

# The Cities

*By Jesse Stuart*

I saw the cities and I learned too well  
All cities are a little piece of hell—  
Yes, hell to me—how well I know they are,  
Sometimes without a bird, without a star—  
And cold-stone streets without the smell of leaves;  
Even the wind there whips loose wires and grieves,  
Grieves loud and lonesome over the white-hard street  
Where click all day the passing passing feet.

I saw the cities desolate and gray  
And children there without a place to play.  
They were green-growing corn the weeds shut in;  
Tall slender stalks so lanky, pale and thin.  
The sunlight did not kiss their death-pale skin.  
And there was something smelly in the wind—

I am a lover of the wind and earth and sun  
And I went back where lonesome waters run—  
Where wind talks to the green leaves night and day  
And children have some place to run and play.

And I came back to get a breath of winds,  
Winds hot and fresh—fresh blowing from the corn;  
Yes, I came back where high-hill blue begins  
And grass and leaves drip fresh their dew at morn.

Yes, I came back where lonesome waters run  
And where the white heat dances in the glen;  
Where pasture fields lie sleeping in the sun,  
Back where the slopes are tilled by stalwart men.

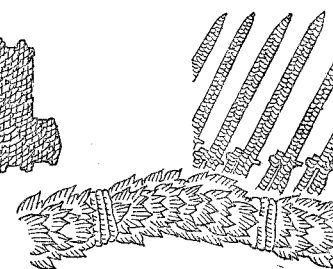
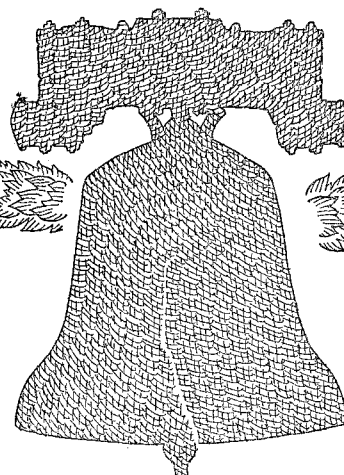
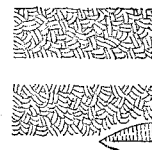
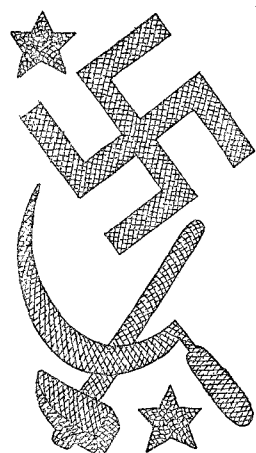
Back—back—I came—back to the midnight moons  
That redden ember-like in blue-sky dirt—  
Back—back—where whippoorwills sing dishpan tunes,  
Back where the quails call night-time with quirt-quirt.

I came to lonesome waters in beech coves  
That kiss the ferns and look to skies all day;  
I came back to ten thousand life-blood loves,  
I came back to the high-hill earth to stay.

I said: To hell with all the paper money,  
To hell with nickel, silver, copper, gold—  
But give me corn, blackberries and wild honey  
And give me things that can't be bought and sold.

# Life, Liberty, and...

By Albert Jay Nock



*A distinguished essayist raises a question—what sort of person is the individual likely to become if the state develops into a personal nurse-maid?*

FOR almost a full century before the Revolution of 1776 the classic enumeration of human rights was "life, liberty, and property." The American Whigs took over this formula from the English Whigs, who had constructed it out of the theories of their seventeenth-century political thinkers, notably John Locke. It appears in the Declaration of Rights, which was written by John Dickinson and set forth by the Stamp Act Congress. In drafting the Constitution of Massachusetts in 1779 Samuel and John Adams used the same formula. But when the Declaration of Independence was drafted Mr. Jefferson wrote "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness," and although his colleagues on the committee, Franklin, Livingston, Sherman, and Adams, were pretty well tintured with Whig philosophy, they let the alteration stand.

It was a revolutionary change. "The pursuit of happiness" is of course an inclusive term. It covers property rights, because obviously if a person's property is molested, his pursuit of happiness is interfered with. But there are many interferences which are not aimed at specific property rights; and in so wording the Declaration as to cover all these interferences, Mr. Jefferson immensely broadened the scope of political theory—he broadened the idea of what government is for. The British and American Whigs thought the sociological concern of government stopped with abstract property rights. Mr. Jefferson thought it went further; he thought that government ought to concern itself with the larger and inclusive right to pursue happiness.

## II

This clause of the Declaration has been a good deal in my mind lately because for the best part of a year I

have been moving about in several countries, and have noticed that hardly anybody in any of them seemed happy. I do not say that the people I saw were sullen or gloomy, or that they no longer occupied themselves in their usual ways. What struck me was, simply, that the general level of happiness was not so high as I had been accustomed to see it some years ago. The people did not act like free people. They seemed under a shadow, enervated, *sat upon*. They showed little of the spontaneity of spirit which is a sure mark of happiness; even in their amusements they behaved like people who have something on their minds. Moreover, this decline of spirit apparently had little to do with "prosperity" or the lack of it. For all I could see, the prosperous were as dispirited as the unprosperous, and the well-to-do seemed not much, if any, happier than the poor.

But the interesting thing about this moral enervation was that so much of it, practically all of it, was attributable to nothing else but state action. Any thoughtful observer could not help seeing that it arose chiefly out of a long series of positive interferences with the individual's right to pursue happiness. Whether or not these interventions were justifiable on other grounds, it was clear that if the state really had any concern with the individual's pursuit of happiness, it had made a most dreadful mess of its responsibility. I noticed with interest, too, that all the countries I visited had some sort of political structure that could be called republican. That is to say, their sovereignty nominally resided in the people, and the people nominally created their