

Honey as Nature Makes It.

—G. W. Demaree.

I have not been idle either in thought or in practical experiment, concerning the much discussed question of keeping up the reputation of honey as an article of food. Unique in kind, and unsurpassed in its fascination of the human palate.

The true secret of the nearly universal *sentiment* in favor of honey, is found in the fact that *Honey is honey*, and nothing else is, or can be made to be honey.

It is well to understand that in these "last days" amidst universal "unrest" in the world, and increasing temptation to dishonesty, driven at a flying gait, under the sound of the cry of "Lo, here! lo, there!" we expect honey to be tampered with. Everything else has been "watered" and has suffered in "woof and warp," and why not honey? The heart cry is "more, more!" and the current is toward the miraculous, whether some of our friends like miracles or not.

But honey will never be anything else but honey. If all the bees on earth were swept away, the word "honey" and its equivalents in all the languages of the human race, would become obsolete. This leads us to the query, though I admit by a circuitous route,—What is virgin honey? I have never met with a satisfactory answer, but will not be able to give an answer that will satisfy a great many. Now, virgin honey is nectar, gathered and stored by bees and evaporated by them in a current of heated air thoroughly disinfected by the constant emission of formic acid from the body of the bees, until it has attained to sufficient density to be sealed in the combs by the bees. This is virgin honey and nothing else on earth is, or can be. For the good reason that the art of man can never make the *conditions* under which the bees *cure* the crude nectar into honey. From the above it will be seen that I am an advocate of leaving the honey with the bees till it is fully evaporated to standard density, before taking the honey through the extracting process. Such honey is imperishable if kept from contact with dampness.

The following experiment, which I have repeated time and again, will convince any honey producer who will be candid and honest with himself and his fellow man, if he will try it for himself, and let the result speak to his better judgment. Now, for the experiment.

Take combs that are sealed down from the top bar, from one-fourth to one-half the way down. First throw out the thin unsealed honey and store it to itself, then uncap the sealed combs, and store it to itself. Keep both lots over the next winter, and till warm weather the following season, and if the results have been the same in your experiment that it has been in mine, repeatedly tried, the latter mentioned lot taken from the sealed combs will represent true virgin honey while the former lot will be *glucosy* syrup, though both lots may be apparently well preserved. All nectars in the early process of curing undergoes normal fermentation (normal for honey), and this is the agent that reduces the cane sugar in the crude nectar.

When the fresh nectar is first carried into the hives it contains the *seeds of ferment*—the outer air is full of them) and slight fermentation (normal for honey) goes on till checked by the disinfecting agency—formic acid, in the hive. Now, when thin, unsealed nectar is removed from the combs, and placed in the air of a "curing room" to be evaporated "artificially," it is brought in contact with germ-loaded air and a second fermentation takes place and the result is *glucosy* honey. But it is urged that this artificially cured honey "won't spile." May be not, and neither will commercial glucose spoil, because it is already spoiled.

In conclusion I want to say that any good manager in an apiary, by supplying his outfit with plenty of good "extracting combs," can produce honey in its best estate at a reasonable cost of capital and labor, and be honest, and feel honest, and enjoy its natural reward.

Chistiansburg, Kentucky.

Correspondence.

I have just received word (yesterday) from the other officers of the North American which enabled me to place the date of the next meeting on this letter head, which was in the hands of the printer at the time. You will see that it is St. Joseph, Mo., Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, October 16, 17 and 18, 1891.

I hope we shall see you there. The "wild and woolly west" is great and it will do us all good to go out there and get a sniff of the prairie air. I think there will be a large attendance from Missouri, Kansas, Nebraska, Iowa, and perhaps other states near.

Yours truly,

FRANK BENTON,

N. A. B.-K. Ass'n.