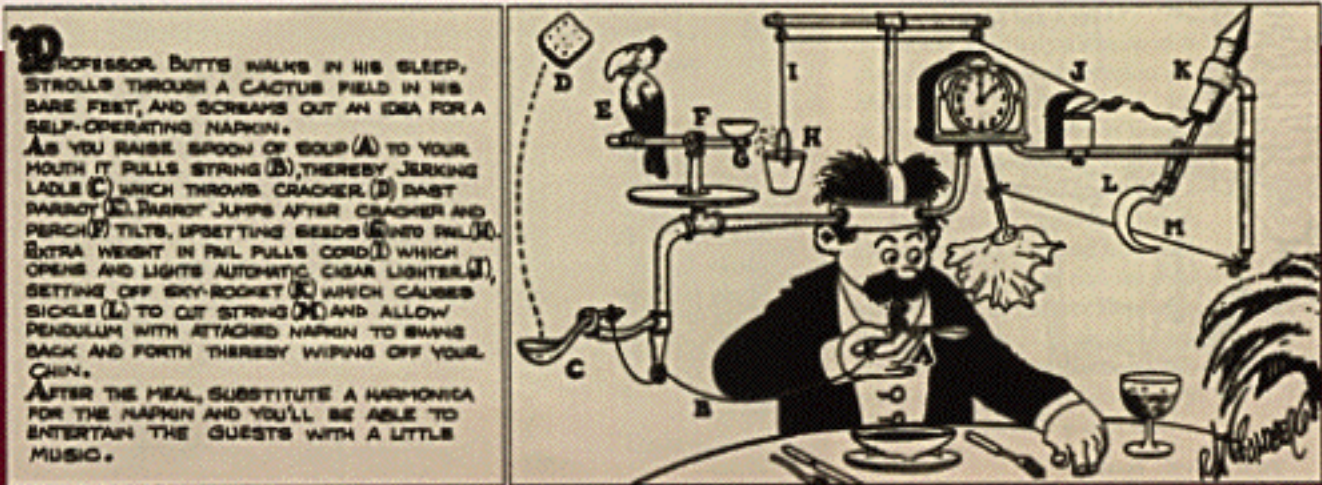


The Self-Operating Napkin by Rube Goldberg



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Rube Goldberg was an artist, inventor, engineer, author and sculptor. He is best known for his cartoons featuring ridiculously complex inventions to perform simple tasks. From 1917 through 1970, Goldberg's "invention" drawings were syndicated in newspapers and magazines across the nation. The popularity of his images was such that Webster's New World Dictionary included Rube Goldberg as a word meaning: "any very complicated invention, machine, scheme, etc., laboriously contrived to perform a seemingly simple operation." Goldberg was also awarded the Pulitzer Prize for editorial cartoons he created later in his career. In 1995 his cartoons were featured as part of the US Postage Stamp's Classics Commemorative series. Today, nearly 30 years after his death, Goldberg's legacy lives on and has inspired the Rube Goldberg Machine Contest held annually at Purdue University, as well as several similar contests held at high schools and universities nationwide. At these contests, students are challenged to perform a specified task in 20 or more steps. The more steps and the crazier the contraption, the better!