TRUE STORIES OF THE NEWS.

A BOY WITHOUT A NAME.

Is the Earth Too Crowded to Make Room for This Little Chap?

A Twelve-Year-Old Youngster of Whom Dame Fate Has Made a Football.

The New York Juvenile Asylum received a new inmate yesterday.

The majority of the youngsters cared for at that noble institution, though often the poorest of the poor, usually have something they can call their own—a relative, a friend, perhaps even a home from which circumstances have driven them.

But this youngster has absolutely nothing. He has not even a name he can call his own.

Sometimes in his lonely hours on the farm where he was "out at service," after he had been kicked and cuffed a little more than usual, he has wondered vaguely whether he had any right to the life which animates him, or whether this earth was not too much crowded to make room for a little chap like him.

Meantime, pending the right to a name he is called Trent—Johnny Trent. Trent is an abbreviation of Trenton, of which he has some childish reminiscences, and, of course, he got the name of Johnny as the direct result of having no name at all.

Johnny Trent is young, but he has lived a great deal in the twelve years of his life. He has had lots of experience, has Johnny. He could give pointers to many young men on the amount of misery which can be crowded into a short space of time, and he is well qualified to speak of the effects of cold and starvation on the human system. In fact, fate seems to have experienced a ghoulish glee in making a football of Johnny. Perhaps because he offered no resistance and there was no one to do it for him.

Personally he is not very attractive. He is thin and gaunt and has a habit of shrinking when spoken to, as if people's remarks to him were to be emphasized by blows. He is round-shouldered, there are numerous lines in his face and his young, starved soul looks out on life through a pair of lustreless dark eyes.

He has almost no remembrance of his childhood; it evidently seems hundreds of years away to him. At times when he was somewhat more miserable than usual he used to think of a face—a woman's face. It was not pretty, but it was very kind, and its brown eyes used to look at him "'s if I belonged there," said Johnny, "an' 's if I wasn't in the way."

One time he was sick, and this face used to be near him a great deal, and once or twice he was rocked to sleep with the face bending above him. He doesn't think it was his mother, for he is of the opinion that he never had a mother and "just growed," like Topsy. The woman, if there was a woman, was probably some nurse or matron in the charitable institutions where he passed his childhood.

One of these was in Trenton. It was a rather pleasant place and the only home the youngster ever knew. He has even told that some man put him there when he was five years old. It certainly must have been early in his career, for nothing precedes it in his memory except the picture of that face.

He had rather a pleasant experience of it for a while. He was among many other children, and, although there was not much devotion lavished on any of them, they were well fed and cared for.

SO HE WENT ON THE FARM.

This lasted until Johnny was about ten. Then it occurred to an old farmer living five miles from Trenton that he would like an active boy to "help round the place." This was a most unfortunate conclusion for young Trent.

The farmer hitched up and came into town, where he proceeded to the asylum and had all the boys brought up before him for review. His eye rested on Johnny and lingered there, and the boy returned his gaze with the fascinated stare of one who feels that it is "all up" with him.

The boy didn't want to leave the asylum, but he was not consulted. His limited supply of clothing was made into a bundle, there were a few farewells, and he found himself riding along the quiet country road towards his new home. All of which reads something like fiction, but which has the testimony of one small boy, who is supposed to know more about himself than anybody else, and who certainly does not dwell on these episodes with special pleasure.

MAKING "JACK A DULL BOY."

Life at the farm was not a rose-colored experience. The advantages given to Johnny were much like those offered to good little George, in Mark Twain's story. He swept and scrubbed and did the chores and milked and sawed wood and carried water and brought the cows home and made fires and cleaned the stables and kept the yard clean and looked after the garden and raked and hoed and planted, and had all the rest of the time to play in and be happy.

Unreasonable as it may seem, he was not happy. The charms of nature failed to soothe him, and the manners of those about him were entirely too free and unconventional to be pleasant. He was kicked and cuffed and knocked round until he was stiff, and then requested to limber up by earnest attention to the splitting of kindling-wood and attending to other farm duties.

Finally Johnny sat down on the wood-pile one day and thought it all over. His process of reasoning was not very clear, and he cannot tell exactly how he arrived at the conclusion that he might be more comfortable somewhere else than he was at the farm. But the conclusion came and stuck to him, and he began to think that it would be well to travel, and to keep on travelling until he struck "Elizabeth, or New York, or California"—he "didn't care much which."

JUST LIKE THE BOYS IN THE BOOKS.

He started that very night. He thoughtfully refrained from mentioning his departure at the farm, fearing that it might result in an unpleasantness which would detain him for several days. He waited until every one was asleep, as the boys in books all do, and then he dropped from his window and struck out for the woods.

He landed, after a weary journey, in Woodbridge, N. J. Half a dozen times he was tempted to turn back, but he kept on. He hung around Woodbridge a few days and then shipped as cabin-boy on a small sloop, which was bound for New York.

NEW YORK HIS EL DORADO.

Johnny's former experience paled into insignificance before this, but he had been in excellent training for it and did not mind it so much. He felt that if he could only get to New York he would be all right. He knew that New Yorkers were just yearning for boys, and in imagination he saw himself pursued by dozens of brokers and bankers anxious to secure his services. So he took his kicks and cuffs philosophically, dodged whenever he could and made the best of it when he couldn't, and was soothed and sustained through it all by the thought of New York.

But one day a dreadful thing happened. It was the 8th of last October and he was busy about the deck when the sail boom swung round and hit him in the head. He fell senseless, and as he dropped the injured head was dashed against the sharp edge of a plank and another great wound opened.

THEY SENT HIM TO THE HOSPITAL.

This was a very bad thing for Johnny. The sloop put in at New Brighton and the youngster was placed in the Smith Infirmary. He knew little and cared less about what was becoming of him. There were days and nights of unconscious agony, followed by days and nights and weeks of conscious agony.

The youngster had grit, a fact which was soon recognized and which made him popular with nurses and physicians. He was so much used to suffering that he took this as a part of his share and made no fuss about it. He was absurdly grateful for any sympathy or kindness shown him.

Among the visitors to the hospital were several New York women, who soon became interested in the boy. They never passed him by when they came on visiting tours, and little by little, as he grew better, they drew from him the story told here. They had boys of their own and they were interested. They did all they could for the friendless youngster and set on foot inquiries to find his parents or relatives.

From Oct. 8 until Jan. 23 he lay sick at the Smith Infirmary. On the latter date he was discharged, cured.

WHAT SHOULD BE DONE WITH A NAMELESS BOY?

What to do with him was the question. His own dreams and hopes had left him; he was no longer confident that he was badly needed in New York. The wound in his head had affected him in several ways; his mind seemed less clear than formerly.

Through the efforts of the women interested in him he was sent to the headquarters of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, where he remained until yesterday.

This is the story he tells, and upon it inquiries are being made. Mrs. Ely, of the Trenton Children's Home, has been written to, but has not, as yet, replied.

In the mean time the youngster, nameless, friendless, homeless, forlorn and desperately lonely, awaits what the future may bring him.