

beasts. But of these Jane Margaret had no fear, depending on the help of the Lord, who has promised to give His servants the power of treading on serpents and scorpions, and of chaining the mouths of lions; and in truth these animals never disturbed her, though she passed their dens again and again; it seemed as though they respected her and all that belonged to her, for they never approached her dwelling, and even spared a little squirrel which she had found in this wilderness, and taken home with her for company.

Here, too, as in the neighbourhood of her first solitude, she found a convent of monks; but this was at a more considerable distance, for she had three leagues and a half to walk before she could reach it, and that through tangled thickets; but in this convent she sought a confessor; the Superior received her with great kindness, believing her to be a poor country girl, and asking her no questions but such as were suitable to the rural life he supposed her to be leading. For the holy sacrifice she went to the hermitage of St. Antony, a league and a half on the other side of the forest.

When once fixed in this new abode, our solitary peaceably resumed the course of her accustomed exercises. She arranged for herself two cells in the hollow of two rocks very near to each other, and in the space between the two she formed a little chapel, which she delighted in adorning with verdure and wild flowers. She divided her time, as before, between labour and prayer, and her trances and ecstasies became more frequent and more sublime than ever; but her great humility made her distrust these extraordinary favours of Heaven, and she required to be set at rest concerning them by her director, with whom she continued to correspond, and to whom she continued, even to the end, to pour forth all the secrets of her soul with the simplicity of a child. Her last letter is dated the 17th of Sept. 1699. and in it she expresses a great desire to go to Rome in the course of the following year, in order to gain the indulgence of the jubilee, but at the same time