

## Zaccheus' Reckoning.

(Hattie L. Bruce, Satara, India.)

'Count it all joy'—mamma was cutting out the pasteboard letters of her favorite motto to hang on the wall over her writing-desk. She wanted a continual reminder before her eyes of this counting-lesson she had lately learned from the Word of God. Just there on the desk lay an unanswered letter from an old-time college teacher who had sent particulars about the fire. 'I think it will be better after a while that our main building is gone,' she wrote, 'as we are to have cottages for fifty and sixty students. How wonderfully God works! Here we are precipitated with the cottage system, without any consideration about it. The fire certainly means advance and new methods of work. I had been praying definitely this fall for a new dining room and chapel, as we were too crowded, and now we shall have to have them. It was hard to see the old building

little people like to reckon up such a column? You can do it as well as I, perhaps better—"For of such is the kingdom of heaven," she added in an undertone; then, aloud, "There was once a man whose name was Zaccheus. I think I will let him teach you the lesson he taught me lately, how to make "all joys" out of a column of losses. He had account-books and ledgers—book-keeping in his own interests he knew only too well. Scarce ever was there an item of loss in his columns. Gains from the poor, from the destitute, from the suffering, gains from widow and the fatherless, unrighteous gains—ah, he could add them quite to his own satisfaction. And thus he came to be a notoriously bad character in Jericho. But he lost his wealth one day when he learned a little of the arithmetic of heaven. You remember the story of how this "man who was a sinner" climbed up into a sycamore tree to see Jesus?"

'Yes, and Jesus, passing by, called to him,

will mean not so many "Oh, dears!" and "Too bads!" and "What a pity!" about the house. See, I have finished my motto. Isn't it suggestive of the lesson Zaccheus has taught us? We must string the letters together, and hang them over the writing-desk as a constant reminder to us all.'

So this is how the children learned to 'count it all joy.'—'Christian Alliance.'

## Joe's Confidence.

(Dorcas Dare in 'Presbyterian Banner.')

'Phew!' said Joe Bayiff. 'This won't do! Two dollars for a garret-room, four dollars for board! Six dollars a week! Phew! I guess it's got to be brains and hands both!'

He walked on in silence for a few moments, turning over in his mind the lodging-rooms he had seen and the landladies he had interviewed. Then energetically, 'I'll do it!' he exclaimed.

He retraced his steps until he reached a quiet side street. There, ringing the bell at the first house, he was admitted by a woman, who looked at him, inquiringly.

Joe smiled. 'Yes, I've come back. I thought I'd come back and offer you one dollar a week for your garret-room and chores.'

'Chores? Well, I don't know.'

'I'll shovel snow, do errands, take care of your furnace, and anything else you say.'

'Would you stay all winter?'

'I'll stay a year; that is, my school year.'

The woman considered the matter for a few moments, looking keenly at Joe meanwhile. 'I've always had two dollars for it unfurnished, but you would save me a dollar a week. Yes, I'll let you have it. That is, we'll try it, and if you don't suit me I'll give you two weeks' notice.'

'Thank you,' said Joe. 'I will try to suit you.'

After a short conversation, in which Joe answered his landlady's questions about his home, he left her, and went to the station for his valise. An hour later he returned with it, and went up to his room. Its emptiness smote him with a sense of desolation, but he resolutely tried to drive away the longing for home.

'I must work hard and earn some furniture,' he said. 'After all the sacrifices father and mother have made, I must not be a coward. It's a pity if I can't sleep on this nice, clean floor till I can earn a bed, and sit on my valise till I can earn a chair.'

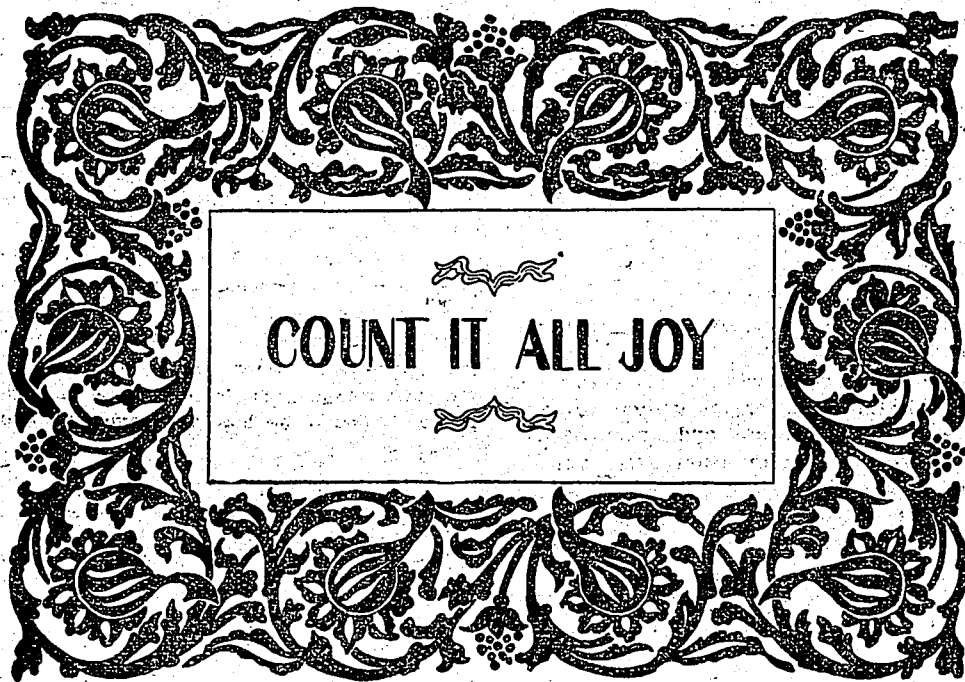
Opening the large, old-fashioned valise, which had been his grandfather's, Joe took out a well-filled box. He ate sparingly, however, of the doughnuts and sandwiches it contained. The lump in his throat could not be driven away by sheer force of will, he found.

He sat by one of his windows until the stars came out. Then, kneeling down, he thanked God for the safe shelter to which he had led him; and, as he asked for his blessing, it seemed to him that a deeper sense of his constant presence came to him than he had ever before felt.

'I am not alone,' he said; 'God is here with me. And at home they are praying to him; they are asking him to take care of me. I am sure he will answer. He will certainly guide and help and comfort me.'

Joe awoke with the same feeling the next morning, and again he thanked God for the home to which he had led him. No thought that he might have to leave it troubled him. 'Mrs. Gray is a good woman, I am sure,' he thought, 'and she will keep me if I am faithful; and I shall be, for God will help me to be.'

He went downstairs after he had made his



go, and we miss it a great deal, but I am assured it is all for the best. The Lord has answered our prayers indeed, and in most unexpected and unusual ways.'

'Count it all joy'—as mamma clipped the large letters, she thought of this new illustration of them. She remembered what that same teacher had said to her once, that it seemed as though she had prayed enough for the college to shake it to its very foundations. And how it had been shaken! She was reminded in God's dealings with the college of his personal dealings with her, long years ago, when she was clinging to so much that though good in itself was inconsistent with God's highest purposes for her; just as the college was clinging to its old-fashioned basement dining-room and over-crowded assembly-hall. 'God had to demolish what we considered quite too good for the flames,' she mused, before he could begin to work in our best interests. But now at last, when he has had his way, our future is bright as it never could have been otherwise. It is the old story, "From death unto life." Why should we be so long in learning it? "Count it all joy."

Then the children came in.

'What are you doing, mamma?' they asked.

'Counting,' she answered with a smile.

'Counting what?'

'Counting it all joy—the disappointments in my own life, the loss of our college main building, the "all things" that work together for good to them that love God. Would you

"Zaccheus, make haste and come down, for to-day I must abide at thy house."

'The rest of the day was spent in the blessed companionship of Jesus. What a transformation it wrought in Zaccheus's life! By evening-time he was changed into a new creature. Had he been rich in the morning, only to find himself poor by nightfall? Or poor in the morning? What do you think? Rich or poor?'

The children could not tell.

'Did it ever occur to you, little folks, that Zaccheus's neighbors, curious to know what he had gained by his long interview with Jesus, may have plied him afterwards with questions? But he could only answer, "Joyfully." "The half of my goods I give to the poor." And then, as they thought him a great fool to count his losses gains, he went on, "If I have taken anything from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold." Gains or losses? The world saw him stripped of his possession on the very day he had become heir to untold wealth.

'Just so it is with us. The world, having no treasure laid up in heaven, cannot understand what it means to be "rich toward God," nor can it take "joyfully" the spoiling of its goods. But this is one of God's counting-houses that he would have us learn—and the sooner the better—to check our complaints, to smile through tears, and to praise his dear name even for disappointments.

'Now, little ones, try for your own selves to "count it all joys," whatever happens. It