

Extracted Honey.

AN INTERESTING AND INSTRUCTIVE PAPER ON THE WHOLE SUBJECT, BY THE BARNUM OF HONEY EXHIBITORS.

WE have not lately copied many articles of any length from other journals, but when so good a one as the following comes to us, we cannot refrain. This paper was sent to the *American Bee Journal* last winter in connection with the competition re "Extracted Honey;" but was ruled out because of its "extreme length," other articles, which in our opinion possessed less merit, and in which the text could scarcely be recognized, were awarded the prize:

"Extracted Honey" is a modern phrase employed only since the introduction of the honey extractor. It is generally used by the beekeepers of America, when referring to honey separated from the comb. In Britain the same article is known as "run honey;" by the uninitiated it is frequently denominated "strained honey."

Extracted is the purest form in which honey can be procured; but not the form in which it commands the highest price in the market. There are two or three reasons why comb honey should be more highly esteemed: The first of these is founded on the belief, on the part of many, that only in this condition can it be obtained in absolute purity; another reason with some people is because a sense of the beautiful, combined with a relish for what is delicious, predominates.

We can admire the man if we cannot commend his extravagance, who, knowing the relative good value of both, prefers to pay a higher price for comb than for extracted honey, for certainly nothing that be can put upon the breakfast table equals a piece of snow-white comb honey in its combination of the beautiful and the good.

Still another reason is found in the greatly different flavor and aroma of comb, as compared with extracted honey. In extracted honey we have the pure nectar flavored with the essential oils of the flowers from which it is gathered, while in comb honey we have added to these, the flavor and aroma of the beeswax that constitutes the honey comb. It was in this combined form, mainly, that honey was eaten, from when history began until the extractor was introduced. David—the sweet singer of Israel—associated this delicious combination with gold, when extolling the righteous judgments of the Lord. He says: "More to be desired are they than gold; sweeter, also, than honey and the honey comb."

It is not to be wondered at that people are to be found even in this enlightened age, who are willing to pay a premium for the privilege of eating beeswax with their honey. The combination inspires a confidence in its purity and preserves a flavor peculiar to itself. Notwithstanding a difference in taste, and the existence of prejudices, the fact remains that extracted honey is honey in its purest and most nutritive form.

When fully ripened it is a translucent, saccharine fluid somewhat greater than that of good syrup, with a specific gravity ranging from 1.415 to 1.440. It is a vegetable product, collected by bees from the blossoms of plants. The fluid when first gathered differs from honey, however in more respects than one, and is denominated "nectar."

Nectar has not as great a specific gravity as cured honey, but the main difference between nectar and honey is, that the sugar in the nectar is identical with that derived from the cane or beet root; while the sugar of honey is similar to that of grape. How this chemical change is brought about is now pretty well understood. It is an accepted theory that the change is effected by a salivary secretion of the bee, incorporated with and acting upon the nectar, while in the mouth and the honey-sac. Prof. Cook, I believe holds this theory to be correct. So do most eminent authorities.

Cheshire in his "Bees and Bee-Keeping," Vol. I, page 236, says: "From what has already been said of the glandular and tongue structure of bees, it is clear that salivary secretion is added to the gathered nectar, and that this, like the saliva in our own case, converts the cane into grape sugar." The change thus effected in the sugar of nectar is of the greatest importance, because cane sugar, when unchanged, is indigestible, and, in a measure, poisonous; while grape sugar or glucose is easily digested and rapidly assimilated.

But few complete analyses of honey have been made, so that its exact chemical compounds are not generally known. Perhaps the best is that of Dr. Brown, which I give here, as copied from page 129 of Blythe's "Foods, their Analysis and Composition."

"From the following table it will be seen that the proportion of sugar—levulose and dextrin—varies in the honeys of different countries to the extent of 11 per cent., Normandy being the richest and Jamaica the poorest. (Paranthetically, I may be permitted to say, that Canadian honey was not among the samples tested.)