

ferent denominations, during the week, have been rendered as heretofore. The Sunday School is also continued with the same charitable zeal and untiring punctuality. There is reason to believe that these pious and benevolent services have been attended generally, and in some instances particularly, with beneficial results; and largely continue to the general efficacy of the penitentiary system.

Your Excellency must be aware, that a clamor has been excited against the convict labor of the Penitentiary, on the ground that it conflicts with the Mechanics of Baltimore. With a considerate regard to the interests of that respectable class of our citizens, the Legislature has authorized full inquiry to be made into the subject of that complaint, and much testimony has been elicited. It is not for the Directors to anticipate, in any respect, the Report of the honorable Joint Committee of the Legislature upon the subject of their investigation—but, we cannot doubt that it will be entirely proper, upon the present occasion, and perhaps it will be expected, that the Directors should express their opinion upon a matter of so much importance to the interests of the Institution under their superintendance—which is, that the labors of the Penitentiary do not injuriously conflict with the Mechanics of Baltimore, or of the State at large, but that the former are materially benefited by the location of the Penitentiary in the city of Baltimore. The reasons for this opinion the Directors have set forth in answer to an interrogatory propounded to them by the Committee of the Legislature, in the course of their investigations; and to which answer, contained in a printed sheet that accompanies this report, the Directors beg leave to refer.

But if the contrary was the fact, and the labors of the Penitentiary did actually come into an injurious competition with the Mechanics of the State, it is obvious that no direction could be given to convict labor that would not, for the same reason, conflict with some of the industrious classes of the community. The question then arises whether the labor of the convicts shall cease, and their support be made a direct charge upon the State Treasury? This it is not our province to discuss. But if the present system be continued, with a view to make the labor of the prisoners support themselves as hitherto, we hope and trust the Legislature will see the propriety of permitting the Directors to continue the exercise of an unconditional discretion upon the subject—inasmuch as it will require the most strict attention, and judicious management on the part of the authorities, whomsoever they may be, to meet at all times the expenditures of the institution. Seeing that their ability to do so must depend, as the prosperity of all manufacturing establishments necessarily does, upon the general prosperity—that the labors of the Penitentiary are liable to the same fluctuations and changes which affect all labor and enterprise—and also, that the heavy incumbrances upon