

CURRENT EVENTS.

The British cruiser *Tiger*, recently launched in Scotland, is the swiftest vessel afloat.

A company has been formed in Quebec to promote winter navigation on the lower St. Lawrence. It is said that the ice is always moving, and offers open passages to allow small steamers to pass.

A new railway across Canada is proposed. It is part of the line called the All-Red route, which is to circle the earth in the British Empire. The proposed railway is to run from near St. Charles, on the Atlantic coast, to Dean's Channel, on the Pacific, keeping farther north than the other transcontinental lines.

The calosoma, a large and handsome beetle which has been introduced in New Brunswick and in some parts of New England to prey upon the brown-tail moth and other hurtful insects, is said to be rapidly increasing in Massachusetts, where it will help to check the ravages of the brown-tail and gypsy moths.

The great barrage of the Euphrates, the first part of the irrigation works planned by Sir William Willcocks to restore the fertility of Mesopotamia, was completed and ready for use on the twelfth of December. When the whole work is finished, it is expected to treble the wheat crop of the region.

At a meeting of the North American Fish and Game Association recently held in Ottawa, a resolution was adopted looking to a treaty between Great Britain and the United States for the protection of migratory birds now threatened with extinction.

The death of the Emperor Menelik of Abyssinia is again reported, and this time, probably, it is true, for the announcement is official.

Otto, the mad king of Bavaria, has been deposed, and is succeeded by the Regent Ludwig. The new King's wife is a direct descendant of Mary Queen of Scots; and therefore, according to the Jacobites, to whom the right of succession was independent of the will of parliament, would be the rightful ruler of the British Empire by inheritance. If this is amusing, there is something still more so in the Jacobite doctrine when carried a little farther. It has been seriously said that her son, Prince Rupert of Bavaria, is the lawful King of America; for when King James abdicated the throne of Britain, if he did really give up his claim, he did not give up the throne of America, which, if you please, was an entirely separate kingdom. America, in this case, of course means Virginia, and Prince Rupert himself probably never thought of such a claim.

A rebellion has broken out in Ecuador, and the rebels have captured an important town.

A Spanish ship on the east coast and a Japanese ship on the west coast have been added to the foreign fleets in Mexican waters. All the north part of Mexico is now held by the rebels under Carranza and Nilla, and there are two separate centres of disturbance in the south; yet it is claimed by Huerta that his government is gaining strength every day.

The annexation of Crete to Greece took place on the

fourteenth of December, King Constantine himself hoisting the Greek flag over the fortress of Canea. For many years the Cretans have tried to break away from Turkish rule and join the Kingdom of Greece, but until now the Great Powers of Europe have forbidden it.

A detachment of the Royal Northwest Mounted Police has left Dawson for Herschel Island, in the Arctic Ocean, to gather information about the Stefansson expedition. The largest vessel, the *Karluk*, was fast in the ice when the leader and six other men left her to go on a hunting cruise. A heavy storm arose, and the ship was driven out to sea. Stefansson and his companions on shore are quite safe, and it is hoped that the twenty-five men on the ship are in no great danger.

A French aviator has completed a journey from Paris to Cairo. The most difficult part of his journey was over the Taurus Mountains, where he had to fly at a height of nearly sixteen thousand feet.

The great cableway which is to be built across the mountains that separate Kashmir from the Punjab will be about seventy-five miles in length. The plan of constructing an ordinary railway into Kashmir has been pronounced impracticable because of the loose nature of the soil in the mountain regions, which causes many slides and the falling of huge boulders with every heavy rain. The cables will be upheld by iron towers of lattice work, some of which will be a hundred feet high. It is expected that goods can be carried over the whole distance in fifteen hours; whereas at the present time, by bullock cart, under the most favourable conditions of weather, it requires fifteen days. The longest cableway now in use is one of twenty-two miles, in Argentina.

It is ten years since the first flight of an aeroplane was announced amongst current events. Perhaps nothing better marks the progress made in the improvement of these wonderful machines than the late announcement of the building of one in Russia that is fitted for passenger service by night, and offers sleeping rooms for passengers.

At all railway stations in Russia, books are kept in which passengers are invited to enter any complaints they may wish to make.

Under a new Anglo-Turkish treaty, it is said, Great Britain will obtain a concession of all the oil fields in Arabia and Syria. With the development of the oil-burning engine, and the possibility that oil will soon take the place of coal in the generation of power at sea, the possession of the large oil fields of the world becomes a matter of the greatest importance. There is a revival of the rumour that a British company will get control of the oil supply of Colombia; and there are some who profess to believe that the question of whether a British company or an American company shall have control of the oil wells of Mexico is the real issue in the present civil war in that country.

The government of Holland is seriously taking up the project of draining the Zuyder Zee. Six hundred years ago this little inland sea did not exist. A series of storms in the thirteenth century drove in the waters of the German Ocean upon the shifting sand dunes and low-lying fields around the mouth of the Yssel; and the small lake