

CURRENT TOPICS

AN INTERESTING ADVERTISEMENT AP-
peared recently in a Pretoria newspaper, and
attention is directed to it by the London corre-
spondent for the New York Herald: "To let, in
ex-President Kruger's late residence, a few nicely
furnished bed rooms with board," etc.

A READER OF THE COMMONER, LIVING AT
Midland Park, N. J., directs attention to an
article originally printed in the Chicago Chronicle
and reproduced in The Commoner of June 19.
This reader says there are several mistakes in
this article. It was said that the Swiss are
alone in having no language of their own. This
Commoner reader begs leave to say that the Bel-
gians, too, have no language they can call their
own; there does not exist a Swiss tongue, neither
a Belgian tongue. This reader says that another
mistake is to be found in the statement that three-
fourths of the Swiss speak German. He says that
the proportion is not so large as that; that French
is spoken in one part of Bern; also in one part
of Fribourg; also in one part of Fribourg, as well as
in other sections, covering in all two-fifths of the
population, leaving three-fifths, rather than three-
fourths, that speak German. This writer says
that as to Italian, it is only and exclusively
spoken in the Canton of Tessin, and that is of no
importance whatever. It was also said that four
other languages, besides German, are spoken in
Switzerland. The New Jersey reader says that
"this is a colossal error; in all, three languages
are spoken in Switzerland, to-wit: German,
French, and a little Italian in one Canton."

AN IMPORTANT RELIGIOUS MOVEMENT
occurred recently in the union effected at
Pittsburg between the Congregationalists, num-
bering 605,000, the United Brethren, 250,000, and
the Methodist Protestants, 200,000. A writer in
the Chicago Tribune, describing this union, says:
"It has been said that the union of the Congre-
gationalists, the United Brethren, and the Meth-
odist Protestants is federal rather than organic.
This is true. The general council of the three
denominations will not have legislative powers.
It is probable, however, that the United Brethren
and the Methodist Protestants, discovering a
strong common resemblance, will go on to tran-
scend the present federal union and to reach a
real union of discipline and of government. The
new church union will then consist of only two
elements, the Congregationalists on the one hand
and the United Brethren plus the Methodist Pro-
testants on the other. The total membership of
the union will be 1,100,000. This is no large per-
centage of the total population of the world, but
"a small fact may convey a big hint."

THEODORE ROOSEVELT, WHOSE SURNAME
is Signet, arrived July 3 at the home of
former Chief of Police Wm. H. Signet, at McKees-
port, Pa. According to the McKeesport correspon-
dent for the Chicago Tribune, the president's
namesake is the twentieth child born to Mr.
and Mrs. Signet, and to mark the proud event the
boy will have the given name of Theodore Roose-
velt. Mr. Signet has notified the president of his
new namesake. The father is a veteran of the
civil war and is 62 years old.

AN INTERESTING QUESTION, INVOLVING
the authority of the army contract surgeons,
has been disposed of by the war department. Re-
ferring to this case, the Washington correspondent
for the Chicago Tribune says: "As a result Pri-
vate Herbert P. Mark of the hospital corps, who
was convicted in the Philippines of disobeying
the orders of Contract Surgeon James C. Rut-
ledge and sentenced to three years' imprisonment,
will probably be released from confinement. Mark
has already served nearly a year of his sentence,
having been tried and sentenced on August 23,
1902, at Santa Cruz, in Cavite province, island of
Luzon. Mark got into trouble with the contract
surgeon at the Santa Cruz garrison, refused to obey
the doctor's orders, and is said to have been
profane in telling the doctor what he thought of
him. For this he was tried by a general court
martial and convicted of insubordination and dis-
obedience of orders. According to the officials of
the war department this conviction was not war-

ranted by law, as a contract surgeon is not an
officer of the army, but only a civilian doctor
employed by the government."

THAT THE MOMENT IS APPROACHING
when some power or combination of powers
must call a halt to Russian aggression, is the
statement made by the London correspondent for
the New York Sun in a dispatch under date of
July 4. In this dispatch, the Sun correspondent
says: "The conviction is rapidly growing that
nothing but the stern certainty of war will check
the policy of Muscovite aggrandizement. In other
words, the Russian 'bluff' must be called. The
question most discussed the last few days is
whether the needlessly provocative course pur-
sued by Russian diplomacy against the United
States, Great Britain, and Japan is a bluff or a
veiled challenge, which domestically has distracted
the administration. Commentators confess them-
selves much puzzled. They cannot conceive the
motive of shrewd diplomatists—and the Russians
always have been the past masters in this line—
in deliberately and unnecessarily forcing such a
triumvirate as America, Great Britain, and Japan
into a combination against them."

THE STRANGE STORY OF A BOY WHO DIED
from excessive weeping, is told by the New
York correspondent for the Chicago Tribune. John
Crowley, 16 years old, whose home was at Brook-
lyn, was strong and robust. On the evening of
Wednesday, July 1, young Crowley learned of the
death of his uncle, Charles Crowley, who was
killed while attempting to jump from a train to
the platform. The lad cried without ceasing for
nearly three days. The Tribune correspondent
says: "From the time John Crowley was a baby
his uncle, who was a bachelor, had shown him
great affection. As the boy grew older the bond
between the two became stronger and after the
boy's father died, four years ago, the uncle and his
nephew became inseparable. Immediately upon
learning of his uncle's death John was seized with
a fit of hysterical weeping and the efforts of his
mother, sisters, and brothers to soothe him were
in vain. All night long and all day Thursday he
continued to moan and sob. He would not eat or
sleep and Thursday night he was so weak he could
barely totter. Yesterday he attended his uncle's
funeral and while riding to the cemetery had an-
other attack of convulsive sobbing, finally becom-
ing so violent that he had to be carried to his
carriage. He continued to weep through the
night until finally he was seized with another
burst of convulsive grief and died in his mother's
arms."

LONDONERS ARE JUST NOW ENGAGED IN
a discussion of that dread disease, appendi-
citis. S. Kellett Smith, writing to the Lancet,
suggested that the increase in appendicitis might
possibly be due to the greater amount of refrig-
erator meats eaten nowadays. Mr. Smith pointed
out that the indigestion of chilled or frozen food,
it being especially liable to rapid decomposition,
might result in a more septic state of the intes-
tines than prevailed before the days of cold
storage, and that this greater septicity might, in
its turn, account for the great virulence of those
irritations to which the appendix has always been
prone. The Lancet thinks this theory a plausible
one, but would like to know whether it can be
shown that the intestine is in a more septic state
now than it was when frozen or chilled comestibles
were not so largely in use.

THAT THE TRADE BETWEEN CANADA
and the United States has greatly increased
recently, is shown by an official bulletin issued at
Ottawa, Ont., July 2. In this bulletin it is shown
that for ten months of the present fiscal year, in
spite of the British preference, which it was ex-
pected would do so much to reduce United States
imports under the headings referred to, Canada's
purchases of metals and metallic manufactures
from the United States show an increase in two
years from \$21,000,000 to \$27,000,000. The figures
for the last ten months are \$27,002,826, and for
the corresponding period of 1901, \$21,103,866. For
the same period last year the total was \$22,726,-
941. Of the imports for the present year be-

tween 45 and 50 per cent were of the classes that
come free of duty.

IN THE SAME BULLETIN, IT IS SHOWN THAT
imports of British metals and metallic man-
ufactures, though small in the aggregate compared
with those from the United States, increased at a
faster ratio in the same period. The total from
Great Britain for the ten months of the present
year was under \$9,000,000, compared with a trifle
over \$4,000,000 in the same period of 1901 and over
\$6,000,000 for the same period of last year. Of the
British imports, however, the goods brought in
free of duty scarcely averaged over 30 per cent
of the whole.

WASHINGTON CITY IS ALREADY NEW
Jersey's rival, and if reliance is to be placed
in the prediction made by the New York World's
Washington correspondent, the Capital City will,
within five years, become the center of the trust-
incorporating industry. This correspondent points
out that the laws of New Jersey, liberal though
they have always been regarded, are so much more
strict than those which congress has enacted for
the purpose of enabling capitalists to incorporate
themselves to do business as stock companies, that
New Jersey will soon lose prestige. It is pointed
out by this correspondent that the last congress
liberalized the corporation law for the purpose of
irritating the formation of companies to establish
factories in the District of Columbia. So far as
ascertainable, it had no idea of establishing a
corporation factory there. But that is what it has
done. A corporation has been formed, the sole
business of which is to incorporate companies that
find the laws of states too strict to suit their no-
tions as to stockholders' liability and things of
that kind. The company's fee is only \$50, and for
that sum it will look after the interests of a com-
pany for a whole year. When the company is or-
ganized it is necessary to have three residents of
the District of Columbia. It does not require
them to remain on the board of directors.

ACCORDING TO THIS AUTHORITY, THE
practice is for the three local men to re-
sign as soon as the promoters of the scheme find
the men they want for directors. Then they are
at liberty to do anything with the corporation
their fancy or interest may dictate. The only re-
striction on them is that they must not issue stock
in excess of the amount their charter authorizes
them to put out. They may issue bonds in as
great quantities as they can pay the printer for.
There are no fees to be paid graded according to
the amount of stock as there are in New Jersey
and in many of the other states. There is no such
thing as liability of stockholders except where
there is fraud and then they are liable for only the
debts of the concern. There is no restriction on
the character of the business that may be done
by the company chartered under authority of con-
gress in the District of Columbia. One that pro-
fessed to teach men how to become skilled bur-
glars might have trouble to get a certificate, but
if it did it would not be on account of what the
act says, but because the officers here might think
the courts would hold such a company to be
against public policy. None of the capital stock
need be paid in before the company begins busi-
ness, and only 10 per cent need be in the treasury
when the concern starts on its career. The other
90 per cent need never be paid in. Nothing in the
way of an annual report or a list of the holders of
the stock is required. After the small fee required
for the issuance of the certificate of incorporation
has been paid, the District of Columbia is through
with its creature. It may rob the unsuspecting
or the worldly wise until there is not a dollar
left in the pockets of those who have trusted
the misleading legend: "Incorporated under the
laws of the United States in the District of Co-
lumbia."

IT SEEMS THAT SENATOR HANNA ANTICI-
pates a strenuous time during the coming
Ohio campaign. The Cleveland correspondent for
the Chicago Record-Herald says: "For a long
time the business affairs of Senator Hanna have
been a source of worry to him. It has been his
ambition to devote all of his time to public af-
fairs, and even though his business enterprises