

BETZVILLE TALES

Randolph Binks and the Safety Hammock

By Ellis Parker Butler
Author of "Pigs is Pigs" Etc.
ILLUSTRATED BY PETER NEWELL



With Consternation Wilfred Started to Leave the Hammock. So Did Adelia.

Randolph Binks of Betzville is passionately fond of reclining in a hammock, but up to the present he has never reclined in one to any great extent. Mr. Binks is an excellent citizen, but is more round than any other man in this county, and when he reclines in a hammock so much of him rounds upward that it overthrows the equilibrium, and the hammock quickly but gracefully turns over and drops Mr. Binks on the ground with a thud. Any man less passionately fond of reclining in a hammock would have given it up long ago, but Mr. Binks said in our hearing that he would be blamed if he would let any hammock in creation get the best of him. He says he has gently climbed into the hammock over 8,962 times, put his head back carefully, grasped the edges, and that each and every time the hammock has revolved half a revolution suddenly, and spilled him on the hard, hard ground. He says that at about the eight thousand, nine hundred and third time he decided that he had been attacking the hammock too gently, and that it must be taken roughly, like the nettle, to be handled properly, so he stood back and made a leap, landing in the hammock. This was almost successful, except that the hammock acted like a spring board and, taking Mr. Binks, threw him six feet against the fence, head first, breaking three pickets. In his temporary anger Mr. Binks arose and kicked the hammock, which then grabbed him by the foot, yanked his other foot off the ground, and bumped him down on the back of his head.

When he became calm Mr. Binks went as far away from the hammock as he could get and sat down on the ground and studied it, and he came to the conclusion that what the hammock needed was a counter-weight. If there was a greater weight attached to the underneath of the hammock when Mr. Binks got into it, it could not turn over. He said he wondered that no one had ever before thought of putting a keel on a hammock, and he immediately began looking about for a good, heavy weight. The best thing he could find was an old millstone, and he built up a solid wall of loose brick underneath the hammock. On top of this he laid the millstone, and then he pressed the hammock smoothly against the millstone, and, warming two quarts of glue, he poured it into the hammock and went away to allow the glue to harden in peace.

That evening Adelia Binks and her fiancé, young Wilfred Doppelgang, went quietly into the back yard to sit in the hammock and spoon. They sat.

About three hours later Adelia raised her head from Wilfred's shoulder and said, "It don't seem like you hug as hard as you used to, Wilfred!" She said this in a reproachful tone of voice, implying that perhaps Wilfred did not love her as of yore, and Wilfred, who did love her as of yore, tried to take his arm from about her waist and get a new strangle hold, but, alas! he could not! He could not get his arm loose from that hug. In the course of three hours the glue had hardened and the hug had become a permanent, guaranteed-fast embrace. He had undoubtedly allowed his sleeve to repose a moment or more in the glue, and Wilfred's sleeve and the back pores of Adelia's shirt waist had become one and inseparable. This is desirable in a union of states, but it is not recommended for all purposes.

With consternation Wilfred then started to leave the hammock. So did Adelia. Instantly, without a moment's hesitation, they did not leave. Reader, have you ever been glued to a large, round, sandy-complected millstone? Have you ever seated yourself upon a millstone well buttered with glue, with the girl of your choice beside you, and then sat there until the glue hardened and you became, as you

might say, two souls with but a single thought? Wilfred and Adelia could not arise; they could not even sidestep. They were glued to the millstone, and the millstone was glued to the hammock, and the hammock was tied to two large trees, and the roots of the trees extended many, many feet into the soil. There was but one thing to do.

Cautiously leaning forward, Adelia and Wilfred began to remove the loose pile of brick from beneath the millstone, until all the bricks were gone. Then, wrapped arm in arm, they began to jogg'e the hammock. It was a trying moment. Suddenly, as out of a clear sky, there was a sound of ripping, breaking, tearing, and then a thud. The millstone had fallen to earth, taking with it the central portion of the hammock. This left a large hole in the hammock. It also took with it—Pardon me, I should say it also left a large—At any rate Wilfred and Adelia sped hastily toward the house.

Half an hour later Mr. Randolph Binks strolled home, and all was silence. As has been said, he is passionately fond of reclining in a hammock. He has since remarked to Uncle Ashdod Clute that his invention of a non-tipping hammock was a success. Formerly, when he entered a hammock one thing always happened—the hammock reversed itself and threw him out. But now Randolph Binks walked up to his hammock and threw himself into it with confidence.

The hammock did not, Mr. Binks says, throw him out. Mr. Binks merely walked up to the hammock in the dark and threw himself into it. Mr. Binks says that in passing through the hole that had been torn in the hammock he thought very few things worthy of reproduction by the press. He says he merely passed through a simple, unconventional way, and met the millstone quite informally, saluting it with the back of his head. He says it was a mere love tap—for the millstone.

Mr. Binks claims that his hammock was a success on three counts: First—The hammock did not turn over and drop Mr. Binks on the ground with a thud; he fell through. Second—The hammock did not drop him on the ground with a thud; he hit the millstone. Third—The hammock did not drop him with a thud; the noise was clean and sharp, like the iron rim of the millstone. Mr. Binks says he can think of only one improvement. Hereafter when he wishes to give anything under a hammock he will choose a feather bed rather than a millstone. (Copyright, 1909, by W. G. Chapman.)

At Old-Time Tea Table.
Tea-table etiquette was somewhat complicated in the days of that "hardened and shameless tea drinker," Dr. Johnson, when many people thought nothing of drinking ten or 12 cups at a sitting. It was considered proper for the cups and saucers of a party of tea drinkers to be all passed up to the hostess in one batch when replenishing was considered necessary, and in order that each person might be sure of getting back the right cup; the teaspoons were numbered. When the cups were passed up those who did not require any more were supposed to place the spoon in the cup.

Too Professional.
"The funniest test of skill in washing clothes I ever saw," said the village bar, "was in Holland between the washerwomen."
"I presume," said the man who was listening, "that you betting instinct led you to put up a wager on one of the amateurs?"
"Yes it did," admitted the speaker. "Did you win?"
"No. There were too many wringers in the contest."

QUAY STATUE IN CAPITOL

Shaft in Memory of Senator is Placed in Pennsylvania's \$13,000,000 "Graft Palace."

Harrisburg, Pa.—A marble statue of Matthew Quay, former United States senator, has been placed in the rotunda of the state house here, which



Statue of Senator Quay.

has been called "the \$13,000,000 graft palace." The imposing likeness of the man who for many years guided the political destinies of the Keystone state occupies a prominent niche selected for it by Gov. Pennypacker when he was chief of state. He was sponsor for the idea of placing the old-time machine leader's statue in the capitol when strong public sentiment throughout the state protested against the plan.

ELECTS HUSSAND MAYOR

Mrs. Lew Shank of Indianapolis Made Many Speeches and Campaigned for Him.

Indianapolis, Ind.—When the votes were all counted after the recent election in this city, Lew Shank, who was elected mayor, turned to his wife and said: "Well, you won. If it hadn't been for you I wouldn't have been elected."
Mrs. Shank entered the campaign early and made three speeches a week in behalf of her husband's candidacy. She avoided personalities and appealed to voters on the ground of fitness and sympathy with the people.



She was received with great enthusiasm and applause, and proved an entertaining speaker.

BROKE THE CABBIER'S HEART

Found That the Boss Had No Fellow Feeling When It Came to Dishonest Dollars.

Pat Masterson tells a taxicab story of Harry Allen, who brought the first fleet of taxicabs to New York, and managed it well while he was in charge. "Allen took a ride during the Hudson-Fulton week," says Masterson. "He paid the dollar and a half in advance graft that was exacted during that period by some companies with demur. He couldn't help himself. But after the cab started he looked at the indicator flag. It should have been pointed at an angle of 45 degrees above the horizon. Instead, it was pushed clear down out of sight. Mr. Allen tapped on the window and the cab stopped. 'You have that indicator down to the double fare notch,' said Allen. 'Put it back where it belongs.' 'Why,' stuttered the indignant roofer, 'you—you—what do you know about my business, anyhow?' 'Everything,' said Allen. 'I have friends of you thieves from our companies at one time and another—and I invented that particular style of register. Now, put it back.' And," said Mr. Masterson, "the cabman put it back. But when Mr. Allen paid his fare, this nifty chauffeur looked at him with sorrow in his eyes."
"I think," said he, "that if you're in the business, you wouldn't mind a poor guy makin' a dishonest dollar for himself."—New York Sun.

Bad Break.
Stubb—What did the big watchman in the bank get fired for?
Penn—Why, a stranger came in and said he wanted to start something and the watchman threw him out.

Stubb—But I thought the bank wanted a man who could handle people who wanted to "start something"?
Penn—Yes, but when they picked this chap out of the mud they found out he wanted to start a \$10,000 account.

Mean Tramp.
"And will you chop some wood if I give you a slice of my own home-made pie?" asked the housewife.
"Ah, mum, it would be a waste of time," hastened Gritty George, tipping his hat; "I'd much rather maul rails."
"But why would you rather maul rails?"
"Cause den I could use de pie as a wedge, mum."

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