

BOYS AND GIRLS

[For the 'Messenger']

Elsie Marshall, Martyr.

(Written for the 'Messenger' by Tena Macfarlane.)

Elsie Marshall, daughter of the Rev. J. W. Marshall, Blackheath, was born in Birchfield, Eng., on Nov. 9, 1869. In 1891, having listened to a stirring appeal of the Rev. R. W. Stewart, the 'Fuh-kien Band of helpers' was organized, and Elsie Marshall was chosen to represent this band, under the Church of England Zenana Society for work in China, under Mr. Stewart. On Oct. 14, 1892, having taken a course of training in Mildmay, she sailed for China. Her first year was spent at Fuh-ning studying the language.

In one of her first letters she writes about a Chinese wedding. Before the bride left her mother's home, she was sitting in her room, on view, in bright scarlet clothes, with something like a crown on her head. She was led out of the house by two women. She was supposed to be very unwilling to leave home. Then she worshipped the ancestral idols, and after filling her sleeves with nuts, as a sign of plenty was led to the wedding chair. In Foo-chow a bride has to remain on view much longer than in Fuh-ning, and men come and prick her eyebrows with needles to see how much she can stand without wincing. In Fuh-ning the roads are all winding to cheat the spirits. They often give men women's names that the spirit may think they are not worth attacking. Feb. 17, is New Year's day. The streets are all decorated and presents are given to one another. At the end of the year the Chinese pay their debts, and if they do not pay them then, must wait for another year, and if at the end of three years their debts are not paid, no claim can be made on them. For money, cash is used, 1000 cash equal a dollar of our money. They think very little of selling their children, especially if they are poor. They are very dirty, only washing their houses at New Year's. When a person is ill, men stand in front of the house, making a terrible noise, to catch the spirit which is making the person ill.

In China there are two forms of language—(1) classical, or written, (2) colloquial, or spoken. Books are printed in the classical language, which the ordinary people do not understand. However, the missionaries printed the Bible in the colloquial.

Some of the native Christians are treated very badly, and one man was beaten dreadfully by his friend, because he would not allow a priest to perform heathen rites in his house.

At stated times, horrible idol processions take place. Two little girls were dressed up and mounted on very high pedestals. They had a narrow bench to sit on, raised on a high platform, the whole carried in a sort of cart. After them came four pair of devils, four black and four white. The black ones wore hideous, inhuman masks. The white ones had tremendous erections on their heads. There were several others, dressed to represent other spirits. All these had square boards round their necks, because they had taken a vow to the gods to serve them for a certain number of days.

In July, 1893, she left Fuh-ning to spend the two hot months in Kuliang on the hills near Foo-chow. While here she with others visited a Buddhist monastery at the foot of Kushan Mountains. The monks live a secluded life. Some do it from a pure motive-



THE CHINESE EMPEROR AND HIS FATHER.

(From a photograph taken about 1886.)

serving Buddha, others because it brings in much money. One man had sat in the same place for fourteen years, and had never once spoken.

In 1894, she passed her second and last examination she then left Fuh-ning for Ku-cheng to join Rev. R. W. and Mrs. Stewart. Here she was given a district called Gang-ga, twenty-one miles long by eleven broad. The principal village was Sek-chek-du, but she lived in a loft in Gang-ga village. Another village was Buang-dong. During her first visit here, she was nearly mobbed, she, probably, being the first foreigner ever seen in this village. These were not the only villages in her district there being a few hundred villages.

On Oct. 11, 1894, writing from Ku-cheng, she first mentions the persecution by the Vegetarians, a secret society opposed to Christianity. At that date, A-deng-bang, a village near Gang-ga, was the centre of persecution. However this was soon quelled. The next March, another rising of Vegetarians was secretly reported. So she left Sek-chek-du for the city of Ku-cheng, and then to Foo-chow. Again, the persecution

seemed to cease, and she spent some time in her own district. Every day she went into the country to one of the villages there to visit the people, and tell them of Jesus. She was just beginning to get the people interested, when being urged by Mrs. Stewart she went to Hwa-Sang for the summer months. She was very sorry to go because she did not like to leave her work so long. Her last letter, July 22, 1895. She speaks of the peaceful times she was having. This letter was received by her friends on Aug. 1, the day on which she lost her life, or rather gained eternal life. This day, suddenly a band of Vegetarians broke into the houses occupied by the missionaries and killed Miss Marshall. Miss Codrington, the only one who escaped, said that she died clinging to her Bible. In one house the Rev. Mr. and Mrs. Stewart, and Nellie Saunders were killed. In the other, Miss Topsy Saunders, Miss HESSIE Newcombe, a Dublin lady belonging to the Zenana Mission, Miss Lucy Stewart, formerly of Little Stukely, Huntingdon, and Miss Marshall. The Rev. Mr. and Mrs. Stewart belonged to Dublin, and the two Miss