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"IT'S YOUR FAIR. SO BE THERE"

DEMOCRACY'S PROBLEM IS IN ITS SCHOOLS

By DR. CLAUDE H. VAN TYNE,
of the University of Michigan.

[EDITOR'S NOTE.—The defects in our educational system pointed out by Dr. Van Tyne are the principal targets at which the National Security League's great nation-wide campaign of "Patriotism Through Education" is aimed.]

Certain fundamental American ideals must be impressed upon the American youth. The crisis through which this nation recently passed before it could be brought to a whole-hearted support of a war begun for the purpose of preserving the most vital principles upon which it was founded has aroused educators everywhere like a fire-bell in the night, to understand that we must employ our educational machinery more than we have in the past to imbue every American citizen with a comprehension of democratic principles.

If we can find some definite means of securing an understanding of democratic ideals, we may expect as a result a patriotic zeal in defending them. If Americanism is a belief in and a habit of supporting such ideals, then we may hope that such a process will produce it.

Opposing Theories.

The American's theory of the state is that it exists to protect him in the enjoyment of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness; that the individual is the important thing, not the state. An opposing theory, and it happens to be the German theory, is that the state is the important thing, that to it the individual owes everything, life and liberty and even blind obedience of orders to do cruel and brutal acts. Why not teach that difference to boys and girls instead of mere dry facts about the organs of government and their functions. Let us not be so shy and modest about the virtues of our political system. The Germans are not. Let us say frankly that democracy implies a nation in peace, that autocracy implies a nation in arms. We can teach frankly, too, that our great principle of local self-government is wholly at conflict with the German ambitions for world-empire, and with her whole tendency of government in provinces like Poland and Alsace-Lorraine.

"Teach Too Little."

It is the spirit of our institutions which we have failed to impart to the rising generations. We have been afraid to state that our democratic philosophy upholds the Christian spirit of brotherhood, asserts the wisdom of united action for the good of all, and seeks to save the weak from the aggression of the strong. We have refrained from saying that the autocratic philosophy operated to deaden the sentiment of humanity; that in affairs of state it sneered at mercy and gentleness, at love and kindness; that the foundation of that philosophy was the stern law of the survival of the fittest; that, to be concrete, Belgium, a weak state, had no rights when she stood in the way of Germany, a big state.

We have taught the American youth all too little about the foundations of their liberty. The story of the blood and suffering of the builders, of the tempest that raged them while they built, of the martyrs who were the architects of those foundations. This history has been too little told. Autocrats see to it that their people are impressed with their rulers' virtues and those of their ancestors, but democracies leave their citizens to take their liberties as they do the air they breathe. Republics are ungrateful only because there is nobody whose interest it is to inculcate that gratitude.

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So far as the local service is concerned we are not only unable to increase our revenue by accepting a volume of new business, but we are in the awkward position of seeing our service suffer and our present patrons inconvenienced. The delays and inconveniences due to the congestion are more embarrassing to us than to the public.

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