

# Dogs of historic great St. Bernard hospice in Switzerland vindicated

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## DOGS OF HISTORIC GREAT ST. BERNARD HOSPICE IN SWITZERLAND VINDICATED.

Reports have recently been circulated throughout the United States that the dogs of the historic Great St. Bernard Hospice in Switzerland were going to be "exiled" to Tibet, the reason for this drastic measure being the tragedy which took place at the Hospice in the Spring of 1937. At that time, for some still unexplicable reason, one of the famous dogs apparently went mad and attacked and killed a young girl skier. He atoned for his misdeed with his life, but had cast a shadow upon the fine reputation which his breed enjoyed for many centuries of life-saving service on the Great St. Bernard.

Some months ago the Police authorities of the Valais issued a report stating that the dogs on the Great St. Bernard Hospice are actually in finer condition than ever, that they are being housed in up-to-date kennels, and that they are, as heretofore, an object of admiration of the many tourists who visit this over one thousand years old institution of mercy in the Swiss Alps.

True enough, some St. Bernard dogs have been shipped to Tibet, but their destination was the Great St. Bernard Hospice which the Augustine Fathers established on the Li La Pass, 13,780 feet a/s, in the Himalayas.

In 1931, when the brethren of the Great St. Bernard Hospice decided that it would conform with the founder's wishes if some of their members would give their services to humans travelling in a region less accessible, but not equipped with the conveniences of radio, telephone and electricity, which their Swiss settlement now has, two monks departed for Tibet. They obtained the necessary permission from the Grand Llama and began exploring the far-away country, with the result that they decided to found a Hospice on the Li La Pass.

Twelve months later the reconnoitering party returned to Switzerland and in January, 1933, these brethren, together with another monk and a layman, who was to act as chief of construction, set out on their pioneering mission.

Early in 1936 a second exodus took place from the Great St. Bernard Hospice to the new Great St. Bernard foundation in Tibet. It consisted of two monks, a lay brother and a few St. Bernard dogs.

There are now 15 St. Bernard dogs on duty at the Hospice in Switzerland. The dogs are still performing their traditional life-saving service, although to a lesser extent. Among the several persons which they rescued during the winter of 1937-38 was their own keeper. On that particular day the dogs, sensing the approach of an avalanche, refused to follow their master, and while he was thus delayed an avalanche descended at the spot over which he had intended to travel.

The Augustine Fathers of the Great St. Bernard also own the Simplon Hospice, located on the summit of the Pass bearing this name, leading from Brig, Switzerland, to Iselle and Domodossola in Italy. Quite a number of St. Bernard dogs are kept in that institution.

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### SEVERE FROSTS IN SWITZERLAND.

Very severe and untimely frosts have caused heavy losses in fruit crops in many cantons. This year's crop will be very small indeed, according to the estimates in the main fruit districts. In the canton of Zurich the loss of apples is estimated at 50-80%, for pears 40-70%, cherries 70-95%, plums 40-60%. Canton Schwyz reports also a heavy loss in the crops of stone-fruit, but there may be still a fair crop of apples. In the Rhine valley of Graubünden vineyards have come off lightly. Such is also the case in St. Gall and Thurgau. Although a survey has not been completed yet, a fair crop may still be expected in those two cantons. In Schaffhausen, white grapes have suffered very much while the blue grapes were not very much affected. But the greatest part of the cherry crop is ruined. Similar reports came from Zug where nearly the whole cherry crop is done for, while the conditions of apples, pears, plums and prunes are fairly satisfactory. Lucerne is in a similar way. In Basleland, a survey has not yet been completed, but according to the positions of vineyards, from 20-90% of grape-blossoms have suffered. In the