

9th Prize 86?

"The Life of Nelson." 1758 - 1805

B104

I.
II.
III.

Short Sketch of Nelson's life.
Nelson's work for the Empire.
Estimation of character, and position among English heroes.

19th

The life of Nelson, showing his work for the Empire.

Motto:- "No gain without pain."

Lord Horatio Nelson, the greatest of our English Admirals, was born at Burnham Thorpe, Norfolk, in 1758. He entered the navy as a midshipman in 1770, and after voyages to the West Indies, the East Indies, and the Arctic regions, he was promoted to a Lieutenancy in 1777. In 1780 he headed the expedition against San Juan, and was invalided home. The next year he acted under Lord Hood in American waters, there involving himself in trouble by his enforcement of the Navigation Act. The same year he met and married the widow of Dr. Nesbit when stationed at the Leeward Islands. Now returning to England he lived in retirement for five years, but on the eve of the French Revolutionary war, he was again summoned to active service. In command of the "Agamemnon", he advanced his reputation by gallant conduct in the Mediterranean

operations of Lord Hood, losing his right eye at the storming of Calvi in Corsica. In 1797 his conspicuous bravery at the Battle off Cape St. Vincent, brought him promotion to the rank of Rear-Admiral. In the same year he lost his right arm at Santa Cruz, and in 1789, with an inferior force, destroyed the French fleet at Aboukia Bay, for which he was created Baron Nelson and Duke of Bronté. In 1801, as Vice-Admiral, nominally under Sir Hugh Parker, he sailed for the Baltic and inflicted a signal defeat on the Danish off Copenhagen. For this he was made Viscount and Commander-in-Chief. On October 21st, 1805, he crowned his great career by a memorable victory over the French off Trafalgar, but was himself mortally wounded at the very height of the battle.

Nelson's work for the Empire has left an unfading mark on the history of our country. We may now examine into the reasons for this.

Europe, at that time, was completely in Napoleon's power, and England occupied an isolated position shared by no other country. Out of this state Nelson safely brought her, and raised her considerably in the estimation of the continental people.

Nelson's numerous victories over the French resulted in great losses to France of men, ships and money. Besides this he shattered their hopes of ever becoming a maritime power.

Southern India under Tipoo Sultan, the Rajah of Mysore, was prepared to fight for Napoleon against the English. Nelson saved the situation which was critical at the time, by defeating the French fleet on its way to India at the Battle of the Nile, 1789. India would never have been loyal to us to day, had we not triumphed over the kingdom of Mysore. Meanwhile the French fleet having been defeated and the Rajah of Mysore disappointed, he turned upon the English with his own small forces. Tipoo was overcome, and part of his dominion annexed by the British. England was now highly exalted in the estimation of the Indians.

Nelson kept a strict guard over the Channel during the Napoleonic wars, preventing the possibility of any invasion on England. After the Battle of Trafalgar she was freed from fear of attack from the Continent. Nelson's life and work was an example to all men, and Englishmen by following his example became noble, fit captains, and daring, intrepid sailors.

Nelson also brought about a change in naval tactics, of which we now feel the benefits. Our colonies were kept free from fear of the French, for Nelson engaged their fleets. While Nelson was defeating foreign fleets, other Englishmen went out to explore, and they annexed several islands. Thus colonies grew

up, which added vastly to the strength of the British Empire.

Nelson raised the spirit of patriotism and love of country in all Englishmen, especially those belonging to the great English navy. His message "England expects that every man this day will do his duty," has left an indelible mark on youth for the fulfilment of their duty, in time of war or political unrest, towards the Motherland.

Nelson stands out as a prominent figure in the history of England, and his work for the Empire was such, that we owe undying gratitude to his memory.

Nelson has been described by Haliburton as "that cripple-gaited, one-eyed, one-armed, naval critter." "A little man and far from handsome", was Sir William Hamilton's opinion of him. These descriptions suit him well, for he was constantly in ill-health, and looked extremely delicate; but he possessed a fiery, restless and vehement spirit, all too strong for its fragile case. The two aspects of his character offer a considerable contrast to each other. He was ambitious, prompt to act, fearless, and an intrepid sea-warrior. He was generous, kind-hearted, and good to his inferiors, making them admire and respect him at the same time. He had great belief in his friends, comrades in war, and ship. On the other hand he was

somewhat shrewish in temper, effeminate in many ways, and took a simple and unchecked delight in flattery. He was often enamoured by a beautiful face, and when at Naples, fell completely under the wiles of the celebrated beauty, Lady Hamilton. Before a battle, Nelson was anxious, fretful and excitable; but during the fight his skilful promptness, and aptitude for command overcame all his mental and physical deficiencies and he became cool and steady once more. He was seen at his very best in the midst of battle, self-forgetful, sacrificing, and thoughtful for others. He performed his duty with a thoroughness never rivalled. Nelson had a grim sense of humour, for which no one suspected him, and which he only allowed to escape after the excitement of a great battle. Nelson's great aims were to raise the naval prestige of England, and to shatter that of France. Both these he finally accomplished, gaining for himself a name to which we owe the deepest admiration and respect. On the pages of history we remember the names of many great heroes; among them Drake, Collingwood, Wellington and Gordon. But Nelson is the one sea-warrior who has stamped his memory imperishably on the minds of all loyal Englishmen.