

The Japanese Boy.

BY R. L. GRANE.

A little lad, a Japanese,
Far off in old Japan;
An army boy with task assigned,
To pour out army wine.
It was on the occasion of
A ceremony rare,
When wine as a libation flowed,
A heathen custom there.

To him it was repulsive work,
For he had vowed to be,
A staunch abstainer from the drink
That causes misery.
His father had a victim been,
Through drinking "sake" had died,
And he, his mother's only boy,
Was forced to leave her side.

He promised her he'd never touch
The soul-destroying cup.
And on that day when all imbibed
He would not touch a drop.
The General-in-Chief observed
The little lad took none,
And told him he must weary be,
To drink as all had done.

The boy refused to take a draught
Though urged to, for his health;
He would not break his word like some,
For honour, fame or wealth.
He said he did not care for wine,
And did not wish to drink,
And felt that he was free to act,
Not do as others think.

He did not fear to disobey
The dignitary high.
Though he might at the chief's command,
Be called for it to die.
The General was vexed to see
The lad's persistent course,
That he would dare to risk his wrath,
And said with angry force:

"Well, if you'll not do as I say,
You never can become
A soldier, for they must obey.
What I command is done."
An officer of lower rank,
Was standing near and heard
The conversation, noted well
Each firmly spoken word.

He asked him how he dared to be,
So insubordinate,
That with his sword he'd thrust him
through,
A well-deserving fate.
With tearful eyes the boy declared
He could not drink the wine,
For fear he should a draught grow,
Therefore he must decline.

And that his promise he would keep
While God his life should spare,
That he would never, never drink,
Nor in its revels share.
And said a soldier was not bound
Such orders to obey.
His country needed sober men,
To be the country's stay.

That he could keep his word and serve
His country none the less,
And spare his widowed mother grief,
And undeserved distress;
That he could better wield a sword
With unobscured brain,
Would be a better soldier far
By letting reason reign.

Their hearts relented when they saw
His quickly falling tears.
They saw the man in him portrayed,
Brave in the coming years.
His firm resolve and honest words
Commanded their respect,
And never after was he known
To suffer from neglect.

And in the army he became
A trusted officer,
Who never quailed before a foe,
No danger could deter.
While his example served to check
The drinking custom rife,
Respected and beloved, men sought
To imitate his life.

Oh boys, resolve that you will do
That which you know is right,
Be upright and be fearless too.
Your lives will then be bright;
Yield not to those who would allure
You in the paths of sin;
Make up your minds, God helping you,
You'll never walk therein.
RICHMOND HILL.

OLD MARTYN'S CHILDREN;

OR,

The House on the Hill.

By Florence Yarricood.

CHAPTER IX.

Tiny's father prayed very earnestly that his many sins might be all blotted out for Christ's sake, and that he might have strength given him to resist strong drink.

"I could never do it alone, Tiny," said he, when they rose, "but, with Christ's help, I feel that I can."

"I am so glad, so glad!" said Tiny, joyously; "if you don't spend any money in drink we can soon have some new chairs; these are so dreadfully old and rickety that they can't last much longer. And who knows but what some day we might afford a rocking-chair, like the one I saw at the house on the hill!"

"That we will, dear," said her father. "We'll have lots of nice, comfortable things before a year goes by. I'll hire a carpenter to fix up the house, or else we'll buy a better one somewhere. Oh, it's a shame the way I've wasted my money and neglected my family!" and his eyes filled with tears.

"Being sorry is all that we can do," said Tiny, thoughtfully. "We can't go back and begin over again; the only thing we can do is to try very hard to do just what is right in the future."

"Yes," said he, "I have made a miserable failure of living; but I shall do the best I can with the rest of life that is given me. I promised your dear mother that I would meet her in heaven, and God helping me, I will."

The next day, towards night, Ernest was sent on an errand down to the town, so he slipped in to see how Tiny was getting along.

"Where's father?" said he; "off drinking, as usual, I suppose."
"No, he isn't!" said Tiny. "He has promised never to drink again; and he is going to have a carpenter here to fix the house up, or else we will buy a better one; and we are going to have some new chairs, and a real rocking-chair!"

Poor little Tiny! her idea of luxuries consisted in possessing a rocking-chair.

Ernest sighed deeply, and shook his head, as he replied: "He can't do it, Tiny! he can't let drink alone!"

"Yes, he can," said Tiny, with decision, "for he has asked Jesus to help him."

"Did he?" said Ernest. "Well, then, that makes all the difference. Father is very weak, but Jesus is strong, and if he depends on His strength I have great hopes that he will conquer."

"People can do anything if they just depend on Jesus to help them," said Tiny.

"That night, after you went away, Mr. and Mrs. Hampton had a long talk together, and the next morning they told me that they, too, had decided to live for Christ; and they read the Bible and have prayer," said Ernest.

"I am so glad," said Tiny. "I am sure they must be so glad, too, to know that they are ready, no matter what happens!"

"Yes, they don't seem like the same people, they are so changed; but that Roy—he's real bad! he sits and smiles a little, and curls his lip up when his father reads the Bible, and he don't seem to want to be good at all."

"I hope he will change, and try to do just what is right," said Tiny.

"Yes," said Ernest. "I hope so. Well, I must hurry back with these nails; what a grand thing it will be if father really comes home sober to-night? I hope he does," and Ernest hurried up the hill towards Mrs. Hampton's.

The winter and spring slipped quickly away, without anything of particular interest happening, save that Tiny's father kept his word and remained sober and industrious; and their shabby home was being rapidly transformed into a neat, tidy one, both outside and in.

The warm weather came with its soft, delicious breezes, its opening flowers and sunshiny days.

Ernest still worked at Mr. Hampton's, although his father told him that he might return to school if he wished; but

he liked his place very much, and he decided to work there during the summer, and by winter he could go back to school, and have money enough saved up to buy a lot of new books.

Roy Hampton was still very reckless, and spent a good deal of his time in the bar-rooms, with low, rough society.

One summer evening Ernest found his little room so warm that he lifted the window up very high, and left it that way all night.

In the middle of the night he heard voices directly under his window. Ernest crept noiselessly to the window and listened; and, although they talked in a very low voice, he managed to gather enough of their conversation to know that they were robbers. He was about to alarm the household, when suddenly the front door below opened, and to his great surprise, Roy Hampton came out and joined the burglars.

"I've got the money," said he, in a low voice. "Now, I'm to have half of it, and you are to have the other half. I'm bound to have some spending money, some way, and this is one way of getting it."

"Yes," said one of the men, "and you are to go back to bed and not give the alarm until after we've been gone an hour; I'll risk them catching us then. You see we shoulder all the blame, and you get half of the profits."

Ernest listened breathlessly to this conversation, wondering all the time what he had better do to alarm the household. It was impossible to reach Mr. Hampton's room without going down the front stairs, and the men would see him.

There was a low verandah directly under Ernest's window, so he noiselessly stepped out on it.

Slowly, stealthily, he crept along, not knowing every moment but what the men would see him and perhaps shoot him. At length he reached the edge; he was within arm's length of the men now. One of the men had taken the half of the money Roy had given him, and placed it in a long pocket book, which he still held in his hand.

"We'll divide this between us after we get away from here," said he to his comrade.

"All right," replied the other.

They were about to turn hurriedly away, when Ernest's small hand just above them suddenly reached out and grasped the pocket-book out of the burglar's hand, which so frightened the men that they ran to the road, and jumping on their horses, galloped away as fast as possible, while Ernest crept back to his room with the money safely in his hand.

CHAPTER X.

The two robbers were very much frightened, but Roy Hampton was much more so.

He crept back to his room, shaking and trembling in every limb with fear. He did not know whose hand had snatched the pocket-book, but he fully expected that it would all come to light in the morning. His own part in the robbery would also be told, and he shuddered to think what the consequences might be.

He could not sleep or rest; his head was so hot he did not know what to do; and when morning came his parents heard him moaning, and, entering the room, they found him burning with fever, and unconscious.

"I did take the money, father," said he, "and gave it to these horrid men! I am very sorry; do forgive me, please!"

"What money, my boy?" asked Mr. Hampton, kindly.

But Roy's mind was wandering too much to answer questions directly, so he talked in a confused way for a while, and then he said:

"Those wicked men! I met them first in the saloon, and they set me up to get them some money out of the house, and they would give me half of it. I was determined to have some money to spend as I pleased, and I thought I could get it in that way, and throw all the blame on them and you would never know but what they got all of it. But they didn't get it, for some one out on the verandah snatched it away from them; I think it was Ernest; ask him to tell you about it. Please forgive me; I'm so sorry! Oh, dear! my head aches so!" and the suffering boy tossed and moaned with pain.

Mr. Hampton went and looked where he always kept his money, and found it

gone; but on looking around the room he found the purse lying on the dresser. Then he went to Ernest and asked him to tell what he knew about it. "Tell me all," said he; "don't shield my poor boy any; I see by his wandering talk that he is in the wrong, in some way."

"I did not intend to speak unless I had to, for Roy's sake," said Ernest, slowly. "But since he has told you a part, I suppose I must tell you the rest," and he told him all he knew of what had happened the previous night.

"You are a brave boy," said Mr. Hampton, when he had finished. "I'll reward you for that, some day. Since the men did not get any of the money, we will, for poor Roy's sake, keep the affair quiet, and say nothing about it. He is evidently sorry and I hope this will be a lasting lesson to him."

For three long weeks Roy Hampton tossed and moaned with fever, and they had but little hopes of his recovery. But at last he took a change for the better, and slowly began to creep back to life again.

"I have been very near death, and I was not ready for it," said he, one day, when he was slowly recovering, but still very weak and ill.

"I want to be ready after this, will you tell me the way?" said he to his parents; and they knelt down and prayed for their boy, and Roy prayed for himself, and his heart was filled with joy and peace in believing in Jesus.

When he got able to be about again, he was a changed boy in every sense of the word.

He no longer loitered around the saloons, wasting his time, and throwing his young life away. He took an interest, and was ready to lend a helping hand, in every good work, and grew up to be a noble, useful man, always letting his light shine that others might see it and glorify his Father in heaven.

What a grand thing it is to see a young life consecrated to the Master's service!—to walk henceforth only in paths of His choosing; to live only for his glory!

Dear, boys, if you want to be manly, give your young life up to Jesus. You will receive rich rewards just in this life, even, and in the great hereafter, eternal life, full of joy and unspeakable glory.

Jesus said: "I am the way, the truth, and the life. If any man follow me he shall not walk in darkness."

Whosoever believeth on me shall not walk in darkness."

Beautiful promises are these! Happy and safe is the heart that trusteth in them!

There is much more to tell about Ernest and Tiny Martyn, but I must stop now.

It would do you good to step into Tiny's neat little home, and see how many comforts, and even luxuries, they now have. It is, indeed, a pretty home—a picture of neatness outside and in.

It made a vast difference when the father quit leaving his earnings at the tavern, and brought them home to be spent for the interests of the family.

He hired a house-keeper, and Tiny had the chance she had so longed for to attend school regularly, and obtain a good education.

Ernest, too, spent a number of years at college and his cherished dream of becoming highly educated was realized.

Many happy days were spent by Tiny at the house on the hill, and when, a few years after, her father died, Mr. and Mrs. Hampton coaxed her to live with them and fill, in a manner, the place their own little girl would have filled, had she lived.

My little story is now told, and, as I lay down the pen, the earnest desire of my heart is that all the dear boys and girls who read it may give their hearts to Jesus and live for his glory.

If you wait until late in life to seek him, you will deeply regret it.

It is a sad thing to have to look back over a misspent life.

"God pity the one, who, looking back, Sees no fruit on life's beaten track; Nothing but leaves at the set of sun; Nothing but leaves when the day is done."

In the morning of life may you give your hearts to the blessed Master.

THE END.

To-morrow you have no business with. You steal if you touch to-morrow. It is God's. Every day has in it enough to keep every man occupied, without concerning himself with the things that lie beyond.