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CURRENT TOPICS.

What a volume of history, especially of British history, has been written since the Queen, the seventy-fifth anniversary of whose birthday was celebrated yesterday in every quarter of the globe, ascended the throne, fifty-seven years ago. The mere enumeration of the great acts and events of her reign by the briefest designations which could be given them, would occupy more space than we have at our disposal. To mention even a few of the more memorable; the establishment of penny postage; the abolition of the Corn Laws; the transfer of the great Indian Empire to the Crown; the admission of Jews into the House of Commons; the various Land and other Acts for the pacification of Ireland; the Disestablishment of the Irish Church; the different Reform Bills, with their successive and progressive extensions of the suffrage—of what changes, past and still in progress were these and

such as these at once the outcome and the instruments. Then if we begin to recall in the same desultory fashion the memories of the world-renowned statesmen whose names are associated with the great events of this wonderful reign, what an array passes before the mind: Melbourne, Peel, Russell, Derby, Aberdeen, Palmerston, Disraeli, Gladstone, and the many others who were only second to these illustrious chiefs. To her honour be it said that during all the agitations and vicissitudes which have been so characteristic of her reign, and many of which must have been more or less repugnant to her own personal views and feelings, Her Majesty has held on the even tenor of her way as a constitutional sovereign, following the advice of the chosen leaders of the nation, and dutifully submitting her will to the will of the people. Hence it is that to-day, in an honoured old age, and after a reign of extraordinary length and lustre, she still holds her place in the affections of the subjects of an Empire unprecedented and unrivalled in commerce and arts as in prestige and power.

The use of the "cloture" is being advocated by some as a means of checking the otherwise interminable obstruction which is feared when the Wilson Bill, or that which now stands for it, is fairly before the Senate. But there is scarcely a possibility of the consent of Congress being obtained to any such measure, and any attempt to pass one would almost certainly be met with obstruction as determined as that which is dreaded in the case of the tariff bill. Meanwhile business is depressed and in many sections the distress of the unemployed threatens to become greater than ever by reason of the fact that the workingmen have long since exhausted any savings they may have had at the commencement of the period of idleness a year ago, and so are in a worse position than at any previous time. Truly the politicians have much to answer for. In view of the great evil and suffering which are dreaded as the result of the weeks and months of delay which are still in prospect, the *New York Nation* asks a question so simple and pertinent in its bearing upon the situation not only in the American Congress, but in our own or any other parliament in which unending speech-making is resorted to for dilatory purposes, that we wonder the simple policy suggested is not oftener used with effect. "Why does not some Senator," it asks, "insist that those who speak

in the Senate be compelled to speak to the question?" It is well known that in all cases of talking against time, at Ottawa as well as at Washington, the most irrelevant matter is dragged in in order to enable the obstructionist to hold the floor. If some senator or member had the courage to persistently challenge every deviation from the subject immediately before the House, and the Speaker the nerve to interpret the rules with reasonable strictness, many an obstructive debate would be brought to a speedy termination through lack of appropriate material on the part of the speech-makers.

It is doubtful whether any great deliberative and legislative assembly ever lowered itself more rapidly in public estimation than the august United States Senate has done during the current session. Each party seems to have done its best in its way to contribute to this result: the Republicans by obstruction; the Democrats by gross disloyalty to the country and to the plainest declarations of the platform on the strength of which the people elected them to office. The Wilson Bill, even as first introduced, fell very far below the standard set up in the declaration that it is "a fundamental principle of the Democratic party that the Federal Government has no constitutional power to impose and collect tariff duties, except for the purpose of revenue only," and its demand "that the collection of such taxes shall be limited to the necessities of the Government when honestly and economically administered." But the few distorted features of the bill, in which, when introduced, could be traced some resemblance to the programme, have been marred or eliminated in committee until the resemblance of the "compromise" measure now before the House to the original is faint indeed. Into the nature of the influences which have wrought this change it is not the business of an outsider to inquire. It is to be hoped, for the sake of democratic government, that the worst which is charged by political foes; and even hinted at by political friends, is without foundation. Bribery is a hard word, indeed, to be used in connection with members of this once honourable assembly, and it may be hoped that the denial which is made on behalf of the great Sugar Trust, that its funds have been used for the basest and most selfish ends, may be true in regard not only to it but to other enormously wealthy corporations whose power, however brought to bear, has been made in some way so conspicuously