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A Theory. The latest discovery, or rather the latest theory, in science, says a recent London despatch, "is that of brain waves." The correspondent uses commendable discretion in making this distinction between discovery and theory—a virtue hardly to be expected in a gatherer of trans-atlantic news. It is just this failure to make the distinction between discovery and theory—in other words between things known and things guessed at, which has led to people "knowing so many things that ain't so." The theory alluded to, as to brain waves, was presented in the presidential address delivered a few days ago before the British Society of Psychical Research, by Professor William Crookes. The theory is put forth as an attempt to account for thought transference—that is the influence of one mind upon another at a distance and without any of the ordinary means of communication. That there is such transference will seem to people generally, we suppose, as a proposition which has itself scarcely yet advanced beyond the region of theory, and to them Professor Crookes' attempt will appear as a theory to account for a theory, and they will hardly breathe comfortably in so tenuous an atmosphere. But evidently the Society for Psychical Research has settled it to its own satisfaction at least, that thought transference is an established fact. Now Professor Crookes' theory, as we apprehend it, is in brief, that, just as they are, or are supposed to be, vibrations of the air or ether causing in the mind the sensations of light and of sound, so the action of the brain in thought creates waves in the ether, or other theoretical medium, which may reach other sympathetic brains at a distance and induce in them similar waves, and so excite in the persons thus reached, similar trains of thought. Such speculation, the professor admitted, was new and strange to science. It was at present strictly provisional, but he was bold enough to make it, and the time might come when it could be submitted to experimental tests.

The Treaty Signed. The Anglo-Venezuelan Arbitration treaty was signed provisionally by Sir Julian Pauncefote, the British Ambassador, and Senor Jose Andrade, the Venezuelan Minister, at Washington, on February 2nd. The treaty requires still to be confirmed by the Venezuelan Parliament, but though there appears to have been some popular feeling in Venezuela against the terms of the treaty, there is probably no good grounds for supposing that it will not be confirmed, since, for Venezuela to refuse arbitration on the basis now arranged, would be to set herself in opposition, not only to Great Britain, but to the United States, which has championed the cause of her sister republic. The signing of the treaty may therefore be regarded as marking the settlement of a controversy which has lasted for nearly a century and the resumption of diplomatic relations between the two countries, which for some time had been suspended.

An Effort for Freer Trade. Two members of the Dominion Government, Sir Richard Cartwright, Minister of Trade and Commerce, and Hon. L. H. Davies, Minister of Marine and Fisheries, went to Washington last week. The mission of the honorable gentlemen is understood to be, among other things, to promote the interest of reciprocal trade between the two countries. According to a statement given out by them for publication, they are in Washington, in the first place, to confer with Sir Julian Pauncefote on several important matters affecting Canada and the United States. And, while at the United States capital, they will see as many of the public men as possible and discuss with them the existing trade relations between the two countries, and the possibility of making those relations broader and freer than they now are. They desire on behalf of the Dominion Government to ascertain the views of American public men on the question of reciprocal trade, before framing the tariff bill which is to be introduced at the approaching session of Parliament. This is a laudable purpose and Messrs. Cartwright and Davies are to be wished success in their mission. The strong sentiment evident among the public men of the United States against reciprocal trade makes it, however, rather improbable that any basis for freer trade that would be of large benefit to Canada can be arranged. All that our ministers can do, we suppose, at present is to sound public sentiment in the United States through leading public men. In Canada the Government could give a guarantee of value as to what Parliament would do in the way of tariff reform. In the United States the relations of the Executive and Congress make any such guarantee obviously impossible. No one can with much assurance predict what Congress will do in reference to any new subject with which it may have to deal and especially in reference to matters in which local interests are so much concerned as in this subject of reciprocal trade.

France Concerned. While the fecundity of the French race in North America is remarkable, quite the contrary has come to be true in France, and the failure of the nation to increase in population causes much concern to its public men. The National Alliance for the increase of the population of France has lately presented a petition urging on the Government the adoption of certain measures, which it is hoped may have the effect of encouraging marriage and the rearing of larger families. Something in that direction had already been attempted. For example a law was passed some years ago by which every seventh child in a family may be educated and boarded while at school at the expense of the nation. It is now proposed that government scholarships in schools, lycees and academies be given only to families having at least three children living. All favors of government, such as tobaccoists' licenses, concessions in colonies, &c., also to be given to such families. When the claims of Government officials for promotion are considered, their number of children to be taken into account and other regulations of a similar character are recommended. It remains to be seen whether such encouragement as it is proposed to give will have any appreciable effect in increasing population.

—President Eliot, of Harvard University, has offered Secretary Olney the international law professorship of that institution. Mr. Olney has taken the matter under consideration with the hope of accepting it provided it does not interfere too much with his regular practice.

The Arbitration Treaty. The fate of the Arbitration Treaty in the United States Senate is still undecided. It is evident that jealousy and distrust of England prevails to so great a degree among United States legislators as to make it extremely doubtful whether the treaty can pass the Senate unless it shall be first so mutilated by amendments as to render it practically valueless. The opposition to the treaty arises from different quarters and for different reasons. The Silver men seem disposed to use their influence against anything providing for cordial relations with Great Britain, because of her attitude on the currency question, and those senators—not a few—who are afflicted with chronic anglophobia can unite with the silver men in this, if in nothing else. Others, out of ill-will toward President Cleveland, will be very willing to see action in the matter postponed during the life time of the present administration. Some influential senators profess to be alarmed lest the treaty cover some deep, dark plot of the British Government to get the better of the United States. They fear that the Monroe doctrine will be invalidated, that England will manage to get the advantage in cases of arbitration, that the King of Sweden would not be an impartial umpire, and so forth. The plan of these senators appears to be to defeat the purpose of the treaty by amendments. To the first clause, which provides for the arbitration, under provisions and limitations laid down in the treaty, of all questions which the two nations have failed to adjust by diplomatic negotiations, an amendment has been proposed, excepting from the scope of arbitration all questions which affect the foreign or domestic policy of either of the high contracting parties or the relation of either to any other state or power, by treaty or otherwise. Such an amendment would of course make the treaty, as a means of averting war between the two nations, quite valueless. There seems to be no doubt that public opinion, and especially the better part of it, is strongly in favor of the treaty. Some of the senators have expressed great annoyance at the pressure which is being brought to bear upon that body, through public and private channels. It is quite evident that the people have little faith in the disposition of the Senate to do the right thing in the matter except under the pressure of public opinion.

—By a communication, which appears elsewhere, from the Secretary of the Board of Governors at Acadia University, it will be seen that at the special meeting of the Board, held at Wolfville last week, a favorable reply was received from Rev. Mr. Trotter, and his appointment as president of Acadia was confirmed. This result was anticipated. We are pleased to know that Mr. Trotter has seen his way clear to accept the appointment, and we believe that the announcement of his having done so will be received with very general satisfaction by the Baptist people of these provinces. A good many of them are already quite well acquainted with Mr. Trotter, but, for the benefit of those who are not, we shall endeavor next week to give our readers such information as many will wish to have respecting the man who has been chosen to fill the very honorable and responsible position of president of Acadia. It will be a pleasant duty for the MESSENGER AND VISITOR to introduce to its readers a gentleman of so high character, who has already done much important work, and who, we trust, is destined, under divine guidance, to render most important service to the denomination and the world at large in connection with our educational work.