

## CURRENT EVENTS.

Those who recall the half forgotten controversy over the discoveries of Dr. Cook and Admiral Peary, as to whether either, both or neither of them reached the North Pole, will remember the names of Crocker Land and Bradley Land. Crocker Land, which Peary thought he saw to the westward, and to which he gave the name, has been proved to have no existence. The MacMillan expedition settled that point, and it is not the only one of Peary's reported discoveries now discredited. Cook, who said there was no land where Crocker Land was supposed to be, and whose story is thus far corroborated by MacMillan, reported other land far to the west, which he called Bradley Land. It still remains to be seen whether this is non-existent. Little notice has been taken of Capt. Bernier's last Arctic expedition, which left Quebec in July, 1914, just before the commencement of the war, carrying two German explorers who went in search of Bradley Land. They failed to reach their destination. One of them, Arthur Haack, perished in a blizzard; the other, Rudolph Franke, returned to Quebec with Capt. Bernier and was made a prisoner of war.

There are grave fears for the safety of the Shackleton expedition, which set out, just after the war began, to cross the Antarctic continent. If all has gone well with them on land, they should now have completed the crossing, and should be ready to embark for home; but the steamer "Aurora," which was waiting for them at Ross Sea, broke from her moorings and has reached Australia in a disabled condition, leaving the explorers and most of the relief party behind, where they may have to remain for another year.

United States forces have crossed the Mexican border, and are pursuing Villa and his followers in the mountains of northern Mexico. The immediate provocation for this invasion was a raid by Villa's men upon the town of Columbus, New Mexico; and it is considered a punitive expedition to deal with lawless forces over which the Carranza government has no control. The Carranza forces are co-operating with those of the United States, apparently in perfect harmony; and there is an understanding between the two governments that the United States soldiers will be withdrawn as soon as Villa is taken or killed. This does not mean, however, that Carranza would then be the undisputed ruler of Mexico; for it is said that Diaz has landed in the south to lead a new rebellion.

It is expected that the Panama Canal will be open for traffic again before the end of this month.

The ice in the White Sea is melting, and maritime traffic at Archangel will probably be re-opened by the middle of April.

After six weeks of fierce and almost incessant attack, the Germans have not yet succeeded in taking Verdun. The capture of this French stronghold must be a matter of great importance in the German plans. The men they have lost are numbered by hundreds of thousands, and their gains are small; yet they are steadily drawing nearer to the city, and may win it in the end. Why they should think it worth the cost is not quite clear.

The British lines have been extended since the struggle at Verdun began, and they now occupy a front of at least eighty miles.

The number of unarmed merchant ships torpedoed by the German submarines has been greater in March than ever before, and many of them were neutrals. Spain, Holland and Norway have protested; and at least one of them, Holland, seems very much in earnest. The United States is still considering what it is best to do.

Because of the seizure of German ships in Portuguese ports, Germany declared war on Portugal on the 9th of March. Portugal is, therefore, the thirteenth nation involved in the war; or the fourteenth, if we count the little republic of San Marino, which is said to have declared war on Austria in June last. The entrance of Portugal into the war will make a considerable difference to the British in one thing. It will enable British armed vessels to make free use of the Portuguese colonial ports.

Why does not Germany declare war against Italy? Certainly it is not for want of sufficient excuse. Among the reasons that have been suggested are these: (1) that she knows such a declaration would bring Roumania into the war as an ally of Italy; (2) that she still hopes to detach Italy from the Entente Allies, and induce her to make a separate peace; and (3) that there are large German investments in Italy which would be lost in case of a declaration of war, but would be very valuable after the war is over if they can be retained. On the other hand, a declaration of war by Italy against Germany might add Switzerland to our enemies, as more than two-thirds of the inhabitants of Switzerland are German Swiss.

The announcement that the small British army in Mesopotamia, besieged at Kut-el-Amara, had been relieved, proved to be incorrect. Later news tells of the advance of the relieving party to a point only a few miles away. Meanwhile the Russians are also advancing from the north towards Bagdad, and there are rumours that Turkish resistance is almost at an end.

Captain the Hon. Alfred T. Shaughnessy, second son of Baron Shaughnessy, is among the Canadians who have fallen in the fight somewhere in France.

The 22nd of this month will be the first anniversary of the battle of Ypres, in which the Canadian soldiers were said to have saved the day. It will be officially celebrated at Ottawa, and the people everywhere in Canada will be asked to raise their flags on that day. Although it comes on Saturday, it is an occasion on which the school flag should be raised.

Yuan Shih-kai, after consenting to assume the throne as Emperor of China, has now declined the dignity, and has once more proclaimed himself president of the Chinese Republic. He explains, in Chinese fashion, that he had accepted the throne with great reluctance, believing it to be the will of the people; and that he is now convinced that the people were not unanimous in the choice of a monarchical form of government, and that it is better to return to the republican form. It is suspected that German influence may have had something to do with his elevation to the throne, in defiance of the wishes of Japan, and also with the insurrection which followed. If this be true, his resumption of the title of president