

CHAPTER IV

NATURAL RIGHTS

THE purpose for which organised society exists being the furtherance of the happiness of all the members of society—the only manner in which this purpose can be fulfilled being the maintenance of the equal natural rights of all the members of society,—it follows that it is the duty of organised society, the State, to secure to all the full possession of their natural rights, *i.e.* to secure to each of them the fullest opportunity for the exercise of all his faculties, consistent with the equal opportunity of all others for the exercise of their respective faculties. Not only must there be no invasion of the sphere of any individual by other individuals, but the State also must abstain from any further limitation of the sphere within which each is free to act than suffices to maintain the equal freedom of all.

Which are the natural rights, which, placed beyond the reach of any majority, cannot be limited or denied without injustice and consequent loss of happiness? To deal at length with all of them would transcend the scope of this inquiry. Neither Socialism nor any instructed Individualism denies the right to free speech and publication, free thought and worship; the right of marriage or the equal political rights of all adults of both sexes. Other natural rights are either denied or at any rate not so fully understood either in their extension or limitation, and must here be dealt with. This will be done in the following chapters.