

IS WAX DIGESTIBLE?

Dr. G. Bohrer Says No

[American Bee Journal (August)]

On page 749 of *Gleanings*, for June 15, 1908, under the heading "Stray Straws," the following language is used:

"Sometimes the objection is made to comb honey that the wax is indigestible. Probably in no case does that do any harm, and, in some cases, the indigestibility of the wax is its greatest recommendation. In cases of chronic constipation comb honey has been reported beneficial when extracted would have no effect."

Please permit me to state in reply to the language above quoted that the fact that wax has been reported beneficial in possibly some cases proves beyond a doubt that it acts as an irritant. For to no other property can its possibly beneficial effects be attributed in cases of constipation. Wax never was, is not now, and in all probability never will be, classed as even a mild laxative, to say nothing about it as a cathartic proper. And for the very prominent reason that it acts as an irritant instead of acting as a stimulant proper, it should be avoided by all persons whose digestive organs are sensitive, easily irritated, and excited until abnormal action. Hence to assert, as the writer quoted does, that probably in no case does it do any harm, is not in accord with any standard author upon the subject of digestion, its causes and treatment. Neither is it in harmony with the observations and experience of our older and most scientific practitioners of the healing art.

I remember quite distinctly that when actively engaged in the practice of medicine, several cases of cancer of the stomach came under my care. Among other articles of food as mildly non-irritating as I could advise honey, free from comb or wax, was recommended. And as a matter of taste as to looks, honey in the comb was tried, and could not be borne

by a cancerous stomach, and when the extracted was submitted, it was quite well borne.

And while upon this subject I desire also to state that it is a well-known fact that occasionally a person is found who cannot use honey in the comb as food, it being almost certain to induce spasmodic colic, which in all reasonable probability is caused by the poison that bees invariably expel upon the slightest jar or disturbance of the hive. Only a very few persons are susceptible to the influence of the small amount of bee-sting poison thus scattered over the combs. And when the cappings are removed preparatory to extracting, the poison is almost, if not entirely, removed, leaving the bulk of honey free from this source of irritation to persons peculiarly susceptible to its effects. And if the limited amount of honey obtained from the cappings be kept separate, it can easily be fed back to the bees, and need never be put upon the market.

Permit me to state that in what I have above given as facts I have done no guessing, but have used my best endeavors to give actual statements, which, it is to be hoped, all are in search of, and which can bring no harm to the sale of the products of the bee industry. But, on the contrary, with the increase of a true knowledge of the fact that honey in the extracted form is in its highest, purest and best shape for food, and that under the strict enforcement of the pure food law, and the known fact that more honey can be produced in the extracted form, and that pure honey, free from all sources of irritation to the human digestive organs, is by all odds the most wholesome sweet ever used by man, the sale of honey will increase beyond any demand heretofore known.

Before dismissing the subject, it is but proper to say that many persons do use as food articles not in harmony with the known laws of health, and for a time sustain no apparent injury. But, as a rule, in time it will bring about disastrous results. Men use intoxicants to excess

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