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Heat from the Stars. It is declared that the question whether or not the earth receives any heat from the stars has been settled in the affirmative. By the aid of an instrument, exceedingly delicate and so sensitive as to be capable of measuring the heat of a candle a mile away, constructed by Prof. E. F. Nichols of Dartmouth College, it is demonstrated, we are told, that the planets and some of the fixed stars give to the earth an appreciable quantity of heat. The quantity of heat received in this way, however, is not so great that, if by any contingency it should be shut off, the earth's coal bill would be seriously increased. The poets will not probably be accused of falsifying the facts of science if they shall continue to allude to star light as "the cold light of stars."

Potatoes and Exports. United States newspapers are boasting of the tremendous volume of that country's exportations, and certainly Uncle Sam may be excused for indulging a feeling of complacency as he contemplates his great and growing business operations. According to figures taken from the United States Bureau of Statistics, the monthly exportations of the country for nine months ending with March 1901, amounts to \$124,497,853, while England takes a second place with \$117,816,246. It exceeds Germany's monthly exportation by nearly 50 per cent. and is more than double that of France. Still, if the 'American Grocer's' estimate of the drink-bill of the United States is accepted as correct, the sum total of the value of all exports from the United States for the nine months ending with March *ultimo*, amounting to more than \$1,120,000,000, falls short by nearly \$160,000,000 of what the people of the United States are spending every year for intoxicating drink. The sacrifice of national wealth which the drink traffic involves—to say nothing of the sacrifice of more valuable things—is certainly appalling.

Canada's Fisheries. Canada's sea harvest is, in comparison with its land harvest, of somewhat less relative importance than it has been in the past, but the fisheries continue to be for this country one of the chief industries and sources of national wealth. This is of course especially true of the maritime parts of the country, both east and west. The eastern sea coast, extending from the Bay of Fundy to the Straits of Belle Isle and covering some 5,600 miles, is still largely exceeded by that of British Columbia, which, with its many bays and islands, has a sea coast of more than 7,000 miles. According to returns furnished the Maritime and Fisheries Department of the Dominion Government, the total catch last year was valued at \$21,891,706. Nova Scotia takes the lead among the Provinces, with a catch valued at \$7,347,004; British Columbia makes a record of \$5,214,074; New Brunswick, \$4,119,891; Ontario, \$1,590,447; Quebec, \$1,953,136; Prince Edward Island, \$1,043,645, and Manitoba and the Northwest Territories, \$622,911. The Maritime Provinces fisheries find their chief markets in Great Britain and the United States, while a larger proportion of the British Columbia catch is marketed in the Dominion. Nova Scotia exported to the value of \$5,007,798, which record included a considerable quantity of the New Brunswick catch which was shipped from Nova Scotian ports. The export record of British Columbia was \$3,443,037, and the total export from all the Provinces was \$11,169,083. Of this important line of export Great Britain took \$4,071,136 worth, and the United States was the next best customer, with a record of \$3,688,935. Exports to the British West Indies aggregated \$957,958; to France, \$526,187; to Brazil, \$427,732; to Cuba, \$326,413, and to Australia, \$203,444.

British Population. The census returns for England and Wales, which are practically complete, show a total population for the two countries of 32,525,716. This is an increase of 3,523,191 over the population of 1891, a gain of 12.15 per cent. during the ten years. The increase is a very satisfactory one, exceeding that of the preceding decade. The census of 1891 showed an increase of 11.65 per cent. Much interest attaches to the returns from the agricultural districts. Forty-eight counties show decided gains. These include the cities and manufacturing towns, while fourteen counties, mostly confined to agricultural interests, show decreases. The figures for Scotland and Ireland are not yet complete. The population of the United Kingdom, taken at the last census in 1891, was 38,104,975. This total was divided as follows, exclusive of the Channel Islands, and the army and navy abroad:

	Males.	Females.	Total.
England	13,291,402	14,192,088	27,483,490
Wales	761,499	757,536	1,519,035
Scotland	1,942,717	2,082,030	4,024,747
Ireland	2,318,953	2,385,797	4,704,750

The progress of the population in Great Britain and Ireland during the last fifty years is shown by the following table:

1851	27,745,942
1861	29,321,288
1871	31,845,379
1881	35,241,482
1891	38,104,975

The estimated population of the United Kingdom and its colonies at the present time is 388,000,000. The following table shows the populations of the great powers at home and abroad from the latest census and estimated figures:

	Colonial.	Home.	Total.
U. K.	347,000,000	41,000,000	388,000,000
France	56,000,000	39,000,000	95,000,000
Germany	15,000,000	56,000,000	71,000,000
Russia	3,000,000	130,000,000	133,000,000
Austria	2,000,000	45,000,000	47,000,000
U. S.	10,000,000	76,000,000	86,000,000

Who Wrote it? There has been a good deal of speculation as to the authorship of an article on Queen Victoria, which a few weeks ago appeared in the London Quarterly Review. The portrait of the late Queen which the author of the article drew indicated both ability and discrimination. Evidently it was not prompted by the desire of flattering either the living or the dead. It did not indeed lack appreciation nor fail in generous and loyal recognition of the strength and virtue of the late Queen's character, nor did it draw a veil over certain royal idiosyncrasies. The author, whoever he was, seems to have believed that Victoria was great and good enough to make a real picture of the woman and the Queen acceptable to both King and people. It is evident that the article reflected an intimate knowledge of the Queen,—her methods of thought, action and speech. The King is said to have been deeply impressed with it, and, though it has been subject to critical scrutiny, its statements remain unchallenged. Among those whose names have been connected with conjectures as to the authorship of the article are those of Lord Salisbury, Sir Theodore Martin, the Bishop of Winchester, a prominent lady at Victoria's Court and Mr. Prothero, the editor of the Quarterly Review. The London correspondent of the New York Tribune is, however, convinced by internal evidence that the author is Mr. Edmund Gosse and that he has been supplied with information for it by more than one person of the highest standing at Court. The literary style, the use of certain characteristic expressions and the mode in which the portrait is built up betray his handiwork. Without doubt, says Mr. Ford, Mr. Gosse wrote the article, and had at least two coadjutors, a man and a woman, who supplied the

material from a large fund of personal reminiscence of Queen Victoria.

St. John Prison Reform.

At a meeting of the St. John City Council on Wednesday last when the question of expending twelve thousand dollars in the enlargement and improvement of the jail was under consideration, Councillor Christie is reported as having said that, "according to the ideas prevailing, there seemed to be a desire to furnish the scrapings of the earth with accommodations equal to the Russell House or the Windsor Hotel. The next thing demanded for the hoboos would be palace cars and a French cook. Where was it all going to end when fancy baths were proposed for jail birds. To submit the average specimen of this class to a daily bath would kill him. These were men many of whom had washed only every three or four years." Such remarks as these, with certain incidental references to "hysterical pulpit occupants," do not strike us as indicating the temper of mind to be desired in men who are expected to deal seriously and judiciously with questions of so much importance as that which the Council had under consideration. Whether or not the expenditure of so large a sum upon the present jail be the wisest practicable course is a fair question, and one demanding certainly the most careful consideration of the Council, but we can see no reason why insulting language should be used towards the ministers of the city on account of the interest which they, collectively or individually, have shown in the matter of prison reform, or that there should be any such absurd caricature of what has been asked for in the interest of such reform as the words above quoted embody. We submit that the function of government towards criminals is not merely punitive but also reformatory. The inmates of our jails are doubtless for the most part of vicious propensities and many of them with very bad histories. They may have settled objections to baths and to many other sanitary influences both physical and moral. But that does not justify society in trampling these men and women beneath its feet as if they were altogether less than human. Our duty to these wrecks of humanity is not discharged by heaping scornful epithets upon them and constructing our prisons and prison discipline on a plan adapted to send them forth from prison ten fold more the children of vice and crime than when they entered. To call these men and women "hoboos," "jail-birds," "the scrapings of the earth," and to pen them up in jails under the most unwholesome conditions, may be the cheapest, and therefore possibly in some quarters the most popular, way of dealing with them, but does this satisfy the conscience of a Christian community or the demands of a Christian civilization? How much has our present jail system had to do in making the hardened denizens of our prisons what they are. A system which takes the youthful criminal, convicted of some petty offence, and incarcerates him in company with those who have become old and hardened in vice, leaving him there in idleness, and uncleanness physical and moral, to receive in this college of crime such an education as the enemy of all good might rejoice in, is surely not one which any member of the St. John City Council can afford at this time of day to defend. Is it too much to demand in the interests of prison reform that the men and women prisoners shall not occupy cells on the same floor, that youthful prisoners and those convicted of a first offence shall be kept separate from the old and hardened class, that personal cleanliness and work of some kind shall be compulsory and that there shall be an effort to promote the best moral and religious influences among the prisoners? How such reforms may best be accomplished we do not discuss here, but that they are not to be ignored is beyond question.