the period of Marco's absence (p. 2) would be nearer accuracy. For he left Venice in the spring or summer of 1271.