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quantitatively speaking—it could not be so, since in "Til We Meet Again" both the principal characters are doomed, Merle Oberon by angina pectoris, George Brent by society. Yet to me Bette Davis was more tragic in her essential loneliness, and I am almost tempted to think of "Til We Meet Again" as a tragedy with a happy ending. However, although it suffers by comparison with "Dark Victory," it is good entertainment. If Merle Oberon has not yet the acting experience of Bette Davis, her very youthfulness, by heightening her personal tragedy, to a great extent makes amends for this. Speaking parenthetically, I would prefer to see her in a happier part. As the condemned murderer being brought back to expiate his crime, George Brent is competent, but does not, in my opinion, rise above mere competence—and I do wish he hadn't grown those Hollywood moustaches. There's good supporting work from Eric Blore, Frank McHugh and Pat O'Brien.

ALL THIS, AND HEAVEN TOO

(Warner Bros.)

 RACHEL FIELD'S "All This, and Heaven Too" is, for a large part of its length, a novel of violent emotions told without violence. Both the leading characters, the Duc de Praslin and the governess, "Mademoiselle D," whose names are linked in scandal and murder, are characters under restraint, and even the psychopathic Duchesse does not make a habit of tearing her passion to tatters in public. It might be argued that it is this very restraint, or repression if you like, that makes the climax so explosively violent, but that is rather beside the point. The men and women of the story seldom forget that they have been brought up as ladies and gentlemen; they have strong feelings but their code of manners demands that they be hidden. The effect of all this in the novel is striking. It is as if the dignified, somewhat stuffy atmosphere of the 19th century setting and the discreet and formal behaviour of the characters had been communicated to the narrative, which is none the less powerful and absorbing because the emotional conflict is built up gradually and almost wholly by inference.

But in the film version it is very different, and if you are surprised that it should be so, I can only say that you don't know Hollywood. For Hollywood in general isn't too keen on restraint. For example, in the novel you are never quite sure just what was the real nature and extent of the Duc's feeling toward "Mademoiselle D," nor whether she was in love with him. The film, however, doesn't leave you in any doubt after Charles Boyer has finished rolling his eyes and sighing gustily and making a death-bed speech, and after Bette Davis has laid a flower on his dishonoured grave. As for the Duchesse, she was never quite such a blatantly obvious case of frustration, though in some ways Barbara O'Neil does come nearer to her part than do most of the others.

To be fair, it is not easy to translate the impalpable qualities of a novel like "All This, and Heaven Too," through the medium of the screen. The book can build up an effect over several chapters; the film must try to achieve it in a scene or two (and heaven knows the film is long enough in all conscience!) It might not have been beyond Hollywood's power

to have made the film much closer in spirit to the book, but I am afraid that if they had used more restraint and subtlety the box office would have reacted much less favourably, for the public seems to prefer its eternal triangles to have plain sides and sharp points.

There is no doubt about the success of "All This and Heaven Too" from the box office viewpoint (it has already run six weeks in Auckland). From any other viewpoint it is a qualified success. The acting, within the limits which the producers imposed, is mainly very good, with Bette Davis taking the honours by a narrow margin

from her co-star, Boyer, whose physical appearance I couldn't quite reconcile with Rachel Field's description of the Duc. The performances of the youngsters portraying the Praslin children are mixed, but the scenes of the governess with her small charges are among the best in the picture.

The film deals only with the Parisian part of the novel, which is the "juiciest" from the movie point of view. As it is, it takes "Mademoiselle D" more than two hours to reach happiness in America, and by that time even the most enthusiastic admirers of the story will probably feel some relief that Warner Bros. did not go on to give us Heaven too.

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