

There is therefore nothing in the argument that because the articles are not of the same description they do not come into competition. And besides if it had any validity it would establish beyond controversy, that the complaints against the Penitentiary are unfounded.

That institution produces *no goods like* those manufactured by the weavers; and if the reasoning be sound, it proves, what is in fact true, that the institution does not come into conflict with their interests.

Nor is it believed that convict labor is cheaper than that which is paid by the master-weaver to his journeyman. The average price paid by them, for the last seven years, for weaving Plaids, is *three and a fourth cents per yard*, as appears by their own statement. The Executive committee of the Penitentiary, estimate *the cost of convict labor to be sixty eight cents per day*, for effective hands—(See their answer to the 9th interrogatory.) The task of an effective hand, is *twenty yards in summer, and fifteen yards in winter, making an average of seventeen and a half yards per day the year round, which is a fraction less than four cents per yard for weaving.* The data on which this comparison is made, may be seen in the testimony returned to the House—from which it appears, that convict labor is not so cheap as out-door work of the same kind. The master-weaver pays *only for the work actually performed, while a multitude of circumstances concur to swell the price of labor in the Penitentiary.*

In the first place, it must be remembered, it is a large public institution, controlled by public agents, who have no personal interest in its economy; and though they are faithful to their trust, it cannot be conducted on so cheap a scale as a private establishment. In the next place, that institution supports many who are not effective laborers. By reference to the reports of the directors, it will be seen that a moiety, if not a majority, enter the prison for a term not exceeding two years; and six months are required, even by those who are willing, to learn the art of weaving, even so as to be able to perform a full task. Thus, one fourth of the time, he is unprofitable to the institution, if not a sheer expense. In addition to this, many of the prisoners are old and decrepid, and occasionally much time is lost by sickness; and some are incapable of ever learning a trade. All this is a direct expense to the institution, which must be made up by the labor of the effective hands. Considering all these circumstances, the subsistence of the prisoners pay of keepers, cost of material, and interest, it may very reasonably be concluded