

## “The Frozen Mother and Her Child”

Great St. Bernard Pass, the easiest pass over the Pennine Alps, towering 8111 feet high, leads from Martigny in the Swiss canton of Valais to the Italian valley of Aosta, and has been the scene of many a stirring event. Despite the easier methods of travel afforded by the tunneling of the Alps, considerable numbers still cross by the famous St. Bernard, and signal rescues from death continue to be recorded. One of the most touching of these Alpine tales was related to us by a personal friend who, in his extended tour of Europe, visited many of the monasteries and hospices situated mid eternal snows in the Alpine heights, including the famous St. Bernard. Known to all since the reading in our boyhood days of the rescues by the noble St. Bernard dog Barry and his equally noble companions.

In one of the monasteries, after being conducted over most of the other parts of the building, he was led to a peculiar chamber down in the basement of the structure. It was the temporary graveyard of deceased monks, or persons found dead in the snow. During certain months of the year the ground around the monastery is frozen as hard as the solid rock on which the building stands, and it is impossible to dig graves in the usual way. Hence the bodies are laid in this vault till the summer's sun prepares the ground to receive the "earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust," till the resurrection morning.

After walking around the lifeless bodies, his attention was fixed on a remarkable object in a corner. What could it be? A closer inspection revealed a poor mother almost naked, and clasped tightly in her arms a bundle of clothes from which there peeped the tiny face of her frozen child. The tragedy was self-evident. The family, consisting of father, mother, and child, had attempted to cross one of the steep and narrow Alpine passes and they lost their way, and were buried beneath one of the huge snowdrifts.

Left alone to die, the mother's love had taken first one article of her clothing and then another, and wrapping it round her darling child, hoped that the little one would be rescued alive. When found by the noble St. Bernard the parents were frozen and dead. The little one had evidently been still alive, but ere the monks reached the spot, and had the family removed to the hospice they were all united in death. There lay the father, stiff and cold, and close beside him the naked mother and the bundled child, a touching tribute to the oft-repeated theme, the strength of a mother's love.

This noble mother died for her own child; but the Lord Jesus Christ died for His enemies, (Romans 5:6,10), for sinners, for you. The mother died because she could not prevent it, but Jesus voluntarily gave Himself a ransom for all. He had power to lay down His life, and power to take it again. No man took it from Him. (John 10:18). ---  
By Hy. Pickering