Bolger, Day Star

# Broadway

By Mark Barron

New York — Being a typical Broadway man, playwright John Ceeil Holm rushed back to his isolated home in North Chatham, Cape Cod, Mass., the other day when he had finished writing the film script of "From Main Street to Broadway." Between the film scenes in

Broadway's Martin Beck theatre, he told the story of how Shirley Booth was cast in the leading role

Booth was cast in the leading role of the stage comedy, "Three Men On a Horse," a play which Holm and George Abbott wrote and which ran for 835 performances on Broadway beginning in 1935.

"Abbott and I saw Shirley playing in a sketch by Dorothy Parker in a revue called 'Sunday Nights at Nine.' "Holm said. "Two girls came out and sat at a table, had a soda and they talked about me. a soda and they talked about me, and life and, I think, Brooklyn. Shirley was the blonde girl; every so often I wonder who the other

"After the show I went up to a room in a hotel which was occu-pied by Shirley and her then hus-band, Ed Gardner, who was affec-tionately called 'Poggie.' He was in a dinner jacket and he was in the show. The deal was, as I recall, that they were given use of the room for these Sunday night shows. Perhaps they received their meals also because Shirley was well enough nourished to attend rehearsals and 'Poggie' went on from there to become a big radio name on his own.

"Abbott and 1 felt that Shirley was the girl for "Three Men On a Horse' and shortly after that we went into rehearsals. Mabel, the character Shirley had to play in 'Three Men On a Horse,' was a very human not-too-bright ex-Follies girl. Her future seemed to be wrapped up in the fortunes of a race tout and horses, while she spins out her dreary present in the fly-specked interior of the Lavillere hotel.

"This could have been a surface smooth, flashy, sexy, dumb dame. But there was more to the role than that and Shirley sensed it at once. Day by day the part developed in rehearsal until, when she opened in New York, she had given the role a sort of pre-cineramic

The other day Holm walked past the Empire theatre where Shirley Booth is now starring in the hit comedy, "The Time of the Cuckoo," and it looked like happy lights to

and it looked like mappy lights to everyone on Broadway.

"A lot of us around Broadway knew she'd get there someday," Holm said. "In fact she's been there quite awhile. And one of the most sure and determined about the whole thing was Shirley Booth

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When an American girl dresses up for her presentation to royalty, even her beribboned, lace corset deserves the closest scrutiny. Here, Lana Turner poses for inspection by her companion, Una Merkel, in a scene from M-G-M's lavish Technicolor production of "The Merry Widow." Fernando Lamas co-stars with Miss Turner in the famous Franz Lehar musical romance.

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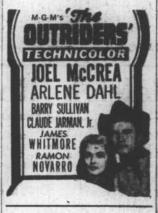
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