

## REPORT.

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THE Committee appointed on the part of this Honorable Body to visit and investigate the Penitentiary, Asylum for the Blind and the House of Refuge, beg leave to submit the following report:

They visited first the Penitentiary, and commenced their labors by an examination of the books of the institution. In this, they were much assisted by the active and intelligent clerk. They seemed to have been kept after the most improved system of book-keeping, showing accurately the general financial condition and operations of the institution and of its several departments.

In their further examination, they found the institution in a very deplorable condition, appealing to every feeling of duty and humanity for some immediate relief. The building is crowded and badly ventilated. As many as six or eight are frequently compelled to be thrown together, in the same room, thus affording opportunities for the vilest associations, and maturing of the most wicked schemes. The act of 1837, chapter 320, requires each prisoner to be kept in a separate cell, and not allowed intercourse with others equally or more corrupt. This is similar to the Auburn system of punishment. For the want of room here, the provisions of this act are violated. There are only about 256 passable cells in the building, whereas, there was 410 prisoners to be taken care of in November last. There are quite a number in the jail of Baltimore city and the county awaiting trial, which together with arrivals from the other counties, will probably soon considerably swell this number. It is a melancholy fact that crime seems to increase in an equal or greater ratio than the population of the State. The inquiry naturally suggests itself to every reflecting mind, what shall be done for this fallen and unfortunate class of beings? The State provides that the violators of certain of its laws, shall be punished by solitary confinement within the walls of its penitentiary. Is it not then the imperative duty of the State to provide suitably for such confinement and pun-