



MRS. ANN E. HARLAN.

# ANNALS OF IOWA.

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MRS. ANN E. HARLAN,  
LATE WIFE OF EX-SENATOR JAMES HARLAN.

Lurton Dunham Ingersoll, in his "Iowa and the Rebellion," page 739, referring to the patriotic work of the Iowa women in the war, says:

The heroic conduct of Florence Nightingale in the Crimean war has been most justly celebrated in many eulogiums of oratory, of history and of song, but the American war against rebellion produced many Florence Nightingales; many who were greater than she. \* \* Every loyal state of the Union had many women who devoted much time and great labor towards relieving the wants of our sick and wounded soldiery. Miss Dix, of New York, sister of General John A. Dix, made the war a new field for the exercise of her broad philanthropy, which had for years before been exercised in other great and noble ways. Miss Anna Dickinson, of Philadelphia, the most eloquent public speaker of our country, except Wendell Phillips, was more eloquent upon this subject than any other. Nearly every State had one or more women who achieved national reputation by their benevolence. But I claim for the State of Iowa the honor of inaugurating the movement which at last culminated in making the Nation the greatest benevolent society which ever existed save that whose founder was God himself. Mrs. Harlan, wife of the Honorable James Harlan, then United States Senator, now Secretary of the Interior, was the first woman of our country among those moving in what we call the high circles of society, which in a free country should be based upon worth alone, who personally visited the army, and ministered to the wants of our suffering soldiery. She visited the army at Pittsburg Landing, and thousands of men are alive to-day, who but for her ministering, but for her energy, for her "out-ranking Halleck," might have been rudely buried on that bloody field. She had but recently lost a lovely and beautiful daughter, Jessie Fremont Harlan, and it seemed that the stream of her wounded, motherly affection ran ever in benignant care of our troops. She at first devoted her energies to caring for the volunteers from our own

State, but afterward gave her time and labors to the general cause, for the good of which she braved the storms of ocean, many journeys to the army, many sneers of upstart officers, but lived to see her efforts crowned with splendid success, and her name blessed in nearly every city, town, and hamlet in the land.

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But it would require a volume to print even the names of the noble women of Iowa who devoted their time to the care of the soldiery. Every county, every city, every town, every neighborhood in the State had these true heroines whose praises can never be fully known till the final rendering of all accounts of deeds done in the body. The contributions of the State to "Sanitary Fairs" during the war were enormous, amounting to many hundred thousand dollars. Highly successful fairs were held at Dubuque, Muscatine, Burlington and Marshalltown, whilst, all the towns contributed most generously to fairs of a less generous nature.

This casual mention by the war-historian, Ingersoll, of Mrs. Harlan's "outranking Halleck," has its justification only in the fact that she was able to overcome that stern general's peremptory order excluding all civilians from his military lines, issued immediately after the battle of Pittsburg Landing, or "Shiloh," as it was named by the Confederates, and to reach this battle-field to succor the sick and wounded soldiers of his army, although all others were inflexibly shut out.

The Ohio and Tennessee rivers furnished, at that date, the only available line of approach for civilians from the North. In pursuance of this order, the commander of the military post at Cairo prevented the passage of all steamboats and other water craft bound up the Ohio river for the mouth of the Tennessee river carrying civilian passengers. Military transports alone were permitted, for the time being, to ascend the Ohio above Cairo. On board of these vessels this order was rigidly enforced. The same order was doubtless observed in relation to boats descending the Ohio towards the mouth of the Tennessee.

Multitudes of relations and friends of the thousands slain and wounded in that awful conflict, who were flying to secure the bodies of the dead and to succor the wounded

were thus arrested in their mission of love and mercy. Even His Excellency, Richard Yates, Governor of Illinois, who, on receipt of the first news of this dreadful battle, had chartered a steam-boat, and with his entire staff, and corps of nurses with sanitary supplies, was on his way to look after the dead and wounded from his State, was stopped and detained at Cairo under this order of the imperious Halleck.

During this first period of agonizing suspense, only one steamer bearing civilians was permitted to pass up to the battle-field. It carried Mrs. James Harlan, of Iowa, with her helpers, sanitary goods and field equipments. On receiving the first news of this battle she had run across the country by rail from Washington, D. C., to St. Louis, where she secured a steam-boat, hastened down the Mississippi river and started up the Ohio river on her way to do what she could to succor the suffering, which her previous experience and observation had taught her must be very great. Her boat was also hailed and briefly detained at Cairo; but only long enough to enable her to visit the military post headquarters, when she was promptly permitted to go forward.

Mrs. Harlan, being informed by a member of his military staff, of Governor Yates' unhappy predicament, permitted him and his sanitary helpers to take passage on her boat. And he thus reached his destination—Governor of a sovereign state as he was—under the protection of one of Iowa's daughters.

\* Her ability to proceed is explained by her possession of the following autograph letter\* from the Sec'y of War:

“WAR DEPARTMENT, WASHINGTON CITY, D. C., April 10th, 1862.

Mrs. A. E. Harlan, of Iowa, wife of the Senator of that state, has permission to pass, with a lady companion, through the lines of the United States forces, to and from Tennessee and wherever sick or wounded soldiers of the United States may be to render them care and attention.”

\*The original copy of this document now belongs to the Aldrich Collection in the Historical Department of Iowa.

They will be furnished with transportation and rations by the proper officers of the service, and all officers and persons in the service of the United States will afford them courtesy, protection and assistance.

EDWIN M. STANTON,  
Secretary of War.

All Quartermasters will observe and obey of course the above order.

April 11th, 1862.

M. C. MEIGS, Q. M. G."

"All agents of the Sanitary Commission are directed to give all aid and furtherance to the plans of Mrs. Harlan, which shall be in their power compatible with their assigned duties.

Washington, April 11th, 1862.

FRED LAW OLNSTEAD,  
General Secretary."

On her arrival at Pittsburg Landing this paper was presented by her to General Halleck, who, after reading it, said, "Madam, you out-rank me. What are your commands?"

Of course this pleasant exaggeration was the fruitage of an eminent soldier's gal'antry towards one of his respected country-women, and only meant that she should have whatever was needed relating to the subject-matter of the Secretary's letter.

She was accordingly quickly supplied with the necessary ambulances, drivers and other helpers, needful in the distribution of delicacies and other sanitary goods to the sick and wounded soldiers, scattered as they were all over that broad and bloody field of carnage. She found scores of helpless famishing men, here and there, in every direction, still lying on the naked ground in the bloody clothes in which they had been shot down in battle. These were, of course, brought in to improvised field-hospitals, and as well cared for as the existing circumstances would permit.

In her intercourse with the sick and wounded she became thoroughly convinced that their worst enemy was despondency, usually called "home sickness." Many of these soldiers were mere lads, in thousands of cases rang-

War Department  
Washington City, D.C.  
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ing from sixteen to nineteen years of age. Sickness and wounds reminded them strongly and vividly of home and the tender, loving care of mother and sister, in sharp contrast with the necessarily rough usage they were then experiencing.

Looking at them with a motherly woman's eyes, and talking to them in the tones of a mother's voice, she at once secured their confidence, and could not avoid seeing those indescribable manifestations of irrepressible craving for the far-away home. In such a presence she could not avoid the conviction that hundreds of them, perhaps thousands of them, would perish if retained in camp or field hospitals, who would rapidly recover their health and strength if sent to their respective states where their loved ones could at least visit them.

Hence, she endeavored to induce the medical authorities whom she found on duty to permit her to remove the dangerously wounded and the almost hopelessly sick Iowa troops to their own State. This request was, at first, harshly refused. But a woman's persistence in what her heart tells her is needful to relieve human suffering and to save life is frequently more potential than man's confidence in his own wisdom in such matters. So it should not surprise any one to learn that Mrs. Harlan was victorious in this contention. She promptly appealed from the adverse decision of subordinates to the imperious and austere Halleck himself. In him she found an attentive listener and a prompt and hearty supporter of her proposition. After a brief consultation with his Surgeon-in-Chief and principal Medical Inspector, she was informed that her request was granted on condition that she should be able to gather up enough invalids of the classes she described from the States of Iowa, Wisconsin and Minnesota, to completely load a hospital-boat ordered to be placed at the wharf for this purpose.

She communicated without delay, a knowledge of this

arrangement to the head-quarters of the several regiments from these respective States, with a request that those of these classes of the sick and wounded who might so desire, be sent to the designated landing, without needless delay, with an official certificate from their several regimental surgeons, setting forth their true sanitary condition. Of course this news spread "like wild fire," and within a few hours these poor, dear, suffering soldier-boys commenced to arrive; some of them in ambulances; some of them on stretchers borne carefully and tenderly by their soldier comrades; and some of them in their impatience to get away, crawled to the boat, long distances, on their hands and knees.

In a very brief time it was completely filled with this precious human freight, supplied with a corps of surgeons and nurses, properly provisioned and on its way to its destination at the Military Post at Keokuk, Iowa. Of course she accompanied them on this voyage, assisting the surgeons to the extent of her strength and powers of endurance, all of that day and the succeeding night and the following day in their unwearied attentions to the sick and wounded who covered every available spot to be found on the boat above and below. At the first opportunity, while on the way, she landed and telegraphed the proper authorities at Keokuk of their approach, mentioning the number of patients on board, that proper provision might be made for their reception and accommodation.

For this purpose one of Keokuk's principal hotels was taken by the Government, emptied of its inmates, transformed into a hospital, in which, on their arrival, these suffering heroes were made as comfortable as possible, where their relatives and friends could visit and care for them.

The establishment of this military hospital at Keokuk, Iowa, on Mrs. Harlan's urgent request, inaugurated the policy of home hospitals for invalid soldiers in the several

loyal States throughout the whole country, which doubtless resulted in the preservation of the lives of thousands of our country's defenders who otherwise would have perished, and also relieved the army in the field of the care of these classes of soldiers who had become, temporarily, a great burthen to their effective comrades. At the same time it demonstrated the superiority of woman's intuitions over man's wisdom in whatever relates to the health, comfort and happiness of those whom she loves. And it is only due to the truth of history to say here in passing that the value of Mrs. Harlan's services to her countrymen during the war of the rebellion was not limited to her personal attentions to the sick and wounded as a female nurse. As shown by the foregoing narrative, and many other illustrations equally striking which might be mentioned, it is seen that her work had a much wider range. She was a keen observer and a practical thinker. And although a native of Kentucky, she was opposed to the extension of slavery, and earnestly in favor of the preservation of the Union, and ready to do all in her power to aid in the overthrow of the rebellion. And having authority from the Secretary of War to go through the army everywhere, even to the extreme front with the skirmishers, where she was frequently "under fire," she was able to see everything that transpired with her own eyes. And having a husband in a commanding official position at Washington, the information she thus obtained could be made available in behalf of the welfare of the army.

As a sample of her correspondence with her husband from the army, it may not be uninteresting to the readers of this article to peruse her first letter addressed to him from Corinth and Pittsburg Landing, although not written for publication. On that account it may be even more attractive to the men and women of this generation, so many of whom were born since the events thus artlessly described transpired. This sample letter is as follows:

DEAR MR. HARLAN:—In passing through the encampments and hospitals of the Western army at Shiloh and near Corinth, some things, which I witnessed daily, and almost hourly, struck me as very unwise in the management of our army affairs which could be and ought to be corrected.

Hundreds of our brave soldiers are dying daily for the want of proper nursing and care, and suitable food and clothing.

Civilians not officially connected with the service, are, as a general thing, carefully excluded from the lines; and when volunteer nurses and surgeons are admitted on the solicitation of aid societies, frequently on large pay, very few of them will perform the unpleasant drudgery incident to camp life among the sick, in the field or in hospital; or if they attempt its faithful performance, they soon weary of such toil and leave for their distant homes; so that the regular surgeons are compelled to fall back on the old army regulation, of demanding a detail of men from the ranks for nurses; but for some time past the army has been so reduced by sickness and death, that the officers have not been able to furnish the requisite number of well men; and this labor has consequently devolved on the convalescing, the sick and the wounded in the mean time, suffering extremely for the most ordinary attentions. And although our patriotic ladies all over the land are plying their fingers day and night to keep up hospital supplies of clothing, wagon-loads of these goods, after being used once, lie on the ground in the rain for weeks, and rot for the want of persons to wash them. I have seen hundreds of wounded men lying in the bloody garments in which they were shot down in battle or on picket duty, for weeks, without the possibility of a change, occasioning a stench almost unendurable, in which the poor fellows were compelled to lie day and night, until removed to their distant homes or until they were ready to be carried to a soldier's grave, which was too frequent.

Now, why not employ the contrabands who swarm around our lines, whenever permitted by our generals to escape from rebel masters, in the hot and unhealthy climate of Tennessee and Mississippi, to assist the nurses and to serve as cooks and washers for our sick and wounded men. They are acclimated; they are accustomed to the heat and outdoor life, and would gladly serve for their subsistence alone. The washing of the necessary changes of clothing for our sick and wounded would more than compensate for the expense incurred, to say nothing of the incalculable service they could render soldiers able to bear arms, in performing the labor and drudgery, often menial in its nature, which is now breaking them down and carrying them to their graves in large numbers.

Some of our commanding generals in the field are so very delicate in their sensibilities towards secession sympathizers, and so careful of the rights of rebels, as to induce them to impose great hardships on our troops. I have been pained to see our poor soldiers, often really unable for duty, though reported as convalescent, for light duty, standing



Engraved by J. C. Butler, N.Y.

HON. JAMES HARLAN, LL.D.

UNITED STATES SENATOR FROM IOWA

guard around the houses and property of Southern people who were as disloyal to the Union as Jefferson Davis, and far less patriotic in their impulses, being too cowardly to risk anything in the rebel cause. They profess Union sentiments to save their property; and our poor Union soldiers, pale and emaciated by sickness and hard fare, are required on account of this hollow profession of loyalty, to stand guard over their premises, without shelter, sleeping on the ground or wet grass, exposed to rains, heavy night dews and miasmatic atmosphere; which in many cases develop malignant fevers, that require them to be returned to the hospitals from which too many of them are never removed until the poor, brave, uncomplaining, noble fellows are wrapped in a soldier's blanket, and without so much as a rough coffin, carried by their comrades to a shallow trench which answers the purpose of a burying place for the defenders of our liberties and all we hold dear as a nation. And while our brave Union troops are thus contracting their death-sickness in this loathsome service, and many of them dying without the most common coarse nursing, the hypocritical rebels are enjoying all the comforts of home under the protection of our soldiers whom they curse, spit upon, and betray, and openly rejoice at their sickness, suffering, and death. And when loyal negroes escape to our lines, who would gladly serve in the most menial capacity for their subsistence alone, our generals under the influence of a kind of negro insanity, send them back to their treacherous rebel masters, to be whipped and tortured on account of their loyal proclivities.

Why should the dead of the army be buried without coffins? It pained me to the heart to witness such interments. The burial of those killed in battle, in their blankets alone where the number is large and danger is great, may be excusable. But I can not excuse it in relation to those who die in hospital. When officers are asked why some kind of coffin or box is not made, in which to bury the remains of the dead, their reply was usually the lack of transportation for lumber, when steamers in Government employ, and under high pay, were lying idle by the week at the wharf. In one instance which came under my personal notice, one of these boats which was under the pay of the Government, was occupied by a pleasure party of curiosity seekers for ten days or two weeks.

Knowing that the remains of their dead husbands and sons are subject to this mode of burial, of course occasions great anxiety to procure them for removal and interment at their respective homes. You may imagine the grief occasioned by General Halleck's order excluding all civilians from the battle field of Pittsburg Landing. Hundreds of fathers, and mothers, and wives, and sisters, and sons, and brothers were hastening to this terrible scene of carnage, with the hope of rescuing their beloved ones wounded in that awful battle; or if too late for this, to secure their remains for decent burial. Every boat was crowded with these messengers of mercy, when the General's order met them at Cairo. No pen can describe the bitter anguish this order occasioned.

I will mention one instance as a sample of the whole. I saw a young man who had traveled a long distance to Cairo, on his way to the battle-field to recover the remains of a dearly beloved and only brother, who had been killed on the first day of the battle. He had procured his pass and was aboard one of the Government transports, then about to start from Cairo to Pittsburg Landing, in company with about one hundred others, nearly all of whom were on similiar business, when the order of General Halleck was received directing the general in command of the post to permit no civilians to pass, stating that all the sick and wounded had been sent below. The faithful general in command at Cairo was, of course, compelled to obey the order, and although deeply sympathizing with these disappointed messengers of mercy to the sick and wounded, cleared the boat of all civilians. This young man, learning that I would be permitted to pass, came to me with tears in his eyes and begged me to intercede in his behalf. He said he had promised his aged and widowed mother, who had cheerfully given her son to the service and who had bravely given his life to his country on the battle field, that he would bring back his body to her for a decent burial; and now it seemed so hard to go back without his remains since they were to be buried in a shallow trench, without a coffin, in his clothes saturated with his own life's blood, and it would soon be too late to identify him.

I accompanied him to the captain of one of the boats, and entreated him to find some means of shipping him, as laborer, fireman, or in some capacity. The noble old captain, with big tears starting in his eyes, promised to do the best he could under the circumstances, and we separated. In a short time after my arrival at the landing; while standing on one of the boats, I was gratified to see my young stranger friend returning from the battle-field with the body of his brother. What commingled emotions of joy and grief must have filled his heart as he bore in his arms aboard the returning boat, the mangled form of the heart's treasure of his dear old mother! May God bless him and the brave captain through whose goodness this success was achieved.

The greatest abuses I witnessed in the Western army grew out of the carelessness or incompetency of surgeons in charge of the sick and wounded. Some of the surgeons are devoted to their patients, and work faithfully day and night for their welfare; but too many of them are totally unfit for their places. Some of them seemed not to know how to make out a requisition for medicines and stores for the sick, and hundreds were consequently suffering for the most common necessaries, within an hour's drive of supplies that would have been promptly forwarded upon a surgeon's requisition.

Some of these surgeons seemed to me to have grown hard-hearted and indifferent to human suffering. In this connection I may mention one practice adopted by some regimental surgeons, that made my heart ache almost every hour in the day; that was compelling the sick men, pronounced to be hospital cases, to walk back to the post hospi-

tals and hospital boats, not unfrequently several miles from the encampment. I have known many to be ordered to walk back as far as five or six miles, and seen them staggering along the road, fainting by the way, without the slightest assistance from any one. And when I appealed to the officers to send them in ambulances, I have received the reply that it was impossible to spare the few ambulances at their disposal for that purpose. Between the Landing and Corinth, I frequently found poor, sick soldiers lying by the roadside, who have been three or four days creeping five or six miles in search of a hospital, by order of their surgeons, with nothing to eat but the common bacon and hard bread which they carried for themselves in their knapsacks; some of them who were unable to carry knapsacks being, when found by me, totally destitute. In fact, coats, blankets and knapsacks were to be seen everywhere strewn along the roads, which had been abandoned by the sick men who became too feeble to carry them.

Much of the sickness in the Western army is occasioned, I have not the slightest doubt, by the character of the food on which the soldiers are compelled to live, the want of tents in which to sleep, and the incessant hard work which the men are compelled to perform in erecting bridges and fortifications, and making roads, in a hot climate to which they have not been accustomed. I heard more complaining on account of hard bread on which they were compelled to live, than any other grievance. Even the sick, as a general thing, were furnished with nothing better. I could not perceive how it was possible for them to subsist on such food and regain their health.

I hope the new corps of medical inspectors recently appointed by the President, and the additional surgeons and assistant surgeons asked by the War Department, may be speedily sent to the field, and that they may prove to be efficient and worthy men.

A. E. H.

Of course such facts as the foregoing, from a perfectly reliable source, enabled the Government to correct, at least in a degree, many of the evils mentioned by her from time to time in her correspondence with her husband as she passed through the army in its various fields of operation. Many of these interpositions, like the establishment of home hospitals, as above mentioned, proved to be of lasting benefit.

Of this class of benefactions, arising from her urgent representations, may be properly named the substitution of "Assistant Surgeons" in the several regiments and army hospitals for "Medical Cadets." At the beginning of the war students from the medical colleges of the coun-

try were so employed, and continued until the attention of the Government was called to the subject by Senator Harlan during the discussion of an army appropriation bill containing an item to cover the expense of these employes. Mrs. Harlan had previously mentioned to him in her letters from the army and in conversations how it made her heart ache to witness their experimental work in surgery, with these living subjects, cutting off arms and limbs and attempting other much more delicate and difficult surgical operations, after a battle, in the field, and also in the hospitals, frequently in a hilarious mood and rollicking manner, as if they were operating on cadavers in a dissecting room, and were rejoicing over the abundance of material thus furnished them for experiments. She did not speak of them unkindly. Many of them were mere lads and of course easily excited. And all of them, she thought, did the best they knew, and were as brave as veterans, exposing themselves in the line of duty to the greatest personal danger. And all the help they could render was often greatly needed by the regimental and hospital surgeons; especially after a battle. But she insisted that these brave men who were disabled fighting for their country were entitled to the services of physicians and surgeons of the highest skill and matured experience, of whom there was no dearth, the country being full of good doctors who would most willingly perform this dangerous service if invited by the Government to do so. Following her suggestions, on her husband's motion, the law was changed so as to provide for the appointment of the requisite number of "Assistant Army Surgeons" to meet this demand of humanity.

It was also in pursuance of her suggestions that the general order was given to the Quartermasters and Commissaries of the army to construct bake-ovens and to issue flour instead of "hard-tack," when the soldiers might prefer it and when it could be done without detriment to

the service. This order was made by President Lincoln in person. It came about in this way. Mrs. Harlan in her ministrations among the sick and wounded soldiers of the Army of the Potomac, while lying on the James river below Richmond, under the command of General McClellan, found the troops, both sick and well, subsisting almost exclusively on hard bread, salt meat and coffee. They were totally destitute of vegetables and fruit. Multiplied thousands of them were suffering dreadfully from the chronic army diarrhoea, arising primarily no doubt from the malaria of the Chickahominy swamps. It seemed impossible for them to recover while subsisting on this sort of food. Their craving for a change of diet was dreadful to witness. They would fight with each other for the possession of a stray potato, onion or turnip. And a slice of common soft baker's bread was prized by them as a luxury.

Coming from the army to Washington for fresh supplies, Mrs. Harlan printed a notice in the evening papers stating that her steamboat was lying at the wharf at the Navy Yard on which she expected to return the next day, and would gladly carry anything which the patriotic and humane people of the city might wish to send to the sick and wounded to promote their comfort, and that, strange as it might seem, nothing would be more acceptable to the soldiers, including the sick ones in camp and hospital, than soft baker's bread. It is needless to add that long before evening of the next day her ship was abundantly supplied with baker's bread as well as the usual varieties of sanitary goods. And on her arrival at her destination, and it becoming known that she had brought what the soldiers called "a ship-load of baker's bread," they crowded around her ambulances in such multitudes, begging for "only one little slice," as to make it necessary to order out a strong guard to secure its safe transportation to the field hospitals. These facts and conditions

being communicated by her husband to President Lincoln, the foregoing order was issued by him and maintained to the end of the war.

In this connection it is only simple truth to state that it was her repeated reports of the deleterious effects of "home-sickness" on the health and efficiency of the youthful element of the army, pressed on the attention of Mr. Stanton, Secretary of War, by her husband, which finally culminated in the wise and humane policy of permitting a month's leave of absence, annually with free transportation for the round trip, to every Union soldier who might wish to visit his home during the period of his enlistment.

A volume might be filled with most interesting details of evils corrected, abuses redressed and improvements of methods in the general service secured through her instrumentality, arising from her deep concern for the welfare of our soldiers, in addition to her constant endeavor to alleviate the sufferings of the sick and wounded. But perhaps the greatest benefit bestowed by her on the Iowa Union soldiers by any single movement, resulted from her successful efforts, in the summer and autumn of 1863, to re-organize the sanitary work of the patriotic women of her own State, through the instrumentality of what was called "The Woman's Sanitary Convention," assembled at the city of Des Moines almost exclusively through her leadership, composed of delegates from nearly every county and important town and city in the State. She was supported in this movement by the wife of Governor Kirkwood and the wives of the other State officials, by Mrs. Senator Grimes, Mrs. General Curtis, Mrs. Justice Miller, and the wives of United States officials from Iowa generally, and hundreds of equally worthy and patriotic women of the State whose husbands were not encumbered with official stations. Its consummation required her to travel all over the State and hold consultations with hundreds of its patriotic men and women,

necessarily requiring considerable pecuniary expense and great labor, encountering of course some persistent opposition, as always happens in such efforts in the best of enterprises, and among the best of people, for the reason that we can not all see alike in selecting means to secure results which all desire.

The character of this Convention and the immediate results of its deliberations, are aptly stated in an editorial clipped from the *Home Journal*, of Mount Pleasant, Iowa, dated Nov. 28, 1863, as follows:

IOWA STATE SANITARY CONVENTION.

We, in company with a goodly number of Delegates from this county, attended this Convention at Des Moines last week. The official proceedings will be placed before the public shortly, and we will for the present content ourselves with a brief general notice. The Convention was called to order by Dr. McGugin of Keokuk, upon whose motion Mrs. Hagar, of Burlington, was made temporary President. Rev. Mr. Truesdale, of Davenport, Miss Knowles, of Keokuk, and Mrs. McFarland, of Mt. Pleasant, acted as Secretaries. Senator Harlan presided over the permanent organization. The Convention was very largely attended, composed of intelligent and prominent ladies and gentlemen from every section of the State. The discussions were able and spirited and in the main courteous. In a body so large it is natural that widely different views as to policy should be held; but in the true spirit of patriotism these were harmonized, and the final action of the Convention was endorsed by nearly every delegate present. A State Sanitary Commission was organized, into which all older organizations of this character are to be merged; and hereafter Iowa sanitary affairs will be managed under a system and each society or individual will have the means of knowing that their donations are faithfully disposed. This system of accountability is indispensable, as much in justice to the agents through whose hands the goods pass, as to the people who give them, and the brave men for whom they are given. The following report of the committee on organization, which was unanimously adopted, embodies the plan:

In submitting this constitution to the action of the convention, your committee desire to call attention to the principles by them deemed important and indispensable, which they have endeavored to secure in the plan thus proposed:

FIRST. A State Sanitary organization embracing the whole of Iowa in its collection of supplies and aid for all our soldiers in the disbursement of its benefactions.

SECOND. A full and equitable representation of all the local Sanitary Societies of the State.

THIRD. Responsible control and executive action.

FOURTH. Strict accountability of each and all of the officers to the constituency whose servants they will be.

The editor here inserts a copy of the constitution which was unanimously adopted; and copies the names of the officers of the Society thus organized, to serve for the first year, which were as follows:

President, John F. Dillon, Davenport.

Vice Presidents, Mrs. S. R. Curtis, of Keokuk, Mrs. D. F. Newcomb, of Davenport, Mrs. P. H. Conger, of Dubuque, Mrs. W. M. Stone, of Knoxville, Mrs. W. W. Maynard, of Council Bluffs, Mrs. J. B. Taylor, of Marshalltown.

Recording Secretary, Rev. C. L. Truesdell, of Davenport.

Treasurer, Ezekiel Clarke, of Iowa City.

Corresponding Secretary, Rev. E. Skinner of De Witt.

Board of Control, G. W. Elwards, of Mt. Pleasant, Mrs. Dr. Ely, of Cedar Rapids, F. E. Bissell, of Dubuque, N. H. Brainard, of Iowa City, Dr. James Wright, of Des Moines, Mrs. W. H. Plumb, of Fort Dodge.

The editor of the *Home Journal* closes his article with the following appropriate words:

The Convention resulted in great good to the cause, independent of the organization effected. Many and important facts connected with sanitary affairs were developed, and the friends of the soldiers will work much more intelligently and efficiently in consequence. We trust every patriotic man and woman will be untiring in this holy work. The field of labor is wide—the demand upon us pressing and constant. Let us remember that while our noble brave ones are fighting to protect our homes and perpetuate human liberty, we have a duty to perform in ministering to their wants and those of the dear ones they have left at home.

Probably the necessity and great importance of this re-organization, the magnitude of efforts put forth by her in bringing together this great assemblage of the representative women of Iowa, the wisdom displayed in guiding their deliberations to successful results, and the unselfish and absorbing interest she felt in the cause to which she was giving the best energies of her life, can be better understood from a perusal of the following letter addressed by her to the local Aid Societies of Iowa, a few days after the adjournment of this Convention, than could be conveyed to the minds of the readers of this article by any other method:



*Yours Truly,  
Jas. Harlan.*

## TO THE SOLDIERS' AID SOCIETIES IN IOWA.

I have deemed it to be my duty, since the commencement of the existing war, to do all in my power to assist in alleviating the sufferings of the sick, wounded and destitute soldiers of our armies. My husband has yielded to my convictions of duty in this respect so far as to permit me to use in this cause all of a limited income over our current expenses. I have been enabled by the kindness of the Secretary of War to visit our armies, and our field and post hospitals, East, South, and West, through the border and loyal States; through the Carolinas, Virginia, Maryland, Kentucky, Missouri, Arkansas, Tennessee and Mississippi, where I have done what I could to correct abuses, and to aid the suffering soldiers of the republic. It has been my sad privilege to administer to the wounded and dying on many of the great battlefields of the country, before the smoke of the conflict had passed away, while the combatants were still covered with the blood and dust of the battle. With these varied opportunities, extending over a period of more than two years, I would have been a very indifferent observer had I not become somewhat familiar with the character and relative efficiency of the different State organizations, as well as those of a more national character, for the relief of soldiers. Although I have not desired nor sought a connection with any of them, I have, at different periods, distributed goods for many, and have observed the bearing and conduct of the agents of nearly all of them. I have, consequently, some knowledge of the system and rules adopted by these organizations for the control of their business. At an early period I observed what seemed to me to be the defects in the plans adopted for the distribution of Iowa sanitary goods. There was no head to the system, no home office at which accounts could be kept, no arrangement by which Iowa regiments could be regularly visited by our agents, no business arrangement for the shipment of goods, no regular plans existed at that time for procuring discharges for the permanently disabled, and furloughs for those suffering under protracted ailments, and transportation and subsistence for those who were discharged and without funds to pay their expenses home. The efforts of our friends seemed to me to be spasmodic, irregular, and of course inefficient, and in marked contrast with that of other States, so much so as to attract the notice of our brave boys in the army, and cause them to feel neglected. I desired at once to enter on a reform, but was told in our own State that this could not be done without effecting individuals and individual interests, that my motives would be impugned, and my purposes and conduct misconstrued and misrepresented, and that a conflict would arise more or less personal, that would be exceedingly unpleasant. This was unsatisfactory reasoning, I confess, for a woman's heart. To argue that soldiers almost worn out in fighting our battles, and who might be saved by a little effort, must be allowed to perish to avoid interference with the petty interests and ambitions of

individuals, might be satisfactory reasoning to public men and "strong-minded women," but it was not to me. But as I had entered a field where I found more to do than my hands could perform I yielded my convictions to the judgment of others, trusting to time and the communications of the private soldiers and honest officers for the facts which would secure the reform in our system in Iowa, so much needed. I knew that while some officers might be flattered and coaxed into silence, and some of them into the support of the bad cause, that other officers, with the private soldiers who bear the heat and burthen of the day and the brunt of battle, would, in time, make themselves heard.

And I waited patiently; the time has at length come. The friends of the soldiers in the State, who have contributed hundreds of thousands of dollars worth of stores demanded a more perfect system. The Aid Societies and Leagues from almost every part of the State met in Convention at the Capital on the 18th and 19th insts. and adopted plans for a State organization which meets the approval of nearly all who were present, and which, it is believed, will secure the harmony, efficiency and accountability of agents, so much desired. The plan does not seek to interfere in any way with the agents appointed by the State authorities. Those who have honestly done their duty deserve and will receive their reward. If any have not, the responsibility was not with the Convention but with those who made the appointments and continue them in the field. The Convention sought only to improve the system, to classify the labor, to provide for a division of work, to require security and safety, and to put more laborers in the field. This does not even imply censure of the State authorities; when the Aid Societies began their good work the business was new, they had everything to learn, their contributions were comparatively small; but they have gradually increased until they are probably equal in amount to the annual revenue of the State. For their proper management we need persons of as high an order of business capacity and integrity as that of our state officers; and we should have the same security against frauds. So far as I can judge the plan proposed by the Convention is good. The board of managers will meet in a few days to complete the organization, when the Societies will be informed more fully on the subject, and advised where their contributions should be sent. In the mean time if my feeble voice could be heard by my sisters in this work, I would exhort them to adopt it, and to go to work with increased activity, that Iowa, whose brave men have secured for her imperishable glory on the field, may be made equally illustrious by the devotion of her women. Let none hesitate to work in this cause for fear their motives may be misconstrued by those who are ever watchful to keep women in "their proper sphere". I am no admirer of "strong-minded women" in the vulgar sense of that phrase. But here is work for a true woman's heart and hands; by engaging in it we may save the lives of many a husband, father, son, and brother, that would otherwise perish. Soldiers in our armies have told me frequently during the past

two years that they were indebted to me for the preservation of their lives. Women of Iowa, what a rich reward for your labor and toil! Feeble, dying soldiers made well and strong and bold in front of the enemy, by your kindness! For these blessings from the lips of those who are assisted, belong chiefly to you who have provided the means, rather than to the agents who have dispensed your bounty.

My dear sisters in this holy cause, do not afflict me by entertaining the thought that I address this note to you on account of any vain desire for notoriety. Nothing could be more painful to the feeling of a true woman. Like you, I would prefer to work on, hereafter, as heretofore, in silence and as far as possible unobserved. But my health has failed. My active labors for this world are probably almost finished. I most earnestly desire a better working sanitary system in our State; to aid in a feeble way, the attainment of this result, will be, I have no doubt, my last work. I am no longer able, in justice to myself, to travel extensively and rapidly from place to place, to converse with you personally on this subject. I therefore snatch my pen to cheer you on, if I can, in your generous efforts to alleviate the sufferings and to cheer up the spirits of the brave boys in the field. Go to work vigorously, let all see that you are in earnest, frown down the factious and those who are constantly magnifying their personal consequence; let every true woman lend a helping hand until success shall cause Iowa troops to be as pleased with our efforts at home, as we are proud of their more than Roman courage and Spartan valor in front of the enemy.

Very respectfully yours,

A. E. HARLAN.

Mt. Pleasant, Iowa, Nov. 23, 1863.

In the foregoing address, as admirable for its classical beauty and simplicity as for its historical value, she happily erred in respect to the near approach of the end of her earthly life. She proved to be able to continue her service in this holy cause to the end of the war; and lived, although with shattered health, caused, no doubt, by the labors and exposures thus encountered, until September 4, 1884. Her death occurred at Old Point Comfort, Virginia, in the presence of all the living members of her immediate family. Her body was interred in Forest Home Cemetery, Mt. Pleasant, Iowa, by the side of her three departed children, two sons and one daughter, with military honors. The members of McFarland Post, assembled in their hall, and after the adoption of resolutions

of regret, condolence and gratitude for her eminent services in the army, followed her in a body, on foot, from her late home to her final resting place, where every spring, on Decoration Day, her grave is marked with her country's flag, by order of the Post, and strewn with flowers by the loving hands of the members of the Loyal Women's Relief Corps.

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SUPREME COURT REPORTS.—Judge Greene of the Supreme Bench arrived at Burlington on Saturday last from New York, where he has been engaged for the past three months in superintending the publication of the "Reports of Cases in Law and Equity determined in the Supreme Court of the State of Iowa." The first volume (edited by Judge Greene) has been issued, and the Judge has brought a number of copies with him. It embraces (with a few exceptions) all the cases decided since the organization of the State Government up to the close of 1848, and makes a book of 622 pages. A handsomer volume we have not for a long time opened. The paper is good, the type clear, the execution faultless. A very full and complete index is appended, with a report of the case of *Telford vs. Barney*, decided in the District Court of Lee County at the November term of 1848, before Judge Olney. The second volume, we understand, is in process of preparation, and will be out before the close of the second year. Judge Greene has assumed the task of Reporter and the decisions may hereafter be expected to be given to the public in a style corresponding with the present volume, as fast as his official duties will permit. For this the public, and the legal profession especially, owe him many thanks.—*Dubuque Miners' Express*, January 9, 1850.

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