

THE IDEAS OF ETHELBURT JELLYBACK, PRIVATE

Dear Editor:

It's the little things in life that count. Don't you know? And nothing so exasperates me, since I have joined the army, as the barriers that are placed in one's way to prevent one's keeping up with society. Of course, I speak of society with a big S—the set to which I belong on the avenue. Of course, by avenue I mean Fifth Avenue.



Now there was Mrs. Hatton-Higgins' New Year's party, for example. Her week-end parties, by the way, are always delightful. I had planned upon going to her house party over the holidays, and Mrs. Hatton-Higgins herself, by letter and telegram, had repeatedly sought my counsel in arranging all the little details—the centerpiece for the dinner table, and the proportions by which the butler should make the claret cup.

He is Denied a Furlough.

Then, all of a sudden, like a bolt from the blue, or the sound of reveille in the morning, I was told that a furlough had been denied me—me of all persons, Ethelburt Jellyback, of the well-known family of that name! I was told that an order from Washington had limited all furloughs to a small percentage of enlisted men.

"Who made that order?" I demanded.

"The Secretary of War," they told me.

"Did he know that Private Ethelburt Jellyback had applied for a furlough? Did he know that Mrs. Hatton-Higgins' house-party waited upon my coming? Did he know

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that without me the butler would probably bungle the punch? Was he aware that a dance had been arranged especially for me, in honor of my having offered my life towards helping make the world safe for democracy?"

Ah, those questions were sticklers! They couldn't answer them. And, after having raced to the telegraph office to wire dear Mrs. Hatton-Higgins that the butler would have to be left to his own devices, I made threats of mutiny and desertion.

Ethelburt is Not a Regular!

"You're in the army now," the first sergeant told me. "Why don't you be a regular soldier?"

"Sir!" I replied with Jellyback pride, "I am superior to the regular soldier. My culture, my training, my position in society, all lift me above that, thank Heaven and my lineal descent. The trifling technicalities of discipline should never apply to me. How absurd!" I was gradually working myself up into a heat over this outrage, and it was a jolly good thing, too, for we get too little of it here in this land called the Sunny South.

"First they took my leather puttees from me," I went on hotly. "Then they deprived me of my sheepskin coat. Then of my silk hat cord. Why, I'll look just like any other private! And me a Jellyback! But I'll thwart some of their discipline. I still have my pink silk pajamas. By day I shall conceal them among my equipment; by night I shall wrap them about me over a pair of flannel pajamas, like the drapery of a royal couch, and lie down to slumber, sweetly confident that I still am the scion of one of our first families—providing, of course, that Jim Murgums, in the next cot, doesn't snore."

Making the World Safe for Himself.

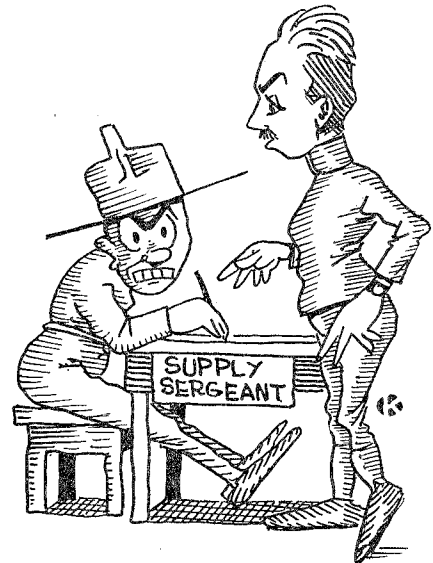
After I had ended this declaration of independence, the first sergeant said he'd see that New Year's wouldn't be a dull day for me. It wasn't. He detailed me to the incinerator.

Oh, how little do the officers who are running this war realize that social conveniences, such as furloughs and two-tone color dancing pumps, are necessary to a

nature such as mine. Before I can make the world safe for democracy I must first make myself safe.

How keenly I felt the hardships of discipline, which makes it impossible for the officers to mingle with us privates in a social way. Of course, my sympathies are more with the officers than the men, for the officers, poor fellows, must always eat and converse with one another. What a bore!

I have drawn up plans for the remedying of some of these evils, and one plan contains the days on which furloughs should be granted, including the birthdays of Lincoln, Washington, St. Patricks, St. Valentine, and May-day, Easter, and the Ides of March.



But, of course, I can not put through such a program myself, because, strangely enough, I am still a private. The first sergeant reminded me that Napoleon had said that there was a marshal's baton in every knapsack.

He Couldn't Find His Baton.

Hearing this, I made a careful inventory of all my luggage, but nowhere did I discover the marshal's baton. I thought that perhaps I hadn't been equipped with the regulation knapsack. I went to the supply sergeant. One always does, you know.

"Will you give me my issue of a marshal's baton?" I asked him.

He looked at me askance. I had seen that blank look on his face before. I knew that it meant: "I haven't any on hand just now, but they'll be here next week."

And I am still without my marshal's baton. I think that as soon as the government concludes its investigation of the shortage in machine guns and rifles that it should undertake an investigation into the lack of baton equipment. America, I believe, is the home of the brave and the land of the inquiry.

ETHELBURT JELLYBACK, Private.

—C. D.