

## Beginners' Department

By E. G. HAND

While the subject of rendering and clarifying beeswax is up for discussion, it may not be out of order for me to mention a little "wrinkle" I happened on for removing the impurities from a boiler or other vessel of melted wax. Previous to using it I used to be bothered by finding foreign matter of various kinds imbedded in the under side of the cakes of wax when they were removed from the boiler—matter which had a specific gravity so nearly equal to that of wax that it would not settle or rise out of the way of the cooling wax, no matter how much time was given it. Wax that has gone through a press seldom contains any foreign matter except pollen, which is easily removed from the bottom of the cakes, but when cappings or comparatively clear comb is melted up there are sure to be more or less dead bees, cocoons, slivers of frames, scraps of paper, or any combination of a thousand other things in it. Some will rise to the top, and some will sink into the water under the wax, while a certain number will be just in the bottom of the wax, being too light to go into the water and too heavy to float on the wax. These are what make the trouble. Many a dead bee, cocoon, or other such "critter," have I dug with my back-knife out of the bottom of an otherwise perfect cake of wax. Then an idea happened along. I had skimmed the top of the melted wax, why not skim the bottom, too, and get the bothersome things that were on it out of the way? Great scheme! I got a piece of wire screen the same width, a little wider, than the inside of the boiler, dished it on one side so it would fit the rounded end, and, after

the wax was off the fire for an hour or so, and everything had had time to find its level, I quietly removed the wrapping and cover, slid my "strainer" down one end of the boiler until it touched the bottom, moved it slowly along to the other end, giving the wax time to go through without crowding, lifted it carefully up on a slant at the other end, and there I had it. After pressing most of the wax out of the mass of mush that the strainer brought up, it was dumped on the scrap heap, to go through the press at the next rendering. The work of putting the skimmer through the wax a couple or three times only requires five or ten minutes, and when it is done I have the satisfaction of knowing that there is nothing in the wax but wax, and nothing between it and the water but a little pollen, which can be scraped off in a minute when the cake becomes cool. After "skimming the bottom" the wax is covered up snugly until it cools sufficiently to be removed from the boiler, which is usually eight to twelve hours or more, according to the amount of wax.

On page 78, in "Gleanings" for January 15th, Dr. Miller, in one of his "Straws," says: "When you catch a moth, pull off its head; and, if it is a female—nine times out of ten it will be one—it will almost immediately begin feeling around with its ovipositor. Shut together your thumb and finger, and let the ovipositor feel its way into the crack between them, and a very little round white egg will be laid there—perhaps several." If the Doctor had said "perhaps several dozen, and possibly several hundred," he would have hit nearer the mark (at least for this locality). The writer happened on this same phenomenon a few years ago, and, after playing