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\*\*\* START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK BENEFACTOR \*\*\*

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*We can anticipate that robots will be fiercely resented, at first, in a society that will see them as the latest—and an indestructible—widespread threat to the workers whom they will replace. The men who will seek to alter the status quo will be called "robot lovers" and stoned. But what happens next?*

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## benefactor

*by ... George H. Smith*

**He clutched at the lever with more force than he'd intended. It was set for further in the future....**

"THEY'RE crazy! They're insane! That mob outside is made up of madmen," Jacob Clark told his young assistant, Bill Towney.

"They'll be battering at the door any minute now, sir," Towney said nervously.

"But why? Why are they doing it? My inventions have advanced the world a hundred years. I've always been a benefactor of man, not a destroyer."

"It's the robots. People are in a rage because they say the robots cause unemployment by replacing workers."

"It's utter nonsense, you know," Clark said impatiently. "Why can't they see that my intelligent, self-controlled robots are the greatest boon the human race has ever received from one man?"

"I don't know, sir, but they don't." Towney paused as the shouting and pounding outside became more intense. "They demanded that you take the robots out of the labor market and order your factories to stop making them. This is the result of

your refusal."

"DOWN WITH CLARK! DOWN WITH THE TIN MEN! DEATH TO THE ROBOT LOVERS!" The furious mob was battering at the door now.

"Really, sir," Towney said, "you should leave here. They'll kill you if you don't!"

"Leave here? I should say not. I'll defy the fools. I'll tell them what I've done for them and make them understand." He glanced nervously at the door. "Besides there's only one door. I couldn't get away now."

"There's the time machine, sir."

"But isn't there some other way? Perhaps if you went out and talked to them...."

"You know there's no other way. Those people believe you've brought disaster to the human race and they mean to kill you. And if you don't hurry they will," Towney said urgently. "The time machine is set for twenty years in the future. Please hurry, sir!"

The door was beginning to give. Clark looked around unhappily and then walked to the time machine. "All right, I'll go. In the future I know the results of my work will be appreciated. I'll be a hero and benefactor of mankind."

Towney heard the door crash and roughly pushed his employer into the time machine as the mob burst through. "Push the starting button, push the starting button. Quick!" he screamed as the first of the mob reached him.

Clark's hand leaped to the control lever just as a brick crashed into his head. His hand completed its motion with more force than he had intended as he sank unconscious to the floor and the machine was set for a thousand years in the future instead of twenty.

The year three thousand had been a brilliant one for the robots, in fact, the most brilliant since the last human being had died some five hundred years before. They had reached Venus and Mars and were now planning a trip to Jupiter. And this very day, a huge statue of Jacob Clark, the creator and benefactor, was to be dedicated on the site of what once had been his laboratory. It seemed a shame that most of the records concerning him and his time had been lost in one of the great wars that had helped to extinguish the humans. The statue though was good for surely he looked like a robot. One of the few human books still in existence said that the Creator had created in his own image.

It was right at the foot of his own statue that the Guardians of the Shrine found Jacob Clark. They picked up his unconscious, bleeding body and laid it tenderly on a nearby bench. They bent over him with all the gentleness and solicitude that had been installed in his very first models and had been handed down from generation to generation of robots. They wanted to help him but they were very puzzled.

"Perhaps it came from a far part of the earth," one of them said.

"Or maybe a mistake was made at one of the birth factories," said another. "See, it is losing oil at a great rate."

"Perhaps," mused the elder, "it is a new model. At any rate it is a robot and has been damaged. As our great creator taught us, he must be aided. We will take it to the central repair factory in the city."

"But," the first robot protested, "it's awfully bulky to be carried so far."

Being creatures of logic, they thought about it for a moment and then the elder came to a decision that was both effective and reasonable.

"Since he is so bulky, we will disassemble him for transportation purposes," he said as he leaned over and gently twisted off Clark's right arm.

"Rather primitive and messy construction, I'd say," said the second robot as he tenderly unscrewed Jacob Clark's head from his body.

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