

## DIFFERENT RACES OF BEES.

Read by D. A. Jones at the Detroit Convention of the N. A. B. K. Association.

IT is not my purpose to occupy the valuable time of this Convention with a long essay on what has been done in the past in reference to this subject, nor shall I trouble you with a history of the efforts put forth, the trials and hardships endured, and the successes, failures and disappointments connected with the importation of the different races of bees in which I have participated. The object of the majority of the bee-keepers of to-day is to have their capital and labor yield them as good a return as possible, and the desire is to obtain such a race or strain of bees as will be conducive to that end. With the aforesaid object in view, I shall therefore tell you what we have now and what we prefer. We have as yet found none having all the good qualities and being possessed of none of the bad; and none therefore that suit us in every particular. We are not now breeding either Cyprians or Syrians in their purity for our own use, but for experimental purposes and to supply the demand in our business for pure stock. It must not, however, be supposed because of this that they are not without many good qualities; such is not the case. Different climates have different requirements, as evidenced by the success of Mr. B. F. Carroll, Texas, with pure Cyprians, and of Mr. A. W. Osburn, in Cuba, with Holy Lands or Syrians. We simply assert that they are not so suitable for our climate as are others. After the experience of years we find that for this particular climate, several crosses give far better results than do the races in their purity. This experience is the outcome of experiments conducted on an extensive scale and with all possible care as to selection and breeding—the latter on our isolated islands in the Georgian Bay. Crosses

between Italians and Cyprians or Syrians, and between Carniolans and Cyprians or Syrians, seem to give the best results. One-third Cyprian or Syrian is sufficient with two-thirds Italian, or half Carniolan and half Cyprian or Syrian, work well together. While bees are all crossed the same the results vary for a time till the strains become more fixed. It is not well to decide because the first cross is of extraordinary value, that you have found just what you are seeking for; in after experience you will find that they seldom duplicate themselves in this respect. These first crosses are too often adopted as the standard, with the impression that breeding from them will always give equally good results. Who knows, unless with proper facilities for breeding, what these crosses are? On the islands of which we have spoken we have found that *at all times* we cannot be successful, especially in those particular points we most desire. Unless the mating of the queen can be better controlled than now, perfection cannot be reached and the best races or strains of bees produced. The breeds of horses and other animals over which we have perfect control, are being constantly improved, through persistent efforts which have been going on for hundreds of years. It is not a mere assumption then to assert that by crossing, recrossing, selecting and reselecting, we certainly make much progress; but these operations will need to be much more carefully conducted than is generally the case, as few, from their surroundings, are enabled to properly prosecute the work. Where pure races best meet the requirements of the climate it is well to have them in all their purity. Mr. Benton is still engaged in the East in the exportation of queens of the different races, and his efforts are worthy of and should receive proper recognition.