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Woman's World

"An Innocent in England"

To become an English housewife was Lyse's ideal. To marry John, leave her native Switzerland, and go with him to his England was what she had set her heart on. It was all so easy. They bought each other rings, were married, and went by train and boat to the country that was to be 'home'; but Lyse reckoned without her mother-in-law. Mother, English to her very rigid backbone, did not take kindly to an alien as her son's wife. Mother had never planned that John should marry a foreigner—it was, after all, such a drawback for an Englishman — but faced with the accomplished fact she could at least do all in her considerable power to transform this particular undesirable into an acceptable Englishwoman.

First things coming first, Mother waged her personal war on Swiss under-clothes, for fine lawn and hand-embroidery were not suitable for English life, nor to move farther up, were gay red hats with feathers—which anyway only went limp under the Midland drizzle. Mother's attempts at family integration were not markedly successful. On her side Lyse had two invaluable assets: she loved her husband, and she never lost her sense of humour. Faced with a plethora of aunts and influential friends, faced even with John's first love—his green tandem—she upheld, as best she could, her Swiss ideas of industry and democracy. But it was the members of her own generation and eventually The Pines, that semi-detached tombstone, that taught her that home is where the heart is.

Mrs. Simpson writes from personal experience. It is lucky for the English that such an 'alien' never gave in before the seemingly overwhelming Englishness of her adopted home, but survived to tell this deliciously funny and heart-warming story.

("An Innocent in England", by Alyse Simpson, is published by Cassell.)

Miss Jeanne Hersch says

Women are logical. Miss Jean Hersch, Professor of Philosophy at Geneva University, told the Union familleecole recently: "Contrary to what one thinks, women are often better provided with logic than with imagination. They have done extremely well in mathematics and science, but comparatively few women have been successful writers or philosophers."

Miss Hersch was answering the question: "What is the use of educating girls?"

A lot of people, she said, thought it was useless because the girls were all going to get married.

But the training of intelligence was an investment in the future. The world had a great need for talent—whether it was masculine or feminine, and the private cultural standards of a family depended very much on the mother.

Education did as much for a woman as for a man, said Miss Hersch.

She did not think that studying would cause women to lose their femininity—being feminine only meant being natural, she said.

Shortage of nurses

Switzerland is short of nurses. Although twice as many received their diplomas in 1959 as in 1941, demand still exceeds supply. Hospitals estimate that between 3,000 and 5,500 more nurses of either sex are needed. And one of the main causes is marriage.

Other causes are the increase in the number of hospital beds, combined with the increase in the population; the progress made in medicine, which involves the use of more nurses, and the reduction in the hours of work.

The shortage of nurses varies from canton to canton and is much greater in isolated country areas.

Equality!

Equal pay for women has been turned down by the Geneva Conseil des Etats—once again. The Conseil decided that the recent 22 to 14 vote would be final, despite the international agreement about equal pay for men and women.

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9 DELICIOUS VARIETIES