

THE STREET CAR: AN IRRITABLE GRUMBLER'S EXPERIENCE.



STREET cars are my abomination, but I was recently forced to make use of one. It was a damp, depressed day. I was ditto, only more so, and hungry and tired to boot. With three miles before me, and no umbrella, no mackintosh, and no goloshes, I made one of a group of woe-begone individuals who stood at the corner of King and Yonge streets and craned their necks in the direction of the approaching cars. After waiting eighteen minutes by Ellis's clock opposite, and thirty-six minutes by my own

feelings, I had the melancholy satisfaction of seeing my car being dragged leisurely along and filled like to the Black Hole of Calcutta. However, I was not to be balked of my ride whatever the crush. After making violent efforts to catch the driver's eye and signify my wish that he should stop and allow me to enter (I had an idea that the officials had to be cajoled into granting what evidently they regarded as favors), I succeeded in gaining my end, but not before I had rushed diagonally through several yards of mud and water. Before I had time to squeeze myself past the crowd of men clinging to various portions of the rear platform—some half sitting on the dripping railing chewing cigar stumps, some leaning carelessly against the door absorbed in the perusal of the six o'clock *Telegram*—the vehicle started with a jerk that very nearly precipitated me back into the street I had so hardly left. But I was fortunate enough to slip into a small space, by courtesy called a "seat," within a space of I suppose about twenty-five minutes.

In the cold dampness of the day, the breath of each person was plainly visible in the form of steamy vapor. Packed close, and each grudging his or her neighbor every inch of room, the occupants of this lugubrious public conveyance seemed like two hostile forces pitted against each other in battle array and sullenly and silently pouring forth against each other volleys of distrustful and curious expirations. The windows rattled jarringly; the door slammed and slammed again; the wet cushions exhaled a thick and odoriferous moisture; and the rancous voice of the conductor, muffled to his chin and stalking, like Venus of old, enveloped in a cloud, harshly bellowed the names of the streets.

Worse than all these, bad as they were, were my co-"fares." I was conscious of being stared at by every eye but one—that one belonged to a girl with a squint. Where to direct my own gaze was a problem. Opposite me was a red-haired girl with no eyebrows and a front of triple brass. The expression of her face seemed to indicate that she was prepared then and there to give with compound interest an answering smirk to any of the opposite bench and sex who might have the hardihood to open up a flirtation with her. I did not dare look in her direction at all events. Turning my head I saw beside me two other young women, gay and gaudy despite the weather. Evidently their aim in life and in that car was

to attract attention—perhaps even to make a chance acquaintanceship with some young man after their own heart—which, by the way, must have been an insignificant portion of their anatomical structure. While I was nervously debating in what direction I should look next without encountering unpleasantly hostile or dangerously amicable glances, a muddy news-boy pushed himself in shrilly shouting "*Mail, Globe, World, Noos, Telegram, Saturday Night er GRIP?*" into as many faces as he both conveniently and inconveniently could while he traversed and re-traversed the length of the car. Then came the conductor for the fares, which occasioned a great deal of awkward tucking in of long legs, holdings aside of be-draggled silk skirts and be-spattered white, or once white, petticoats, openings of reticules on the part of the women, and leanings over to one side on the part of the men, who had to thrust dirty hands into hip pockets in a long search for the required five cents. When this commotion had subsided there entered a corpulent and asthmatic woman of uncertain age, but of very certain weight and dimensions, who had a greasy face and a hairy mole on the upper flat of a two-storied chin. She breathed out threatenings and slaughter upon all around her in the shape of enormous chestfuls of peppermint-loaded breath. The car grew perceptibly heavier with the dense atmosphere with which she soon filled its entire bulk. This was the last straw. I confessed myself vanquished, and, tottering to the door, plunged once more into the muddy street, a decidedly sadder, if not a wiser, man. I have a dollar's worth of tickets, minus one, which I will give to any one who will have them. H.



A GREAT WRITER.

JINKSON—"Who is that rather distinguished looking party?"
 BROWN—"Clever man, that; one of our finest writers; writes better than Goldwin Smith."
 JINKSON—"Indeed? Who is he?"
 BROWN—"Professor of penmanship in the Business College."

THEY AGREED, AFTER ALL.

SCRIBBLER—"It is strange I can't find an editor who agrees with me about my articles."
 FRIEND—"Why, they all agree with you, in at least one respect."
 SCRIBBLER—"I can't see how you make that out."
 FRIEND—"They all regret that what you write is not available; so, I presume do you." X.