STORY OF LIFE AT THE SOLDIERS' HOME.

Frankfort, Ind., Sept. 10th.

Editor Courier:

We got aboard a north-west bound interurban trolly car at Frankfort and went to La Fayette, a distance of about 21 miles, on an outing. We carried with us a natural requisite to a good time—a good lunch box. We didn't stop out of the ordinary at La Fayette. It is a real nice town of about 30,000 inhabitants. We didn't see much out of the ordinary—we witnessed a tragedy, but tragedies are common "these days" the old inhabitant would say. A willful, unheeding cat tried to cross the street-car track, at precisely the same moment that the car came along. The venture proved fatal to the cat—its head lay on one side of the rail and its body on the other, the non-descript part of it had gone with the wind. My exaggerated lumps of tenderness for all living things from the elephant down to the ant, I suppose I should call it the "humane force within me", received a rude shock, so that it was an easy matter for me to think of La Fayette as "the tragic city" for a while.

La Fayette was not our destination, however. We soon boarded a car bearing a big placard and went four miles farther north-west to Tecumseh's Trail and the Soldier's Home. The Trail lies along the banks of the upper Wabash. At the point nearest the street-car line there is a large lunch-house, where they serve ice cream and confectionery. Also, several small sandwich stands. There are swings, teeter-boards and small tables for the benefit of picnickers, and boats on the river. It is altogether a pleasant place to be, not to speak of the historic value in connection with the battle of Tippecanoe which was fought about four miles farther north.

We wandered about this place for awhile, finally selecting a seat apart from the crowd and on the bank of the river. Here we ate our lunch. The squirrels and chip-munks darted from tree-trunk to tree-trunk, eyeing us in that furtive, suspicious manner so characteristic of all wild things.

After lunch we started for the climb to the Soldier's Home. At the entrance to the grounds there stands a cannon for a sign, and from this vicinity nothing can be seen of the Soldier's Home. There are about one hundred wide cement steps leading up from the river level. On the way we met some old soldiers who seemed anxious to exchange greetings and even to talk at length with us if we cared to do so.

When we came to the top we found the Soldier's Home quite a little city of its own accord. There are about 900 inhabitants, soldiers and soldier's wives and widows. The first building that greets the eye is the captain's residence, then the adjutant's office. As we saunter along the well-kept streets of this little Home city we come to the new Widow's Home dedicated on the 4th of July, the hospital, the dining apartment, Home for old men, the laundry, carpenter shop, commissary, assembly hall and the cottages of the soldiers and their wives. All religious services and mass-meetings are held in the assembly hall. There is also a meeting place for the Roman Catholics and their priest comes once every two weeks. Something like fifty counties of the state have each a representative home, built, furnished and kept by the county.

We found the inhabitants walking about the grounds near the captain's residence and sitting on benches discussing what seemed a common topic, and over which most of them were agitated in a mild sort of way. By asking a few questions we learned that the very grandest and largest man, to them, "Brigadier General Curtis, the Inspector," was to be there that afternoon on his annual tour of inspection. Every man in the Home was to be mustered and taken note of, that the Home might draw a full amount allowances from the government. In talking of this matter with some we found those who had been wanting a furlough for weeks but had been detained by the authorities until after muster. One declared they had not been allowed to go fishing even for fear they might not hear the bugle call for muster, should the Inspector come unexpectedly.

They live by the bugle at the Soldier's Home. They go to meals and to work by it, they go to bed by it, arising daily. Have a nice line of latest patterns.

Only a few minutes after the bugle blows the men form a battalion and be be doing some sort of work. Some, of course, are very his wages per month to use as his very own, all he earns over that goes to the Home. A married man gets $2.00. If does not earn that much he is kept anyway. Those who are unable to work are kept free of charge. Every bed room is furnished with bed, table, two common chairs, two rockers, one rug and hooks. The inmate may bring more furniture if he desires. We were permitted to look through the kitchen and dining room. In the kitchen we saw a boiler into which steam is piped for the purpose of cooking all food. The table that the Home sets is always plentifully furnished with the kind of meat, vegetables, fruit, soup, gingerbread and white bread, coffee, tea, milk, and all that goes with an ordinary rough substantial meal. The inmate may have as much or as little as he has the means to pay for, or as it to table will agree with his desires.

We were gaining the fore-going information from the trusty head of a company, but it broke off abruptly as the bugle sounded its peculiar long-drawn, warning note. Every reclining figure straightened itself, every hand shot forth a pair of white cotton gloves from an inner pocket and drew them laboriously across the field, for old soldiers, get stiff in the joints. Some of them limped to their places. The captain's residence is dotted with soldiers, getting in line