

Written for this Paper

## THE ANNUAL COUNT.

The modern mania is for figures. Everything is resolved into numerals and these are claimed as the unerring testimony of progress, from politics to potatoes, and from corn to coin. The consequence is that current literature "bristles with statistics," from the official reports made to Congress to the statement of a mythical company whose astounding wealth is merely speculative.

Common arithmetical knowledge is unable to cope or grapple with these mysterious columns, and if there are experts who can manipulate them, open eyed inability simply marvels at a faculty as incomprehensible as the figuring by an astronomer of the starry heaven, in the infinite volume of space.

Yet this phenomenon doubtless has its uses, even if incomprehensible save to the few, for it is a matter of scale only, although even the gigantic is comparative; and while the humble toiler, living from hand to mouth, may count his income and resources on the fingers of one hand, no idea save that of infinitude comes to him when he hears or reads that James G. Fair dies leaving behind him a colossal fortune estimated at near forty million dollars; just as the local farmer looking after the little corn patch which is all the world to him, fails to estimate the immense exportation of this cereal which in one year ranges so far upward as to reach a total of forty million bushels, exclusive of home consumption.

The flippancy with which statistical aggregates are used only comes home through individual or local affairs; the petty village dry goods storekeeper cannot realize the magnitude of business transacted by a Stewart or Claffin, their annual sales each aggregating over fifty million dollars. Nor can the Lehi sugar factory with its last year's production of five and a half million pounds of sugar, grasp its almost insignificance only by contrast with the national production or at least consumption. The total world's production is said to have been in 1894-5 eight and a half million tons, an excess over prior production of one million one hundred thousand tons, which fact amply accounts for present low prices, without any reference at home to California or trust competition in any shape whatever. Sugar, as every one knows, is affected by the same law which makes wheat lower lately than at any period of statistical history; yet low prices favor enlarged consumption or provide new openings or methods of use. This explains why seventy-five million bushels of wheat has been profitably used this year for feed and also that the sugar consumption in our United States is now equal if not in excess of the per capita in hitherto leading England.

These scribbled columns of figures are, however, in harmony with general practice at some special period. Government, in its several departments, tabulates its resources and expenditures; the budget of England's prime minister is his recapitulation or stock-taking, as the merchant usually calls it. Each item is scrutinized for its revenue, and each section of government for its possible expenditure,

that it may maintain itself without defaulting or without surplus. In this country similar estimates are made, but a feverish, impatient, and speculative people cannot wait the deferred official presentation; and so the press makes an approximate statement every week at least, income, expenditure, resources and prospects, just as in commerce all staples are tabulated continuously. Wheat, corn, meats, fruits, sugar, constituting the main necessities of life, are supervised closely; stock on hand, demand, etc., present or prospective.

The reader of trade or other special journals adapts himself, whatever his location, to these presentations in buying and selling, appreciating the information, but in his practical, personal affairs resting satisfied with a general stocktaking twice, or in many cases only once a year, and that generally in the beginning thereof, in keeping with convenience and custom as old as the hills.

At the present time most business men, great or small, are thus engaged, some with trepidation, others with a degree of confidence, but both equally interested in knowing just where they stand after the exigencies and auxiliaries of an interrupted trade. There are none engaged in active business who can afford to defer this critical survey of their affairs. Even the smallest may have proportionately as much at stake as the largest, and a general overhauling and cleaning up is of advantage to any stock, leaving out the proof of financial status which a proper balance sheet is bound to give.

Obligations and resources will have to be more carefully scrutinized this year than usual, and the latter probably discounted to a greater extent. The first will remain in *status quo* or increase perchance by the addition of interest; the latter, whether indebtedness or goods, must come down to close assurance, for there is inability to pay, and a failing market affects nearly every article in stock.

It may require some nerve to admit and act upon the suggestion, but nothing is to be made by ignoring the situation, and a good honest inventory is worth all surmises—is, in fact, the only satisfactory showing either for the business man or his creditors, if they need it.

A reliable, straightforward exposition of financial standing would be an education in any department of life. The artisan keeping an account of every dollar received and its expenditure is in advance of the one who receives and disburses without such memoranda; and the columns of the NEWS have often suggested to the farmer the propriety of understanding the cost of every product of his labor. If our now general education does no more than insist upon this universal keeping of accounts, there will be more thrift, consideration and economy than there is in the present happy-go-lucky method of running the home business for self, wife and family. The income and the outgo, if familiar to the home circles, might soften many a refusal which to the applicant (wife or child) seems arbitrary, and altogether beyond necessity, particularly when some remunera-

tion for services rendered seems fair to older members of the family at least.

Many persons who appear to own a store and contents, are misunderstood by their families, who conclude that because it is there they should be without restriction as to use. Cases occur now to memory where this freedom has resulted in failure and assignment; in part because restriction was not made, or that it was thoughtlessly defied.

The results exhibited by a true inventory, whether favorable or otherwise, are best when fully known to a business man. This may be his own secret, but a resolute will seeks, if adverse, in the readiest way to apply the remedy. Expenses are reduced, slow moving goods are pushed, dilatory debtors are stirred up, care is exercised in buying, every thing is cleaned, straightened and made attractive, and a general air of push and vigor pervades the store and finally maybe compels success.

Times of stringency have their value in this way, when there is a lull in affairs. Cause and effect are studied, problems of finance become increasingly familiar, markets are more closely watched, buying is more cautiously done, credits are carefully scanned, extra means are taken to secure trade, the buying public is notified and their patronage cultivated, exchange is scrutinized and judicious, economy pervades every line of action.

The time of business revival is thus hastened. There is confidence because the situation is fully understood. Things are on the bedrock of assurance. All features savoring of inflation have been eliminated; values have been fully determined, whether stock, accounts or real estate; everything is wisely discounted until a dollar means a dollar, and if there is error or undue depreciation it is on the winning side, so that returning activity will find every detail above suspicion, and that which has been too closely cut carries its legitimate profit to the brightened side.

These suggestions are of universal adoption. They are not limited to the storekeeper. Every man's life and business is worthy of system, is benefited by it; and where it seems unimportant, intelligent supervision and determination is often able to lay a foundation for certain prosperity and wealth. Small beginnings, carefully nurtured, reared the most stupendous fortunes known in this grand business Republic.

## THE AGED HONORED.

SPRING CITY,  
Jan. 14, 1895.

We occasionally see an item in the NEWS of social parties, so I thought it would not be amiss to make a report of a very pleasant time enjoyed by the old folks of this place last Thursday, under the management of a very efficient committee of middle aged brethren and sisters, Bishop James A. Allred and counselors having the general supervision. The poor and widows, including missionaries' wives, and all from fifty years old and up were invited to meet at the large hall at 1 o'clock p. m., where a feast of things awaited them. And to insure