

## A Travelling Experience of 1897

**I**T was the last week of the Toronto Exhibition, and the Grand Trunk train was crowded with country visitors returning home with curious looking bundles. I politely tried to appear uninterested in everybody, and stared out of the window with such assiduity that a friendly old farmer, noting my evident admiration of the city scenery we were passing, proceeded to give me very interesting, if somewhat inaccurate, information about the Union Station, the River Don, and Toronto in general. I could not get my breath quickly enough to inform my eager entertainer that I had been born and brought up in Toronto, so after several vain attempts to rectify matters, I resigned myself to the requirements of the situation. My old man would occasionally fall asleep for half an hour or so, but just as I might be beginning once more to take a little healthy interest in life, he would waken up, and continue his course of instruction.

At the I. B. and O. Junction, my first estate of misery gave way to a second. I parted with my loquacious travelling companion, and resigned myself to the tender mercies of an antiquated engine, which proved to be the first used by the now celebrated Grand Trunk Railway. It was still in its primitive state of simplicity, and burned wood instead of coal. Sparks flew in all directions, so that soon all the windows of the car were closed, and I found myself in rather close quarters with six men. For a time I amused myself by watching the dancing fireworks, and thinking how the first people that saw the old engine rush past in the night must have likened it to a huge dragon vomiting fire. And truly, had the engine been really alive, it could not have been much more erratic in its movements. We rocked and swayed along on an uneven track that wound around perilously near the edge of a lake. Sometimes we almost stood still—once we actually did stand still, for no good reason so far as I could see. My fellow-passengers one by one filed out of the car, and a few minutes afterwards, when a gentle, rocking