

In Hollywood—

Telephone Foils Vacation Away From Busy Filmland

Esther Williams Tries to Relax in Her Own Home But Finds Long Arm of Mr. Bell Quite Disturbing

By Esther Williams

(For Erskine Johnson, who is on vacation) HOLLYWOOD, Aug. 9.—This being that time of year when everyone has vacations on their minds, I am no exception. But the moral of this tale I am about to unfold is—never take a vacation at home. Since Mr. Bell invented the telephone, the words "vacation" and "telephone" just don't go together.

I hadn't had a real vacation for so long that when I learned I was going to have a baby this month, I thought, "Oh, boy! Think of the days of 'I'm going to have! This year I'm going to have a real vacation!"

AND VISIONS of long, lazy days at our little house at Acapulco, or at the family cabin on a little island in the chain of lakes in Wisconsin rushed through my mind.

For the past few years every time I would finish a picture, Ben would be busy on radio and unable to get away...and for me there seemed always to be publicity pictures, personal appearances, etc., as long as I was within reach of a telephone.

But this time, I knew no one would want to take my picture or ask me to make a personal appearance so I was a cinch to get a real vacation.

SO WHAT happens? I had no sooner finished "Neptune's Daugh-

ter" than Ben gets a big television show all his own. Well, maybe we could still go to Carmel for a few days in the middle of the week. But immediately Ben is signed to narrate and sing in the "Salute to Gershwin" at the Coconut Grove—and that's every night!

Well, I hope you're going away far away—on your vacation, Erskine, for here is what happens when you spend one at home.

This is how a typical day goes:

The doorbell rings at 8:30 a. m. and Ben is off to fix the telephone which is out of order (why didn't we leave it that way?) and it's in the bedroom so we have to get up. The workman has a hard time fixing it because it rings every 10 minutes from then on.

Why is it the people who want you to donate to their pet charity buy an ad in a trade-paper, appear at their swimming meet, always call early in the morning?

FINALLY Ben has to go in town on business and I decide to take a swim—quickly before anything else happens. I've just started to relax and enjoy myself when I look up and there is a perfectly strange man standing there staring at me. When I inquire as to his business, he fumbles for a while and finally says, "I was just passing and saw you. You don't mind if I stopped to do that?" So there goes my swim.

About that time a photographer from the studio arrives. On yes—

they found a way! That takes the best part of the afternoon and then it's time to start dinner. By the time I get Ben fed and off to work, the phone rings again and it's a columnist wanting to know if it's true we're "puffing."

I settle down to read the script for my next picture, "Duchess of Idaho," and finally go to bed about 10 o'clock dead tired. I'm

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Gene Raymond—in Color
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