

Our Prize Competition.

We have pleasure in awarding the 5s. prize this week to Miss Florence Lewsley, of Drayton Road, Harlesden, N.W., for her article printed below on

WHO IS YOUR FAVOURITE CHARACTER IN HISTORY AND WHY?

History is but a record of events, not always true, often misleading, and sometimes not at all edifying. Dark deeds are even more numerous than deeds of heroism, so that when one comes across a great pure character he stands out as a monument.

"Sincerity, a deep great genuine sincerity, is the first characteristic of all men in any way heroic." So wrote Carlyle, and to no one is it more applicable than to David Livingstone, doctor, scientist, foreign missionary, and traveller.

Nothing could have been more wildly improbable to the youthful David than that his life should run in any other groove than that of a mill hand. At the same time he determined that if perseverance and grit were worth anything he would climb the ladder of success. When working at the mill the hours were long, ventilation imperfect, and remuneration inadequate, but he would sit far into the night in his garret over his studies often depriving himself of necessary sleep. Many another lad would have bemoaned his humble origin and want of schooling, and never arrived at anything beyond a character for grumbling, but not so our hero. Before long he had qualified as a young doctor, and, with that heroism which is the highest, had offered to spend his life and talents in the service of those less gifted and enlightened than himself, by placing himself at the disposal of the London Missionary Society.

Only those who have lived in native lands have any conception of the nobility of this devotion on the part of men and women who leave friends, home, and every comfort, to suffer bodily and spiritually, seeking no reward. Livingstone went to Africa, and with his splendid medical knowledge appeared to the natives as a god since he brought the godly gift of healing in his hands. He possessed the first essential for success in a doctor's career—a deep and sympathetic insight into character. His piercing eye fathomed many a secret, and his knowledge of human frailty made him exceedingly tender. The greatest man is ever the humblest.

Livingstone, when in Africa, lived with the natives as one of themselves. He married a daughter of Moffat, another great African mis-

sionary, and when in course of time she returned to live in England with her children, the doctor stayed behind with his life work. Towards the end of his life he visited England but only to be sent back to die surrounded by his faithful native boys.

Why should such a character be admired? Why do the flowers love the sunshine? There is health in knowing such a man. He never knew his own greatness, and we can only recognise its fulness too late, but his memory is an inspiration. His great message was "live for others," and he fulfilled it to the uttermost.

The papers sent by Miss B. Coles, Miss J. W. Briggs, Miss E. Twist, Miss A. C. Ainstie, Mrs. Drew, and Miss K. Foster, are highly commended.

Miss B. Coles chooses Mary, Queen of Scots, as her favourite, and writes:—

"Mary, Queen of Scots. Surely among the many fascinating people in history Mary of Scotland reigns as one of the most mysterious, the most irresistibly enthralling. What was—what is—her spell? Why have men for the last three hundred and fifty years fought and argued about her—whether she were innocent or guilty—sinned against or sinning? The pathetic, mysterious story of her life hardly accounts for it; there are many other obscure, sad old tales, but the most of them are let alone. Yet the very name of Mary calls up visions, sets people attacking or defending her, for there is no indifference where she is concerned now, any more than there was in her lifetime. She is one of the world's great beauties, yet we should hardly imagine that when we see her portraits, some of them quite plain; she must have had some charm, some magnetic force which could not be represented on canvas. The impression made by her personality on her world was so great that the echo of it is still sounding. Poor lovely Mary! Such a brilliant gifted spirit hounded to death, and such a death after nineteen years' imprisonment, crippled with rheumatism, sickened with disappointed hopes, humiliated by petty insults; yet she stands a Queen to the end, and not only a Queen, but a sweet and lovable woman. Her attendants, her ladies and waiting-women, would not have clung to her and broken their hearts over her sorrows had she not been a gracious, noble mistress; for Mary cast her spell over women as much as men.

Yet the one who should have been the first to defend her—her son—was the one to neglect and desert her. What a bitterness it must

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)