

CURRENT TOPICS

ONE OF THE saddest stories ever written relates to the death of one of America's great statesmen, Congressman David A. De Armond of the Sixth Missouri district. Fire destroyed the congressman's home at Butler, Mo., and he died while engaged in a fruitless effort to save the life of his little grandson. An Associated Press report of the tragedy said: "The heroism of the congressman was made known late this afternoon, when, with his arms locked around the blackened and burned body of the little boy, the congressman's body was found. He had caught up the six-year-old lad, David A. De Armond, Jr., and rushed through the flames that filled his room. He fell with his unconscious burden and both sank to the floor to quick death. What makes the tragedy unusually pathetic is the fact that the grandson was the grandfather's idol. The two were inseparable and often slept together. Last night the boy went to his grandfather's house, as usual, and after a happy evening the two retired. The next the family heard of them was early today, when, from behind the smoke and flames that enveloped the house, the boy screamed: 'Oh, grandpa, get me out of here quick; I'm burning to death.' 'Yes, son; don't be afraid; grandpa'll take you out,' was the calm reply. Then both went down to their death. The remainder of the family stopping in the house at the time of the fire—Mrs. De Armond, her daughter, Mrs. Clark, and Miss Nettie Boles—were greatly shaken by their experiences."

THE NAME of David A. De Armond might well be called a household word so far as American democrats are concerned. Referring to Judge De Armond, the Associated Press says: "David De Armond was first elected to the house of representatives from the Sixth congressional district of Missouri in 1891 and served continuously. He was one of the best known members of the lower house at Washington and had occupied other positions of prominence in his state. He was a democrat, and in addition to his political prominence was a well known lawyer. He was born March 18, 1844, in Blair county, Pennsylvania. His early life was spent on his father's farm, receiving his education in the common schools and at Williamsport Dickinson seminary. In his young manhood he practiced law in Butler, Mo., and in 1884 was named a presidential elector. He held successively the positions of state senator, circuit judge and Missouri supreme court commissioner. His entry into congress was in 1891, when he was made a representative in the Fifty-second congress, and was re-elected to each succeeding congress, including the Sixty-first."

THE WASHINGTON correspondent for the Associated Press says: "In Mr. De Armond the democrats lose one of their leaders on the floor of the house. A member of that body for the last nineteen years, and a man of education, wide experience and fluent speech he had become one of the principal resources of his party in all discussions of national questions. He made a specialty of labor subjects, but was never at a loss in handling almost any question. Mr. De Armond had been on the bench before coming to congress, and he naturally gave much attention to judicial subjects. He was a member of the committee on judiciary and had held that post for many years. Previous to the present congress, he also was a member of the committee on rules, but the selection of his colleague, Champ Clark, as a minority leader, rendered it necessary to place Mr. Clark on that committee, which had the effect of displacing Mr. De Armond, as two could not be appointed from the same state. While Mr. De Armond will be long remembered for his brilliant oratory and his power of sarcasm and capacity for invective, he also will long be known on account of his qualities as a party fighter. Inclined to be pugnacious, he often pleaded subjects as an aggressor rather than as a defendant. This quality of mind was the means of getting him into a personal altercation two years ago with John Sharp Williams, who was then the democratic leader of the house. The difference be-

tween them arose over Mr. Williams' designation of a Missouri colleague of Mr. De Armond's for a place in the organization of the Sixtieth congress. They came to blows, but both being lightweights neither was badly hurt. Mr. De Armond was an aspirant for the leadership of the house, but the recognition of Mr. Clark effectually cut him out of that position."

THE OMAHA World-Herald pays, to the late David A. De Armond, this well deserved tribute: "The shocking death of Congressman De Armond, burned to death at night in his own home, will cause grief everywhere, but nowhere will the sense of affliction be so keen as among those who knew and admired Judge De Armond for what he was, a good man, a true patriot, and a brave and devoted champion of truth. It is a serious loss to the country when, with the forces of greed and the forces of righteousness about to face each other in an important session of congress, so able a champion of the right as David A. De Armond is suddenly swept from the lists forever. De Armond was a man of scholarly attainments and statesmanlike qualities. For a good many years he was recognized as one of the strong men of the house and a democratic leader whose courage never faltered and whose devotion knew no swerving nor turning back. He was a democrat without taint or flaw, true to the principles of his great party because he believed in them, and believing in them, because he had so thoroughly mastered and grasped their meaning. Though he was not imposing in appearance and though his voice was weak, he was a master in debate, thanks to his wide information, his learning, his keen and active mind and a gift for incisive, heart-felt sarcasm. He will be missed, on the floor of the house this winter, not alone by the democratic minority, but by all republican members who, because of their insurgency, had a kindred feeling for this plain, old-fashioned Missouri democrat. He will be missed by his straight-out political opponents, who had a healthy respect for his prowess no less than for his simple integrity. But he will be missed most of all by his country, which can ill afford to spare from congress at this juncture a friend of popular rights so devoted and splendidly equipped as he."

T. P. O'CONNOR, in a special article written for the Chicago Tribune, declares that the British budget is a revolt from landlordism; that the English people now see a chance for breaking the system which oppresses them and that the budget is opposed by wealthy men, liquor dealers and high tariff advocates. Mr. O'Connor says: "To illustrate the great tide of passion which surges behind the budget of Lloyd-George, I must give a personal impression. It may be familiar to some of your readers. There is no lovelier or more entrancing succession of scenes than those on which the eye falls as the traveler, returned from the continent of Europe, rushes in the train from Dover to London. For mile after mile you look out on stretching fields of dazzling emerald green; immemorial elms colored by the rays of the setting sun give you a strange and potent impression of the age, the splendor and the beauty of English life and history; the red bricked house stands out in relief from this gigantic maze of green; you realize all the centuries of struggle, of tranquility, of patient work, of ordered government, of progressive civilization which lie behind a nation, that can thus reveal to the world miles upon miles of land cultivated to the softness, to the prettiness, the regularity of a garden. And then suddenly there comes upon you another thought. You bathe your eyes in the beauty of that wondrous landscape and sink back in your seat in the languorous peace of satisfaction until suddenly you jump up with a start, and remember that you see everything in the landscape but the human face and the human home. For these succeeding miles of uninterrupted green are mostly a silent solitude. The houses come but rarely at long intervals; the figure of a man or woman or young boy or young girl which now and then you see crossing through the path in the fields rather

intensifies the sense of the loneliness of the land. And then you realize that England is not the land, as France is, as Ireland is becoming, of hundreds of thousands of small peasant homes, but the land where the few own the soil and the many are banished from it. And then all that bewildering and intoxicating beauty of the English landscape presents itself to you under a different aspect. Perhaps the best epitome and figure of your sensations is a lovely English rose with a crawling worm inside its beautiful and delicate petals. That bit of England sums up the land question. Today, as within a few years of the Norman conquest in the eleventh century, the land is in the hands of a few great families. What was not given to the English nobleman by the Norman conqueror was conferred on him by Henry VII when the lands of the old monasteries were confiscated. Everything in English life and English legislation has been contrived to perpetuate that state of things, the law of primogeniture beggaring all the rest of the family by giving the land entirely to the eldest son; the social distinction which the possession of the land brings; the control of one great house of the two houses of the legislature by the men belonging almost exclusively to these great families. All these things combine to keep the land over vast spaces still in the hands of a few men. And no amount of reasoning, no facts, however tragic, have seemed able up to the present to produce any serious change in this ancient system. The village is deserted, and lusty country lads who ought to be singing behind the plow are drudging in the slum and alley of the congested English city. But the ancient land system persists; the English rose still carries in the bosom of its petals the cancerous worm of land monopoly."

ACCORDING TO Mr. O'Connor: "The landlord party, powerfully represented in the house of commons, in the press, especially of London, where it is now almost entirely in their hands; in exclusive control of the house of lords, where it counts something like 560 members against forty liberals, backed up by some rich liberals who have been frightened; the landlords, I say, regard the proposals of this budget as a fatal blow at their prestige, their property; and their power. The wealthy and powerful liquor interest rages against the budget as fiercely, and some of the big taxes on income and inheritance have exasperated the capitalist classes. All these threatened and infuriated interests now concentrate their hopes on the house of lords. A final and also most potent factor are the protectionist or tariff reformers, as they are called. They also wish to precipitate an election; regarding the budget as a deadly blow at their hopes of framing a protectionist budget when they get into power. In something like ten days from this day the issue will be finally knit. Either the house of lords will then have accepted or rejected the budget. If their decision be rejection you will see in England an epoch more excited, fiercer, more embittered, more epoch making than for almost a century. I will discuss next week the probabilities of the mighty struggle which has now apparently become inevitable between the classes and the masses in England."

RAYMOND PATTERSON, for many years Washington correspondent for the Chicago Tribune, died recently. Public men of all parties paid high tribute to Mr. Patterson and the Chicago Tribune itself printed this fine editorial: "Yesterday morning there died in Washington the dean, the head of the corps, of American political correspondents. But he was more than that. He was a delegate at large at the capital for half a dozen states. He was a journalistic ambassador accredited to the government at Washington not only by the constituency which followed him and which supported him through the Tribune, but by an even wider constituency, which found his opinions reflected in the columns of hundreds of other newspapers throughout the country. From the time, fifteen years ago, when Raymond first went to Washington in the energy of his young manhood and