

FIREMAN HERO SAVES CHILD



JAMES H. JOHNSON,
of Bristol.

Bristol, Va., April 18.—For heroism in saving the life of a curly-haired youth, Andrew Carnegie will be asked to award a special prize to James H. Johnson, aged twenty-seven, residing at 322 Sixth Street, this city. When a ponderous double-header freight train was rounding a curve near Chilhowie, Smyth County, Va., on the Norfolk and Western Railway, the engineers saw a small child upon the track. Although both engines were reversed and the air-brakes applied, it was too late to stop the train. Fireman Johnson, who has a tot in his own home that is the idol of its parents, realizing that only desperate chances might save the child upon the track, sprang through a window of the cab of the forward engine and sped along the running board to the pilot. Clutching the pilot bars with both hands, he slipped his right foot down to the level of the rails, intending to catch the child up and hurl it from the track. But the weight of the child pulled his foot under the pilot, the toe of the shoe being wedged under the upper part of the rail. In this way he was unable to extricate his foot immediately, and the engine ran the length of a rail, with his toe

dragging in the groove and the child balanced on his foot, its curly head sliding along on top of the rail directly in front of the wheels of the pilot trucks. The slightest unfortunate turn would have meant death to the child and either death or serious injury to Fireman Johnson. But, in some unexplained way, the fireman's toe was released from the rail, and with a sudden swing of the foot, he hurled the child off the track and clear of the locomotive. Aside from a few scratches, the child was not injured.

The little one proved to be the two-year-old son of the widow of Henry Baker. The child's father was killed last fall by the bursting of an emery wheel.

"I knew I had a slim chance to save the little boy," said Johnson, "but when I thought of my home and the little woman and bright little daughter who make life pleasant for me, I was seized with an impulse that the treasure upon the track in front of us was worth any risk. I did only what I would do again and again under like circumstances. I am proud that I was able to restore the little boy to his mother, but I must say that the way it happened was little short of a miracle."