

and went to a certain great monastery<sup>1</sup> of the people of the country [which was called THEBE].<sup>2</sup> And he called to him one of their monks, saying: "Seest here this *Franki Rabban*? (which meaneth this Frank monk). He cometh from where the sun sets, and goeth now to Cambalech to pray for the life of the great Khan. Show him therefore, prithee, something worth seeing, so that if he get back to his own country he may be able to say, I have seen such and such strange things in Cansai!" And the monk replied that he would do so with pleasure.

So he took two great buckets full of scraps from the table, and opening the door of a certain shrubbery which was there we went therein. Now in this shrubbery there is a little hill covered with pleasant trees [and all full of grottoes].<sup>2</sup> And as we stood there he took a gong,<sup>3</sup> and began to beat upon it, and at the sound a multitude of animals of divers kinds began to come down from the hill, such as apes, monkeys, and many other animals having faces like men, to the number of some three thousand, and took up their places round about him in regular ranks. And when they were thus ranged round about him, he put down the vessels before them and fed them as fast as he was able. And when they had been fed he began again to beat the gong, and all returned to their retreats. So I, laughing heartily, began to say: "Tell me, prithee, what this meaneth?" And he answered: "These animals be the souls of gentlemen, which we feed in this fashion for the love of God!" But quoth I: "No souls be these, but brute beasts of sundry kinds." And

<sup>1</sup> The monastery which they visited in a boat was probably on the lake called *Sihu* ("Western Lake"), of which, with the temples, monasteries, gardens, and palaces which bordered it, Polo gives a brilliant account, confirmed by Martini and Alvaro Semedo, and to some considerable extent in later times by Barrow. (*Autobiog.*, p. 104.)

<sup>2</sup> MIN. RAM.

<sup>3</sup> *Cimbalum*. No doubt *gong* is the proper thing, though perhaps not the proper word to put into Odoric's mouth.