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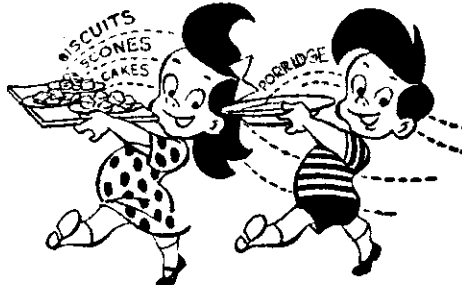
in his football boots,
Big, brave, bonny and bold,
Hope of his team was Timothy
Toots;
Pity he caught that cold!
Only two days to the greatest match
Of the famous football tour,
How did our Tim the victory
snatch?
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13

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"FINE or COARSE"



Film Reviews, by P.J.W.

VANISHED YEARS

COME BACK, LITTLE SHEBA

(Paramount)

SHIRLEY BOOTH'S performance as the slatternly housewife in *Come Back, Little Sheba*, a film adaptation of William Inge's Broadway play, is as fine a piece of acting as we are likely to see on the screen for some time. She plays with complete absorption and restraint the part of a woman who has seen the best years of life pass by leaving her middle-aged, childless and disappointed. She seems lost in the aimlessness of her marriage to a man (played by Burt Lancaster) whose own frustrations and disappointment, linked with hers, have turned him into an alcoholic. These years of their married life, which, she says, have "just vanished," are symbolised in her imagination by the memory of her pet dog, Sheba, which one day ran away and has never come back.

Yet out of such sombre material she has created a screen personality of intense vitality and sly humour. Her sloppy, untidy clothes, the lack of interest in housekeeping which makes her incapable even of getting her husband's breakfast before he goes to work, are amusingly contrasted at the beginning of the film with his own quiet uprightness and neat pride. He has been cured of his alcoholism and has not had a drink for a year, but his temporary recovery is destroyed by the arrival of a pretty young co-ed from the university (Terry Moore), who becomes a boarder in the house. In his fear that the girl will be unable to resist the attentions of a wolfish fellow student (Richard Jaeckel), and will repeat the empty pattern of his own married life, he breaks out again, abuses and threatens his wife in his drunkenness, and has to be sent to the hospital for a second cure.

The resolution of this dramatic situation is worked out on fairly conventional lines, and it is in the early part of the film that the main interest lies. The gradual revelation of the real tragedy behind the lives of this couple, and the parallel development, achieved with great subtlety by Shirley Booth, of the character of Lola Delaney, has been

BAROMETER

FINE: "Come Back, Little Sheba."
FAIR TO FINE: "Partie de Campagne."
MAINLY FAIR: "Bloodhounds of Broadway."

very skilfully done. The play has been more than usually well adapted to the screen by its director, Daniel Mann.

PARTIE DE CAMPAGNE

(Pantheon-Film Traders)

JEAN RENOIR'S adaptation of Guy de Maupassant's short story, *Partie de Campagne*, photographed by his brother Claude, is in many ways a small masterpiece. The setting is a stream in the country near Paris where, in the year 1860, a bourgeois ironmonger, his wife, his daughter and her fiancé arrive for a day's outing. Their picnic on the banks of the stream is interrupted by two young men who are staying at the inn near by and who succeed in taking the two women boating, while the father and his prospective son-in-law go fishing.

On the river the first of the young men (Jacques Borel) succeeds in conquering the affections of the ironmonger's daughter (Sylvia Bataille), and his companion (Paul Temps) succeeds in similar fashion, but with considerable comic by-play, in overcoming the plump and giggling wife. The sequel to this afternoon of love-making appears in the film's last sequence, when the first of the young men returns some months later to the spot where he had known the few idyllic moments in his dissolute life, and finds the girl also there—but accompanied this time by the clownish fiancé (George Saint-Saens), whom she has by now married. The role of the gross, pompous, but good-natured father is played by the actor Gabriello.

The scenes by the river are photographed in a manner that recalls the luminous landscapes of the Impressionist painters. The film is beautifully done, with a nice irony of mood contrasting with scenes of alternating tenderness and rustic comedy. *Partie de Campagne* is only 4000 feet long, and was left unfinished by Renoir when he went to America during the war years. But as it now stands it is to all intents a rounded work of art, carried out with a rare purity of design and execution.

BLOODHOUNDS OF BROADWAY

(20th Century-Fox)

IN this fable of New York, lightly based on the stories of Damon Runyon, there is a good deal of pleasant comedy, dancing, singing and so forth. Numbers Foster (played by Scott Brady) and his pal Poorly, returning to New York by car after a visit to Florida to avoid a bookmaking rap, get lost in the mountains, and meet Emily Ann (Mitzi Gaynor) and her two bloodhounds Nip and Tuck. Numbers rescues Emily Ann from her feuding hill-billy friends and takes her back to his Broadway nightclub. What follows is more or less routine guys and molls stuff, with the cops and crooks trying to out-manoeuvre each other until Emily Ann persuades Numbers to give evidence before the Senate Crimes Commission and renounce his sinful life.



SHIRLEY BOOTH

"Vitality . . . with great subtlety"

N.Z. LISTENER, JULY 24, 1953.