

# THE IDEAS OF ETHELBURT JELLYBACK, PRIVATE

## VI. On Aviation, and the Unusual Steps He Takes to Pass the Examination for that Branch of the Service. Also on the Interior Decoration of Tents.

I have an abhorrence for the word "police." Here in camp one is always policing something—the street or the kitchen or the shower baths or anything the officers can think up in those idle moments when their minds run riot.

Of course, in civil life the word police meant to me the rotund patrolman who said, "Good day, Mr. Jellyback," whenever I rode up Fifth Avenue in my limousine. In civil life the police only pick up intoxicated or lawless persons about the streets. In army life they pick up anything in the street—sticks, straws, cigarette butts, and any sort of mineral or vegetable matter. It is so annoying!

### No Rubbish in the Air.

That was one of the things that decided me to try to transfer to another branch of the service. I selected aviation. In aviation, I thought, one would always be flying



around, don't you know. And there's nothing to police in the air.

As soon as I heard about the terribly strict tests which were conducted in the examination for aviation, I set about practicing to make myself perfect. My friends prophesied that I would succeed in aviation.

"It ought to be easy for you to go up in the air," said Jim Mugrums, that smudgy-faced little first-class private who sleeps in the next cot to me. Moreover, when I was home in New York, among our set, I frequently danced in the ballroom of the Biltmore, twenty floors in the air. Fancy that! I have also ridden on Fifth Avenue busses.

### Ethelburt Overcomes Dizziness.

I discovered that one of the tests to which I must submit was to sit upon a piano stool—I love music, you know—and permit the examiner to twirl the stool around rapidly, at the end of which I must arise and walk towards a specified object. I realized that the turning about on the stool would create in most chaps a dizziness that would render their subsequent footsteps uncertain.

So, what did I do, thoughtful fellow that I am, but go out to the drill grounds and rehearse the movements. I turned about on my heel an astonishing number of times and then made straight for one of the tall pines in the patch of woods fringing the drill grounds. I practiced this for a week. I also asked some of my tentmates to stick needles into me at unexpected moments and places to see if I would jump. This was a test for steady nerves, you know. They chose the unexpected moments all right, but they always selected the same place. Of course my breeches are reinforced at that place, but my epidermis, alas, possesses no such support. I had to beg Jim Mugrums to desist.

### But, Alas! His Disappointment.

And then, after this careful preparation I went into the examination and failed to pass. Imagine my disappointment. The examiner said I wasn't normal. I now see my mistake. I had practiced so efficaciously that I was too efficient. I got up from the revolving piano stool and walked directly and unwaveringly towards the object I was told to approach. Of course, I knew I wasn't normal. I was too perfect. They wanted a fellow who couldn't meet the rigid requirements. I could have told them before I went into the room that I was super-normal.

My corporal, Flanagan, looked astonished when I told him the depressing news of my rejection. He turned to me sympathetically.

### A Tribute to His Intellect.

"If I could buy your brains for what they're worth," he said, "and then sell them for what you think they're worth, I'd be a millionaire."

The corporal meant this to be a compliment, naturally, but the untutored fellow was unfortunate in his choice of words. But then, he didn't have the training of a Jellyback.

After this setback, I cast about in my mind for suitable activities in which to employ my talents. I simply can't go on as other privates do. So, I hit upon the excellent scheme of improving the home-like appearance of tents. I decided to organize the **Association for the Interior Decoration of Tents**. I believe in all forms of organ-

ized labor, but I prefer to do the organizing and let others less gifted do the labor.

### Ethelburt's Association.

I planned to have my **Association for the Interior Decoration of Tents** establish a fund to purchase quaint little sketches and water colors, attractive cretonne hangings, and artistic bric-a-brac and statuary with



which to decorate our tents. But I met with little success in broaching the topic to my tent-mates. That detestable Jim Mugrums said:

"I'd be willing to chip in two-bits for a statue of Venus de Milo to hang my socks on at night. I'm getting sick of having to reach under my bunk and pull 'em out of my mess cup every morning."

I went on to explain to him the importance of having the interior of one's tent harmonize with one's mood. On certain days my mood is bright. I want bright, cheery pictures around me. On other days my mood is olive drab. I told Mugrums that certain articles of furniture are only suited to certain persons.

"Yep," he piped up, irreverently, "the only chair for you to sit in is a black one with electrical upholstery in a little room at Ossining."

But I daresay that later on I shall come in contact with fellows who will appreciate my plan. Meanwhile I shall be working on other ideas as they occur to me—providing, of course, that I have the time to do them justice.

ETHELBERT JELLYBACK, Private.

(C. D.)

### CAMP LIBRARY RUNNING.

The Camp Library is open for business. It is situated in the old white church not far from Division Headquarters. It is free to all soldiers, who may take out books. Take advantage of it.