

CHARLIE COMES HOME

Back to Britain in the liner "Queen Elizabeth," comes Charlie Chaplin after an absence of twenty-one years, and this time he's brought his lovely young wife, Oona, daughter of American playwright Eugene O'Neill, and their children. Geraldine is just six years old.

Charlie may not have brought his little moustache or bowler hat with him, but everyone at Southampton knows him just the same, and here's one docker who even manages to get a personal souvenir from the great little clown.

Three-year-old Josephine Chaplin shows plenty of signs of her mother's good looks. Now in the voice that remained silent for so many years, Charlie tells us of his homecoming:

- Charlie: "It's nice to be here I assure you."
- Interviewer: "Could you give us some idea of your plans?"
- Charlie: "Well, we're going to see beautiful England - land of my birth. I'm going to take my beautiful wife to Stratford-on-Avon, Scotland and everywhere."
- Interviewer: "This is her first visit here is it?"
- Chaplin: "Yes, this is her first visit. And I haven't been here in 20 years."
- Interviewer: "Is it as long as that?"
- Chaplin: "Yes, it's as long as that. Yes in 1931."
- Interviewer: "Well, it's nice to see you back."
- Chaplin: "Thank you very much."

On the train heading for London, the city where he was born sixty-three-years ago, Charlie shows his wife some of the places he knew as a child, the humble, poor places where he was reared and about which his son Michael has only heard.

Now the train draws into Waterloo Station, only a short distance from Chaplin's actual birthplace, and what a great reception greets him and his family from the thousands who have gathered to welcome him home. Chaplin's last London visit, in 1931, was a triumph. The nation's leaders and great personalities feted him as no other star had ever been before. But it was the ordinary folk of Britain who

really took him to their hearts, the people he loved and knew because he was one of them and understood them. When he left America a week ago, Charlie was worried in case our affection for him had dimmed. Londoners show him now that he need not have worried - we can never forget him or the laughter he brought into our lives.

At the Savoy Hotel, Chaplin and his family are to spend a few days before they tour Britain. A crowd quickly gathers outside as Charlie makes his way onto the roof, from where, with his wife he looks down upon the city for which he has such great affection.

Already the Chaplins are making plans to buy a house near London. From there his son Michael will go to school while Charlie sees again the beauty spots that are ever fresh in his memory. But, for the next few days, Chaplin will be (as he puts it) "soaking himself in the atmosphere of London." There in the city upon which he now looks down, he will find many friends. Some knew him as a boy, some remember him as a promising young actor, but all will know him. Throughout the world he is loved for his genius. Chaplin was not born great. Yet in a lifetime crowded with laughter (and tears) he has achieved an everlasting greatness.