

# THE IDEAS OF ETHELBURT JELLYBACK, PRIVATE

## VII. On How, Acting on Impulse, He Almost Got Into the Officers' Training School.

To the Editor:

It has ever been a fault of mine—and I make bold to confess it—to act on impulse. Yes, I often hurl myself into rash deeds, I, Ethelburt Jellyback, a scion of one of our most prominent families.

That was how I met with a rude rebuff at the hands of a high officer just the other day. It began with the excitement in our tent over the beginning of the officers' training school. I told my tentmates that I couldn't understand why the captain had failed to recommend me for appointment. It was absurd, I declared—as absurd as saluting, though some officers seem to have a fondness for this custom. Of course, I myself might have come to enjoy saluting if I had succeeded in entering the officers' training school.

"My training at home, in the most intellectual circles of Fifth Avenue, ought to fit me for an officer," I said.

"Yes," put in Jim Mugrums, the pudgy little first-class private who sleeps next to me. "It's easy to get a commission in the army of the unemployed."

### You Can't Fool Ethelburt.

I knew that Mugrums spoke without sufficient respect for my position in society. I knew he did. It isn't easy to deceive me in these things. I know, for instance, that yesterday's stew, despite its tomato camouflage, is the same stew to-day.

Flanagan, my corporal, went out laughing. It rankled in my soul, for Flanagan was going over to be examined for the officers' training school. And he doesn't possess one iota of the culture that is mine. I fell into reflection. I brooded. A sudden impulse seized me. (I told you it has ever been a fault of mine to act on impulse.)

"What," I asked myself excitedly, "what is to prevent me going to the examination of my own accord?"

### Ethelburt Rushes Into Action.

I seized my hat, adjusted my tortoise-shell spectacles, and rushed out of the tent. In my haste I forgot to wax my moustache.

Outside the appointed building I found the line of men waiting to enter to be examined for the school. I fell in at the end of the line. I don't mean by this that I caught my toe on some obtruding object and actually "fell in." No, I maintained perfect poise. I simply took up a position at the end of the line. I was still outside the door two hours later, shivering from the cold. If enough had not already been said in a satirical vein of the sunny South I would record my opinion here. Suffice it

to say that I have renamed it the Funny South.

### Ethelburt Is Examined.

At length my turn came to enter the long room and approach the officers standing there in a knot. To me it looked like a hard knot, stern and forbidding. But did I shrink? No! I remembered that the captain had warned Flanagan: "For Heaven's sake, Mike, when you get up in front of those officers, make an impression. Do something to get their attention."



I walked forward and, six paces from them, I stopped, clicked my heels together, and saluted—oh, so smartly! I could tell by the expression that suddenly came over the colonel's face that I had already begun to make an impression.

"What is your name?" he snapped out, glaring at me.

"Ethelburt Jellyback, Private." I never winced.

"Where did you ever go to school?"

"I went to Broton, sir, until I found life there too rough. Then I studied with private tutors. After that, Harvard."

"What did you do before entering the service?"

### His Previous Training.

"Well, sir, I did a great many things. I spent a year in travel. I surrounded myself with the best books, the best chappies and friends a fellow could hope to have, I managed many a cotillion and social event for Mrs. Hatton-Higgins, I drove my own car—when the weather wasn't too severe, you know—and—"

"Have you had any previous military experience?"

"Yes, sir." I spoke up promptly, a snappiness of tone would help to make an impres-

sion I knew. "Yes, sir, I once visited the Campfire Girls at their spring maneuvers."

The colonel turned to another officer, who was sitting at a desk keeping records of the candidates. They conversed secretly. Their conversation continued. I began to wonder when the colonel would ever turn around and tell me I had been accepted. Then I began to fear he had intended to tell me but had forgotten about it. I must do something to get his attention, I told myself. So, in a sharp, commanding voice, such as I might use when commanding troops of my own, I cried:

"As you were!"

### He Gets the Colonel's Attention.

It had the desired effect. The Colonel swung about as if on a pivot. He must have been impressed for his face grew red and his hand was shaking. In it he held a paper containing the list of names.

"What—" he thundered at me in a louder voice than necessary—"what in the devil brought you here!"

"I came on the impulse of the moment, sir. I thought there would be an opening."

"Yes, there is." The Colonel turned to the door. "Please close it after you go out."

I felt like making him a long speech, in which I should say that apparently the only officers they wanted were fellows who spoke like roaring cannons. But I restrained myself. I went away with a great amount of hauteur and a confidence that I would hit upon other ideas soon.

When I get them, Mr. Editor, you shall know of them. But you mustn't dismiss them with such scant consideration as you displayed in your last note to me. I wrote you about some ideas, and added: "I have other irons in the fire." You replied: "Remove irons. Insert ideas."

—ETHELBURT JELLYBACK Private.

(C. D.)

### A BUILDING BOOM.

This is getting to be quite a thriving little town—this here Camp Wadsworth. The 102d Engineers allow as how they are going to build a church, and the 107th comes right back with the announcement that it is going to build a combined church and clubhouse for use by the whole regiment. Part of the building will be used for an officers' club.

### NUT NUMBER NEXT WEEK.

The next number of the *Gas Attack* will be the Nut Number. It will appear on January 26th. It will be something to marvel at, something to laugh over, something to crack your brain on, and something to send home to the folks.