

"25. Do the manufactures of your prison injuriously affect the outdoor laborer engaged at the same business—how is this prevented—and do your mechanics make it a cause of objection to the institution?" It unquestionably affects the mechanics of the state and country to a certain extent—just as any other large manufacturing establishments must, of necessity; but, scattered as these wares are, by the contractors, from Canada to New-Orleans, they are only as the small dust of the balance. We are confident, from the investigation we have made, that the *influence* of the institution would not be perceived, were the *existence* of the institution unknown. The evils, such as they are, cannot be prevented, without sacrificing the greater good for the less; and, supposing them to exist, to the full extent alleged, it might still be a matter of serious inquiry, whether individual interests ought not to yield to public necessity.

"I insert here a paragraph from a report made by our State Commissioners appointed in 1834 to investigate this matter. "As to the extent (say they) of the competition of the labor of convicts in prison with that of citizen-mechanics, there have doubtless been erroneous impressions among that class of persons. During the last summer the agent of the Auburn prison, under the advice of the Commissioners, issued a large number of circulars (nearly 2000) addressed chiefly to persons in his prison district, from whom he would be likely to obtain correct information. The whole number of answers received was 319. The whole number of discharged convicts heard from, was 228, of whom 150 were said to be decidedly reformed, and 47 were pursuing trades which they learned in prison. Of all the letters, 167 stated the sale of articles, manufactured in prison, at the places where they were written, and 152 stated there were no sales in their vicinity. The whole number of the different kinds of State manufactures, mentioned as sold in their respective neighborhoods, is 32. Sixteen of these have never been manufactured in the prisons, and two others have not been made for some years; and from these circumstances it is equally probable, that the writers were mistaken in reference to the place of the manufacture of many, if not most of the articles enumerated. In answer to the last inquiry of the circular, whether mechanical business of the prison injuriously affected the interests of the mechanics in the place, 18 answered in the affirmative, 282 answered in the negative, and 19 returned no answer to that question."

"In another part of their report, after showing, in various aspects, the proportion of convict mechanics to the number of mechanics in the State at large, as estimated by the New York Trades Union, the Commissioners remark, "these proportions are so small, that the injurious influence upon mechanics, as a whole, must be imperceptible in practice, and only to be ascertained by examination."

"2. The mechanics were very clamorous, for some time, until the above-mentioned Commissioners reported, (in January, 1835;) but since that, not a word of complaint has been heard. Their report is