

wore, kissed the cross in the most reverent and humble manner. Now, the rule and custom of that court is that no one shall venture to come into the Khan's presence empty-handed. So Friar Odoric, having with him a small dish full of apples, presented that as their offering to the Great Khan. And he took two of the apples, and ate a piece of one of them whilst he kept the other in his hand, and so he went his way.

Now, it is clear enough from this that the Khan himself had some savour of our Catholic faith, as he well might through the Minor Friars who dwell at his court continually. And as for that cap which he doffed so reverently before the cross, I have heard Friar Odoric say that it was a mass of pearls and gems, and was worth more than the whole March of Treviso.¹

52. The blessed end of Friar Odoric.

Now, the blessed man Odoric,² after he had come back from foreign parts to his own province, to wit, the March of Treviso, became desirous of visiting the Supreme Pontiff, in order to obtain leave from him to take away with him again a body of fifty friars, no matter from what province, provided they had the will to go. So he departed from Friuli,

¹ FAR. here has the following nonsense, which is so great a falling off from the preceding pretty anecdote that I will not introduce it into the text: "Also I heard another thing from him. For he said that once every year the Great Khan sends one of his Tartars to the Soldan of Babylon, who receives him with great fear. And on an appointed day, the Soldan takes his place on one bank of a small stream, whilst the Tartar takes his on the other bank, with a bow bent in his hand, and a strongly poisoned arrow fixed therein. The Soldan takes his place with his knees bent and his hands clasped; he hath nought on his head, and nought on his back but a shirt. And the Tartar after giving him a great deal of harsh language calleth on him three times, saying: 'Confess then that thou hast thy life at the hand of the Great Khan, and that thou art his slave!' And the Soldan in great fear answereth that it is even so. And if he did not the other would incontinently slay him. Now this the Khan causeth to be done in token of his power; and I think it ought not to be let pass into oblivion."

² This is from FAR., comparing BOLL.