

S.O. s Victory

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AN EVENING WITH MAURICE CHEVALIER

The famous French star, Maurice Chevalier, will give a gala performance in London on 2nd May. He will appear at the Saville Theatre in aid of the French Hospital and Dispensary in London. This will afford the Swiss Colony an opportunity to show its appreciation of what the French Hospital is doing for our fellow countrymen, of whom a large number are treated at the Hospital every year. The Swiss Ambassador and Madame Daeniker are Patrons, and the Chairman is H.E. Baronne De Courcel.

The original French Dispensary was founded by Dr. Achille Vintras in 1861, and in 1867 it was amalgamated with the new French Hospital which opened in Leicester Place on 1st December 1867.

Its purpose was to assist distressed French-speaking persons of all nationalities requiring medical assistance, and so great was the demand for its services that it was enlarged in 1878. Even so, the organization was not large enough and a new Hospital, on the present site in Shaftesbury Avenue, was inaugurated in 1890.

The list of the 1867 Founders was headed by Her Majesty the Empress Eugenie, His Majesty the King of the Belgians and the French Embassy; and the list of Founders of the new Hospital, in 1890, was headed by Her Majesty Queen Victoria and included also the French, Belgian and Italian Governments, the Swiss Conseil Federal as well as the Cities of London, Paris and Antwerp.

Although the Hospital and Dispensary was enlarged in 1893 and 1910, by 1957 an urgent need of modernisation in all departments was felt, and a big scheme was instituted involving an expenditure of £70,000 or more.

Her Majesty the Queen, a Patron of the Hospital, was graciously pleased to send a generous contribution towards the cost of modernisation, and the Hospital was also privileged to receive a personal donation from the President of the French Republic, General de Gaulle.

About half of the essential work of modernisation has now been carried out, but more money is urgently needed in order to complete the work. Many of the patients are of British nationality, but nationals of some fifty countries have been included amongst the 63,000 persons who have been admitted as In-Patients. Furthermore, the Hospital deals with many casualty and emergency cases, and thus makes a valuable contribution to the public health of London.

Nevertheless, because of its French origin and direction, it operates outside the framework of the National Health Scheme, so that it is dependent upon voluntary contributions for all its financial needs.

Maurice Chevalier will entertain the audience with the songs and sketches which have made him world famous, and the evening promises to be a great success. At the same time it is hoped that a substantial amount of money will result from the combined efforts of the French, the Belgian and the Swiss Colonies.

Tickets at 10 gns., 5 gns., 3 gns., 2 gns. and 1 guinea for dress circle or stalls and at 20/-, 10/- and 5/- for upper circle can be had from the organiser, Miss Irene Edwards, 2A Trebeck Street, Curzon Street, W.1, telephone Grosvenor 3278/8452. It is also possible to reserve space for advertisements in the souvenir programme at £25 for a full page, £12 10s. for a half page or £6 5s. for a quarter page. Anybody who cannot attend the gala performance would perhaps like to send a donation. Cheques are to be crossed and made payable to "An Evening with Maurice Chevalier", Williams Deacon's Bank Ltd.

S.O.'s VICTORY

This little story appeared on 18th March 1933. It was written by a young Swiss teenager temporarily in England. She signed herself "Mariann". She was obviously convinced of the importance of the "Swiss Observer" though she could at that time not possibly have had any idea that she would one day become the Editor.

Pips came home after a very amusing evening. The night was getting on and he felt rather funny. He was tempted to open a certain bottle on the bottom shelf of the shoe cupboard. But he said: "No, Pips be a sport and go to bed. You've had quite enough, why should you sigh for more!" And off he went to bed — rather unsteadily, but all right otherwise. Yet something went wrong. He forgot to switch the light off in his sitting-room. It was a dark room with the characteristic bachelor-atmosphere. Many papers scattered about all over the place. Any orderly creature would have had a fit at seeing the untidy mess. But what did it matter? Pips was quite happy. He did not mind. His landlady used to tidy up at one time, but he got so cross with her that she thought it wiser to leave everything as she found it. The old furniture, the shabby-looking carpets, the pictures, a few faded photographs of film stars, some souvenirs of the prime of his life — everything was in perfect silence. Everything — except a neat white paper called the *Swiss Observer*. He was rather spoiled and couldn't bear the bright light. He was young and a new inhabitant of that room. He was resting comfortably on the top of the typewriter case.

"Hallo," he said, "is nobody going to switch that beastly light off! I want to sleep!" A large copy of *The Times* woke up and got vexed: "Pipe down you horrid thing!" and moved to the very middle of the cushion. A *Financial Times* and the *Efficiency Magazine* didn't like being disturbed either and shouted at the intruder. An aristocratic *Daily Mail*, a filthy-looking *Zürcher Illustrierte* and a few more woke up and an awful row started. Only *Britannia and Eve* seemed to sympathise with poor S.O. *Daily Mail* was too exclusive for words. He left the writing table and slipped down between the sofa and the wall. *The Times* shouted: "Why must you come here? Are there not enough of my colleagues?" — "Yes," said a *Morning Post* of last December, "when I came here it was quiet and none of these boisterous young papers spoiled our night." — "You might just as well shut up, *Morning Post*," said the *Efficiency Magazine*. "You are an old grandfather. But I suggest we sack this foreign product." A few papers agreed eagerly and *Evening Standard* said: "Buy British!" S.O. had not yet said anything and he obviously was preparing a speech. As a matter of fact he had no right to be there, but Pips had picked him up that same morning in the "tube" where a young fair-haired fellow had dropped him. He was not pleased in that dark study; but after all — if he could gain a few more sympathisers — his "firm" was so badly off. There the *Evening Standard* in his glory started shouting again, and the Swiss paper cursed him, and blowing his nose began his defence in an important voice. I must say it was a wonderful speech, not accepted with pleasure by his enemies. He blamed one of them for being too large, the other too dirty, the third too silly. And after some 25 minutes several of the papers had left their places, and hidden themselves wherever they could — they were so ashamed. The *Efficiency Magazine* was still there and so was *The Times*. The latter almost buried S.O. with his

enormous body. But *S.O.* was strong and soon got rid of *The Times* by tearing him up completely. There he lay — remains of a glorious past. *Swiss Observer* threw a corkscrew at his half-sister *Sie und Er* and killed her on the spot. *Britannia and Eve* had left the room before, it was not a very decent affair. — There still was the *Efficiency Magazine*. *S.O.* clever and strong kicked the ink-stand and the nice yellow cover of the Magazine became blue-black. — The victory was his! He went to the sofa and lay down on the cushion — proud and happy. —

Pips had a rather restless night. When he got up in the late morning, he felt a bit queer. He wanted to forget his headache by reading some papers. But where on earth had they all gone to? He saw the black wreck of the *Efficiency Magazine*, and the hundred bits of *The Times*. Thank goodness he found one — *S.O.* He soon got interested, and when he had finished it he said: "Gosh! What an intelligent paper! I had no idea of its existence! Everything else is tosh in comparison!" He wrote a cheque for 12s. to 23 Leonard Street straight away. And *Swiss Observer's* victory was complete.

Mariann.

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