

A Christian Rule of life under
THE GUIDANCE OF GOOD ST ANNE

THE sixth Christian rule of life treats of the necessity of restraining in our hearts the lust of the flesh.

St Peter compares our adversary the devil to a lion — a mighty and bloodthirsty beast ; not to a lion shut up in a cage, nor to a lion gorged with food and sleeping in its den, but to a hungry lion prowling in search of prey. The lion draws near its victims stealthily and then with a sudden roar leaps upon it and rends it to pieces. Thus had the devil acted to St Peter : and Peter had been in his claws, and had been nearly devoured. Hence the earnestness of his appeal. As a man who had hardly escaped with his life might warn another of the dangers of an Indian jungle, so does St Peter warn us to be sober and watchful.

Therefore we must *be constantly on our guard against pleasure, lest it should become the sole end for which we act.*

Among all the emotions which agitate the heart of man, there is none more dangerous than pleasure. It is very difficult to guard against this passion, because pleasure creeps insensibly into everything we love, and is mingled with the very necessities of life. There is nothing, says St Thomas, that obscures the light of prudence as soon as pleasure. We cannot judge of it rightly, because, having been nourished in it from our infancy, it has corrupted our judgment. The passion, of pleasure is the first and strongest of all our passions, because it wields despotic rule over man before he comes to the use of reason. We must therefore firmly establish this principle, that we must die to all sensual pleasures, however insignificant they may appear, and that there is no diversion, recreation, satisfaction, or consolation derived from creatures, in which it is lawful for us to indulge ; unless reason, necessity or charity require it.

We should then carefully examine all the actions we have to perform, whether they be natural, social or religious, in order