

**'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 1, 1895**

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EXTRACTS FROM THE LETTERS OF  
ELSIE MARSHALL, MARTYRED AT  
HWA-SANG, AUGUST 1, 1895

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# 'FOR HIS SAKE'



## INTRODUCTORY MEMOIR

A SHORT sketch of the life of the writer of the following record of missionary work in China will perhaps enhance its interest for the general reader, and make clear some of the personal allusions, which could not be well omitted without breaking the continuity of the letters. The letters themselves are published in the hope, and with the earnest prayer, in which it is certain the writer would (and perchance does) join, that their perusal may stir up still greater zeal in hastening forward the King's business in the land of Sinim, which recent events—and not least amongst them the martyrdoms at Ku-cheng—will assuredly open up to the 'Divine Enterprise of Missions'; and lead many to adopt what she found to be the happiest of all lives: to give up home 'for His sake,' in order to go and tell the love of Jesus to those who have never heard.

Elsie Marshall was born on November 9, 1869, at Birchfield, near Birmingham, of which parish her father, the Rev. J. W. Marshall, was the vicar. When she was

five years old her father was appointed Vicar of St. John's, Blackheath; and it was there that she lived till God's call came to her to go as His messenger to China.

In the recollection of her family, and of all who knew her, brightness and sunshine were always associated with her; and that this was the brightness of God's countenance, and the sunshine of His love, reflected in her life, those who watched her growth from her infancy never doubted. She used to say, 'I do love people who seem to have a liberty in Christ's religion, always loving to sing, and to speak of Him.'

There never was anything like a spiritual crisis in her life: from the first she lived the life of a child of God; and His grace was beautifully developed in her growing soul. Her joy was unbounded when a friend of hers told her that her name 'Elsie' meant 'consecrated to God.' The testimony of her schoolfellows corroborates this. One who was with her at the first school to which she went writes: 'I remember her so well at school; her kindness and unselfishness to all the younger girls; and she was always trying to set them a good example. There was something almost amusing too in the poor opinion she had of herself—she, who was as good as any one could ever be.'

A schoolfellow at the last school to which she went, and one who there formed a deep and lasting friendship with her, says: 'I have been thinking of my darling when I first knew her at school. I think it is not everybody to whom God has given the memory of such a friend. Even at school unkindness and strife seemed to cease when she came near. We used to be ashamed to let Elsie hear quarrelling and bitterness; and yet she

was so quiet and gentle always. I cannot tell you what a friend she has been to me. I owe so much to her, and she has always so encouraged and cheered me at all possible times. . . . It seems as if God has crowned a most holy life with the great honour of taking her to Himself along the glorious road of martyrdom. It would have delighted dear Elsie had she known she would have been found worthy of so noble and grand a death. Our darling was a "treasure of costly price" that God has provided for us "to sacrifice." As long as I live I shall be a better woman for having had the love of my dearest friend.'

She and her sister organized a little prayer-meeting amongst their schoolfellows, which they held at the vicarage. Her Confirmation preparation was a time of marked spiritual growth: and her admittance to the Lord's Table an event of intense delight to her. Ever afterwards she looked to the Holy Communion as her chief means of grace. She began her active work for God in Sunday School teaching, after her school-life was finished; and her influence with the girls in her class was deep and lasting. She was not content with teaching them in the school on Sunday, but made herself their friend, visiting them and their parents in their homes, and gathering them together for prayer-meetings and talks about missionary work. She also started amongst them a working party, to help them to have a definite share in the work. A fellow teacher writes: 'I don't think I ever met any girl living quite so close to God as she did.' A young man who was living in the parish gives this testimony: 'None of us will ever forget Elsie, or how we used to notice how brightly she