

ELSIE MARSHALL, MISSIONARY AND MARTYR.*

BY MARIAN NORMA BROCK.

The late war between Japan and China directed the attention of the world as never before to those two nations, and was a revelation of the intelligence and power of the one, and of the ignorance and comparative helplessness of the other. The heart of every Christian was touched with a feeling of deeper sympathy for both; for with all its vitality and energy and mighty possibilities, Japan was felt to be without that Great Light—a knowledge of the world's Saviour. The clearer perception thus awakened of China's vast area with its teeming millions of ignorant, benighted souls, aroused in the heart of many a keen-sighted man a sense of responsibility. These men of clear vision saw that from a merely secular standpoint the support of Chinese missions was wise policy if we would save our dearly-loved civilization from the possibility of a second overthrow by the vandals—this time coming from the far east instead of from the north.

But a more terrible revelation of China's great need of the Gospel soon followed, when all Christendom was horrified with the account of her martyred missionaries. Among those who thus laid down their lives for Christ's sake was Elsie Marshall, a young girl whose consecrated zeal and sweet enthusiasm made her short life richly fruitful. She was born November 9, 1869, at Birchfield, in Birmingham, England, of which parish her father, the Rev. J. W.

Marshall, was vicar. Soon after her father was appointed to the charge of St. John's, Blackheath, and there Elsie lived till the King called her to go as His messenger to China. The thought of foreign missionary work first entered her mind in 1886, and at once took firm hold of her, becoming the ruling motive of her life. With this end in view, she took up her secular studies with increased enthusiasm, and soon passed the senior Cambridge local examination. In November, 1891, she offered herself to the Church of England Zenana Society for work in China.

In January, 1892, Elsie went to the Willows, a training home at Mildmay, from which place she was shortly sent on to the Mildmay hospital for training in medicine and nursing. What she here learned in the few months allowed her, was of the greatest help to her in her missionary work, and often opened hearts and homes, sometime even whole villages, to receive the "message of God's love."

She sailed for China, with a mission party, in October, 1892. Of the voyage out the senior member of the party writes: "We travelled out together, and very sweet are my memories of Elsie during that six weeks' voyage; her earnest and whole-souled devotion to God, and her yearning, tender love for souls."

At length the voyage, into which so much work and study had been crowded, was at an end. On reaching China, Elsie writes: "It is beautiful practically to be at the end of the journey, and to feel that we are at the place which the Lord has told us of. The text

* "For His Sake," a Record of a Life Consecrated to God and Devoted to China. Extracts from the Letters of Elsie Marshall, martyred at Hwa-Sang, August 1st, 1895. Illustrated. London: Religious Tract Society. Toronto: William Briggs.