

IS BEESWAX GOOD FOOD?

It will be noticed, by comments appearing elsewhere in this issue, that a remark of ours published in the December C.B.J., to the effect that beeswax eaten with comb honey had no food value, and was not easily digested, has created considerable interest. On this we invited criticism. In the January Bee-Keepers' Review, Brother Hutchinson comments as follows:

Once an idea takes possession of the public mind, it is difficult of eradication, no matter how erroneous, or how many times it is contradicted or disproved. For instance, most people know that beeswax is indigestible, and they immediately jump to the conclusion that its consumption in the shape of comb honey is an injury to the digestion. In fact, this is one of the stock arguments used in favor of extracted honey as compared with comb honey. For instance, in the December issue of the Canadian Bee Journal is found the following editorial:

"We have been frequently asked by our customers which is the best—comb or extracted honey. We invariably reply, 'Extracted honey is by far the best.' Then we back it up with the following arguments—listen, and tell us if we are right or wrong. We say this: 'In eating comb honey, you cannot put anything else in your mouth at the same time, or if you do you must swallow the wax. There are no food values in the wax, and it is difficult to digest, as it must first melt in the stomach. In eating comb honey with nothing else in the mouth one gets the taste in too concentrated a form, and many persons feel a choking sensation as a result; others can eat but very little of it and are repelled; while if the extracted honey is eaten, it may be taken clear if desired, or taken with the bread or cake, and will not be found irritating to the throat, and no wax is put into the stomach. The bees make wax to store their honey in; they do not make it to eat. We do not think that honey and the comb should be eaten. We do not believe that Nature so intended it.' There are a number of persons in our minds whom we have converted in this matter. It is more profitable, too, to produce the extracted article. What

"have our comb honey men got to say to this? Don't get after us too severely."

Bro. Hurley, I have no desire to get after you "severely," as I believe that, like the rest of us, you sincerely desire to arrive at the truth; hence, you will be glad to have your attention called to the fact that wax does not "melt" in the stomach. A temperature of about 130° is needed to melt wax, while the temperature of the body does not go above blood heat—about 98°. Still further, although wax does not melt, and is indigestible, it is actually an aid to digestion. On this point I never saw a better explanation than that given 25 years ago by Prof. Jared Hasbrouck, at that time living in New Jersey. The article that he wrote on this subject was published in the Bee-Keepers' Magazine, and reads as follows:

So much is said now-a-days by such influential men as King, Dadant, Jones and many others, to "boom" extracted honey, that it seems necessary that something should be said to recall the claims of comb honey, that its virtues may not be forgotten and its production neglected. It may be that, for the present, more money can be made in running bees for extracted honey—five dollars to one, as Jones says; but I think I can see reasons why, with increased production, we may expect extracted honey to depreciate in price much faster than comb honey. Extracted honey must always compete with similar sweets, such as sugar, molasses, syrups and glucose, and its principal recommendation will be its novelty or cheapness; while it is weighted in the race for popularity by its inconvenient tendency to candy and is immediately exposed to the suspicion of being adulterated. On the other hand, comb honey stands without a rival—a thing sui generis—captivating to the eye—the symbol of sweetness—a royal luxury. But so industriously have they who ought to know better talked about the enormity of eating indigestible wax, that the proper use of comb honey is almost a lost art. People struggle to reject every flake of wax, or else eat their hot biscuit and honey as a forbidden indulgence, dared with full expectation of gripes and nightmares as a penalty. The fact is, that comb honey is one of the most wholesome

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