

*Class B*  
*2nd Subclass*

*SPECIAL PRIZE?*

*B + 7*

*Commended in circumstances*

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Class B

Name: Lee Pak Wai  
Address: King's College, Hong Kong.  
Date of Birth: [REDACTED]  
School Attending: King's College

Describe the achievements of three explorers of the Commonwealth and Empire. Which of these interests you most?

During the last few hundred years - the age of discovery when lands were waiting to be explored - there were many explorers of the Empire who made brilliant achievements.

Sir Francis Drake was the first man to sail an English ship round the world. He was a great sailor, and a skilful man, and was powerful in command. Once when he was out to trade in the Gulf of Mexico he was attacked by the Spanish ships. He fought his ship gallantly under Sir John Hawkins, and acquired great reputation, but all his money was lost. So he wanted to get back his money by robbing Spanish ships. In 1570 he obtained a regular privateering commission from Queen Elizabeth and embarked on a cruise in the Spanish Main. A year afterwards, after having discovered the Spanish trade route and the places where their treasure lay stored, he went to rob the Spanish. Then he became a rich man. It was in 1577 that Drake made his great voyage around the world. The Queen, Elizabeth, furnished him with means and he set out with five small vessels - even Drake's Pelican was not more than 150 tons - manned in all by 166 men. He started on Dec. 13. He laid his course by the west coast of Morocco and entered the Rio de la Plata in Brazil on April 6. There he took the provisions out of two ships and turned them adrift. On June 19 he entered Port St. Julian, because of the trial and execution of Thomas Doughty who plotted against him, and laying in provisions he was delayed for two months in the port. On August 21st the ships entered the Strait of Magellan. The danger of the Strait was not exaggerated but in spite of all those difficulties Drake succeeded. At the end of sixteen days they found themselves once again in the open sea. They were on the Pacific Ocean then, but what they found was anything but pacific. A great storm arose and carried them west; one of the ships sank and the remaining two ships were separated. By the time they had made their way back to the mouth of the Strait it was Oct. 7. When the two ships failed to meet at the rendezvous, one turned back to go home, leaving Drake's Pelican, now called the Golden Hind, to proceed alone. He came to Mocha Island off the coast of Chile on Nov. 25. Thence Drake and his men sailed along the western coast of America from south to north for more than a



year. Although he had only about a hundred men, he took the Spanish by surprise, so he captured ships, towns and treasure until his ship was so full that it could hold no more of the gold, silver and jewels which the Spaniards meant to take back to Spain. By this time Drake had been away from home for two years, so he thought that it was time for him to go home. He knew that it would be impossible to go back by the original way, for the Spaniards were ready to take back from him what they had lost. So instead he tried a new way home. He wanted to return by the mythical N.W. Passage but he gave up at last because of a contrary wind and because the weather was becoming cold. He coasted along the American shores and went as far north as 48° N. Lat. He named the country New Albion and took possession of it in the name of Queen Elizabeth. He then sailed south and west, crossing the Pacific. For more than a hundred days there was no sight of land, but at last he came to the islands lying to the south of Asia. Passing through them, finally he came to the coast of Africa. He had only fifty seven men left then. By the time he landed in Plymouth on November 3rd, 1580, he had been away from home for three years. His fame spread through the whole of England. He was knighted on board the Golden Hind by Queen Elizabeth at Deptford on the Thames, and so he became Sir Francis Drake.

In the 18th Century, when Australia was newly discovered, people thought that beyond the land of the eastern coast, which were closed on three sides by mountains, were deserts. So British convicts were sent to this natural prison. Then about a hundred years ago the Blue Mountains were crossed. Instead of what they expected they found fertile land. As they went further they discovered rivers. Among the explorers was Capt. Charles Sturt who discovered the River Darling in 1828. The River Darling seemed to be flowing inland so Sturt thought that there must be an inland sea. So he set out to find it. The season in which he started the exploration was hot and dry. The river course he set out to follow shrank and gradually became a wilderness of reeds. After days and days of journey through hot and parched grounds and lacking water, at last he came to a river of salt. So he failed to reach its end. Again he tried; this time he used small boats to trace its outlet. Since no sea was found in the west and it was reported that no river estuary was seen along the southern coast, the mystery became greater than before. So with one boat - the other one sank, he set out on the expedition. The little boat sped faster and faster until it came to another river, the Murray. There he continued. Then one day he came to a sudden narrowing of the river; had it not been for the help of the natives he would have been drowned. At last he reached the sea, and discovered the mystery of the hidden estuary. The estuary was hidden behind sandbanks and with the great waves breaking on them it was quite invisible from the sea. In 1844 Sturt made his third journey. This time he ventured into the tropical north of Australia. In the north of Australia there lay great stretches of deserts which many explorers failed to make their way across. The lands Sturt came across was often horribly dry and hot; sometimes he and his companions had to go for over a hundred miles through waterless tracts and carrying their water with them. If they found signs of water



they had to dig in the ground in order to get the water. The heat was also terrible; once they had to stay near a spring of water for six months, unable either to proceed or go back because of the heat. Sturt and his men dug a cave for themselves to live in to escape the sun's heat, but even thus it seemed to be an oven. When Sturt tried to write with his pencil, the lead fell out. Besides the desert there were also dense scrub, poisonous nettles, terrible thorns and salt water which kept Sturt from proceeding. This journey lasted for about a year, Sturt and his men failing to reach the north. But even so they made fresh discoveries, and more and more they found that in Australia, crossed by rivers, there were great fertile tracts where white men could live.

A hundred years ago the great continent of Africa was little known except for the countries lying near the coast. Dr. Livingstone was the first white man who came to explore its interior. Livingstone, a Scottish, born in 1813, went to the "Dark Continent" at the age of twenty-seven as a missionary. At first what made him go to explore the interior of Africa was that he wanted to find some highland free from the tse-tse flies and build a missionary station there, but as he went into the interior he found slavery everywhere and natives were often cruelly slaughtered. He thought that the best way to stop slavery and improve the poverty-stricken and miserable lives of the natives was to open trade and bring in colonists. So he went to explore, preparing the way for people to follow. Wherever he went he made friends with the natives; they learned to love him and trust him. For sixteen years Livingstone had been roaming through jungles and swamps, along river valleys, across mountain tracks, and wandering fearlessly among the savages. There were a great many difficulties which he had to surmount, such as the hostility of savages or even cannibals which he often overcame by means of curing people with the drugs he carried in his medicine chest or the slides of Biblical scenes which he showed with his magic lantern. Once on his journey he was attacked by a lion and was seriously wounded in the arm, and for the rest of his life that arm hung limply at his side. In 1849 he crossed the Kalahari Desert. There he discovered the greatest water-fall on earth while he traced the River Zambezi, and named it after Queen Victoria. He discovered Lake Nyassa during his second journey after he paid a visit to England. Twice he went back to England and took the reports of his explorations with him, telling people about the horrible slave trade and also asking for some more missionaries to go to Africa. He set out from England for the last time in 1866; from this journey he was never to return. This time he went north of Lake Nyassa and discovered some more lakes such as Lakes Tanyanyika and Victoria. He also found out the resources of several rivers. The River Congo was one of them, which he believed to be the Nile. Although he rejoiced in his discoveries, he never forget the duty of a missionary. He healed the sick and preached the words of God wherever he went. He was then quite an old man and could stand no more those hardships. His body was weakened - affected by the climate, fever and his task. He had often had little food and it was

under these conditions he struggled for seven years. On the 18th October 1871 he was found by Henry M. Stanley at Ujiji. He was sick then and his medicine chest was lost, so he was glad to see the fresh supplies Stanley brought with him. This is what Stanley wrote down in his record about their meeting. "As I come nearer I see the white face of an old man ..... He has a cap with a gold band round it, his dress is a short jacket of red blanket of cloth, and his pants - well, I didn't observe; I am shaking hands with him. We raised our hats and I say 'Dr. Livingstone, I presumed?' And he says 'Yes'." After spending six months with Stanley, he set out again. It was his last attempt. He died on the bank of the Molilamo, early in the morning of May 1, 1873, while he was praying by his bed. His heart was buried beneath the shade of a tree near the spot where he died. His body was carried back to England and buried in Westminster Abbey.

Of these explorers Dr. Livingstone interests me most. I admire his enthusiasm, self-sacrifice and simple fervour and also his bravery - wandering among the jungles of the unknown country of savages without fear. I also respect his brotherly love for the natives and his work done for the stopping of slavery.