The year 1942 saw the parting of Al Jolson and Rudy Keeler. (Jolson was through by 1940, anyhow, it was said.) Douglas Fairbanks died—and a way of life died, too, for even though the way was in Hollywood, it represented the peaks of Hollywood. Robert Montgomery went to France to drive an ambulance. Leslie Howard and young Richard Coburn renewed their gear, preparatory to going back to England. The beautiful glamorous girls began going out with older men, Garbo with Gaylord and Thea, the food fascist; Norma Shearer with George Raft; Ginger Rogers with Howard Hughes (definitely they would stay) and sweet Livvy de Havilland was seen gushing over with Jimmy Stewart—not knowing then that he would be the first man from Hollywood to the lesser-known in Fort, Taylors, Payne, Skelton and many others. And backing up the soldiers in uniform were the soldiers in greasepaint—Bing Crosby, Bob Hope, Kay Kyser, Jack Benny. (That is endless, blazing with tragic brilliance with the name of Carole Lombard who died in a plane crash coming back from a bond drive. Jack Warner did not lack; he had the ex-Mrs. Ayres. Jack Warner had much of the ex-Mrs. Ayres. Very
diversified people took that fatal step.

The year's "romantic" marriage was that of Vaughn Paul and Deanna Durbin. They had waited for two years to marry. Time considered the betrothal the most romantic event of the rest of the world. The war front was fighting. The home front was waiting.

But in the playboy world of Hollywood, Greer Garson made "Mrs. Miniver" and began going about with the young man who had played her son, Richard Ney. That was the beginning of a romance that was to Rita Hayworth went into the Coast Guard. Humphrey Bogart made "Casablanca" with Ingrid Bergman and they were stars who were, in the words of one writer, "a little kid with a little kid." And when Frank Sinatra, who would certainly replace Crosby, began to be heard from. Gene Kelly came along and Joseph Cotten and Ingrid Bergman found someone besides Bogart and a darling small clown named June Allyson.

In 1943 they discovered a fellow in "Bataan" named Robert Walker and his wife, the then-unknown Joan Fontaine, for purely financial purposes, made "The Song of Bernadette." Such a divinely happy, darling couple they were. Linda Darnell, playing the Virgin in the movie, was interested in a little kid with her cameraman, Pev Marley. An impossible marriage, said Hollywood. It couldn't last. And the Garson-Ney marriage looked bad, too. But it didn't. The Garson-Ney marriage never worked.

There was the fantastic marriage between Rita Hayworth and Orson Welles, the genius. Bette Davis's husband, Arthur Farnsworth, died most unexpectedly.

By 1944 time was whirling faster. There was great palpitation between Van Johnson and his very best friend, Evie, and his wife, Mary Wickes. The happy couple. Dick Powell and Joan Blondell separated and Betty Grable had her first daughter, Victoria Elizabeth, in 1943.

There was the German and the Japs. Peace came. And Hollywood didn't know it but its second chapter wrote its own ending.

And what has happened to Hollywood since 1945 does not belong in its third chapter. For the box office has changed completely. America is not buying the same pictures now shooting. Somewhere in a picture now shooting there is a kid playing, bit parts. What does she, you, deserve, public, or find him, and you'll make him, bless you.

And ten years or twenty from now, I hope, I'll be writing Hollywood's third chapter for you.