

## "WHEN DOCTORS DIFFER."

### Races of Bees—Which is Best?

To use a Parliamentary phrase, the "cross bench" mind comes in here with an admirable exhibition of variety and contrariness. I have even heard Tunisians (or so-called Punics) praised—nay, lauded to the skies. Think of it, ye gods! They were said to be quiet, gentle, easily handled, good workers, prolific, good honey-getters, good cappers, not robbers as a rule, early risers, late of going to sleep, excellent nurses, capital defenders of their stores, not given to excessive swarming, not given to dysentery. That is laying on the brush with no light hand! I used to think it was easier calling bad names, and that expletives were more easily coined than words of commendation; but after the above paean of praise, I must revise my opinions on the subject. Alas, that the shield should have a reverse side! I have heard these same bees called all the bad names it was possible for so fair-minded a person (as a bee-man always is bound to be) to call them. I almost asked him to do the remainder of his swearing in one of the dead languages, but refrained, as a feeling of the same kind prevailed in my own heart; so I gratefully let him speak his mind, and thus got all my swearing done by proxy. One rev. gentleman records in your pages, "These Tunisians seem to be a bad lot!" It almost reads as if the parson had inwardly emulated my friend's use of bad language. Another gentleman gives as a record the large number of 208 queens and queen-cells he killed or cut out of one of his hives of this kind of bee. What a paradise for a queen dealer! These "prolific" bees, at 2s. 6d. a queen, would run up a nice little profit of

£26—with more to follow. I refrain from following out this line of argument any further.

"Give a dog a bad name and it sticks to him," says the old proverb. Possibly, in nine cases out of ten the dog deserves all the bad names he is called. Who has not heard of Carniolans as swarmers? And who that has had to do with them has not found them the bane of his bee bliss? Have not your pages times without number recorded these swarming propensities? Honey, that desideratum of all apiarists, they would not secure him. Swarms which were not desired, they supplied in superabundance. One gentleman (Mr. Webster) had "eight swarms from one hive in a single day." He adds, "I wouldn't for the world try them again. I made a regular queen-killing raid on them." Mr. Brice says, "Gentleness is the only good quality they possess. Swarming is their bane. Out they come prime swarm, first, second, third, and fourth casts, which means good-bye to any chance of a surplus. They have been imported largely into this country to the detriment of our own variety." Yet Mr. C. N. White writes, "As an all-round bee I don't think the Carniolan can be beaten," and Mr. Simmons says, "Longevity is one of the most valuable qualities possessed by Carniolans. They are usually very gentle, hardy and long-lived, use little propolis, and are beautifully white cappers. They are the bees for beginners, and none should start with any other kind." One specialist pins his faith to them, and considers them the bee par excellence. Other races may be good, others better, but Carniolans are the best. The Irishman's praise—"Heaven's reflex, Killarney,"—can't be excelled by higher praise. The above description of our white-ringed friend can't be capped. We can't "go one