

**THE MODERN THEME: OR
EDUCATION, THE PEOPLE'S RIGHT
AND A NATION'S GLORY: THE
SUBSTANCE OF A LECTURE ON
THE BRITISH SYSTEM**

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The Modern Theme: Or Education, the People's Right and a Nation's Glory: The Substance of a Lecture on the British System by Celatus

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CELATUS

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MODERN THEME:
OR
EDUCATION,
THE
PEOPLE'S RIGHT
AND
A NATION'S GLORY:
BRING THE SUBSTANCE OF
A LECTURE ON THE BRITISH SYSTEM.
BY CELATUS.

"That the soul be without knowledge it is not good."



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TO
THE RIGHT HONOURABLE
LORD JOHN RUSSELL
FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY
AND
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT,
FOR
THE CITY OF LONDON,

The long-tryed, consistent, and successful champion of popular
and unsectarian Education,

THIS VOLUME
ON THE SUBJECT OF EDUCATION,
OR
ON THE BRITISH AND FOREIGN SCHOOL SYSTEM,
IS MOST RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED,

ACCOMPANIED BY
THE PROFOUND RESPECTS OF HIS LORDSHIP'S HUMBLE AND
OBEDIENT SERVANT,

THE AUTHOR.



THE DEDICATORY ADDRESS.

MY LORD,

THE ensuing pages are not dedicated to your Lordship from any selfish ends, as is evident from the author designating himself in the title-page "Celatus." Nay, he would fain convey the impression that his motives are diametrically opposite to the humble and the sordid: being none other than those of real admiration of your private life and public principles. Also, the singular interest you have always taken in national, or, what might be called, popular education. The great amount of toil and anxiety you undergo at present, as it is supposed, in maturing a legislative enactment on the subject, and the decided partiality you have evinced, and that deservedly, to the British system, by maintaining the education of some hundreds of poor children on that scheme, from your private and ample resources, these, and many others, are strong and additional inducements for taking the present step.

It might be briefly intimated, that the author is not in any way connected with the British school, otherwise than a warm admirer of the system. As a lecturer, he has been a mere volunteer in the work. The circumstance has been an entire incident, chiefly and necessarily arising from his way of life. Therefore, what has been said should be deemed as perfectly gratuitous and unbiassed; besides, here it might be stated, that the writer's knowledge of the working of the system has not been very limited, and he has had the satisfaction of witnessing rather extensively that the good effects of the unsectarian education imparted by it have been of the most salutary description.

A reference might be made also to the character of the present work, which is discursive rather than controversial. The pen has not been submitted to combativeness; such a work as controversy has been designedly left for those that take pleasure therein. Nor has the quill been knowingly dipped in the gall of uncharitableness, nor anything of a bitter quality, unless done so unconsciously and unawares. In short, the whole treatise, to the full extent of our ability, has been kept in unison with our unsectarian and edifying subject. Even the common topic of our days has been allowed to remain undisturbed, such as the

question, whose work it is to educate the people? As the province we have assigned ourselves has been rather to show the paramount value of education, and the advantages arising from it. Were the said interrogation mooted at all, our ready and willing answer would be, that it is the work of those who will perform it. Even the most superficial observer must be conscious that there is work enough in the country for both politicians and the beneficent, supposing one and all to be fully in earnest. And verily, my Lord, it would be an invaluable boon, were it possible to model a measure so as to further rather than neutralize the praiseworthy designs entertained by that honourable portion of our community, classified by some under the term voluntaries. However this might be said, the country, knowing the happy tendency of your enlightened principles, as well as the glowing lessons on political progression, imparted by the late ministry, entertain feelings and expectations of a high and intense character.

Verily, we have at length arrived at a momentous period of our world's history. It is true, the dawn is come, and, doubtless, the day that shall follow will be an extraordinary one. This we are warranted on every consideration to surmise; for coercion or oppression of any kind is