

MEMORIAL.

To the *Honorable,*

the General Assembly of Maryland:

The undersigned, members of the Grand Jury of the Criminal Court of Baltimore city, respectfully represent to your Honorable Body that, in the discharge of their duties, many cases of offenses on the part of negro children, from the age of ten to fifteen years, are brought before us which do not seem to be of sufficient magnitude to demand punishment by imprisonment in the Penitentiary, and which, because of the absence of any other place of detention, are dismissed. Yet experience has shown that the effects of imprisonment with older criminals, and the absence of all punishment, generally are, to harden these children in guilt, and to embolden them to the commission of other crimes—leading to repeated imprisonments.

We believe that a remedy which would go far towards curing this great evil could be found by the establishment of an institution similar to the House of Refuge, with the same powers to receive and hold negro children as is possessed by that institution.

We are satisfied that the future welfare of these children, and consequently also the interests of the community, would be promoted by such action as we have indicated.

And to show to your Honorable Body that we are not alone, in the opinions here expressed, we beg leave to present the following extracts from the Report of the Grand Jury for January term of 1866 to the Criminal Court of Baltimore:

“ We have found confined in the jail quite a number of young negroes of both sexes between the ages of ten and fifteen years. Most of them are committed by magistrates upon trivial charges, and after an imprisonment of from ten to thirty days are discharged. Others are held upon charges which require the investigation of this body; of this class many are discharged, not from the want of legal evidence of guilt, but from a belief in the minds of the jurors that from their youth and ignorance of right from wrong, they are not morally accountable to the law for their actions. But