

REPORT.

*To the Honorable Members of the Fourteenth General Assembly
of the State of Iowa:*

Your joint committee, appointed to visit the Iowa Soldiers' Orphans' Home at Davenport, having performed that duty, beg leave to present the following report:

During the recess we visited the Home and made a thorough examination, visited the schools, called at each cottage, the laundry, and the hospital ; and dined with the managers, matrons, teachers, and children.

We were indeed surprised at the admirable management of this institution in all its departments. Neatness, discipline, and happiness were everywhere apparent. We were not expected, and found all at the Home just as it is every day.

This Home, under the management of Mr. S. W. Pierce, as Superintendent, and Mrs. Pierce, as Matron, we found to be a *home* indeed for the children entrusted to its care, and your committee take pleasure in saying that the present condition of the home is the best evidence needed to convince the visitor that those persons to whom have been confided its care and management are fully competent to discharge their responsible duties. Ever kind, and courteous, thorough in discipline, yet ever keeping in mind that this is a Home where paternal care and affection should be felt for all. This Home is conducted on the cottage plan, each cottage or family containing from twenty to thirty children, under the charge and care of a lady manager, whose duty it is to look after the welfare of their own household, and to be mindful of their conduct, to correct their faults, and to encourage good behavior in all.

We were surprised at the home-like appearance these cottages present. Everything was in order, neat and cheerful, and more real happiness than we found among these healthy and happy children is seldom seen.

The ward-rooms are well lighted, ventilated, and supplied with comfortable cot bedsteads, and the bedding was clean and neat. The inmates are supplied with plain and substantial food, their meals are taken regularly, and while at table the same order is observed as in every other department in and around this Home.

The children are all plainly and comfortably clothed, and are provided with clean garments each week.

In the Laundry we found quite a number of the larger girls busy at work, under the direction of their manager. In the Hospital were four or five children, but not one confined to the bed, and to us it seemed a remarkable fact that with an average attendance of over four hundred children, there has not been a death since August, 1869. The schools are in a prosperous condition, presided over by faithful and efficient teachers, well qualified to discharge their respective duties, and in the opinion of your committee, these schools will compare favorably with the best regulated schools of the State.

The girls are instructed by their managers in making the clothing for themselves and boys; they assist in the dining-hall, in the kitchen, and in the laundry; and some of them are experts in many branches of housekeeping.

The boys, although there is not a great variety of labor for them to perform, render great assistance in the out-door employments, and each boy over twelve years of age is regularly detailed for duty, but during a portion of the year more employment is much needed for the larger boys. The library at present consists of over one thousand volumes, and is kept in good condition.

Your committee would recommend that an appropriation be made to replenish the library; also for some improvements and repairs which will be needed during the coming two years.

We would most respectfully refer you to the report of the "Board of Trustees of the Iowa Soldiers' Orphans' Home" for a detailed statement of the present condition of this institution, and its requirements for the future; this being, in the opinion of your committee,

a fair presentation of the claims which may be justly urged upon this General Assembly in behalf of the children of Iowa's fallen heroes, now being cared for in the "Home," at Davenport.

CHARLES ATKINS,

On the part of the Senate,

WM. W. BLACKMAN,

L. F. ELLSWORTH,

On the part of the House.