

that Marco the Traveller was called to the Great Council *after* the date of the document in question.

We have seen that the Traveller, and after him his House and his Book, acquired from his contemporaries the surname, or nickname rather, of *Il Milione*. Different writers have given different explanations of the origin of this name; some, beginning with his contemporary Fra Jacopo d'Acqui (*supra*, p. 54), ascribing it to the family's having brought home a fortune of a million of *lire*, in fact to their being *millionaires*. This is the explanation followed by Sansovino, Marco Barbaro, Coronelli, and others.* More far-fetched is that of Fontanini, who supposes the name to have been given to the Book as containing a great number of stories, like the *Cento Novelle* or the *Thousand and One Nights!* But there can be no doubt that Ramusio's is the true, as it is the natural, explanation; and that the name was bestowed on Marco by the young wits of his native city, because of his frequent use of a word which appears to have been then unusual, in his attempts to convey an idea of the vast wealth and magnificence of the Kaan's Treasury and Court.† Ramusio has told us (*supra*, p. 6) that he had seen Marco styled by this sobriquet in the Books of the Signory; and it is pleasant to be able to confirm this by the next document which we cite. This is an extract from the Books of the Great Council under 10th April, 1305, condoning the offence of a certain Bonocio of Mestre in smuggling wine, for whose penalty one of the sureties had been the NOBILIS VIR MARCHUS PAULO MILIONI.‡

It is alleged that long after our Traveller's death there was always, in the Venetian Masques, one individual who assumed the character of Marco Milioni, and told Munchausenlike stories

* Sansovino, *Venezia, Città Nobilissima e Singolare, Descritta*, etc., Ven. 1581, f. 236 v.; Barbaro, *Alberi*; Coronelli, *Atlante Veneto*, I. 19.

† The word *Millio* occurs several times in the Chronicle of the Doge Andrea Dandolo, who wrote about 1342; and *Milion* occurs at least once (besides the application of the term to Polo) in the History of Giovanni Villani; viz. when he speaks of the Treasury of Avignon:—"diciotto milioni di fiorini d'oro ec. che ogni milione è mille migliaja di fiorini d'oro la valuta." (xi. 20, § 1; Ducange, and *Vocab. Univ. Ital.*). But the definition, thought necessary by Villani, in itself points to the use of the word as rare. *Domilion* occurs in the estimated value of houses at Venice in 1367, recorded in the *Cronaca Magna* in St. Mark's Library. (*Romanin*, III. 385).

‡ "Also; that Pardon be granted to Bonocio of Mestre for that 152 *lire* in which he stood condemned by the Captains of the Posts, on account of wine smuggled by him, in such wise: to wit, that he was to pay the said fine in 4 years by annual