

THE IDEAS OF ETHELBURT JELLYBACK, PRIVATE,

XXII. On Catching a Train, and Going to Gas School

Going northward on my furlough, I was aggrieved not a little by the conductor, who handed me in change, several of the dirtiest, most yellow-looking bills I ever confronted. I protested.

The conductor astounded me by his reply: "They shoot so much crap in the South," he explained, "tossing the money and the dice on the dusty ground that I ain't seen a clean, fresh dollar bill since the snow went away."

How quaint, I thought. Also, how crude! But there were many quaint incidents which I encountered on my journey to New York. One of them was the trial through which I passed in making connections at Washington.

I had eight minutes to catch that train known as the Congressional Limited. What, with the pushing crowds in the big station, I became frantic. I dashed through a multi-colored sea of uniforms toward the ticket office. I had four minutes left. I flung myself toward the Pullman ticket office. Another mob. I saw that if I waited my turn at the window I would miss the Congressional Limited. So, getting out of line and breath, I dashed to the train-gate. The ticket puncher refused to let me pass without a parlor-car ticket. I dashed back to the ticket window. Two minutes left! I reached the window after jockeying around a fidgetty woman who fluttered about like the nervous energy of a misspent life.

"Oh!" I cried, "how I would like to skull-drag her!"

That phrase, "skull-drag," is one of the latest bits of slang. It smacks of the primitive, and harks back to the days when brave men hauled the fair sex about by the hair of their head.

The Fever of Traveling.

The ticket agent told me he could sell no more parlor-car tickets because the diagram had gone to the train.

"There's another train at four seven on track fifteen," he said.

"But I don't want it," I retorted. "I distinctly desire the four o'clock train on track seventeen."

There was half a minute left! I ran back to the gate. The ticket-puncher again refused to let me pass to track seventeen, so, my ingenuity taxed to its utmost, I scurried through the gate to track fifteen and, once inside, I ran slyly over to track seventeen and boarded the train I wanted. The Pullman conductor said he'd let me sit in the smoker. I got in. The engine puffed. The train proceeded. I perspired.

All of which brought me to the amazing conclusion that it's harder to get into the Congressional Limited than it is into Congress! . . .

Several hours later—New York! What

joy, what exhilaration, in the humming streets and teeming canyons. What pleasant days were spent in Fifth Avenue! I had best not dwell upon them; I would be the envy of all my fellow soldiers. Suffice to say that I returned to camp when my leave was ended.

He Goes to Gas School.

I was at once sent to the gas school. My first lesson consisted in learning how to adjust on my countenance that contrivance of rubber and cloth known as a gas mask.

Of course, there is a manual of the gas mask. In the army there is a manual for everything. But I don't particularly fancy the present manual of the gas mask, by which you put the mask on by the numbers, and so I have devised a manual of my own. It follows:

One, you stroll leisurely across the drill ground, enjoying the view and breathing God's pure air. **Two**, some crude officer hollers: "Gas shell!" **Three**, everybody grabs for his gas mask and gets his hands all mixed up with the tube and straps. **Four**, you get your mask on and look at the fellow next to you, who looks like a face in a nightmare. **Five**, your mask smells like the inside of a dentist's office. **Six**, it tastes worse. **Seven**, the instructor tells you you've got it on wrong!

Dickie Darling and I got into a heated argument over the appearance of the mask. Our disagreement reached the point where we confronted each other belligerently. I shook my index finger in Dickie's goggle.

Mugrums, the Peacemaker.

"I insist that it looks like a gargoyle of the period of Louis XIV," declared Dickie violently.

"No, of the period of Louis XV!" I cried.

"Aw, quit yer fightin,'" said Mugrums. "Split the difference an' make it Louie the fourteenth an' a half."

Mugrums had been so impressed by the pictured horrors of being gassed that he said he was going to keep his mask on until the war is over.

"And are you going to purchase a safety suit?" I asked.

"What's that?"

"It is a suit of rubber, I believe, which prevents exposure and keeps you afloat in the event a submarine should torpedo your vessel."

"Where do they issue 'em, Ethelburt?"

"They are not an issue. They may be rented for fifteen dollars."

Mugrums let out a cry.

"What? Me pay fifteen dollars to keep from drowning when the family's got ten thousand insurance on me? That's no way for me to act."

"Then what would be the proper way for the heir apparent to the Mugrums' fortune to behave?"

"I dunno whether I getcha or not, but I know that the Mugrums family has planned to use my insurance in a season at Palm Beach."

The instructor came up. He had all he could do to get Mugrums to remove his mask. The crude fellow was for keeping it on until, as he said, it rotted off.

"What would you do, Ethelburt, if the enemy started one of them there gas attacks at you and you didn't have your mask on?"

"I would tell them to go back, that I was not as yet ready to fight."

"Yes, and then people would be looking at you and calling you the 'remains.'"

ETHELBURT JELLYBACK, Private.

—C. D.

2,200 NEW MEN.

Recruits Arrived from Camp Upton to Fill Up Division.

The Division has been filled to full strength by the addition of 2,200 men, transferred from the National Army camp at Camp Upton, Yaphank, L. I., N. Y. When they arrived here, most of the men had been in service two weeks. A detail of commissioned and non-commissioned officers from the various units in the Division has been detailed to the work of drilling the new men into shape. When they have advanced far enough in their drilling, they will be assigned to the various regiments which need filling up. They were first camped near the Base Hospital.

The Division, by reorganization, was brought up to full war strength but it lost many good men through wholesale transfers to the mechanic regiment at Camp Hancock and the French speaking regiment at Camp Greene and by individual transfers to many other branches of the service.

CORRESPONDENT RAE LEAVES.

Bruce Rae, efficient and popular correspondent for the New York Times at Camp Wadsworth for the past eight months, has returned to New York to resume his reportorial duties on the city staff. He made many friends in the New York Division, who will miss him.

COL. NORTON LEAVES SERVICE.

Col. Frank H. Norton, of the 106th Infantry, has been discharged from the service because of physical disability. Lieut. Col. William Taylor of the 108th Infantry, who was commandant of the Officers' Training School has been transferred to the 106th Infantry.