

Ragging And De-Bagging

I HAVE made a good deal of those opening sequences—without doing justice to them—because they are typical of the spirit of the show.

But what comes after is just as good. Oxford does not take kindly to the bragging of Mr. Sheridan. It rags him and de-bags him; but has to admit that he is a super-athlete, after he has won a freshman's race in cap and gown, pulled off the inter-varsity relay, and put his college at the head of the river in the annual bumping races.

It also has to admit, at time goes on and Mr. Sheridan falls under the spell of the ancient city and the charming Maureen O'Sullivan, that he isn't such a bad fellow after all. Eventually the heroine's brother, Griffith Jones, is the only die-hard Sheridan-hater left, and even he comes round at the end when Sheridan nobly shoulders the blame for a Jonesian escapade with a married woman (Vivien Leigh) and by so doing jeopardises his chance to row in the big race against Cambridge. However, diplomacy by Mr. Sheridan's father (Lionel Barrymore) puts Mr. Sheridan back in the Oxford boat in time for a last-minute victory over the Light Blues.

Kicking The Dean

THE trouble with that rather bald recital of the story is that it shows up the familiarity of the situations without giving much hint of their freshness of treatment or the excitement with which they are invested. Nor does it suggest at all the mellow Englishness of the backgrounds.

As a true chronicle of Oxford life, the film is probably not without its peculiarities. For instance, would one find at Oxford a Dean who would have to fight back the atavistic desire to kick even as annoying an undergraduate as Mr. Sheridan in the seat of his gown—even when the said Dean had just suffered a similar indignity from the said undergraduate? Now, if it had been Cambridge, . . .

Alice Brady and Charles Winninger, as they appear in Universal's forthcoming release, "Good-bye, Broadway," a comedy-drama of theatrical life.



And, as usual in college pictures, the emphasis is on sport rather than learning. Practically the only mention of study is when his tutor asks the Yank what he is reading, and he replies that he is still only half way through "Gone With the Wind!"

Mellow With Age

YET even so, this film has an almost perfect atmosphere. I don't know how much of it was actually made on the spot, but I do know that it does suggest something of the antiquity and traditions of Oxford. This is conveyed by one or two brief panoramas of the ancient city slumbering by the Isis, by the sound of bells, by a glimpse of May morning on the river, and by a few words spoken by Edward Rigby as the old college servant, to the despondent Yank: "In this very room Sir Walter Raleigh must have heard those bells as you are hearing them now . . ."

Not Just Handsome

IF in the past I have been inclined to doubt Robert Taylor's acting ability and have suggested that his talent is mainly decorative, let me now make amends by stating that he gives a grand performance—and a sympathetic one—in a role that quite easily could have been thoroughly obnoxious. Underneath the cocksure Americanism of Mr. Sheridan there is a charm that is quite as real and infectious as that of his English colleagues.

Griffith Jones, as handsome as a young Anthony Eden, is a coming star, or I'm the world's worst critic; and attention also, please, for Robert Coote as the brainless student who cannot achieve his ambition to be "sent down." Coote, you may remember, was almost the best thing worth seeing in the Australian "Rangle River." But it's the old boys like Edward Rigby, C. V. France, Edmund Gwenn and Morton Selten who walk off with the real plums in the supporting cast, with Lionel Barrymore trailing far behind.

Of the two girls, Maureen O'Sullivan



You're not supposed to know it, but this is Mae West disguised as a Parisian actress in her latest Paramount picture, "Every Day's a Holiday."

and Vivien Leigh, the latter has it all her own way, so far as acting goes, in the particularly difficult role of the college flirt who causes half the trouble in the story. I do wish, though, that Miss Leigh hadn't worn that hat tied on with a bow under her chin.

That I am reduced to criticising a girl's hat may give you some idea of how much I enjoyed "A Yank at Oxford."

Nice work, Mr. Metro. Mr. Goldwyn, and Mr. Mayer!

"A Yank at Oxford." M-G-M. Directed by Jack Conway. Starring Robert Taylor. First release Wellington and Auckland, July 1 (tentative).

Two Pleasant Family Pictures

Judge Hardy Again

IT seems I'm just a sentimentalist at heart after all, because I find something enormously refreshing about the new series of pictures M-G-M. is making dealing with the exploits of Judge Hardy and his American family. The first of these, "A Family Affair," was released some time last year, but the second and third—"You're Only Young Once" and "Judge Hardy's Children"—have just come to hand, with Lewis Stone now occupying the position of head of the family, formerly held by Lionel Barrymore. The change is for the better, I think.

These pictures have a simple, homely quality; and, if they do nothing else, they should at least help to dispel the belief that the ordinary American