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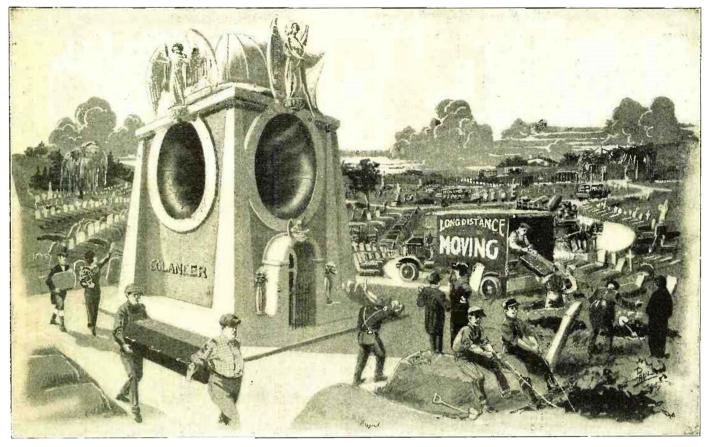
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Solander's Radio Tomb

By ELLIS PARKER BUTLER

Author of "Pigs is Pigs"



Within a Week the Inmates of Our Cemetery Began to More Out. Friends of People Who Had Been Buried There Over a Hundred Years Came and Moved Them to Other Cemeteries and Took the Headstones and Monuments With Them, and in a Month Our Cemetery Looked Like One of Those Great War Battlefields—Like a Lot of Shell-Holes. Not a Man, Woman or Child was Left in the Place—Except Remington Solander in His Granite Tomb on the Top of the High Knoll.

FIRST met Mr. Remington Solander shortly after I installed my first radio set. I was going in to New York on the 8:15 A. M. train and was sitting with my friend Murchison and, as a matter of course, we were talking radio. I had just told Murchison that he was a lunkheaded noodle and that for two cents I would poke him in the jaw, and that even a pin-headed idiot ought to know that a bulb set was better than a crystal set. To this Murchison had replied that that settled it. He said he had always known I was a moron, and now he was sure of it.

'If you had enough brains to fill a hazel-nut shell," he said, "you wouldn't talk that way. Auybody but a half-baked lunatic way. Anybody but a half-baked tunatic would know that what a man waits in radio is clear, sharp reception and that's what a crystal gives you. You're one of these half-wits that think they're classy if they can hear some two-cent station five hundred miles away utter a few faint squeaks. Shut up! I don't want to talk to you. I don't want to listen to you. Go and sit some-

Of course, this was what was to be expected of Murchison. And if I did let out a few laps of anger, I feel I was entirely justified. Radio fans are always disputing over the relative merits of crystal and bulb sets, but I knew I was right. I was just trying to decide whether to choke Murchison with my bare hand and throw his lifeless body out of the car window, or tell him a few things I had been wanting to say ever since he began knocking my bulb set, when this Remington Solander, who was sitting behind us, leaned forward and tapped me on

the shoulder. I turned quickly and saw his long sheeplike face close to mine. He was chewing cardamon seed and breathing the

odor into my face.
"My friend," he said, "come back and six with me; I want to ask you a few questions about radio."

Well, I couldn't resist that, could I? No radio fan could. I did not care much for the looks of this Remington Solander man, but for the last few weeks my friends had seemen to be steering away from me when I drew near, although I am sure I never said anything to bore them. All I ever talked about was my radio set and some new hookup I was trying, but I had noticed that men who formerly had seemed to be fond of my company now gave startled looks when a neared them. Some even climbed over the nearest fence and ran madly across vacant lots, looking over their shoulders with frightened glances as they ran. For a week I had not been able to get any man of my acquaintance to listen to one word from me, except Murchison, and he is an utter idiot, as I think I have made clear. So I left Murchison and sat with Remington Solander.

In one way I was proud to be invited to sit with Remington Solander, because he was fer and away the richest man in our town. When he died his estate proved to amount to three million dollars. I had seen him often, and I knew who he was, but he was a stand-offish old fellow and did not mix, so I had never met him. He was a tall man and thin, somewhat flabby and he was pale in an unhealthy sort of way, but, after all, he was a millionaire and a member of one of the "old families" of Westcote, so I took the seat alongside of him with considerable satisfaction.

"I gather," he said as soon as I was scated, "that you are interested in radio."

I told him I was.

"And I'm just building a new set, using a new hook-up that I heard of about a week ago." I said "I think it is going to be a wonder. New, here is the idea: instead of using a grid-

"Yes, yes!" the old aristocrat said hastily.
"But never mind that now. I know very little of such things. I have an electrician employed by the year to care for my radio set and I leave all such things to him. You are a lawyer, are you not?"

I told him I was.

"And you are chairman of the trustees of the Westcote Cemetery, are you not?" he asked.

I told him I was that also. And I may say that the Westcote Cemetery Association is one of the rightest and tightest little corporations in existence. It has been in existence since 1808 and has been exceedingly profitable to those fortunate enough to hold its stock. I inherited the small block I own from my grandfather. Recently we trustees had bought sixty additional acres adjoining the old cometery and had added them to it, and we were about ready to put the new lots on the market. At \$300 apiece there promised to be a tremendous profit in the thing, for our cemetery was a fashionable place to be buried in and the demand for the lots in the

new addition promised to be enormous:
"You have not known it," said Remington
Solander in his slow drawl, which had the

(Continued on page 804)

то наражно се попесататопратично проценации в посто е е Solander's Radio Tomb

(Continued from page 696)

effect of letting his words slide out of his mouth and drip down his long thin like cold molasses, fout I have been making inquiries regarding you, and I have been meaning to speak to you. I am drawing up a new last will and testament, and I want you to draw

"Why, extrainly, Mr. Solander," I said with increased pride. "I'll be glad to be of service to you."

"I am choosing you for the work," Remington Solander said, "because you know and love radio as I do, and because you are a trusted of the cometery association. Are

a trusted of the cemetery association. Are your a religious mone?

"Well," I said, a little measily, "some. Some, but not much."

"No matter," said Mr. Solander, placing a hand on my arm. "I am. I have always been. From my earliest youth my mind has been on serious rhings. As a matter of fact, sir. I have consolled a manuscript collection. sir, I have compiled a manuscript collection of religious quotations, hyrnes, sermons and uplisting thoughts which now fill fourteen volumes, all in my own handwriting. Forthroately, I inherited money, and this collec-tion is my gift to the world."

"And a noble one, I'm sure," I said.
"Most noble," said Mr. Solander. sin, I have not confined my activities to the study than. I have kept my eye on the progress of the world. And it seems to me that radio, this new and wonderful invention, is the greatest discovery of all ages and emperishable. But, sir, it is being twisted to cheap uses. Jazz! Chean songs! Worldly words and music! That I mean to remedy." "Well," I said, "it might be done. Of

course, people like what they like."
"Some hobler son's like better things,"
said Reministon Solander solenuly. "Some more worthy men and women will welcome nobler radio broadcasting. In my will I am butting aside one million Collars to establish and maintain a broadcasting station that will broadcast only my fourteen volumes of hyunus and upliffing material. Every day this matter will go forth-scimons, famures on prohibition, noble thoughts and religious ростиа."

I assured him that some people might be glad to get that—that a lot of people might, in fact, and that I could write that into his

will without any trouble.
"And" said Remington Solander. "But that is already in my will. What I want you to write for my will is another clause. I mean to build, in your cometery, a high class and imperishable grante tumb for myself. I mean to place it on that knoll—that high knoll

the highest spot in your cometery. What I want you to write into my will is a clouse providing for the perpetual care and maintenance of my tomb. I want to set aside five hundred thousand dellars for that purpose,"
"Well," I said to the sheep faced millionairc, "I can do that, too."
"Ves," he agreed. "And I want to give to

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my family and relations the remaining million and a half dollars, provided," he said, accenting the "provided," "they carry out faithfully the provisions of the clause providing for the perpetual care and mainte-nance of my tomb. If they don't care and maintain," he saxl, giving me a hard look, "that million and a half is to go to the Home for Flea-Bitten Dogs."

"They'll care and maintain, all right!" I

laughed.

"I think so," said Remington Solander gravely. "I do think so, indeed! And now, sir, we come to the important part. You, as I know, are a trustee of the cemetery."

"Yes," I said, "I am."
"For drawing this clause of my will, if you can draw it," said Remington Solander, looking me full in the eye with both his own. which were like the eyes of a salt mackerel, "I shall pay you five thousand dollars.

Well, I almost gasped. It was a big lot of money for drawing one clause of a will, and I began to smell a rat right there. But, I may say, the proposition Remington Solander made to are was one I was able, after quite a little talk with my fellow trustees of the cemetery, to carry out. What Reming-ton Solander wanted was to be permitted to put a radio loud-speaking outfit in his granite tomb—a radio loud-speaking outfit permanently set at 327 meters wave-length, which was to be the wave-length of his endowed broadcasting station. I don't know how Remington Solander first got this remarkable idea, but about that time an undertaker in New York had rigged up a hearse with a phonograph so that the hearse would loud-speak suitable hymns on the way to the cemetery, and that may have suggested the loud-speaking tomb to Remington Solander, but it is not important where he got the idea. He had it, and he was set on having it carried out.

"Think," he said, "of the uplifting effect of it! On the highest spot in the cemetery will stand my noble tomb, loud-speaking in all directions the solemn and holy words and music I have collected in my fourteen volumes. All who enter the cemetery will hear; all will be ennobled and uplifted.

That was so, too. I saw that at once. I said so. So Remington Solander went on to explain that the income from the five hundred thousand dollars would be set aside to keep "A" batteries and "B" batteries supplied, to keep the outfit in repair, and so on. So I tackled the job rather enthusiastically I don't say the five thousand dollar fee did not interest me, but I did think Remington Solander had a grand idea. It would make our cemetery stand out. People would come from everywhere to see and listen. The lots in the new addition would sell like hot cakes.

But I did have a little trouble with the other trustees. They balked when I explained that Rem ngton Solander wanted the sole radio loud-speaking rights of our cemctery, but someone finally suggested that if Remington Solander put up a new and artistic iron fence around the whole cemetery it might be all right. They made him submit his fourteen volumes so they could see what sort of matter he meant to broadcast from his high-class station, and they agreed it was solemn enough; it was all solemn and sad and gloomy, just the stuff for a cemetery. So when Remington Solander agreed to build the new iron fence they made a formal contract with him, and I drew up the clause for the will, and he bought six lots on top of the high knoll and began erecting his marble mausoleum.

For eight mouths or so Remington Solander was busier than he had ever been in his life. He superintended the building of the tomb and he had on hand the job of getting his endowed radio station going—it was given the letters WZZZ—and hiring artists to sing and play and speechify his fourteen

volumes of gloom and uplift at 327 meters, and it was too much for the old codger. The very night the test of the WZZZ outfit was made he passed away and was no more eth earth.

His funeral was one of the biggest we ever had in Westcote. I should judge that five thousand people attended his remains to the cemetery, for it had become widely known that the first WZZZ program would be received and lond-spoken from Remington Solander's tomb that afternoon, the first selection on the program—his favorite brain beginning as the fineral cortage left the church and the program continuing until dark.

I'll say it was one of the most affecting occasions I have ever witnessed. As the body was being carried into the tomb the loud-speaker gave us a sermon by Rev. Peter L. Ruggus, full of sob stuff, and every one of the live thousand present wept. And when the funeral was really finished, over two thousand remained to hear the rest of the program, which consisted hymns, missionary reports, static and recitations of religious poems. We increased the price of the lots in the new addition one hundred dullars per lot immediately, and we sold four lots that afternoon and two the next morning. The big metropolitan newspapers all gave the Westcate Cemetery full page illustrated articles the next Sunday, and we received during the next week over three hundred letters, mostly from ministers, praising what we had done.

But that was not the best of it. Requests for lots began to come in by mail. Not only people in Westcote wrote for prices, but people away over in New Jersey and up in Westchester County, and even from as far away as Poughkeepsie and Delaware. We had twice as many requests for lots as there were lots to sell, and we decided we would have an anction and let them go to the highest bidders. You see, Remington Solander's Talking Tomb was becoming nationally famous. We began to negotiate with the owners of six farms adjacent to our cometery; we figured on buying them and making more new additions to the cernetery. And then we found we could not use three of the farms.

The reason was that the fond speaker in Remiegton Solander's tomb would not earry that far; it was not strong enough. So we went to the executors of his estate and ramp against another snage—nothing in the radio outfit in the tomb could be altered in any way whatever. That was in the will. The same loud speaker had to be maintained, the same wave-length had to be kept, the same makes of batteries had to be used, the same style of tubes had to be used. Remington Solander had thought of all that. So we decided to let well enough alone—it was all we could do anyway. We bought the farms that were reached by the loud-speaker and had them surveyed and laid out in lots—and then the thing happened!

Yes, sir, I'll sell my cemetery stock for two cents on the dollar, if anybody will bid that much for it. For what do you think happened? Along came the Government of the United States, regulating this radio thing, and assigned new wave lengths to all the broadcasting stations. It gave Remington Solander's endowed broadcasting station WZZZ an 855-meter wave-length, and it gave that station at Dodwood—station PKX—the 527-meter wave-length, and the text day poor old Remington Solander's tenth poured forth "Yes, We Ain't Got No Bananas" and the "Hot Dog" jazz and "If You Don't See Mama Every Night, You Can't See Mama Af All," and Hink Tubbs in his fundy stories, like "Wel", one day an Irishmen and a Swede were walking down Broadway and they see a flagner coming fowards them. And she had on one of them short skirts they was wearing, see? So Mike he says 'Gee, for jabers, Ole, I see a peach.'

So the Swede he says, lookin' at the silk stockings, 'Mebby you ban see a peach, Mike, but I ban see one mighty nice pair.' Well, the other day I went to see my mother-in-law..."

You know the sort of program. I don't say that the people who like them are not entitled to them, but I do say they are not the sort of programs to loud-speak from a tomb in a cemetery. I expect old Remington Solander turned clear over in his tomb when those programs began to come through. I know our boarc of trustees went right up in the air. but there was not a thing we could do about it. The newspapers gave us double pages the next Sunday—"Remington Solander's Jazz Tomb" and "Westcote's Two-Step Cemetery." And within a week the inmates of our cemetery began to move out. Friends of people who had been buried there over a hundred years came and moved them to other cemeteries and took the headstones and monurnents with them, and in a month our cemetery looked like one of those Great War battlefields—like a lot of shellholes. Not a man, woman or child was left in the place—except Remington Solander in his granife tomb on the top of the high knoll. What we've got on our hands is a deserted cemetery

They all blame me, but I can't do anything about it. All I can do is groan—every morning I grab the paper and look for the PKX program and then I groan. Remington Solander is the lucky man—he's dead.