

Excerpts from Butler's *Lives of The Saints*

ST NOTBURGA, VIRGIN (C. A.D. 1313)

NOTBURGA was the daughter of a peasant, and at the age of eighteen entered the service of Count Henry of Rattenburg and was employed in the kitchen. There was a good deal of food left over from the tables of this feudal establishment, and Notburga used to take it to one of the side doors of the castle and give it away to the poor people who daily waited there. Not content with this, she would even stint her own meals to increase the portion of the poor. When County Henry's mother died, his wife, the Countess Otila, looked less favourable on the charity of the kitchen-maid, and gave orders that the broken food was to go into the pigbuckets as heretofore, and be fed to the swine. For a time Notburga did as she was told, and gave to the poor only what she could save from her own food and drink, but she soon began secretly to continue her old practice, till one day her mistress caught her at it and she was dismissed. Count Henry in the meantime had been suffering considerably in the strife between the Count of Tirol and the Duke of Bavaria, and St Notburga's biographer, who wrote in the seventeenth century, says that Henry attributed all his misfortunes to the meanness of his wife, lately dead, and the consequent dismissal of Notburga. So, when he married a second time and somebody was required to manage the household, Notburga was installed as housekeeper and lived a happy and holy life at Rattenberg for the rest of her days. Before she died she particularly recommended her beloved poor to her master, and asked him to lay her body on a farm-wagon and bury it wherever the oxen should finally rest. This was done, and after a journey of which the usual miraculous accompaniments are recorded, the oxen brought the burden to a halt before the door of the church of St Rupert at Eben. Here accordingly St Notburga was buried.

ST GUY OF ANDERLECHT, (C. A.D. 1012)

ST GIU (Guidon), called the Poor Man of Anderlecht, was born in the country near Brussels, of poor parents, but both virtuous and happy. They were not able to give their son a school education, but instead they were diligent in instructing him early in the Christian faith and the practices of our holy religion. St Augustine says that God ranks among the reprobate, not only those who shall have received their comfort on earth, but also those who shall have grieved to be deprived of it. This was what Guy dreaded. In order to preserve himself from it he never ceased to beg of God the grace to love the state of poverty in which divine providence had placed him, and to bear all its hardships with joy. The charity which Guy had for his neighbour was no less active. He divided his pittance with the poor, and often fed them whilst he fasted himself.

When he grew up St Guy wandered about for a time, until one day he came to the church of our Lady at Laken, near Brussels, whose priest was struck with the piety and willingness of the man, and retained him in the service of his church as sacristan. Guy accepted the offer with pleasure; and the cleanliness and good order that appeared in everything under his direction struck all that came to that church. But Guy, like other simple folk before and since, was induced by a merchant of Brussels to invest his small savings in a commercial venture, with the unusual motive of having more at his disposal to relieve the poor.

The ship carrying their goods was lost in going out of harbour, and Guy, whose place in the church of Laken had upon his leaving been given to another, was left destitute. He saw his mistake in following his own ideas and in forsaking secure and humble employment to embark, though with good intention, on the affairs of the world, and he blamed himself for the false step he had taken.

In reparation for his folly Guy made a pilgrimage on foot first to Rome and then on to Jerusalem, and visited all the most celebrated shrines in that part of the Christian world. After seven years' absence he again reached Belgium, where he made his way to Anderlecht, dying from exhaustion and illness brought on by the fatigue of his journeys and other hardships. His soul to God. Shortly after he was received into the hospital of Anderlecht he yielded up his soul to God.