

Severe frosts in Switzerland

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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

low-lying districts the loss in stone-fruit is from 80-100%, Bern's loss is from 50-100%. Tessin estimates the damage in the vineyards at two-thirds, while stone-fruits have come off more lightly. In Wallis, where in some of its districts fruit-growing is one of the mainstays of the people, this frost has been nothing short of a calamity. Since 1913 this canton has never experienced a frost of such severity. The whole crop of apricots, cherries, is practically done for, and other stone-fruit nearly so. Vineyards have suffered to the extent of 30-100% according to the more or less sheltered positions of the vineyards. The entire loss in fruit in this canton is about 80-85%. A later message states that the damage in Wallis is estimated at 12½ million francs.

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SWISS OVERSEAS.

Yet there is another countryman whose name stands prominent in the annals of history of the United States of America. A short time ago a soldier of the Old Brigade was buried in the Arlington National cemetery with all military honours. His name was Brigadier General Léon A. Matile, born in Neuchatel on the 28th September, 1844. He was the son of a Scientist, Professor G.A. Matile. As a soldier of the U.S. Army, he had a very distinguished career and just before his death he was the Guest of Honour at the annual banquet of the "Military Order of the Carabao", a society of ex-service officers who fought in the Spanish-American war and in the Philippines. The Army and Navy Journal, a very important and exclusive paper, gave the following resume' of his activities :

" Leon A. Matile who came as a youth with his father to the United States, entered the army when 19 years of age. As a soldier he fought in the American civil war, and was wounded at Atlanta, on the 7th August 1864. After the Civil War he remained in the regular army and until the Spanish-American War, served in the West and South-west, taking part in the activities against Indians of the Sioux, Crow, Pintes and Apache tribes. In 1898 General Matile occupied an important position in Alaska. When the war with Spain broke out, he was ordered to the Philippines where he was soon actively engaged. For bravery in action against the Rebels of Luzon he was decorated with the Silver Star. He returned home wounded, but 1901 found him once more in the Philippines. For this service he received the Order of the Purple Heart. In 1903, after 40 years of continuous service, he retired, but he still led an active life and never missed military functions. For many years he lived in Washington, but moved later to Plainfield. "

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NEWS IN BRIEF.

The Mammoth locomotive built by Sulzer Brothers of Winterthur, has been on its trial trips between Winterthur and St. Gall and has proved most satisfactory. With a train composition of 600 tons consisting of 4 axled passenger wagons, this giant was asked to do 100 kilometers per hour. Representatives from England, Spain, France, Bulgaria, Rumania, Japan and Germany were present; another proof of how interested foreign countries are in our Swiss products.

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Now and again we hear of Swiss who have made their name famous in foreign parts. Not only in war service but also in civil service, as well as in politics, do they appear in every country of the world.

During the last 25 years the South American Republic of Paraguay can boast of no less than two Presidents of Swiss origin. Between 1912 and 1916 Eduardo Schaerer of Vordemwald, Canton Aargau, held the most important office of that country. Today he lives in retirement in Asuncion, the capital of Paraguay. From 1928 to 1932 Dr. José Guggiari, a solicitor of Mator Di Savoia, Canton Tessin, held this position. During his term of presidency, a conflict broke out between Paraguay and Bolivia, about the Chaco district, which under his successor led to war. True to the old motto of our countrymen in foreign parts "Honour and Faith", these two men have put their name foremost in the service of foreign countries.

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