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ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

An apparatus for gripping a down hole tubular for support and rotation, or a string of such tubulars, includes a body element adapted to be rotated at high torques either by a top head drive or a rotary table of an earth drilling machine. Gripping elements are mounted in a central cavity of the body element, and each gripping element includes a lower gripping portion shaped to engage a tapered shoulder of a length of drill pipe to support the drill pipe and an upper gripping portion shaped to engage the tool joint of the drill pipe to rotate the drill pipe. First guides are secured between the body element and the lower gripping portions in the central cavity, and these first guides are oriented to approach one another toward a lower portion of the body element. Second guides are secured between the upper and lower gripping portions, and these second guides are oriented to approach one another at an acute angle with respect to the axis. Links are secured to the gripping elements such that initial downward movement of the links forces the lower gripping portions radially inwardly along the first guides and further downward movement of the links after the lower gripping portions have seated against the down hole tubular forces the upper gripping portions radially inwardly along the second guides. The disclosed apparatus serves as a combination elevator, make-up/break-out tong or wrench set, spinner, and drill string rotation means. It is fully compatible with remote control and automation.

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