

THE NEW RICH - AN OPPORTUNITY TO WIN CONFIDENCE, REWARDS OF PERSONAL INFLUENCE

To The Editor of The Times

Sir,

You kindly admitted a letter of mine on the theme of the New Rich, upon August 7 last. May I be allowed to supplement it?

An opportunity presents itself to the supplanters of the old squirearchy to acquire confidence and regard. "A great gain has been and will be further won by the breaking up of the large farms into small holdings. The small-holder, however, is subject to difficulties through the uncertainty of our climate, and too often, as has been the case this year with the hay, his crop has been spoiled through inability to cut, turn, and save his hay in the intervals of fine weather.

If the New Rich would provide a stock of agricultural machinery which they would lend to these small-holders, to enable them to cut, turn, and save their hay and to reap, bind and stack their corn, at propitious moments, they would not only win for themselves regard, gratitude, and affection, but they would obviate great losses. This summer has shown us whole fields of ruined hay, that with a little help, through loan of machinery, might have been saved.

But the population of England of the lower class consists not only of agriculturists, but of artisans as well in our manufacturing towns, who have never undergone the humanizing and softening effects of intercourse with the old squirearchy; whence spring prejudice and class animosity. How is this to be broken down? Much depends upon our clergy, if they will adopt the right method of appeal.

This will not be by the multiplication of religious services which may be grateful to the leisured, but to them alone; least of all by the adoption of Roman expedients which the robust common sense of our people will never accept, nor by turning of the churches into cinema shows.

The plain Prayer-book offices are satisfying to the intelligence and to spiritual cravings, when reverently rendered, and lightened with hymns. Nor have I much faith in organization where the energies of the clergy are devoted to, and their time and strength are exhausted by, clubs, social gatherings, mothers' meetings, and the like: useful maybe, but not by any means producing a result adequate to the labour and thought expended on them.

But that which gains regard and affection is personal influence, through visiting, showing sympathy in troubles, giving advice in perplexities, and administering comfort in afflictions. Personal influence this, when the heart speaks. And just as, when a note on a violin is sounded, every other stringed instrument in the chamber vibrates in response, so it is with human hearts. Such work is not showy, it is not recorded in newspapers, is not applauded by superiors, but it is not evanescent and perishable. *Crede experto.*

Yours truly,
S. BARING-GOULD.

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