

It has no sense of fair-play whatever; it is spiteful and prejudiced; it is saturated with class-conceit—and it hates the thought of work. When it says "character" it means, in plain English, side, shirking and jobbery. It is a fact that the costly rich Public School boy, with every advantage upon his side, is systematically unfair towards, and jealous of, the lowest class of our population that gets any education at all. I believe myself he is afraid of it.

Then, after the statement that there is not a particle of evidence to support the "wild assertion" that character is not formed in the public elementary schools "at least as well as it is in the great Public Schools," there follows this plain and disgraceful charge:

Barring Mr. Chamberlain, who is not, I believe, a Public School product, the present Government is certainly not a demonstration of this fine ignorant nobility of soul we are always hearing about. Lord Milner owes nothing to Public School claptrap, and Lord Kitchener does not own to any such origin. Quite apart from the indisputable ignorance and incapacity that has distinguished the Public School-made War Office, there has been, I hold, the most miserable want of nerve throughout the last war on the part of the stuff our Public Schools have made. General Buller, who acted so dismally after Colenso, for example, was an Eton boy, and the true history of the campaign, when it comes to be written, will be studded with the record of wretched little intrigues, failures of will, and indecisions on the part of Public School-bred men. Had we had no leaders but Public School men, we should certainly have lost South Africa.

The champion who lays about him in this wild and panting style is evidently stung by some irritation not really caused by the object of his attack. So far we may and do sympathise with him. We look with admiration upon the teachers working in the public elementary schools of this country, and with strong hope upon the generations which are to be in our time their spiritual offspring. We may seek to better our national education on the technical side, to enlarge its scope on the religious side, but we do not wish to hear, still less to take part in, any attack on the devotion of those who train the bulk of our working class, or on the brave and kindly English spirit which they daily rekindle on the hearth where twenty generations of freemen have stored it. But all this talk of "the Board School product" is beside the point: if