



"Can I See the Film Now?" Tallulah Telephones From Her Dressing-Room
This is Dressing-room F at the headquarters of Twentieth-Century Fox. In it, innumerable tins of English cigarettes and a telephone on which the reporters find out how the actress feels at the moment—witty, sardonic or irascible.

TALLULAH FILMS AGAIN

The film is "Lifeboat," made by Alfred Hitchcock in America, and soon to be seen in London. Tallulah Bankhead plays the smart, intellectual woman writer.

THERE are only three people in England who are front-page news—the Prince of Wales, George Bernard Shaw and Tallulah Bankhead." To be so described by Lord Beaverbrook is a pretty remarkable tribute to any woman. That,



"I'll Tell You What I Think of It"
She gives her opinion of "Lifeboat" to Hector Dods, head of the cutting department.

of course, was in the palmy days of peace. But to-day Miss Bankhead is showing that she can blister her way on to front pages habitually filled with war news.

When invited to the White House recently to meet Mrs. Roosevelt, Tallulah said: "I knew I should be asked here—you are always so kind to delinquent girls!" She caused a minor sensation only the other day when she turned on the representative of New York's Left Wing, pro-British paper *P.M.* and said: "Of all the filthy, rotten Communist rags that is the most vicious, dangerous and hating paper there has ever been. It is a dirty Communist sheet of the most atrocious taste. Don't shush me! It is a stinking little paper."

These two speeches—the wisecrack and the outburst of fishwife abuse—explain why Miss Bankhead always gets into the news. She is an actress as well, of course, but that is of less news value.

When Miss Bankhead left a dazed, dazzled and slightly exhausted London in 1930, she was known as "tantalin' Tallu," the darling of the "gods," the girl from Alabama who came to England with her husky voice and electrifying personality, and



"So That's What I Look Like at Sea"
The apparatus is called a Movieola. The film is run through for Tallulah by the cutter

then one day "woke up in the Strand to find herself the oo-la-la of all England." The daughter of the Speaker of the House of Representatives, she was the incarnation of the cocktail era. Her sole vocabulary off stage—and she was always as vivid off the stage as on—seemed to be "Bless you, darling!" and "Too divine!" Yet she was always something more than a siren with sweeping eyelashes to be attacked by the prudes because her plays always seemed to require her to appear in her underclothes. She was exciting because she was Tallulah. Some said she was beautiful. Her



"It Looks Better Than My Old Films"
Tallulah strides out to the make-up department—her early film disappointments forgotten.

Botticellian emaciation was painted in an Academy picture by Augustus John. And, of course, she was an actress.

But she shook our powder off her face, went to Hollywood and made a number of films there. She had plenty of publicity. In fact, she was mentioned in the same breath as Garbo and Dietrich. But they gave her bad stories and, she went back to the stage. The only film she did worth remembering was *Devil and the Deep*, with Charles Laughton.

Now she is back, in another sea-picture. She is just as tough, her sardonic humour is just as brittle and compelling, and her voice is still gin-husky, though nowadays she is a teetotaler—she has sworn not to touch alcohol until the Axis has been defeated. Hollywood has at last realised that she could not be confined to tarnished lady roles. They have given her a break—as an actress.

Her new film is *Lifeboat*, a Twentieth-Century Fox feature shortly to be released. The original idea for the film came from Alfred Hitchcock, who directed it, and the story was written by John Steinbeck, author of "*Grapes of Wrath*". The entire action takes place in a 25-foot lifeboat. There are eight survivors in the boat, their merchant ship having been torpedoed by a German submarine, which itself has gone down. The drama describes their reactions and emotions in the life-and-death struggle for survival during the days and nights they drift together. This is not another sentimental fiction decking the grimness of war with glamour



Tallulah Bankhead's Film Come-Back: As the Woman Journalist in "Lifeboat" The 25-foot boat sails on. Tallulah sits behind a survivor who has just been picked up. She is the woman journalist who alone can speak German to the U-boat captain.



actors—the grim concern for survival, the problems of peril from storm, loss of food and water, the agonies of mental strain. And then, of course, there is the moral problem revolving around the treatment of the U-boat captain which has aroused the ire of some critics because he is represented as the most competent fellow in the bunch.

Here Hitchcock has voluntarily sacrificed the

camera's ever-moving eye, whose restlessness so often explains why films show everything and say nothing. He confines himself to one scene, one action, one theme. He can get to grips with his characters, and use realism to probe reality. It is essentially a director's film, but one performance is outstanding. At last, on the screen, Tallulah Bankhead comes into her own.

The Negro Steward and the Englishwoman
Canada Lee plays the coloured sailor who saves an English woman after the battle.

and romantic allure. Perhaps America has taken a leaf out of the book of British film producers, who—by backing such subjects as *In Which We Serve* and *San Demetrio, London*—have shown they understand that, when presented with the realities of war, the British public can take it—more, that they demand it, and laugh at fakes sweetened down for easy consumption.

It is interesting to see Hollywood again producing the kind of stark and virile subject at which they used to excel, especially when the treatment has the courage to shun compromise and depict the characters as tough-grained men and women, who are not improved or glorified by a heart-breaking experience. A terrible scene shows a bereft mother (Heather Angel) mourning her drowned child and, finally, driven into drowning herself while her fellow castaways are asleep. A fury of retribution overtakes the Nazi U-boat captain who is hauled aboard, thanks to that section of opinion which considers he has only been doing his job.

Humour and even broad comedy lighten the drama. There is a subdued love development between the ship's "Sparks" and a nurse, told with quiet conviction. A more heady and elemental passion grows between a hard-bitten woman journalist (Tallulah Bankhead) and the primitive member of the ship's black gang (John Hodiak), who from the first wants to kill the U-boat skipper (William Slezak). William Bendix plays a Brooklyn jitterbug pining for his dance-mad Rosie, Mary Anderson is the nurse, and Hume Cronyn the shy young British radio engineer. A negro steward and a Socialist are included in the party. But the physical conditions are as important as the



The Lifeboat in Which the Whole Story is Set

The whole action is in this boat. Among the survivors are a U-boat captain, an English radio operator, an American business man, an Englishwoman, a ship's oiler, a steward, and a seaman.