

OUR STORY TELLER

A COUNTRY CRACKER.

ACCORDING to his schoolmates, Bubber Ramp was a country cracker. And who knows better a child's social and financial standing than its schoolfellows.

His face was not round and rosy like other jolly, sweet-tempered boys, for Bubber was a slender child with face pale and lanky, straight hair, streaked in color with the shades of half-pulled molasses candy. He was subject to chills and fevers which kept him away from school about half the time and gave his teacher an excuse for scolding him whenever there was no one else in particular for her to scold. His father was a section master on the Georgia railroad and they lived in the "ten-mile shanties," which were built on the side of the railroad and on the edge of a deep cut, through which the wind blew a perfect gale the whole year round.

But if by living on the cut Bubber acquired the chill and fever habit, he also gained the knowledge which enabled him to save the lives of some 500 people—Sunday school children with their friends and teachers. It was the picnic of Bubber's Sunday school, but because it fell on his chill day his mother said he could not attend. So he contented himself with walking five miles up the railroad to Belair, the nearest station where the train would stop, with a huge bunch of flowers for his Sunday school teacher. This teacher, be it understood, was one of the people who did not know about Bubber being a country cracker, but considered him a jolly, amiable boy.

After handing the bouquet through the car window, Bubber stood for a while looking wistfully at the trainload of happy children. Then something occurred which made his schoolmates forget forever that he was home-ly and poor, and this is how it happened.

II.

Southward from Brazella the road drops down steadily for five or six miles. There follows the little rise to the top of Habersham hill; and then comes the sharp sag of a mile or more to Belair and the level valley of the Savannah.

John Johnson, or "Yucker," as he was called for short, was the most daring engineer on the Georgia and had the best run on the road until he joined the strike of the Knights of Labor. After the difficulty was settled and the strikers went back to work, Yucker, for the sake of discipline, was put to hauling way freight between Union Point and Augusta.

There was nothing at Brazella but the siding and the dull red station house, and little else at Belair. It wasn't often that Yucker had to leave or pick up anything at either place, and he liked to sail by both stations at top speed, and loaf further down the line to make up for it.

On this particular day, while his fireman was taking water at the big red tank at Thompson, Yucker went into the station for orders. He found that there was nothing for him at Brazella or Belair. He had nothing to leave at either station, so he climbed back into his cab, meaning to go through to



"TO THIS BRAVE BOY YOU OWE THE PRESERVATION OF YOUR LIVES."

Wheeler to meet the up freight. Sometimes he met it at Belair, but whenever he got the chance he ran by and trusted to luck that it would be held for him at Wheelers.

III.

The people at the station were benumbed with fright. They stared with horror-stricken faces at the oncoming engine as some great demon hurrying to destroy the excursion train with its load of human freight. Paralyzed with fear, they could neither move nor cry aloud.

In the whole crowd there was but one who could think and act. He was

a slender, pale-faced boy, and he rushed up the track towards the coming train.

"Git out, git out," his shrill voice shouted to the men in the cab of the up freight. "Jump and run, jump and run."

He was tugging at a switch key, and they saw what he meant. So down the men jumped from the engine, while the boy ran on to the switch. His hands seemed paralyzed, so long did it appear before he forced it open, then he stepped back just as the way freight rushed by and ran full tilt into the up freight. There was a tremendous crash. The engine of the way freight rode over the other and smashed it into fragments. Then it sat down on its own cab with the forward truck in the air and one wheel whirling around like a



"IT'S 'BOUT TIME FOR MY CHILL," SAID BUBBER.

millstone. The following cars piled up in a great heap, and over it all rose a great cloud of dust.

The terrified excursionists scrambled from their own train rushed over to the wreck and stood in speechless horror and amazement. Then the freight conductor came up and searching among the crowd led out a slender, pale-faced lad.

"To this brave boy," he said, raising his hand to attract attention, "you owe the preservation of your lives. But for his presence of mind—" Here his voice choked. With tears streaming down his face he finished the sentence by motioning toward the excursion train.

"There were more than 500 on board," said the Sunday school superintendent. "The majority of them children."

"Not a life lost," cried one of the trainmen, running up. "Yucker, his firemen and both brakemen jumped for their lives after shutting off steam and putting down brakes. They came off without a scratch."

"It was a miracle," said the preacher.

"It was Bubber Ramp," cried a childish voice. "I seen him when he opened the switch."

Then the crowd surrounded the pale-faced lad, pushing and shoving to shake his hand, to touch him, or even to get a look at him. What was said or who said it no one could ever tell, but in the midst of it all there sounded the shrill whistle of a nearby sawmill.

"It's 'leven o'clock," said Bubber, looking up at the sun. "It's 'bout time for my chill, so I'd better be gittin' home." And he hurried off down the track toward the ten-mile shanties as complacently as though nothing unusual had happened.

The following week the Sunday school superintendent accompanied the railroad official when he went to tell Mr. Ramp of his appointment to a better position on the road. The superintendent, in behalf of the people on board the excursion train, presented Bubber with a bicycle and a gold watch.

"Why, Mr. Brand," said Bubber, regarding in awed astonishment the handsome wheel and timepiece, two things above all others he had most longed for, "I never done nuthin' but turn the switch key. Anybody could 've done that. I've been doin' it ever since I was goin' on seven years old."—Omaha Bee.

Scarcity of Camphor Trees.

The manufacture of camphor in Japan has fallen off considerably and many men have gone out of the business altogether. This is due to the growing scarcity of camphor trees. Japanese production is now confined almost wholly to Formosa.

A busy man is always willing to talk business, but an "agent" is not a business man.

COLOR PHOTOGRAPHY.

A Chicago Claim that the Discovery Has Been Made.

The announcement comes from Chicago that James W. McDonough has discovered the art of color photography. Similar announcements have been made with more or less regularity for a good many years, but none of the methods heretofore discovered seemed to be of any value. About a decade ago a handsome photograph in colors was shown, the picture of a brilliant-hued Japanese vase then in the possession of a famous New York collector, but whether it was really a color photograph or merely a colored photograph



JAMES W. McDONOUGH.

nothing more was ever heard of the particular method by which it was claimed this picture was made.

The story that comes from Chicago appears to have a good deal more than the usual foundation in fact, and according to it the method has been subjected to many and severe tests and has proven a success in every instance.

It is to be hoped that the problem, which has for more than a quarter of a century been attacked from all sides by chemists and photographers, has at last been solved. The art of color photography, if it can be perfected and made practicable, in addition to its value in portraiture, will revolutionize the work of book and magazine illustration. The lithographer's stone will be superseded, and pictures true to life in color as well as line will be within the reach of every one.

WORLD'S SHORTEST STREET.

The Length of This Imposing Thoroughfare Is Twenty-six Yards.

London is an amazing jumble of long streets, short streets, broad streets and narrow streets, but the shortest, if not the narrowest, is John street, south-



WORLD'S SHORTEST STREET.

west. The length of that imposing thoroughfare is twenty-six yards. The directory of John street begins at No. 1—and ends there. The house is occupied by the architect to the Duke of Norfolk, and it is seldom that his letters miscarry, as the postman would have some difficulty in leaving them at the wrong number. The whole of the other side of the thoroughfare is occupied by Ye Olde Bell Hotel. It is said to be 400 years old. The house fronts Pall Mall and is included in the numbering of that home of fashionable clubs. Close to the St. James' square end of "the shortest street in the world" stands the home of the Duke of Norfolk.

CALIFORNIA MINERS' MONEY.

Kind of Coin They Used Before San Francisco Mint Was Established.

This is a "Big River bit." In the days before the mint was established in San Francisco it was a current coin



"BIG RIVER BIT."

among the miners. It represents \$50. It is an eighth of an inch thick, octagonal in form, its largest diameter being one and five-eighths inches.



VESUVIUS IN ERUPTION

MOUNT VESUVIUS, the most famous volcano in the world's history, which, as every school-boy knows, destroyed the cities of Pompeii and Herculaneum, is again in eruption and great alarm is felt for the safety of life and property in the vicinity of the volcano. The flow of lava goes on unchecked, and if the eruption continues on the alarming scale it has lately reached it will cause frightful misery and immense damage. The lava torrent near the crater, which has a width of half a mile, divides into three principal streams, each seventy to eighty yards wide. These as they pour



A NEW FISSURE.

down the mountain side, again subdivide into numerous smaller streams. They advance at the rate of forty yards an hour, submerging everything in their path, smothering the vegetation in the vicinity as though fire had passed over it. An enormous quantity of lava keeps pouring out of the crater. It has filled Vetrana valley, a deep ravine, and ashes lie several inches thick for a long distance down the sides of the mountain and on the adjacent villages. The inhabitants of these villages are in a state of suspense, not knowing what moment the volcano may burst forth in all its fury and bury them the same as it did the inhabitants of Pompeii over 1,800 years ago.

The slope of the mountain is one of the most thickly populated districts in the world. The fertility of the soil

Naples, the largest city of Italy, and overlooks the Bay of Naples. At its base Vesuvius is thirty miles in circumference. Its height varies after its eruptions. On the north side is a lofty, semi-circular cliff called Monte Somma, which has a prehistoric crater. It is separated from the active volcano by a deep valley several hundred feet wide.

The Vesuvius of the ancients was a truncated cone, with a base of eight or nine miles, and a height of 4,000 feet. At its summit was a depressed plain three miles in diameter. On this plain Spartacus, the gladiator, fought Claudius Pulcher. There is no record of an eruption of Vesuvius prior to A. D. 79, although the latter-day scientists have proved that it must have been active before that time. At the beginning of the Christian era the sides of the Vesuvius were covered with fields and vines, and its crater was overgrown with wild grapes. It is certain that the people living near it at that time had not the slightest idea that it was an active volcano, for the writings of Pliny the Younger and Tacitus show that he gave warning for thirteen years before the great eruption. There were a series of earthquakes and tremendous seismic disturbances.

The great historic eruption took place in August, 79 years after Christ. The lava poured down the mountain side in tremendous streams and buried Herculaneum, at the west base; Pompeii, on the southeast side; Stabiae, on the south side, and Castellamare, which was beyond Stabiae. These cities were inundated and forgotten until centuries after, when the remains were dug up and gave the moderns a perfect insight into the manners and customs of the time of the big eruption. For centuries Vesuvius was quiet. People who lived about it forgot that it had once buried cities and killed thousands. Again old vines cover the crater and its sides were cultivated fields. There had been six months of earthquakes, but these were not accepted as a warning.

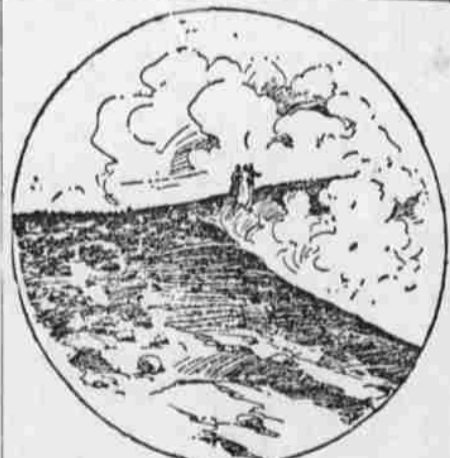
Vesuvius burst forth in mighty fury



MOUNT VESUVIUS.

is unsurpassed, four crops a year being garnered in the best parts.

The spectacle at night is one of indescribable grandeur, and travelers from all parts of Europe flock to see the volcano in action. The faint, palpitating glow that nominally marks the great crater is exchanged for a vivid tongue of light, colored at times almost like a rainbow, illuminating the heavens and reflected with exquisite effect in the waters of the bay. These manifestations are accompanied by deep rumblings and thunderous subterranean



ON THE EDGE OF THE CRATER.

tions, but the average is about 4,000 feet. Its great crater is some 2,000 feet in diameter and about 500 feet deep. It consists of two distinct parts. The ear explosions, followed by great outpourings of lava and ashes. The fresh lava streams moving down the mountain side, steadily encroaching more and more on the cultivated regions, have already caused extensive loss. Several new craters have appeared around the central one, and from these the lava also flows.

Mount Vesuvius lies eight miles from

on December 16, 1631, suddenly and unexpectedly. It continued until February, 1632. There was a tremendous flow of lava mingled with water, resulting from the melting of the snow and mud. Torre Annunziata, Torre del Greco, Resina and Portici were almost wholly destroyed, and it is estimated that 18,000 people lost their lives. There was another eruption in 1660, but only ashes and steam, which formed mud torrents, came forth.

One of the very grand eruptions occurred in 1779. Huge stones were projected several thousand feet into the air in a cloud of white vapor, with large masses of molten rock. Huge streams of lava poured down the mountain side, carrying death and destruction. In 1794 it burst forth again and Torre del Greco was once more destroyed. In October 1822, an outbreak ruptured the top of the cone, making a crater three miles in circumference and 1,000 feet deep. Since this time Vesuvius has never been wholly quiet.

Eruptions have occurred periodically, of more or less violence. In 1855 lava flowed for twenty-seven days, destroying miles of cultivated fields and many houses, but the people fled in time to save their lives. There were eruptions in 1858 and in 1861, which were of little consequence. There were greater flows of lava in 1867 and again in 1872. The eruption in the latter year was very violent, the streets of Naples being covered inches deep with a black sand. There have been other eruptions since that time, which have done more or less damage, but none has been of great importance.

"How do you manage to keep so friendly with Mrs. Tiff?" asked Mrs. Teeters of Miss Twitters. "I never see her telephone," replied the smiling young lady.—Judge.