Taking Sections Out of a super.

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I WILL now describe the plan I have followed for some time, to take single sections out of a T super, without taking the super off the hive. I thought of doing so some time ago, but had about given it up, with the thought that, if followers and wedges in T supers came into general use, there would be no special plan needed. Still, it may be useful to a good many.

You may remember, friend Root, a tool that I took to the convention at Madison, a year ago, and then forgot to show. Well, I send it herewith. I have pulled sections by the thousand with the identical one I send you. I will tell you how to make one. Have your tinner cut a piece of No. 11 wire about a foot long. Straighten it. Bend the wire at right angles about 1 inch from one end. Make another right-angled bend, ¼ of an inch or less, from the same end. (I am not sure which of these bends should be made first). The end of your wire is now shaped like the bottom part of a capital L. But the end is blunt, and must be filed down to a cutting edge like a chisel. Your chisel-edge will, of course, be the size of the thickness of your wire—a little more than ⅛ of an inch.

Now, for a handle. Make a curved bend at the other end of the wire, about 3 inches from the end, so that it shall form a semi-circle at the end, an inch in diameter,. This leaves about 2 inches of the end straight, and I do not know whether it is better to have this 2 inches parallel with the main wire, or to have the end come within ⅝ of the main wire. The bends at both ends are all made in the same plane, so that the hook will lie flat upon a table, without any part projecting upward.

Another tool is needed. Take a common steel table-knife, and make it square across the end by cutting off the rounding part. Make this square end about as sharp as the cutting edge of a table-knife usually is,

Now, we will go to the hive, and I will show you how to pull out any desired section. Take of the cover and give the bees just enough smoke to drive them out of the way a little. There are separators in the super, and on top little separators ¼x⅛ inch, 12 inches long to keep the ends of the sections apart. Now, run the knife across at each end of the section, to loosen the little separator from it. I must confess that I usually use a third tool for this, the big blade of a pocket knife. Run in the case-knife at each side to the bottom of the section, so as to loosen the section from the separators. Put your hook down between the section and separator, and give it a quarter turn, so as to let the hook on the lower end run under the section.

I have a bit of string tied on the wire, to show me when it is pushed just deep enough to turn the hook. If the hook is not in deep enough when turned, of course it will dig into the honey. A ring of bright paint might be better than the string, for it would never slip out of its place. I think you will understand the rest. Like a bureau drawer, it may pull out straight; but very likely it will need starting at each end. When you get the section out, just grasp across it with the thumb and fingers of one hand, and give it a few rapid whirls, and every bee will be thrown off.

Now, that looks like a good deal of fuss to read it, but it does not take as much time as you probably imagine. I think I can take out a single section, or several sections, from a T super in less time—a great deal less time—than out of a wide frame. You see, there is no frame to take out—nothing but the section. In fact, if you loosen the super you will find it much harder to pull the section. Sometimes I have taken out the sections without the hook, merely loosening them with the knife and then pulling them with the fingers; but every now and then the bottom-bar of a section would pull off, and I was glad to go back to the hook.

The objection made by the editor, in the foot-note, is a valid one, that sections left on the hive for a long time will have a soiled, travel-stained, yellow appearance. But they should never be left on after the harvest is over; and in a poor season, when nothing is put in them, I think they come off about as bright as if they had been in a wide frame. You know, the bees do not go into the glue business (at least they do not here) until the white honey season is over. Indeed if you take into consideration the whole surface of a section, or, in other words, its total appearance as viewed by a purchaser, the section out of a T super is the cleaner. In the wide frame, a heavy streak of propolis is crowded in just as far as the bees can push it all around the section. This they have no temptation to do in the T super, for there is no crack.

You say, friend Root, that an enameled cloth can be laid flat on the section tops in wide frames and section holders. I do not see what good it would do in wide frames, for it would