

INSIDE HOLLYWOOD

THE BAD AND THE BEAUTIFUL

(M.G.M.)

IF we are to believe what has been shown us in films like *Sunset Boulevard*, life in Hollywood is a pretty gruesome affair. Directors and scriptwriters stab each other in the back, actors wage continual war for publicity, nearly everyone is morally corrupt or depraved. The latest movie to look at Hollywood does nothing to dispel this idea. *The Bad and the Beautiful* is the story of an inspired but ruthless film producer named Jonathan Shield (Kirk Douglas), who claws his way to fame by taking the credit for the ideas and abilities of the talented people who work for him, and then throwing them over. But it appears that he isn't such a bad sort of fellow after all, since he does these things for the sake of art—he is a perfectionist whose aim is not self-aggrandisement, but the making of good pictures.

The producer is seen through the eyes of three people who once worked for him, a director (played by Barry Sullivan), an actress (Lana Turner) and a script writer (Dick Powell). The story

BAROMETER

FAIR: "The Bad and the Beautiful."
MAINLY FAIR: "A Girl in Every Port."

begins with the three gathered together by Jonathan Shield's old friend (Walter Pidgeon) to decide whether they will make one more film for him in order to save him from bankruptcy. As they try to make up their minds they brood over their past associations with him. The director recalls the first part of the great man's career, then the actress takes over, and finally the script writer brings us up to date. Do they decide to help him? Naturally there's only one answer.

In the course of these three lengthy flashbacks we are shown not only the rise and fall of a movie tycoon but also a picture of how films are presumably made in Hollywood. Everyone at some time or other gets drunk, goes to wild parties, whirls around in high-speed automobiles, spends the evening with a call-girl, falls in love, and so forth. The only thing wrong with this picture is that it is just about completely unbelievable. None of the characters—with the exception of Gloria Grahame, who plays Dick Powell's Southern wife—comes to life. The production is as

glossy, slick, and tricky as a magazine serial, and has besides a distinctly second-hand look. The story is more than a little indebted to such books as F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Last Tycoon* and Budd Schulberg's *What Makes Sammy Run*, and the approach is reminiscent of that used by Orson Welles in *Citizen Kane*.

Yet the film exercises an eerie fascination for all that. It is realistic enough in its details to be partly convincing, as if behind its melodramatic trumpery and the shallow values it stands for there may be more than a shadow of truth. And there is, paradoxically, a residue of warmth in the picture, a sense of the buried idealism and companionship among this shabby band of film-makers which somehow survives after the cheapness and shoddiness are forgotten. But let us hope, at any rate, that the director, Vincente Minelli, goes smartly back to his old job of making musicals like *On the Town* and *American in Paris*, from which his work on *The Bad and the Beautiful* ought to be described as a misdirected holiday.



LANA TURNER, KIRK DOUGLAS
Shallow values, but a shadow of truth

A GIRL IN EVERY PORT

(RKO Radio)

GROUCHO MARX and William Bendix have a rare old time as a couple of swindling sailors who become the owners of a racehorse which can't run but has a twin brother which can. Things get so involved, with Groucho's

(continued on next page)



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