

# My Friend!

My friend!

Don't be frightened, my friend, I didn't mean to startle you. I must tell you of things I have seen. Disturbing things, littering the streets. Things that have been used in intimacy, only to be discarded in public.

I will speak frankly—the rubbers, my friend. I speak not of bridge. So many used rubbers in the streets these days, torn and dirty.

Please, my friend! Little could look more forlorn—what is to be done? Who is going to effect the throwing properly away of such sad remainders? Are they to be left in the streets to decompose, rotting in the summer sun? Shall we expect the ant to come cart them off? And the streets, my friend, with their gutters. Perhaps we haven't been paying sufficient attention, but we have certainly been paying taxes, notice taken or no.

So, my friend, indulge me if you please to ponder the streets and their gutters, littered with the used aforementioned items. These gutters and streets appear more torn and dirty these days than did they in the days of our youth. Less composed. Less laid down in dimly and deeply remembered Roman order, their quondam order now on holiday, our dear-bought streets and gutters crumbling somewhat under the summery sun.

And the ant, my friend, between bites of rubber-colored rubbers, comes carting street pieces off ajaw. I have seen it, day and night, with mine own eyes close a-watching. With attentive listening it can even be heard, below the noise of traffic.

My friend, I have heard it!

And I must tell you, my friend, these used and chewy rubbers, they are nothing next to those galoshes, those combat boots and spats, those spits of screaming meemies going on through the night—*Oh, it's mine! No, it's mine! Give it to me! No, me!* And neither you nor I would have to strain too terribly hard to hear the splash of

galoshes, the tramp of combat boots almost as loud as ants eating streets in the daytime, the nights-long hissing of women referred to unjustly as tramps, dueling as such women do over diminishing returns of possible commerce with johnnies come marching home on streets rendered now impassable by greedy ants picking apart the pavement one nearly microscopic piece at a time, carrying the grains of pavement to their underground colonies where they, the ants, construct their crystalline edifices mortared by well-chewed ant-spit-slathered slices of sun-baked indiscretion.

Army-ants building forts underground you may think, but put your eye—carefully, my friend!—to the hole to the colony there in the dirt now exposed where the curbing used to be, and you may see as clearly as do I the delicate arches of the formicidaecal palaces glistening in the dimness down below.

You may wonder as do I what they are up to, these ants.

You may stand stock-still as I do, my friend, and watch in excruciating detail your dearly-bought and finely-ordered world slowly vanishing before your eyes, one ant-sized chunk at a time.