

FIFTH ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE


NEW JERSEY

STATE REFORM SCHOOL

FOR JUVENILE DELINQUENTS,

FOR THE YEAR 1869.

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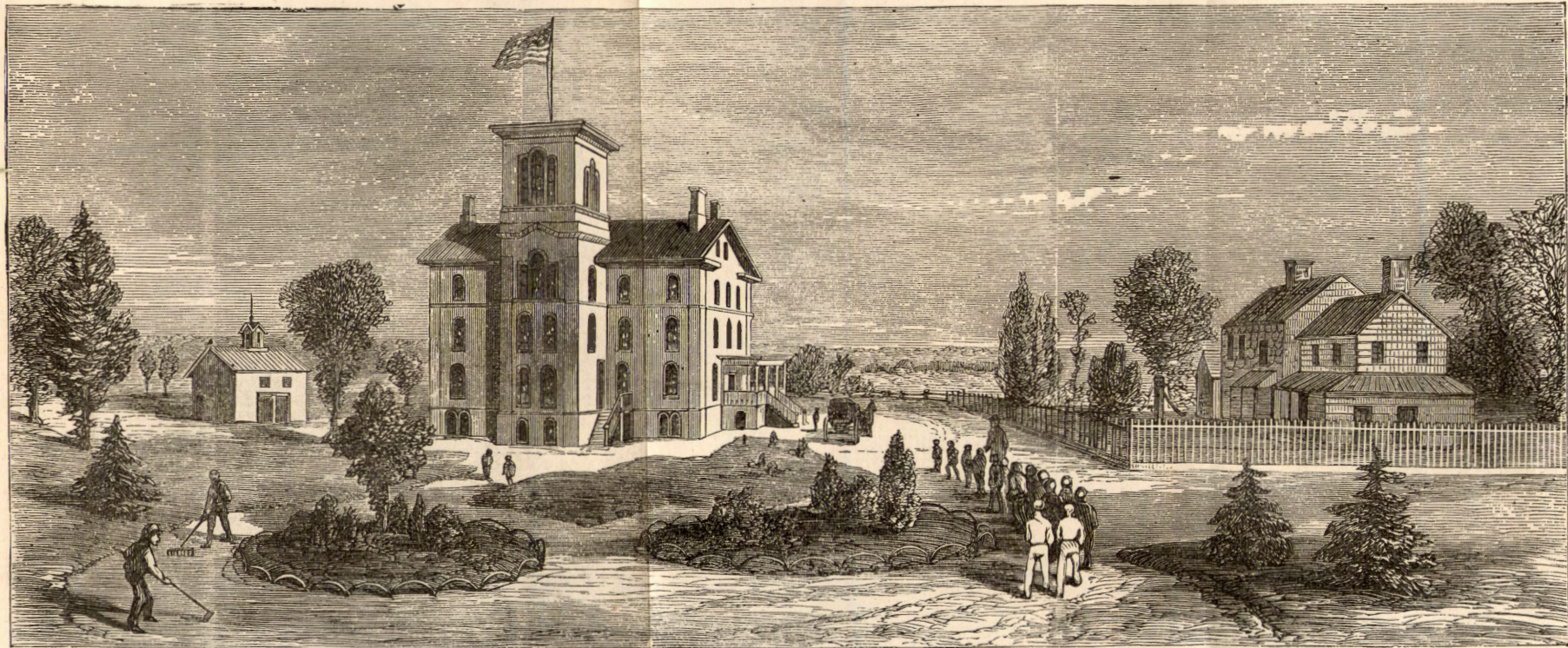
TRENTON, N. J.:

PRINTED AT THE TRUE AMERICAN OFFICE.

1870.



EXTERIOR VIEW



OF THE STATE REFORM SCHOOL AT JAMESBURG, NEW JERSEY.

THE FARM HOUSE SEEN ON THE RIGHT WAS BUILT DURING THE FRENCH WAR OF 1754-6, AND USED FOR THE DETENTION OF FRENCH PRISONERS.

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BOARD OF CONTROL.

His Excellency Governor THEODORE F. RANDOLPH,
Chancellor A. O. ZABRISKIE,
Chief Justice MERCER BEASLEY.

TRUSTEES.

DANIEL HAINES, Term expires January 1, 1870.
DAVID RIPLEY, Term expires January 1, 1870.
JOHN D. BUCKELEW, Term expires January 1, 1871.
ANTHONY RECKLESS, Term expires January 1, 1871.
SAMUEL ALLINSON, Term expires January 1, 1872.
NATHAN T. STRATTON, Term expires January 1, 1872.

TRUSTEES' REPORT.

To His Excellency Theodore F. Randolph, Governor of New Jersey :

The Trustees of the New Jersey State Reform School, in submitting their Fifth Annual Report, take great pleasure in congratulating the public upon the continued prosperity of the institution under their charge.

The experience of another year has proved the wisdom of the Legislature in providing for it, and the truth of the principle of its foundation, "that it is the duty of the State to extend a reclaiming parental care over her erring youth, rather than to regard them as hopeless criminals." It has clearly manifested that reformation is better than punishment; that reformatory agencies, wisely planned and consistently, firmly, kindly maintained, promote the welfare of the subject and the prosperity of the State. To rescue the vicious, the wayward, the ignorant from a life of crime and degradation, and from the fate of the felon, and to make him a virtuous and useful citizen, challenges, not only the benevolence, but the wisdom and the bounty of the State.

Of such reformatory agencies is secular education, by which the intellect is quickened, self-respect inspired, and proper ambition awakened. Another is the inculcation of habits of industry.

Instruction in useful, systematic labor, rendered agreeable by habit, rescues from idleness, the fruitful parent of crime, affords the means of support, creates self-reliance and self-respect, and diminishes the power of temptation to evil. If to these be added moral and religious instruction, faithfully given, and the impression of good example, constantly exhibited, there is good reason to hope for the desired change in these otherwise hopeless youth.

These, with other agencies, have been introduced into the school under the care of the Trustees, and, as they believe, have been successfully applied.

The system of grades has proved to be very salutary. By means of it the standing of the pupil through marks of merit and demerit is easily and correctly ascertained, and he enabled, by continued good

conduct, to attain to the "Grade of Honor," and to become entitled at the end of the year, to be honorably discharged—to return to his parents and friends, or to be apprenticed to a suitable person for instruction in some trade or other useful occupation.

This system of rewards somewhat resembles the "Commutation System," so successfully employed in other States, and recently adopted in our own. By it the boy earns his discharge, and secures for himself early employment, both honorable and profitable. The hope of liberty becomes a strong incentive to good conduct. And it is gratifying to know that it is so much appreciated, and that the pupils express so great a desire to fill the places offered for them. This gives assurance of the excellence of the system.

The report of the Superintendent, herewith submitted, fully sustains these views. It will there be seen how these agencies have been employed and with what results.

A fair example is presented in that part of it in which mention is made of the "new family" of eighteen boys, detailed to occupy the old farm house, fitted up for lodgings to supply, temporarily, the space wanting in the principal building. This youthful family, under the charge of one of their own number, constituted a "guard of honor," in the absence of every officer, and without bolt or bar to prevent escapes, have shown themselves worthy of the confidence reposed in them. Cheerful and contented, quiet and happy, they have manifested a just and commendable pride in maintaining their propriety, and in sustaining the discipline of the institution. These boys are now, or soon will be entitled to an honorable discharge, and there is good reason to hope that they will become good and useful citizens—an honor to the institution, and to the State which has established it.

The notice of "Absentees" also exhibits the correctness of this view. The term absentee is not used exclusively, nor chiefly, to express delinquency; but is here applied to those pupils who attaining to the grade of honor, have been discharged, either to be returned to their relations or apprenticed to some useful trade or occupation. Having been committed for the whole period of their minority, they continue under the protection and guardianship of the Trustees, and are wards of the State until their majority. They are liable to be re-called for irregularity or relapse into vicious habits, and be replaced in the school and subjected to its discipline.

This is virtually an adoption of the Irish "ticket-of-leave" system, under which a convict is discharged from imprisonment, and has his liberty on condition of good behavior; being required to report himself to the police station of the district in which he resides, on the first of every month during the remainder of his term of sentence, and to give notice of any change of residence.

By the terms of our indenture of apprenticeship, the master is required to make semi-annual reports of the condition and conduct of

his apprentice, and in case of his absconding, to give immediate notice thereof to the Superintendent, and where he has gone or may be found, if within his knowledge.

By the report of the Superintendent it will be seen that, of the one hundred boys committed to the School, twenty-nine are classed as absentees; of these, twenty-seven have been discharged, on condition of good behavior, only one of whom has been recalled for misconduct. The reports from them are very favorable and highly gratifying, and give evidence of their improvement and hopes of thorough reformation.

By the report of the Building Committee, which accompanies this, it will be seen that the additional building authorized by the last Legislature has been erected, and parts of it completed and occupied.

This contributes greatly to the comfort and convenience of the inmates, affords the accommodation requisite for the increasing numbers, and tends to the promotion of discipline and good order.

The account of the Treasurer of the Board of Trustees, herewith submitted, shows the amount of funds received and paid by him.

The account of the Superintendent exhibits his receipts and expenditures, and shows a balance due to the First National Bank of Jamesburg, for temporary loans, the sum of three thousand one hundred and seventy-six dollars and sixty-nine cents.

This deficit has arisen from causes beyond the control of the Trustees, and notwithstanding their efforts to conduct the institution upon principles of strict and wise economy.

Among these causes are the short crops of the preceding year, which required a large expenditure for the supplies of the current year. But this increased expenditure will be in part compensated by the greater amount and value of the farm products and stock now on hand, as shown by the inventory. It will be remembered, also, that it has been deemed expedient to put a large part of the farm under grass, for the purpose of grazing and gathering hay; and to have another part prepared for fruits and vegetables for market, by means of which the boys may be more fitly and profitably employed than in raising grain.

This change is still in progress, and the fruits of it not yet fully matured; but when so matured, there is reason to believe that they will contribute largely to the expenses of the school, and tend to make it self-sustaining.

While all proper efforts are to be made to relieve the State from appropriations, it must be borne in mind that the object of the institution is the reformation of wayward youth; and efforts to accomplish this must be made, although the specific expenditure may seem large. But no reasonable expense of the institution can equal the amount of charges upon the community of that class of boys in any other position.

If they are left to run at large, their depredations will greatly exceed the cost of their maintenance and education.

If convicted and committed for crime, they must be fed and clothed in the prisons, and the charges of trial, conviction and transportation would meet a large amount expended at the school. This is the mere financial view of the subject, without reference to the evil example and corrupting influence of such boys when at liberty, or to the advantages to themselves and to the community resulting from their hopeful reformation.

The employment of the boys on the farm is to be estimated by its reformatory influence, rather than by its pecuniary profit. A great amount of labor has been done by them, notwithstanding the extreme youth of some, and the inexperience of all; the average years being thirteen, two of the age of ten, and one of eight years. To render the labor of such at all profitable, necessitates constant care and vigilance. They must not only be required to work, but they must be taught how; and then they must be constantly watched, lest they do more harm than good. Should an idle, reckless, not to say vicious, boy be taken from the street and placed in a garden, what profit would there be in his labor, unless he were carefully instructed and closely watched? A moment's reflection will convince any one of the incessant care, labor and responsibility resting upon the officers of the institution.

While there are many things to discourage, there is also much cause for hope, and a large reward in the evidences of the reformation of so many of its pupils, and of the successful progress of the institution.

The Trustees take great pleasure in acknowledging their indebtedness to several friends of the institution for presents of books and other tokens of kind remembrance, of those under their care, and valuable contributions. Among these, they mention, with many thanks, a donation of fifty tons of marl from the Squankum Marl Company, and the sum of fifty dollars to furnish a Christmas tree, presented by the Honorable George T. Cobb, of Morris county.

DANIEL HAINES,
President of the Board.

JOHN D. BUCKELEW,
Secretary.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT.

To the Trustees of the State Reform School, Jamesburg, New Jersey:

GENTLEMEN:—I take pleasure in submitting for your consideration, the following report of the progress and condition of this school during the third year of its existence.

An examination of the annexed tables will show that we have at this time seventy-three boys committed to our care, having received thirty-five this year. The whole number admitted since its opening, being one hundred. Those received this year are younger and smaller than those heretofore sent, the average age being *thirteen*, and previously, *fifteen*. They are, thus, less valuable for farm work, and require more attention from those in charge. A large proportion were convicted of crime, and but few were sent for insubordination; hence, the small amount paid in for their support by parents or guardians.

The general management of the Institution has been in accordance with the original plan adopted by the Trustees, and the results have been more gratifying than ever, as we now begin to witness the fruit of our labors. As a whole, the conduct of those under our charge has never been better. There has been no case of resistance, or opposition to those in authority during the year. Most have shown commendable interest in so performing their task as to merit the approbation of their respective officers.

The work of the laundry and kitchen (for about eighty persons) has been mostly performed by boys under the oversight of two female servants, and the miscellaneous work of the house, also, under the supervision of the Matron and her assistant.

The Superintendent has had no occasion to change his opinion or practice in regard to the discipline of the school. The "Open farm system" may be more expensive *at the outset*, than the "Refuge," with its walls and shops, but the superior reformatory influence of the former far more than compensates for this difference. The constant *family relation* of this whole system, with its moral and religious training, its daily worships, its Sabbath day and Sunday-school

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services, together with our record of merits and demerits, as the result of each day's conduct, ever develops in the young heart a consciousness of value and blessedness of a good life. With the favor of beneficent God, these agencies seldom fail in securing the desired result, notwithstanding the stubborn facts shown by the table, exhibiting their moral and domestic condition before commitment.

OFFICERS AND THEIR DUTIES.

During a considerable portion of the year the entire charge of the school has devolved upon the Superintendent, his assistant and one teacher. For short periods there have been two teachers, as there should have been all the time; but the difficulty of obtaining suitable young men, willing to endure the confinement and privations of such a life, has thrown a double duty on the officers employed.

Our system necessitates a degree of watchfulness and an amount of labor that few persons are qualified and willing to perform. Its success is so entirely dependent upon the fitness of officers for their respective duties, that too much thought and care cannot be bestowed upon this subject. The personal interest and self-denial indispensable to the perfect working of such a plan, are not easily secured. Example must not destroy the moral effect of precept. Officers must not indulge in habits which corrupt and demoralize their youthful charge. As the compensation for such self-denial and toil is not large, we must be subjected to frequent change, and consequently to inexperienced and faulty laborers. This greatly increases the burden of those officers who do understand and appreciate their responsibilities.

The subjoined statement presents the daily life of the officers:

They must rise with their grades at five o'clock A. M., attend to the morning work until six, when all come in to prayers and breakfast. All are detailed to their respective employments at seven. They remain at their work on the farm, or in school, until time to prepare for dinner at twelve. At a quarter past one P. M., all are called to be detailed to the duties of the afternoon. They come in for supper at six; bring their charge to the school-room and take "reports," attend to reading, study, writing, &c., until eight, when, after family worship, the boys retire. Thus, it is seen, that the officers must be on duty from five A. M. until eight P. M., seven days in a week, either in the school-room or on the farm, devising and perfecting measures for the improvement of all, or superintending and aiding their daily labor. This is no light tax upon physical endurance, when continued for any considerable length of time.

Yet, I am happy to be able to say that my present officers have borne this burden without complaint, and labored, to the best of their ability, to accomplish the wishes of the Trustees.

THE NEW FAMILY.

During the first half of the year our limited accommodations were more than full. To meet this pressing necessity the "Old Farm House" was fitted up for the temporary reception of a family of eighteen. This has been their place of resort for rest and sleep up to this time. One of their own number, a "Guard of Honor," has had the almost entire control of them, under the general direction of the Assistant, Mr. Goodell. Although the doors have never been fastened to prevent escapes, no one has shown the least disposition to leave his home without permission. A more cheerful and contented company of children and youth cannot be found in any community. They have been remarkably quiet, and have manifested a just pride in maintaining the discipline of the institution without the continued presence of an officer. It is true that the inmates of this family were selected from those who have been the longest with us, and had gained the confidence of their superiors by their good behavior.

We call your attention, however, to *this family*, as exhibiting the fruits of your system of reform. Ungovernable and vicious boys, taken from a life of idleness and crime, under a firm and christian discipline, become worthy, obedient and industrious.

No one can witness this change without sincere gratitude to Him under whose divine ruling such efforts result in restoring to the paths of virtue and honesty the victims of neglect and vice.

THE FAMILY IN THE MAIN BUILDING.

It was naturally to be expected that we should be somewhat troubled by the disturbing influences consequent upon the changes in our building, and the erection of the valuable addition to our present dwelling. Whatever breaks in upon, or interrupts our systematic procedure, weakens the authority of those in charge, promotes restlessness and a disposition to escape the restraints of the Institution. Under such circumstances, with a deficiency of officers, or with new and inexperienced men in charge, escapes will be unavoidable. By some, our "system" is thus made responsible for evils, purely accidental, and we cheerfully yield to these annoyances in view of anticipated benefits. In our new and pleasant surroundings we now welcome a return to our usual order and contentment. The happy influence of these improvements is already seen in a disposition to employ leisure moments in profitable study or reading, while most anxiously strive to maintain their present standing, and steadily advance in their grade. We are greatly cheered by these hopeful signs of progress consequent upon our enlarged accommodations.

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THE ABSENTEES.

Boys are committed to the school until they are twenty-one. Therefore they are not fully discharged, when, after a year of good conduct, they are permitted to go to their homes, or are indentured. They are simply released on trial—given an opportunity to test the strength of their resolution to amend and lead a virtuous, honest and industrious life. They are liable to be recalled by the Superintendent, if they should relapse into their old habits, or, by their idleness, expose themselves to the temptations incident to such a condition. Thirty of our whole number may now be classed as absentees. There was one escape (unreclaimed,) in 1867, and two this present year—those reported as fugitives last year having voluntarily returned. Twenty-seven have been released on condition of their continued good conduct—some to gladden the hearts of anxious parents, and by their pecuniary aid, to lighten the burdens of life. Others are indentured to farmers, where they are establishing a reputation for industry and sobriety, especially gratifying to the friends of this enterprise.

But one boy has had to be recalled because of his return to his old habits, and he was among the younger class.

Those having good homes, and those indentured, so far as I have heard, are doing well. Some have been visited; others have visited the institution, and many have written interesting letters concerning themselves and their employment. One young lad, of thirteen, writes: "My father is very thankful for your kind treatment of me, and hopes to return a recompense to you. I work in a flax mill, and like it well. So far I have fifteen dollars a month and board, and think that is very good for a boy like me."

Another tells me, "he has nine dollars a week, and supports a widowed mother in feeble health. Still another visits me with a portfolio of original designs for public and private buildings. On leaving the school, he entered the office of an architect in New York city, and now is in successful business for himself—an honor to the institution, and now the great joy of once desponding parents.

As remarked above, we have but two unreclaimed fugitives, who have escaped the past year.

It is an interesting fact, that the boys who escape, and voluntarily return, have, without an exception, become at once trustworthy, and have immediately taken a higher position in their grade. They returned to re-instate themselves and regain the good opinion of their officers, that they might be honorably discharged.

One happy effect of our "farm life" is seen in the desire of boys having no good home, to be indentured to *farmers*. And, so far as I have learned, in but a single instance, has any boy thus indentured manifested a disposition to leave. And upon careful inquiry I found this was for good reasons, and have placed him with another farmer,

where he is doing well. Nothing can be more false than the idea that those placed here fare so well and have so little to do, that they are unwilling to go into the families of farmers, and subject themselves to the discipline of farm life. *Exactly the opposite of this is the truth.* There is quite an earnest strife to be the one to be sent out when the call is made, and, in no instance have I heard any remark indicating such a feeling as that alluded to above. These boys, now scattered among our farmers, testing their ability to do well, are a practical exhibition of the blessed influence of such an institution to the wayward youth of any State. No thoughtful, unprejudiced mind can doubt but that, in a *pecuniary point of view*, it is an immense gain to save these young lads from a life of idleness and crime. Therefore, the friends of this enterprise watch the future of those released with the deepest interest.

THE SCHOOL.

Our school is divided into two "grades," each having a half-day's study and a half-day's labor on the farm. Many sent to us without a knowledge of their letters, now read fluently, and write to their friends, and are making commendable progress in other things. While it is not the main object of this institution to educate those committed to our care, yet it is found that a *love of knowledge* is one of the best helps to a better and more useful life, while a love of idleness is the greatest hindrance to the work of reform. Awaken in the child's mind a desire to accomplish something useful, and the good seed will spring up in due time. The school thus becomes the handmaid of that greatest good work which this institution was designed to accomplish for this class of youth. During the press of farm-work, all suitable for such labor have been taken out of school, making up the loss to them during the severe weather in the winter, and in the evening's exercises.

THE MORAL AND RELIGIOUS ELEMENTS OF THE WORK.

While the development of industrious habits and the culture of the mind occupy so important a position in the reformation of our criminal youth, their moral and religious well-being cannot, for one moment, be overlooked. Therefore, they are required to have private devotions every morning and evening in their sleeping-rooms, which each individual conducts for himself; also, public prayers, before and after the labors of the day, by the Superintendent, in the chapel. On the Sabbath, the morning is spent in studying the Bible, or in reading instructive books, and in the afternoon in the Sunday school and preaching. In all the education and discipline of the school, constant reference is

had to the religious need of its inmates. I believe that all *true reform* must grow out of reverence for God and his law, and that a *good heart* is the only sure safeguard in the hour of temptation.

THE FARM.

Those best fitted for the important work of training the young for a useful and honorable manhood, and of restoring the wanderer to the paths of virtue, find one of their most reliable helps in *profitable industry*, the habit of *earning an honest livelihood* by toil and self-denial.

In view of these facts, in conducting the work of the farm, the labor of hired men has been dispensed with as far as possible, and the services of the boys employed in every department where they could be made available. It will be seen at once that quite a large part of the work accomplished on this farm, of nearly five hundred acres, must have been done by them. Besides the almost constant call for labor on the new building, but four farm hands have been employed the past season, for the care of the stock, the culture of our extensive orchard and small fruits, preparing and hauling compost, ploughing, planting and gathering of grain and root crops, and the securing of our large amount of hay, straw and stalks. The cutting, drawing and preparation of fuel has been mainly done by the boys, together with the numberless improvements of such a farm, under the eye of the farm hands. One hundred and seventy-five acres have been under the plough this season. Two hundred and forty-six loads of hay, weighing one hundred and ninety tons, besides the large amount of grain noticed in the table of farm products, have been cut, cured and housed. While the drouth shortened somewhat our corn and root crops, they were better than we were led to expect at one time. Our young peach orchard, of some six thousand trees, and small fruits, have made a commencement of returns this year. The young stock of the farm has been largely increased, so as by their growth, to supply all our tables with such meat as we may need. It will thus be seen that a considerable part of the labor bestowed on the farm, and increased expenditure for *nursery* stock, &c., has a prospective profit, which will greatly augment the income in subsequent years. It should not be charged to the cost of maintaining the Institution, but be looked upon as an investment to aid in defraying future expenses.

It is proper in this connection that I should bear testimony to the faithful and judicious conduct of the farm hands, in their endeavor to meet the wishes of the Trustees and promote the best interests of the Institution under your charge. They have labored with fidelity, and have manifested a desire to carry out my wishes in reference to the general improvement of those committed to my care. They have worked together in harmony, and have thus greatly lightened

the burden and anxiety of the Superintendent in regard to the farm duties.

Gentlemen: In closing my report, permit me to express the wish that the blessings of a beneficent Providence may still rest upon your labors to promote the highest well-being of this Institution.

L. H. SHELDON,
Superintendent.

JAMESBURG, NEW JERSEY, }
November 23d, 1869. }

STATISTICS.

The following tables may be interesting and instructive to such as are wishing to inform themselves more minutely in regard to the School.

| | |
|--|----|
| Number present December 1st, 1868, | 63 |
| “ committed in December, | 7 |
| “ “ “ January, 1869, | 2 |
| “ “ “ February, “ | 1 |
| “ “ “ March, “ | 0 |
| “ “ “ April, “ | 0 |
| “ “ “ May, “ | 1 |
| “ “ “ June, “ | 2 |
| “ “ “ July, “ | 3 |
| “ “ “ August, “ | 3 |
| “ “ “ September, “ | 8 |
| “ “ “ October, “ | 4 |
| “ “ “ November, “ | 4 |
| | 98 |
| Total, | 98 |
| Released to care of parents and guardians, | 17 |
| Indentured, | 6 |
| Apprenticed in navy, | 1 |
| Enlisted in regular army, | 1 |
| | 25 |
| Total inmates Dec. 1st, 1869, | 73 |
| Fugitives, | 4 |
| Average number inmates during year, | 67 |

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