



"The Greatest Possible Good to the Greatest Possible Number."

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GENERAL.

More about well-Ripened honey.

MR. HOLTERMAN has done well in calling attention to this subject in the last number of the C.B.J. It is a matter to which the Ontario Beekeeper's Association ought to pay its respects in the most thorough manner at its next annual meeting. I have been writing about it in my department of the *Montreal Witness*, and cannot do better than ask you to insert an extract from an article of mine which appeared in the issue of the journal just named of August 10th. It is as follows:—

"It is of extracted honey, more especially, that I wish to say a few things in this article. The term "extracted honey" covers many qualities of the product, from inferior grades of strained honey and honey adulterated with glucose, to the very best samples of clover and basswood honey. There are large quantities of extracted honey in the market which are a fraud and an imposition. Such is most of the strained honey, which is obtained by setting conglomerations of old comb, dead brood, and miscellaneous refuse from the hive to drain, the liquid resulting from this messy process being sold as a rare luxury and choice confection. Extracted honey, largely consisting of glucose, a cheap and inferior sweet, is also an imposition on the public.

There is, moreover, a great deal of extracted honey in the market which is immature and unripe, owing to its having been taken out of the hive before the bees have finished the process of manufacturing it. Honey is not, strictly speaking, a natural product. It is made from the

nectar of flowers, which undergoes a mysterious process of manufacture in the stomach of the bees. Even after it is stored in the cells, this manufacturing process is not complete. The honey is not a finished article until the bees have capped or sealed it over with that pearly white wax which makes it present such a tempting appearance to the consumer. During this final finishing stage of the process of honey-making, the bees inject a minute portion of formic acid into the honey. This is, in reality, the poison of their sting. It will be a surprise to many to learn that, after all, the most important function of the bee's sting is not stinging. I have long been convinced that the bees put the finishing touches on their artistic cell work by the dexterous use of their stings, and, as I have said, they infuse a little formic acid into the honey. This formic acid gives honey its peculiar flavor, and also imparts to it its keeping qualities. The sting is really an exquisitely contrived little trowel, with which the bee finishes off and caps the cells when they are filled brimful with honey. While doing this, the formic acid passes from the poison bag, exudes, drop by drop, from the point of the sting and the beautiful work is finished. A wonderful provision of nature truly!

Now, since the extracting machine was invented and brought into use among bee keepers, it has been proclaimed as one great advantage conferred by it—that it saved the bees the needless work of capping over the cells, giving them time to gather and store so much more honey that the bee-keeper could afford to sell extracted honey much cheaper than comb honey. But the discovery has been slowly dawning on the bee-keeping world that honey which has