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READERS' LETTERS

I WAS uplifted to read March issue letters from Miss Tiburtius-Iseli and Mrs Forrester.

I have been married to a Swiss for more than 20 years and before that worked for nearly seven years in Switzerland. It always was my ambition to live there. Unfortunately, quite soon after that dream was shattered.

My dear Swiss, we really try, but that awful wall you build around yourselves – they and us – your self-righteousness, complete inability to accept others' ways and ideals, as only yours are the right ones and, as your reader said, pre-occupation with mercenary matters. Not to forget, of course, your general lack of humour.

We hear continually of the Swiss linguists. Not one of my husband's family or friends speaks a word of English. Regarding scenery, we too have that, sporting also a wonderful coastline. WE know it's there, but we don't ram it down others' throats.

The well-fed, well-dressed etc.

Materialist road to isolation

etc. citizens could be any from the Western world although most other countries have fine womens' organisations where much useful and creative work is done so leaving the coffee shops to the youngsters. However, I will say the tea-rooms are excellent. Here you may boast.

The Swiss at one time were a very kind and pleasant people, but one has only to read your newspapers with their continual churning out of unpleasant foreign news and smugness of their own to see that you don't stand a chance. To read my in-laws' letters lately one would think that all England is still trying to dig itself out from under mounds of snow, being washed away by the floods, everyone joining the dole queue, living in con-

stant fear of the blacks, with hardly a crumb to eat or even heat to warm up our 'terraced' houses.

Two years ago a Swiss friend and I were walking over a bridge in the vicinity of Basle. It was on the left-hand side and a policeman shouted out to us to go back and cross on the right-hand side. This friend cringed with fear but I laughingly but politely told him in no uncertain terms what he could do, whereupon this friendly Bobby literally jumped up and down in rage. Deride your neighbour, promote yourself seems to be the order of the day.

Women's rights? Of course, you now have the vote. Farcical. Divorce your wandering, self-centred, egotistical husband and what rights are there? Especially if you happen to be a foreigner. In England we fall over backwards to help the underdog, which is probably where our weakness lies, but without money in Switzerland you don't stand a hope in hell of winning.

Swiss people, we wish we could like you, but while you put things before people you will become more and more isolated.

Your banks will get bigger, your chemical firms richer, the lucrative international organisations add to your funds, your cuckoo clocks become obsolete, the poor more downtrodden (yes, there are some, I have met them!) and your people . . . walking robots.

This is a personal look at Switzerland, but I trust it will show you how we mere foreigners view you and perhaps get you out of your preoccupation in relating everything to yourselves. Also, I would like to put it on record, in case you think that this letter is due to my marriage being on the rocks, that I am sorry to disappoint you.

My Swiss marvel (he tells me so) and I still have the same feelings that we felt for one another on our wedding day even after all our difficulties and my insisting and insisting that Everyone but Everyone has rights. Lucky indeed though, that I am extremely broadminded and

tolerant with, happily, a good sense of humour!

Why do I bother to read the Swiss Observer? I tell you, in all sincerity, probably because of my marriage and one exceedingly sweet sister-in-law, I still try to understand you and I do have a genuine interest in all peoples. Last, but not least, I so hope one day to hear our daughter say "Mummy, I'm glad Daddy's family is Swiss." Up until now she also, even from her grandmother, is 'one of those.' Should I ever hear that, then my long-awaited dream will have come true. Please help it.

One last thing. Mrs Forrester, you are lucky that your English husband is at home, as you say. My Swiss one is out again, busy making another £100 for . . . well, I don't know either. Some obscure reason or other. Still, live and let live. Perhaps I'll see him at breakfast.

Many thanks. Truly no offence – just something from my heart. – Joan Berger, Croydon, Surrey.

□ □ □

WHAT can I say about Solidarity, except how deeply sad I feel that a people who pride themselves as being the model for the world, can be so cruel and heartless to the poor little devils who come to their land to do an honest day's work.

The most cruel of all is not being allowed to bring their nearest and dearest with them. I wonder how many marriages have foundered on the rocks of such a law?

I had hoped the Ticinesi would have been different. Being a Ticinese myself I feel hurt and ashamed. What would have happened to us had England brought in such inhuman laws?

Thank you Basler Zeitung and Le Matin Tribune. It is nice to know that there are still some real humans left in Switzerland.

After all what it means is

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