

At another time Our Lady appeared to her and presented to her a dish on which were the bleeding members of a child's body "It is thus," said the beloved Mother of the Saviour, "that sinners treat my Son!" The world, with its vices and crimes, the fatal scission in the occupancy of the papal chair, the distress and disorder which were the consequences, were all shown to her within a space of eight days. She saw souls falling into the eternal abyss like snow-flakes from the heavens, and the sight filled her with an intense hatred of sin and fear of God's judgments. This vision made such an impression on her, so stricken was she at the sight, that to prevent herself from falling into the yawning gulf that she saw at her feet, she was found grasping the bars of her window.

During the years of this voluntary seclusion her penances recall those of the Egyptian anchorites. Chains across her breast, an iron hoop around her body entering her flesh, blood-stained disciplines, the bare ground for a bed, a block of wood for a pillow, coarse food taken only after long fasts, were some of the exercises of her who never knew practically what sin was.

But there was something harder to bear than self-willed austerities. Troubles and perplexities of conscience came to afflict her. God was purifying and strengthening her soul, for He was preparing her for a great public mission. Colette sought refuge behind her humble birth and her simplicity; and chiefly, because of the vow she had made of perpetual retirement, she tried to persuade herself that what she saw and heard were simply illusions. After these precautions the world could not accuse her of credulity or ambition!

Several visions made known to her clearly her new vocation, and the lofty task that was to be confided to her. God was calling the humble maiden of Picardy to begin the reform of the Order of St. Clare and even of St. Francis. Heaven sent her a wise and enlightened director in Father