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God is the Sovereign
there is no God.

God is not the physical Being who directs and judges everything. Nature alone does that. God punishes everyone. God will one day destroy the whole world. God has created men and breathed their soul into them.

Mr. Oliver McCowen, who is organising the inquiry, hopes that it will be possible, when all the thousands of replies have been analysed, to draw valuable conclusions.

"During the past few years," he told the 'Daily News,' "I have travelled in nearly every country in Europe, and everywhere I find youth in revolt. Everywhere one finds the young refusing to accept the ideas or conventions of the old.

Mr. McCowen finds that one of the dominant ideas in the minds of the young is that peace—both international and industrial—is essential to the progress of humanity.

Let us hope that Mr. McCowen's findings, as mentioned in the last paragraph of the above, are really true. If the children now growing up really believe in Peace as a necessity, the signature of the Locarno Pact on Tuesday last will have yet greater significance.

Via Paris comes a story of a fierce—

Naval Battle on Lake Léman.

Daily Mail (23rd Nov.):—

The Swiss Navy is not, as many people think, a joke. It has just fought and won a desperate battle against pirates on the Lake of Geneva.

The action arose out of a frontier incident on the line dividing the waters of the lake between France and Switzerland. A French fishing-boat from Thonon-les-Bains was fishing at the lines it had laid down to capture the delicate lake trout, when it was pounced upon by a fast Swiss mosquito craft, a motor-boat, whose rôle is to prevent poaching in the Swiss waters.

The Swiss sailors claimed that the French boat was in Swiss waters, and casting grappling irons aboard the French craft, they proceeded to board it, revolver in hand.

The Frenchmen were outnumbered and unarmed, but they seized oars and gaffs and resisted desperately until they were overpowered. The Swiss warship finally towed its prize into the port of Vevey, where the two members of the crew of the French vessel were lodged in gaol.

This naval dispute is to be settled through diplomatic channels.

The Swiss, revolver in hand, must have exercised more restraint in not using them, when they were met with oars and gaffs in desperate resistance! Oh, oh!

Secret Swiss Posts.

The times in which we live breed secret societies everywhere. Not only Fascisti, Communists, Bürgerwehren, etc., but even more secret ones, and the latest one has just been unearthed in Switzerland, according to *The Times* of 23rd Nov.:—

By order of the Swiss Federal Post and Telegraph Department, the Geneva police have recently seized the wireless receiving set of a Geneva individual who had failed to register this set and to pay the yearly 10 frs. tax. According to the Swiss wireless regulations, which compel amateurs to register their post and to pay a tax, and which forbids them from writing down what they hear, a fine may be imposed up to 1,000 frs. The Swiss police have also seized ten secret broadcasting posts set up by a secret association of young men for corresponding between themselves in Switzerland and with foreign countries.

Now, broadcasting secretly and against the law must be put down, as any wireless fan will know. There is a more serious aspect than mere interference with the official broadcasting. Such secret broadcasting may be used for political purposes and may well give the Government in whose territory it takes place a lot of trouble.

St. Bernard's Hospice.

The passing of "free hospitality" by the St. Bernard's Hospice monks prompts Horace Wyndham to the following article in *Eve*, the Ladies' Pictorial of Nov. 18th:—

It may come, perhaps, as something of a shock to those who have visited it in the past to learn that the famous Hospice of St. Bernard is about to break the tradition of nearly a thousand years. The tradition is that of extending free food and a night's lodging to all who knock upon its doors. Instead of this, the system of imposing a fixed tariff is to be adopted.

The change has not been resolved upon lightly. It is a matter of necessity. Left to themselves, the good monks would infinitely prefer to carry on the generous practice of their founder, St. Bernard of Menthon, and accept nothing beyond any voluntary thank-offering that their guests choose to make. But the cost of providing the requisite food and shelter is now so much beyond the revenue obtained from this source that it has become imperative to raise funds by other means. This will be the more readily understood when it is said that the annual number of visitors to the Hospice exceeds 20,000.

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Of this army of guests, more than half are Italians, most of them workmen looking for employment in the Swiss valleys. The remainder come from all over Europe, with, perhaps, a couple of British and American tourists, who like to finish up a Swiss or Italian trip with an expedition to this part of the world. As a rule, they only make it in the height of summer. The Hospice is then fairly easy of access, whereas during the winter months it is almost entirely cut off by fierce storms and crashing avalanches, wrapped in continual fogs and mists, and half buried in great drifts of snow.

Where the tourist from Switzerland is concerned, Montreux, on the Lake of Geneva, offers a very convenient starting point, as there is a fair motor road the whole way to the summit of the Pass. The journey takes about six hours, the route being through Martigny and the Drance Valley. Every kilometre of the steep and winding road is historic. It has echoed to the tramp of Caesar's legions, to the footsteps of weary pilgrims, and to the tumble of the guns which Napoleon's "Grand Army" dragged with such effort across the Alps towards the battlefield of Marengo. At the little village of Bourg St. Pierre, where Napoleon slept for a night, stands a bridge said to have been built by the mighty Charlemagne, and adjoining it is a stone that still bears an inscription to Constantine. From here onwards the gorge becomes narrower and more precipitous with every step. There is scarcely any vegetation. The scenery is bare and bleak and desolate. Nothing but great wastes of trackless snow, and everywhere a brooding silence.

The Hospice of St. Bernard was founded in the tenth century by St. Bernard, a young priest who joined the Augustine Fathers and became Archdeacon of Aosta. The present building, however, dates from the sixteenth century. It consists of two large stone blocks, built four-square and solid to withstand the fierce storm that beat upon it, connected by a bridge, and with a couple of small outhouses adjoining. At the back, on the edge of the road leading towards Italy, is a little lake, round the banks of which a few pale pines and forget-me-nots are sometimes found. The Hospice contains about a hundred rooms in its two wings, with refectory, library and chapel, etc.

Among the visitors to the Hospice of St. Bernard have been many of distinction. The King and Queen of Italy have made several motor trips there from Aosta, and members of our own Royal family have signed the visitors' book. Queen Victoria once stayed within its walls for a night, and the late King Edward, as a very young man just beginning his travels, also experienced the hospitality of the monks. On returning to England, Queen Victoria sent her hosts a portrait of herself. This is still to be seen in the salon.

With regard to their sleeping accommodation, visitors are divided into classes, and rank as (1) tourists, (2) workmen, and (3) paupers. Only those in the first category can expect bedrooms, the others being allotted to dormitories. Where, however, their food is concerned, no distinction is made, and everybody fares alike. The menu is simple and plentiful and is served in separate dining-rooms, with one of the monks acting as host. After one night's lodging a guest must, unless prevented by illness or bad weather, continue his journey.

As a rule, the number of monks on duty in the Hospice at a time is fifteen. They are all members of the Order of St. Augustine, and generally begin their work of devotion and self-sacrifice at the age of twenty. The majority of them come from the Alpine districts, as few others can endure the rigorous climate for any prolonged period. As it is, even the strongest of them are apt to suffer from rheumatism and neurasthenia. They all have their special niche. Thus, one acts as Prior and directs the affairs generally; another instructs the novices; another is keeper of the chapel; another is librarian; another attends to the finances and stores; and another is in charge of the dogs. Provisions are obtained from Martigny and Aosta, and also from a farm and pasturage in the valley below. For crossing the snow the monks use skis. They were the first to introduce these articles into

Switzerland. This was in 1883, when they received a couple of sample pairs from Norway. These served as a pattern for others which they made in their own workshops.

Every visitor to the Hospice finds special interest in the famous St. Bernard dogs, with the maintenance of which the monks are traditionally connected. The pack was first formed about the year 1812, being specially bred from Newfoundland and either Danish or Württemberg mastiffs. Until the late 'sixties, when some puppies were bought from the monks by a British tourist, no specimens had been seen in England, for one that was given to the Prince of Wales as a souvenir of an earlier visit died before it left Italy. The dogs are all of considerable size, and are strong enough to carry a man on their backs. Their usual colouring is orange, but some are brindled or tawny, with white muzzles and chests. Like their masters, they seldom live long, as they develop rheumatism and heart trouble at an early age.

The training of the St. Bernard dogs begins almost when they are puppies. The first step in the process is to couple a young dog to an older animal and turn him loose some distance from the kennels. At first he runs backwards and forwards in a frantic attempt to discover the path. After a little time instinct teaches him not to stray, and he can then be trusted to go out by himself. The practice, however, when travellers are being searched for is to despatch the dogs in pairs. Should a wandering traveller be met, one dog will then stop beside him, while the other will run back to the Hospice and guide a rescue party to the spot.

Before the Hospice was linked up with the outer world by telephone, it was the custom for a band of monks and dogs to start from it every morning to search the tracks leading towards Italy and Switzerland. This, however, is no longer necessary, as a warning message is always given when anybody passes through one of the villages in the district.

I can well refrain from writing about Winter Sports in Switzerland this week, seeing that we can hardly keep warm ourselves here and have seen tobogganning nearly all over the South of England. Somehow I hardly feel so keen on wintry conditions in England, and the yearning for the first snow, which I well remember having possessed me in my youthful days, is absent, or at least very faint. I suppose as one grows older one grows not wiser, perhaps, but colder, and one appreciates warmth rather than cold. At all events, it does require an effort these frosty mornings to get up!

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