

Young People's Department.

"FOR HIS SAKE"

[Our young readers will remember that during the recent Chinese riots several missionaries were murdered. Miss Elsie Marshall was one of the number.]

This is the title of one of the most beautiful missionary books of recent times. It is a bundle of letters written by Elsie Marshall, one of the girl-martyrs of Ku-cheng. These letters, which were sent to relatives and friends without any thought of publication, were written between 1892, when Miss Marshall first went out to China, and 1895, when she was called "Home." They are the record of a singularly sweet and consecrated young life. They sparkle with bits of humor and girl-like fun, but are permeated throughout with a spirit of intense love and enthusiasm for Jesus Christ and for His work in the world. The little introductory memoir gives us various peeps of her home-life, where, from her very babyhood, Elsie seems to have lived the Christ-life. The testimony of her schoolfellows as to her school days is peculiarly touching, and we hear how "unkindness and strife seemed to cease when she came near." "We used to be ashamed to let Elsie hear quarrelling and bitterness."

Miss Marshall sailed for China in October, 1892, after a course of training at "The Willows" and in the Midway Hospital. Since her death some of her fellow-passengers have written to her father, giving a little account of Elsie's devotion and helpfulness on board ship. They tell of the little services she held with the crew, the stewards, and the children, and that her life seemed an entire sacrifice to her Saviour. In one of her first letters to her father after reaching China, Elsie speaks of having that day received a letter from a sailor with whom she had had much conversation on the voyage out. This sailor writes to say that the very day after she landed at Hong Kong he had found Christ. Elsie says: "I tell you this because I want you to share in my joy. Of course, it is no praise to me, or I would not have told you. It is only so good of Jesus to give me this wonderful joy of knowing that I have been used by Him. There is no joy like it."

Her study of the difficult Chinese language was literally "a work of faith and labour of love," and she actually passed the first examination in six months instead of twelve. An experienced missionary wrote of her learning the language in so short a time as a miracle. "God just gave her the language." It was characteristic of the girl that when she began the difficult study, she hung up these texts in her room: "All things are possible to him that believeth." "Who hath made man's mouth? Have not I, the Lord?" Some of her letters written during the first months of her stay in China are a most valuable and interesting record of Chinese life and customs. We find Miss Marshall in the homes of the people, rich and poor. Nothing escapes her notice, and the snapshot word-pictures of Chinese feasts, weddings, temples, etc., given are those of an intelligent, wide-awake young Englishwoman. She seizes every opportunity offered for giving the message she has come to China to deliver, and one is struck throughout the book, not only with her whole-heartedness and thorough missionary spirit, but with her wonderful humility.

The language once mastered, Elsie Marshall's energies knew no bounds. She threw herself heart and soul into

the manifold and varied duties of a consecrated missionary's life. Whether engaged in teaching in the schools, visiting the women in their homes, or in itinerating work, the one aim of her existence was to tell of Jesus, the Saviour for the poor Chinese. Some of the descriptions of her journeys by boat and by chair are very vividly told. She met with dangers not a few, with discomforts many; but she makes light of personal inconveniences and hardships, and would have us believe they were quite amusing experiences.

Some ten months before the massacre of the missionaries last August, we find Miss Marshall speaking of the Vegetarian sect, and the trouble they were causing in many places. She writes: "The Vegetarians said that Christianity is getting on too fast, and they are going to make a stand against it. Isn't that good news? They will find it rather difficult to do that, won't they? They can't get on much when they are fighting against God."

On the last Christmas Eve she spent on earth she writes: "One more Christmas nearly gone, one more nearer Heaven. The message that comes to my heart to-day: 'The Lord of Peace Himself give you peace always, at all times and in all places.' It is so true; with the Prince of Peace in our hearts, there must be peace, such peace that nothing can touch, no, not even separation; for 'with loved ones far away, in Jesus' keeping we are safe, and they.' It is all joy, for all is for His dear sake."

On March 29th, we find from her letters home that they were on the eve of insurrection in Ku-cheng. The Vegetarians had mustered 3,000 strong in the city. Mr. Stewart wrote to all the lady missionaries in the country districts around to tell them to come within the city walls. Miss Marshall adds: "It seems so mean to run away and leave the women, after teaching them to trust in God. To run away at the first note of danger seems so like preaching what we don't believe. Topsy and I can't bear the thought of going in for that. However, if it is the Lord's will, it must be right. We do not know whether the women here will be in danger; if so we have begged Mr. Stewart to let us stop and be with them." But they all had to obey orders and enter the city, about which she writes: "This is such a funny thing; it is almost like living in a story-book. Mr. Stewart says it is like the 'Arabian Nights.' No one here ever remembers such a thing happening as the city being closed, the city straightly shut up. And not only that, but the primitive, almost antediluvian, style of the whole thing is so amusing."

But affairs grew more serious, and the little band of missionaries were ordered off to Foochow for protection. This was a hard trial to them, and Elsie writes to her sister, in April last, as follows: "I just feel as if the Lord must be going to teach us something well worth learning. This is the very hardest thing the Lord has ever asked me to do in all my life, though I can be glad about it when I feel it is His will, and He has told me to come away. I just feel, if only the Lord had said: 'Will you stay here for Me, and run the risk of the mob?' I would just have felt I could not thank Him enough for giving me the easy thing to do; but to run away and leave them all—it seems as if nothing after this could ever be hard."

After peace was made between China and Japan, the missionaries were able to go back to their much-loved work. The last letter written by Elsie Marshall was dated from Hwa-sang (Ku-cheng), July 22nd, just about