

HONEY IN THE LIMELIGHT OF SCIENCE

It is perhaps well for the somewhat competitive lines of food that the majority of bee-keepers do not understand many of the merits of honey.

Those in the bee-keeping ranks know that choice honey is one of the most palatable of foods; that all of it can be digested, leaving no residue, and that honey is erroneously looked upon as a luxury. They also know that a jar of honey, unlike fruit, may be opened, partially consumed and, although unsealed (if kept in a warm and comparatively dry atmosphere), not spoil.

Science, however, has recently demonstrated many things of which the bee-keeper might well take note and use to advantage in popularizing honey.

Scientific investigations and close observation has determined that the bee, with its strong instinct for cleanliness, puts the cleanliest housekeeper to shame, in the thoroughness with which it polishes and disinfects the comb cells; the receptacles for storing honey. It gathers the aroma-laden nectar distilled by the blossoms and, in all its purity, places it in the honey sack, and, after reaching the hive, it is placed in the comb cell, where the bees, blowing a current of air warmed by the inmates of the hive, continuously over the open cells, evaporating it to the consistency of ripe honey and in its marvellous process making the various methods invented by syrup and sugar manufacturers appear crude and unclean.

But this is not all in this process of gathering, storing and moving from cell to cell; the nectar undergoes a marvellous and valuable change. The nectar is largely "inverted," thus saving the consumer of honey the digestive energy required in its preparation for assimilation. Many with weak stomachs know how expensive and valuable food prepara-

tions with pepsin are. The bee-keeper in his charge for honey has never yet taken this valuable feature into consideration, although, as far as is known, in this respect he has a monopoly in the carbohydrates.

Late investigations by Gershorn Franklin White, Ph.D., expert in animal bacteriology, Department of Agriculture, Washington, still adds to the scientific evidence as to the value of honey as a food, and no doubt, if properly used by bee-keepers, will tend still more to give it a prominent place on the table as a daily and regular article of food.

In Bulletin Technical Series No. 14, Dr. White, after making careful bacteriological investigations "of many samples of honey," states of bacteria in a normal apiary "the number of species isolated is comparatively small."

It is not often that the people of wealth, moderate circumstances, and those comparatively poor, can for a moderate sum find a food which the chemist, the bacteriologist, the pocket and the palate, pronounce upon so highly.

REPORTS

I have called on a few bee-keepers in the vicinity of Winnipeg and Portage la Prairie, and find that while in most cases bees when taken out of the cellar were nearly all alive, there has been a heavy loss from spring dwindling. I would place the winter and spring losses at 40%. Bees are getting honey when the weather is favorable, but we are having a lot of cold, windy weather, and bees can only fly about half the time. They are working on Wolf Willow, which has been in bloom for over two weeks. Have had one swarm to date.

J. H. STONEMAN.

Bees are doing extra well in the County of Lambton, especially around the vicinity of Arkona.

GEO. OTT.