

GREAT St. BERNARDS.

THE Great St. Bernard of the present day is a powerful animal, as large as a mastiff, with close short hair and pendulous ears.

and varying in colour.

These dogs are kept by the monks of the Hospice of St. Bernard in their convent founded in 962 by Bernard de Menthon, a neighbouring nobleman, for the benefit of pilgrims journeying to Rome, and situated on one of the most dangerous passes between Switzerland and Italy, near the top of the Great St. Bernard, 8120 feet above the sea. It now affords sleeping accommodation for 80 travellers, and can give shelter to about 300.

The Hospice is connected with a station in the valley below, from which the

monks above are warned by telephone when travellers are on their way up the mountain. The keepers of the Hospice are a dozen or so of Augustinian monks, all young and strong, and their work is, with the aid of their dogs, to rescue travellers who are in danger of perishing from the snow and cold.

On such occasions these sagacious and powerful dogs set out from the convent in pairs, generally an old dog and a young one, one of them bearing a little barrel of

spirits attached to his neck, and the other with a cloak. Should they come upon a baffled yet struggling traveller, they conduct him to the convent, but should he have succumbed, and be covered by the snow, their keen scent detects his presence, although buried several feet below the surface. By loud barking (and a young dog of this breed kept some years ago in the suburbs of Edinburgh was able to make itself heard a mile away) they apprise the monks of the need of succour, while with their feet they attempt to clear away the snow from the body.



A ROUGH HAIRIED ST. BERNARD.

In this way these dogs are instrumental in saving many lives every year, although often at the sacrifice of their own: one dog which thus met with its death wore a medal stating that it had been the means of saving 22 lives.

The rigorous cold of the pass, and the difficulty of breathing the rarified air, often