

## NATURAL RIGHTS

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### INTRODUCTION

This series of lessons on Natural Rights is to give children correct ideas, first as to their rights as individuals, second as to the rights of the community of which they are members. The right to live is equal. It therefore follows that the right to earn a living is equal. In order to maintain equal rights to earn a living the rights of the people as a whole, or as a community, must be respected. Finally, men and women have a right to be quite free to exchange the produce of their labour for the produce of the labour of other people. These four rights must be taken together, as they constitute the natural rights of the people.

### LESSON I.

#### The Right to Live is Equal

**NATURAL RIGHTS ARE EQUAL.**—The right to live in the world is just the same for all men, women and children. They are born with equal natural rights. They must all live on the land, so that their claim upon it for support is the same in all cases. It makes no difference whether people live in towns or cities, or in country districts. They all live upon some part of the surface of the earth—in other words, upon the land.

**WE DEPEND UPON THE LAND.**—The land is the one and only source from which we obtain food, clothing, shelter, and all other things that we use as long as we live in the world. We depend upon the land as do the birds and the beasts, the trees and the flowers. Apart from the land, men and women cannot live.

**THEIR CLAIM UPON THE LAND IS EQUAL.**—Their claim upon the land for support is equal, no matter how unequal or varied their talents may be. Even those who go down to the sea in ships depend upon the land. Ships are made of materials taken out of the land. The goods which are carried in them are also products of the land. And finally, they must have access to the land at some wharf or jetty to load or unload goods.

**TALENTS OR POSITION AND NATURAL RIGHTS.**—One man may be twice as strong as another, or twice as clever, but that does not affect the equal right of all men to the land. The son of the poorest working man has just as good a right to live in the world as the son of the Governor-General or the son of the Prime Minister. Both need food, clothes, and shelter. There is no difference in their natural right to live in the world.

**LIFE, LIBERTY, AND HAPPINESS.**—All boys and girls, therefore, should feel and understand that the Creator of the world has endowed them with equal natural rights to life, to liberty, and to seek happiness. But this equal right is the same for all. One man must not interfere with another man's right to live. If he did, then the equal right to life would be denied.

### LESSON II.

#### The Right to Earn a Living is Equal

**A LIVING COMES FROM THE LAND.**—A living consists of food, clothing, shelter, and recreation. All these things come from the land. The word "land" is here used in a very wide sense. It means the whole world, but not the people in it.

**A LIVING IS THE RESULT OF WORK.**—In order to get a living, work must be done. Every man and woman should work. If any person gets a living without work, except out of savings, it can only be at the expense of other people. When men and women work they should have their full earnings for themselves and their families.

**MANY WAYS OF EARNING A LIVING.**—There are thousands of ways of earning a living. Some men grow wheat, others grind it into flour, and others bake the flour and make bread. Some men catch fish, others mine coal, and others grow fruit and vegetables. Again, some men build houses, others keep shops, others make clothes, boots, and so on.

**PRODUCTION.**—In a general way there are two kinds of work. First, work on the land, as in growing wheat, in mining, in producing wool, meat, or fruit, or in making butter, clothing, bricks, or cutting timber, and so on, and in handling and in moving these things until they reach the person who is going to use them. All such work is called production.

**SERVICE.**—The second kind of work is called service. It consists of teaching in our schools and the work of other civil servants, the work of doctors, lawyers, judges, policemen, clergymen, the work of carrying on all kinds of amusements and so on. All work, whether in directly producing things or in any service, is honourable and important, provided that work does not interfere with the equal natural rights of men, women, and children.

**A PLACE AND WORK FOR ALL.**—Everybody should be able to get a living at the kind of work he or she likes best, and is best able to do. One man may be a good farmer, other work would not suit him. Another man may be a good teacher, or a good postmaster, or a good carpenter. There is a place and work for everybody in the world.

**THE RESULTS OF WORK.**—When a man works all that he produces or makes, or the full value of his services, is his. No one else, not even the Government, has any right to touch it. One man may work all day at his trade or business, and when he comes home he works in the garden and grows fruit and flowers. What he earns during the day is his. The fruit and flowers are also his. The only thing he must not do is to prevent any other man earning a living and pleasing himself also.

### LESSON III.

#### The Rights of the Community

**THE RIGHTS OF PEOPLE AS A WHOLE.**—While the individual has rights, there are rights of another kind which belong to the people as a whole. The rights of the whole people or community are just as important and just as sacred as the rights of each person.

**RICH LAND AND POOR LAND.**—The world is full of the good things that men want for themselves and their families. The land yields grain, fruit, meat, butter, milk, and other good things as the result of work. Some land is very rich and other land is very poor. A little light work on rich land will yield as good a living as a lot of hard work on poor land. Or the same amount of work on good land will yield perhaps four or five times as good a crop as on poor land. In the same way in towns and cities some places are very much better situated for shops, offices, warehouses, or factories, than other places. A day's work on one site brings in much more money than a day's work on other sites.

**LAND VALUE OR GROUND RENT.**—Every farmer wants good land, every business man wants a good position or site, and every householder wants a suitable place to live. When there were only a few people and everybody could get an equally good piece of land no place had any advantage. As the people increased in numbers and resorted to poorer sites, then some were willing to pay a price in order to use the better positions. That payment or price is land value or ground rent.

**TOOLS AND MACHINERY.**—Then there is another matter to consider. Originally men had no tools or machinery to help them in earning a living. As they wanted to get an easier living they made tools and machinery. On the rich land at first a few people made a living. Later on, with the help of tools and machinery, the railways and other conveniences, land that would not yield a living at first now yields a good living.

**PAYING FOR ADVANTAGES.**—The rich land and the better positions now yield much more than a living. So that a man, instead of working on land miles away from a railway or town, finds that he can do better by paying the price for the advantages of land close to the railway or in the town.

**LAND RENT AND LANDOWNERS.**—After he pays that price which is called land rent, there is remaining for him as good a living as if he were working on land farther out, which could be had without paying land rent. This price, or ground rent, arises because of the presence of the people, or, as we say, the population. It is commonly called land value. It is not made by one man. It is not made by landowners. It is made by the community.

**POPULATION OR PEOPLE VALUE.**—Where there are no people, or very few people, no value attaches to the land. Wherever the people settle the land becomes valuable, and new wants arise which individuals cannot attend to themselves. Roads and streets have to be made, bridges built, railways and tramways constructed. We must provide for the defence of the country, for public health, and we must have policemen to keep order.

**FOR THE COMMON OR GENERAL GOOD.**—All these things must be attended to for the common or general good. They cost money. The right way to get the money is from the population or people value of the land. The man who has land of no rental value should pay nothing towards the cost of public services.

**AN EQUAL CHANCE FOR ALL.**—Those people who have the land of good quality or high value should pay the cost of public services. In that way, persons on poor land will have an equal chance with persons on the good land. Equal rights to earn a living depend upon paying the population or people value of land into the public treasury. In that way it may be used for the equal benefit of all the people.

**TWO KINDS OF NATURAL RIGHTS.**—Therefore, in every country there are two kinds of natural rights, first individual rights, second public, or population, or national rights. One depends upon the other. The individual has a perfect right to all that he produces or earns. The community also has a perfect right to all that it produces, that is, to land rent. It belongs equally to all the people.

#### LESSON IV.

##### The Right of Exchange

**WORK IS A MEANS TO AN END.**—It is the desire, as well as the right, of every man and woman to get a good living. Work is the only honest means of getting it. Work, however, is not the special object or desire of men and women. Work is but the means to an end, or the means of getting a living, which consists of food, clothing, shelter, and recreation. If a man gets a good living so as to satisfy his wants with working eight hours a day, he won't work nine or ten hours a day. To make him work longer would be to interfere with his equal natural rights.

**THE WORLD IS THE FIELD FOR ALL WORK.**—The world which we live in is complete in itself. Any country, even the best country, is only a part of the world. The world is the field for all work. In all countries the people have to work on the land for a living. And they work at those occupations which yield them the best living for the least work.

**A ROUGH, HARD SORT OF LIVING.**—Many centuries ago in England each family had to do everything for itself. In remote parts of the world that condition exists even now. But it is a very poor sort of living. When a man and his wife had to get all their own food, make their own clothes, build their own house—if they had one—be their own doctor, policeman, and so on, it was a very rough, hard sort of living.

**SUBDIVISION OF WORK.**—That was all changed by the subdivision of work. In our day, the farmer grows wheat the grazier produces the meat, the miner digs the coal; the

school teacher teaches the children, the doctor looks after the sick, and in that way we have experts in all occupations.

**MONEY IS A MEDIUM OF EXCHANGE.**—The farmer wants many other things besides wheat, so he sends his wheat to the market and gets money for it. Money is a medium of exchange and measure of value. It enables the farmer to readily exchange his wheat for all other things he wants. The school teacher, the doctor, the policeman, and many other people are also paid for their services in money. They then can readily obtain what they need in the way of food, clothing, shelter, and recreation. The real exchange is between the goods that one man makes or produces, or the services he performs for other goods or services. All that money does is to make the transaction easy.

**EXCHANGE OF LABOUR PRODUCTS SHOULD BE FREE.**—Every man should be quite free to exchange what he produces for what other people produce. Suppose a man wants a hat or a pair of boots. He finds that he can get a good hat in a shop across the street for 8s. 6d., but just round the corner there is another shop where he can get a similar hat for 7s. 6d. So the man goes to the shop where he can get the hat for 7s. 6d., because it means a shilling less work for him to do than if he buys at the other shop.

**WORKING AT THE BEST OCCUPATION.**—In all countries people work in those occupations which yield them the best living, and they exchange what they have to spare for what people in other countries have to spare. We do not grow tea, rice, or cocoa in Australia, but we do grow wheat, meat, butter, and we mine for coal, for silver, lead, copper, and other metals.

**THE WAY TO GET THE BEST AND EASIEST LIVING.**—So we exchange some of our products which we have to spare for tea, rice, cocoa, and many other things that people in other countries have to spare. In that way we get an easier and better living. The world is complete in itself; no part is complete by itself. One part helps another part, so that the abundance of the kindly fruits of the earth may be available for the use and enjoyment of all the people of the world.

#### AN ISLE OF MAN RECORD

The Duke of Atholl's family acquired their sovereignty of the Isle of Man quite by chance. The feudal dignity of Lord of Man, forfeited by the Stanleys Earls of Derby in Commonwealth days and restored by Charles II. to the eighth earl, became abeyant at his last son's death in 1736. Nobody claiming it, the Lordship of Man seemed likely to revert to the Crown.

But the then Duke of Atholl had a friend, President of the Scottish Court of Session, who was something of a genealogical expert.

Staying with the Duke one day and noticing the emblazoned family tree on the walls of the great hall, he told the Duke he could claim the lordship of Man and the barony of Strange. The Duke acted on the advice and duly obtained the sovereignty of Man, with the barony, so that the Dukes of Atholl sit to-day in the Upper House as Lord Strange.

But the Murrays could not devote the necessary attention to their sovereignty. The Isle of Man became a hotbed of smugglers, which led early in George III.'s reign to the Crown purchasing for £70,000 all feudal rights and civil patronage in Man, which was then annexed directly to England.

The Murrays had kept tight hold of the island's revenues (an old Scottish saying is, "From the greed of the Murrays, Lord, deliver us"), and in 1829 it was found desirable to make a further bargain with the ducal owners. The remaining rights of the Duke of Atholl were bought for the enormous sum of £409,000.—The STAR (London); January 25th.