

last season's campaign; but, on the other hand, the present crop is pretty certain, satisfactory as it is, to fall short of last year's abundant harvest by at least five or six times the amount of the excess in the stock.

Presuming, therefore, our information from Smyrna with regard to the harvest prospects to be correct, a moderate advance seems not at all an unlikely event, though to some extent that advance has already been discounted, the average opium price in Smyrna, at the beginning of the present campaign, being about 20 per cent. in excess of that of the 1888 season. Another circumstance which is mentioned as likely to be of some account in keeping the opium prices up is, that since the recent establishment in Smyrna of a branch of the *Crédit Lyonnais* bank, it has become easier for weak holders to raise money than was formerly the case. Whether this will really have any appreciable influence on the market we cannot judge, but at any rate it is a factor which deserves to be mentioned when passing in review the chances for and against a rise in the value of the drug.

As regards the quality of the new crop, it is as yet too early to speak with any degree of certainty. As we stated before, the harvest in the provinces is now practically at an end, but the new opium is only slowly commencing to arrive on the Smyrna market, and it would be premature to judge the average quality of the crop by that of the 150 cases, or thereabouts, which had reached Smyrna up to the middle of this month. In the Salonica district, we know, the crop has been a large one, fully 1,200 cases, or double that of last season, when this very district was one of the weak points; but as yet there is no saying what quality of opium such important districts as Malatia, Karahissar, Koniah, Tokat, etc., have produced this season. One thing, however, is known, viz., that the harvesting period, and that immediately preceding it, have been attended by unusually favourable weather, though generally speaking the crop is late in consequence of the delay in the spring sowings resulting from the prolonged wintry season. The next great feature in the Smyrna market will probably be the purchases for account of the Dutch Colonial Department, which appears as a large buyer of certain qualities of opium every season. The anticipation of the requirements of this large purchaser always gives rise to a very considerable amount of speculation. So far as we are able to judge at present, the position would seem to be most in favour of the maintenance of the current rates for the drug, or, perhaps, a slight advance; but it is quite possible that for a time, at any rate, a feeling of panic may seize some of the Smyrna operators, and make its effects temporarily felt on the London market; for although, as we have frequently pointed out during the last few years, the outturn of the crop must regulate the quotations ultimately, yet opium is one

of the articles most liable to unaccountable and wayward speculations—partly on account of the extreme difficulty of obtaining reliable data as to what goes on in the remote districts of Asiatic Turkey, and partly because the bulk of the trade is in the hands of a few large houses, whose wealth enables them to operate independently of the considerations which generally guide operators of more modest resources. With regard to the yield of the different varieties of opium respectively used by druggists, morphia makers, exporters, etc., no information is available until further details regarding the harvest in each particular district have been received; and it is quite possible that the rise or fall, as the case may be, will prove more pronounced in the case of one of these varieties than in that of another.—[Chemist and Druggist.



Short, timely articles upon subjects of interest to pharmacists are solicited for this department. In order to be in time for publication in the issue of a given month, they should be in the editor's hands on the third day of the month.

Always send your proper name and address: we do not publish them unless you wish: if you do not, please use a distinctive nom-de plume.

Write on one side of the paper only; and devote a separate piece of paper to each query if you ask more than one, or if you are writing about other matters at the same time

SELLING AT COST.

Editor CANADIAN DRUGGIST.

SIR,—A letter appeared in the August number of your journal under the heading "selling at cost." The writer requests, "would like to hear how others figure this up."

In the Druggists' Circular for December, 1888, appears a letter written by W. B. Lillard of New York, from which I will give some extracts.

Signs like the following are now to be found in many retail drug stores:

Great reduction in prices, all \$1 patent medicines at 69 cents; 50 cent ones at 33 cents; 25 cent ones at 14 cents. Quinine pills 1 grain 2c. per dozen; 2 grains 3c. per dozen; 3 grains 4c. per dozen; 5 grains 7c. per dozen; prescriptions at half price.

Toilet articles and perfumery are often added to the above list at about wholesale prices.

Now where does the profit come in?

I asked one prominent cutter what proportion of his sales were at cut prices. He said 75 per cent., possibly more. I asked him if he had ever figured out what it cost to

do business? He said no; but judged it was about four or five per cent. Now this party claimed to do a business of \$16,000 per annum. I made an estimate of his expenses. I find that it costs this party to do business about 30 per cent. Mr. Lillard writes: I have made an estimate of the business of over 150 retail druggists in different parts of the United States, and find that their average sales are about \$8,000 per annum, and average expenses are \$2,000, or in other words it costs 25 per cent. to do a retail drug business.

Mr. Lillard again writes in August number of the Druggists' Circular, 1889. At the recent meeting of the Kentucky Pharmaceutical Association, the same matter was discussed; there seemed to be a unanimous opinion that the trouble in the trade was in cut prices, especially those on patent medicines. I have taken from a number of statements obtained three.

STATEMENT A.

On a business of \$29,841.25 per year a net profit was made of \$4,198.85. Expenses being \$8,801.15.

STATEMENT B.

On a business of \$5,121.70 per year a net profit of \$754.45 was made. Expenses being \$1745.55.

STATEMENT C.

On a business of \$11,217.00 per year, a net profit of \$854.90 was made. Expenses were \$4,191.60.

An old druggist writes in September number of the Druggists' Circular regarding these:

"I have been in business thirty years and have managed in that time to save a little money by dint of close attention and careful economy. I have kept a detailed account of purchases, of business expenses, of private expenses, and of bad debts during some considerable portion of that time. Here are a few figures for the years 1878, '79, '80, '81 and '82, five years. I purchased \$25,862.57 worth of goods. My business expenses during those five years amounted to \$7,598.86, exclusive of freight, bad debts and personal expenses. That is to say, every dollar's worth of goods I bought cost me \$1.29 before I got it into the hands of my customers. Am I more extravagant in my management than my neighbours? I think not.

"In statement A, given by Mr. Lillard, expenses are 52 per cent. on "purchases," in statement B and C they are 66 per cent.

"It would seem that the gentleman who furnished statement B, if he sells his business, invests his money at 6 per cent. and lives out as a clerk would make probably \$1,050 per annum instead of \$754.45 as he is doing now, whilst he who furnished statement C would make \$1,260 instead of \$852.90."

Supposing we examine these statements and try and place them on a basis that would be applicable to the retail druggists of On-