

A SAD STORY OF THE FUTURE

by Forrest J. Ackerman

(Following is a brief summary of a recent radio broadcast taken from the story "We Buy Us a Robot—and What Happened" in the American Weekly.)

A married couple had an eight year old robot, and decided that it was about time to get a new one as 'Willy' was becoming worn and creaky and inefficient; so, they went to look over the newest models. They selected Julius, a most capable iron-man who could not tell a lie. This proved a disadvantage, however, as, upon entering their home he declared in his deep hollow, mechanical voice: "Dust—much dust!"

As the wife would grow lonely when her husband was away, she a phonograph record made of him assuring her how much he loved her. This she inserted into Julius, and listened to him. But this made Julius become very pensive and sad. One day he was found reading love poems and crying. Julius was in love! He realized the hopelessness of the situation.


One day he was found missing. "Oh! He's committed suicide!" the wife cried, "I know it!"

"But that's impossible!" her husband assured her, "if he tries to drown himself, he will only be short-circuited and rusted, and could be revitalized and polished up just like new. If he shoots himself, but a few parts need be replaced. Jumping from a window would merely dent him a little. He cannot hang himself; he cannot poison

— — — — —

himself; he cannot die by fire. Anyhow, our contract guarantees us against loss by suicide.

(continued on page 112)



A Sad Story of the Future

(continued from page 109)

Just then the televisior flashed on.
I was an upstairs neighbor.

"My son's all dirty and greasy,"
he bellowed, "and it's your fault!"

"Our fault? How so?" they asked.

He gave a serial number. "That's
your robot, isn't it? Well, he went
out into the park and called a lot of
kids around him; told them he wasn't
feeling well; gave them screw-drivers
and asked to find out what was the
matter with him. In a few minutes
he was scattered all over six blocks."

Julius, the mechanical man, had
taken the only method an automaton
knew of committing suicide——