

A PLAIN DUTY.

WHAT Professor Kauffman called attention to at the last meeting of the Columbus Branch,—the use of the sodium salts in place of those of potassium,—is one of particular importance to every person, especially to pharmacists.

The supply of sodium in this country is practically inexhaustible, while we are almost entirely dependent upon Germany for potassium, and this fact accounts for the sharp advance in the prices of potassium salts, which will probably be accentuated if the war continues.

Salts of potassium and sodium, are presumed to derive their medicinal value from their combination with their radicals, not from their bases. The iodides and bromides of sodium and potassium have like medicinal uses, and are usually administered because of the iodine they contain, and the slight difference between them in this regard is in favor of the sodium salts. The latter are even preferred by many practitioners.

Merck's Report says:—

“Medicinally, in fact, the sodium salts are even believed to be superior to the potassium salts, because the consensus of opinion accredits the potassium ion with a depressing action on the central nervous system and heart, while the sodium ion is perfectly inert or indifferent. This view is so widely held that many physicians, particularly abroad, prefer the sodium salts (bromide, iodide, etc.,) to the potassium salts, and invariably prescribe them. This fact has not, however, been impressed upon the greater number of physicians, who largely follow traditions in prescribing, and who perhaps are not fully familiar with the sodium salts and their doses.”

If physicians were informed on these points by pharmacists, there would doubtless result a greater use of the sodium salts and a lessened one for those of potassium. The doses of the most commonly used salts of these bases are practically identical,—of the iodides and bromides exactly the same. It would seem, therefore, as though it were the performance of a plain duty to the public and to themselves, for druggists to recommend to physicians the use of the salts of sodium instead of those of potassium. At the same time, they would be assisting to render the country independent of any interference with its medicinal supplies, such as has been caused by the existing war in Europe.

E. C. M.

RETAILERS IN THE AMERICAN PHARMACEUTICAL ASSOCIATION.

THOUGH not unfriendly in tone, an editorial in the November number of the *Western Druggist* entitled “Retailers in the American Pharmaceutical Association,” is based upon a false assumption and therefore leads to a wrong conclusion.

An assertion, admittedly made “during a somewhat acrimonious debate” at the last N. A. R. D. convention, affords very slender support for such a sweeping premise as that “a majority of the members of the A. Ph. A. consist of pharmaceutical teachers, pharmaceutical editors, representatives of various departments of wholesale and manufacturing houses and the retired lists of these various interests.”

An inspection of the roster of the A. Ph. A. members, quickly disproves this assertion. An actual count of the members in Massachusetts shows that 130 out

of 151 members of that state are engaged in the retail drug-business as proprietors or clerks.

The Chicago Branch, which includes in its membership representatives of the faculties of four schools of pharmacy, as well as a liberal number of chemists, manufacturers, wholesalers and journalists, shows, nevertheless, a decided preponderance of practicing pharmacists among its members. In the smaller cities and throughout the country the percentage of retail pharmacists is of course much greater than in the large centers of industry.

True, many of the most active members of the A. Ph. A. are not engaged in the retail drug business, but more than a few of these are qualified pharmacists notwithstanding. Further, it is to be expected that teachers, journalists, chemists, wholesalers and manufacturers *should* take an active part in the work of the A. Ph. A. More commonly than the retailer, they have the ambition, the time and the training which leadership requires. The strength of the A. Ph. A. lies in no small degree in its ability and opportunity to avail itself of the talents of such men.

The inference, that the Journal of the A. Ph. A. has been a failure is likewise refuted by facts. The Journal has been and is a success—a success not to be measured in the dollars of advertising receipts—especially as the cautious and conservative policy of the Association, does not permit of the acceptance of much of the advertising ordinarily carried in most of the trade journals.

That the Journal has materially helped to increase the membership of the Association may be determined by a comparison of the rate of growth for the nine years before and since the establishment of the monthly. In 1896, the total membership was 1558. Nine years later it was 1776, an increase of 14 percent. The Bulletin, as the Journal was first known, was inaugurated in 1905. During the following nine years—to 1914, the membership increased nearly 50 percent., passing the 2600 mark at the last convention.

W. B. DAY.

OLIVE CROP OF TUSCANY.

The olive crop of 1914-15 for all of Tuscany is estimated to average, with a tendency to increase, the 1913-14 crop, which, according to last statistics, produced 1,064,000 quintals (106,400 tons) of olives, producing 197,000 hectoliters (5,204,159 gallons) of oil.

The cold winter and dry summer, though having somewhat reduced the very promising crop as to quantity, have much prevented the development and spreading of the olive fly (*Dacus olearia*) and other parasites, and the quality of oil is expected to be superior to that of 1913 as a result.

Very little oil of the 1913-14 crop is still on the market—estimated as not exceeding 5 to 6 percent. of the total production.

The oil from the 1914-15 crop will not be on sale until December or January next, and prices (purchases from the producer) are expected to be about as the last quotations, viz., per 100 kilos (220.46 pounds), 200 lire (\$38.60), for first quality; 180 lire (\$34.74), second quality; 150 lire (\$28.95), third quality; and 105 to 115 lire (\$20.26 to \$22.19), for industrial purposes.—Consul Benjamin F. Chase, Leghorn, Oct. 13.