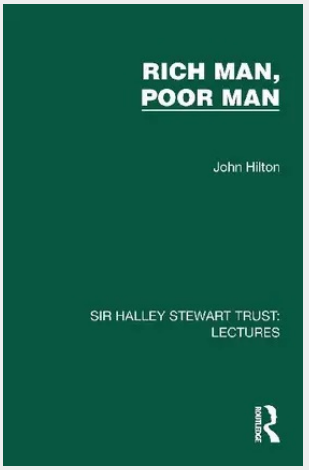
Hilton

# Rich Man, Poor Man




First published in 1944 (Sir Halley Stewart Lectures 1938), the original blurb reads: “In Rich Man, Poor Man, Professor John Hilton examines the facts as to the distribution of wealth in this country. He finds that of our twelve million families only four million (a few of them immensely rich) are worth all told more than £100; four million are worth between a couple of pounds and a hundred; and four million live from hand to mouth, owning no more than they stand up in and sit down at – if that. But what about the £3, 000,000,000 of “Small Savings”? Professor Hilton answers. How comes it about that so few own so much of the wealth of the country, and so many own so little? Why are the poor poor and the rich rich? Is it because the poor are a poor sort and the rich are a rich sort? If not – what? The book tells of a special study of three hundred poor families. As for those of us in the middle range, whose real incomes have been steadily rising, what do we do with the extra? We spend some of it wisely. Professor Hilton goes on to examine various aspects of our spending, such as what we spend on pints, perms, poms, pictures and pools; and why: the curious and costly practice of burning fermented leaf-mold under the nose: twiddlers of fruit-machines and pin-tables: followers of dogs and horses: users of turnstiles and totalisators: knaves and thieves on the doorstep and in the letterbox: the £3, 000,000,000 of recent surplus we haven’t saved, and what would have happened if we had. “It’s the rich wot ‘elps the rich.” What it all means in terms of national well-being and strength, and what to do about it.”. Today it can be read and enjoyed in its historical context. This book is a re-issue originally published in 1944. The language used and views portrayed are a reflection of its era and no offence is meant by the Publishers to any reader by this re-publication.

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