



THE FIRE AS IT APPEARED AT ONE O'CLOCK IN THE MORNING—FROM YORK ST. BRIDGE  
LOOKING EAST.—PHOTO BY D. J. HOWELL

## CANADA'S GREATEST FIRE

BY CLYDE FORMAN

**T**ORONTO, on the morning of Wednesday, April 20th, 1904, faced a fire loss of from \$12,000,000 to \$15,000,000, and saw its wholesale district an area of awful ruin. From eight o'clock Tuesday night till four on Wednesday morning the fire raged practically unchecked. North, south, east and west the flames spread; the fire department, pitiful in their utter helplessness battled doggedly against the destroying element.

From a blaze which had a beginning serious looking to be sure, yet not necessarily heralding the commencement of a great conflagration, fanned by a high north-west wind, the flames swept resistless, here and there, devouring everything within reach.

The fire had its beginning in the building occupied by the E. & S. Currie Co. on Wellington Street West, made rapid headway and was soon beyond control. The heat from this building was so great that Suckling & Co.'s premises to the west and Brown Bros' warehouse opposite were soon afire. The fire now spread in an easterly direction

attacking the building belonging to the Digmun & Moneypenny Co., and the warehouse of the Allcock, Laight & Westwood Co. on the corner of Bay and Wellington Streets. These buildings, though of a modern and fire proof design, seemed mere playthings for the flames, and in an incredibly short time Wellington Street from Suckling's building to Bay Street on the north side and Brown Bro's. on the south side, was a mass of flames. The Gale Mfg. Co's. factory, in the rear of the Ansley building, was the next victim, and soon the flames had leaped across to the east side of Bay Street and attacked the warehouse of the Office Specialty Co. The offices of the Telegram adjoining this building were now in great peril, but by dint of much effort, both on the part of the fire brigade and the staff of the Telegram, it was saved after two hours hard fighting. This building proved to be the northern limit of the fire.

The strong wind carried the flames and burning embers southward, and with startling rapidity the fire ate its way through from the rear of Brown Bros. building to Front Street, and many fine structures on both sides of this street