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CURRENT TOPICS.

As we go to press, it is probable, almost certain, that the Americans are to be once more victorious in the international yacht race. The Vigilant has fairly beaten the Valkyrie in a light breeze, and in a stiff breeze, thus pretty well demonstrating her superior speed under any circumstances, in the chosen waters. It seems, therefore, as if nothing but an accident can prevent her winning the third time and thus ending the contest. To many this will seem to be a matter of the slightest importance. But this race is one of a kind which has a deeper meaning than a mere trial of skill between British and American builders and yachtsmen. In these days, when the maritime nations are straining every nerve to increase the speed of ocean travel, and are drawing to the utmost upon all the resources of science to aid them in the effort, the question of models, in their relation to

speed, becomes one of no small importance. In one respect, however, the trial between the yachts will be defective and indecisive, whichever wins. The real question is not one of speed, pure and simple, in comparatively smooth waters and under special circumstances, but of speed, combined with safety, under any and all conditions of wind and sea. For practical, as distinct from mere sporting, purposes the trial would be much more to the purpose if it involved two or three trips across the Atlantic or to the Antipodes. Lord Dunraven's craft has demonstrated her ability to compete under such conditions. The popular impression is that the Vigilant is unfit to do so. To settle the whole question of superiority, British yachtsmen should offer a challenge cup to be competed for in British waters.

It is said, we know not how correctly, that the opening up of the Cherokee Strip disposes of the last large tract of valuable, unoccupied territory in the possession of the American Government. It is to be hoped, in the interests of civilization and morality, that it is the last that the Government will use as a stimulus to the gambling instinct which is so powerful in the breasts of a large section of its citizens. The disgraceful and cruel events connected with the scramble for locations in this region, which took place on the 16th of September, are no doubt fresh in the memories of our readers. We shall not stay to describe them. It makes one blush for his kind to read of the savage struggles in which men and women were trampled and crushed and even killed outright in the mad rush for places on trains, first entries on locations, etc. How many of those who displayed such insane eagerness to get possession of claims had any intention of really cultivating or otherwise improving them, further than might be necessary in order to meet the conditions of the grant and acquire such title as would enable them to sell to some one else? Such an incident must be a godsend to the advocates of the single tax on land values. The land while at the disposal of the Government was of course the property of the nation. Why should property so valuable as the rush for possession would indicate be given gratis to the individuals who might be lucky or smart or selfish enough to outrun or overrun all competitors and reach it first? The Government which adopts such methods is surely blameworthy for failing to make an equitable distribution of the

people's property, and doubly blameworthy for pandering in such fashion to the gambling mania—the dishonest desire to get something belonging to others for nothing—which is one of the worst banes of modern society.

We read the other day in an American paper that those who had been winners in the Oklahoma races and had won free grants of farms in that coveted strip of territory, owed their good future to the "liberality of Uncle Sam," or words to that effect. We have just now noticed in a Toronto paper the statement, that the meeting of the British Association in Montreal a few years since was "generously aided by the Dominion Government." These are but typical instances of a mode of speech which is strangely common, even in the most democratic communities. They are suggestive of the tendency of which we have before spoken, to separate the state and the Government, in thought, from the people who constitute the one and whose agent the other is, as if they had an independent existence, and an inherent right to the use of the authority and the property they hold in trust for the people. Such expressions, we confess, always grate on our ears. It is, of course, too obvious to need argument that "Uncle Sam" has no right to be "liberal" with the people's land, and that the Dominion Government has no right to be "generous" with the people's money. If the one disposes of the land or the other of the money in any way which favours individuals at the expense of the nation, it commits a breach of trust. Liberality and generosity are terms which are properly applicable, only to the acts of those who are dealing with their own property. It is the business of agents and stewards to be honest and just. They have no right to be liberal or generous with their master's property. When a Government has, under consideration the distribution of public land, or the bestowal of public money, the only question rightly before it is how to use these trust properties for the benefit of their real owners, without distinction of persons. These may seem like truisms, too well known to require formal statement, but we are persuaded that it would prevent many mistakes and much political wrongdoing, if both Governments and peoples would keep such truisms clearly in mind and govern themselves accordingly.

There is some reason to fear that the cow-killing riots reported a few weeks ago