

EUGENE F. MORAN, a lively, dapper little man of seventy-three, is the president of the Moran Towing & Transportation Company, the biggest tugboat business in the world. Traditionally, tugboaters are huge, profane brawlers, seasoned by wind and river water and hostile to the niceties of life. Moran has never conformed to this design. Of all the tugboaters everywhere, he is perhaps the chief for elegance. On occasional trips aboard his boats, he presents an uncommon and refreshing sight. Jauntily got up in a sports jacket and slacks, with a bow tie and an expensive beaver, he steps around the deck with the happy detachment of a first-class passenger on the Queen Mary. As a rule, he climbs down to the galley for a noonday snack with the men. There, as the tug bucks and heaves, as the dishes jump and rattle, and the oil-stained crew scramble for the catsup and bologna, Moran sits gracefully lunching. "Excellent coffee, Phillipowitz," he may observe to the cook, and then prance out on deck to see how things are moving. An axiom of tugboat people is that once a man takes up the business he never leaves it. Moran has been a full-time tugboater for only fifty-eight years, so his colleagues feel that he may roughen up yet.

The several hundred employees of Moran's company do not resent his high polish. Instead, they seem to draw nourishment from it, much as the crews of clippers used to take pride in an especially fine figurehead. This analogy is misleading, however, because Moran is actively established at the tiller of his firm. He oversees all operations in a

PROFILES

THE ELEGANT TUGBOATER-I

bland, unassuming, cotillion manner that conceals rocklike opinions, knows most of his workers by name, and remains solidly fixed in their affections. Stokers have been known to crawl up for a look at him, after rumors of a particularly catchy ensemble, and then, much stimulated, crawl back and stoke like crazy men. Moran is only vaguely aware of his inspiring effect on his crews, but he always rejoices to see them so animated. The president, who is five feet five inches tall, has white hair, parted on one side, and a permanent look of impish gaiety. As a result of riding tugs in all kinds of weather, and of using a sun lamp, his face and hands are fashionably tan. He has a great variety of upper-class clothing, much of it quite rakish, and dresses with country-club precision even if he's only going across the harbor with a bargeful of fertilizer. All in all, Moran looks much younger than his seventy-three years and not unlike the little man on the front of *Esquire*, although his features are not so pudgy.

THE Moran company owns and operates twenty-eight tugboats in and around New York Harbor, of which fourteen are equipped for deep-sea work, and in addition is temporarily operating forty-nine War Shipping Administration tugboats. These last are based at various ports on both coasts and require crews with long experience in professional tugboating. The company's offices are on the twenty-fifth floor of the Whitehall Building, at 17 Battery Place. They command a wide view of the harbor and the East River and are within earshot of several docks. Until fairly recently this was a prime necessity, as considerable of the company's business was negotiated from a window ledge on the East River side. Assignments were given to idle tugs tied up below through the simple expedient of having a man crawl out on the ledge, which has an iron railing, and carry on a discourse through a megaphone. This system was good, but it had flaws. Moran himself has a high, squeaky voice, and on windy days his directions often got no farther than the railing. Also, some of them came through in garbled conduction. There was a good chance, after he had screamed down, "Hey, Joe, run across the river and look around for a second-hand boiler!" that a crew would proceed to Sandy Hook in

search of a Scandinavian oiler. The possibility of that kind of error was eliminated not long ago by the installation of a public-address system. The company's dispatcher now speaks into a microphone on the twenty-fifth floor and the orders emerge from a loudspeaker nailed to the side of a shed on a Moran pier.

Competition between tugboaters is still spirited, but the business has undergone refinements in the last few decades. At one time there was a certain tension in the relations among rivals in the trade. For example, when two boats belonging to competing firms passed at close range, it was standard procedure for the crews to exchange greetings in the form of curses and missiles of various kinds. It was not unusual, during a particularly warm hail, for the enthusiastic hands to throw away a good percentage of their coal, and also shovels, chairs, rope, frying pans, buckets, shoes, hams, and toilet seats. The owners viewed this mid-river camaraderie with mixed feelings; it had a certain value in keeping up the morale, but it caused a noticeable sag in the profits. Today, all the companies, of which there are sixty-three in New York Harbor, strive amiably for the available business. They work together on difficult jobs, use one another's docks, and in general cooperate in any way whatever to save time and money.

A tugboat is, essentially, a big marine engine just barely afloat. The main idea is to pack as much power as possible into a small space. Moran tugs, from the standpoint of power, are of three kinds: steam, Diesel, and a combination of Diesel and electric. From now on, the company intends to buy only Diesel-electric engines, since they can be throttled down to a much lower speed than the others. This is very handy in maneuvers that require holding a big ship almost stationary for several minutes in a tricky current. Moran boats working in New York Harbor vary in length from eighty-eight feet to a hundred and thirty-three feet and in horsepower from four hundred to nineteen hundred. In addition to the power plant and fuel compartments, a tug has quarters aft for a crew of eight, a galley forward, a pilot house, and usually a high stack. A tugboat master, whose chief duty is piloting, goes by the title of captain. Once a man gets to be captain of a tugboat, he enjoys the

benefit of that occupational honorific for the remainder of his life. It is a distinction of considerable eminence, and a tugboat captain's neighbors treat him with deference, even though his total activity during his period of command may have consisted of several dozen trips pushing a garbage scow in the late eighteen-nineties. As a rule, tugboat crews, working in the open air and riding around seeing the sights in the harbor, are good-natured, but they become peevish if asked to work long periods of overtime. Their usual working day is eight hours. When suppertime comes, they knock off like anyone else, lock up their boats, step ashore, and go home on the subway. They may, however, remain on the river continuously for a week if a number of urgent jobs turn up in close succession. At these times the men, when they pass the company's offices, will gather at the rail and shout up suggestions. "Come now, Moran," they may yell, "we need a barber on here!" or "You'd better put a census taker aboard, Moran! This crew hasn't been ashore in several years!" Sometimes Moran will appear on the window ledge and wave gaily, then hustle back to line up some more jobs for them.

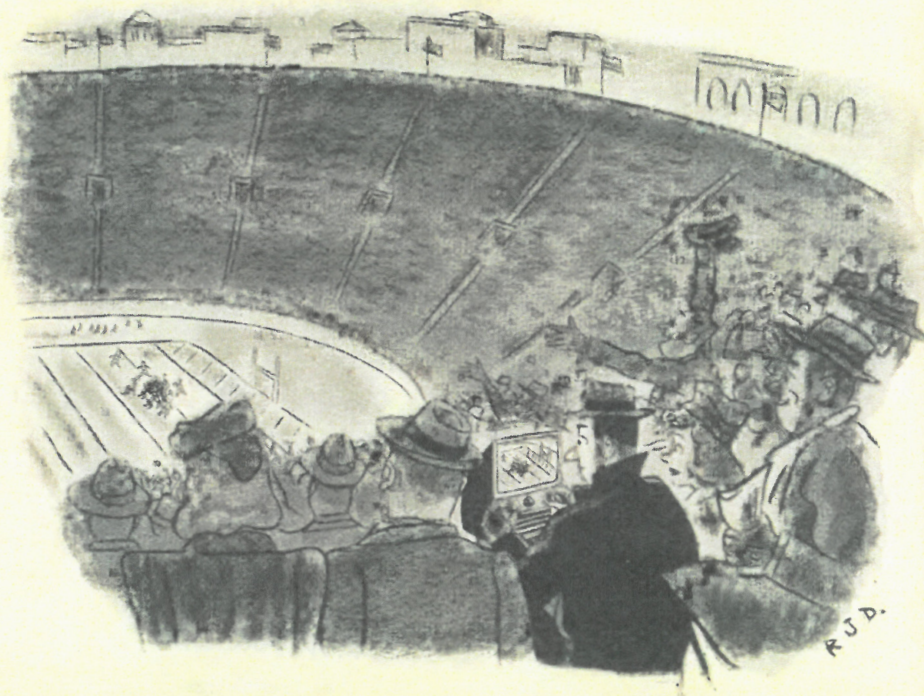
Tugboating in New York Harbor falls into two general divisions, known as "transport work" and "barge work." Most tugboaters vastly prefer transport work, which is considered to be the aristocratic side of the business. It includes jobs like berthing the big liners and pushing cargo ships up and down the harbor. Operations of this sort, involving property worth millions of dollars, require highly skilled captains and crews. Nearly all transport men have graduated from barge work, which consists of short trips pushing railroad floats, cattle barges, and garbage scows and is, in the main, unglamorous. Whereas the majority of the men who push barges around frankly aspire to higher things, a few intentionally go on year after year where they are, having some unusual affinity for either cattle, railroad cars, or garbage. One deckhand, looked upon as something of

a curiosity by his fellows, retained all through his early maturity a childhood ambition to be a bum. But what with one thing and another, he never could get around to it. Now that he is a tugboater, he often finds the opportunity to stretch out in an empty freight car, and his contentment has reached its zenith. Another man, whose family was forced to move from a midland farm when he was twelve, is particularly delighted by the garbage jobs. "They seem to soothe me," he says. "I can lie out on deck and close my eyes and see the old family place—barn, pigsty, and all." It is romance of this kind that makes tugboating so cherished by its practitioners.

Despite the pleasant interludes with liners, cattle cars, and garbage, the operation of tugboats is filled with hazard. New York Harbor and its tributaries are not the most tractable of waterways. There are places—such as Corlears Hook, where Manhattan Island bulges into the East River; the Kill van Kull, between Staten Island and New Jersey; and the stretch at Hell Gate just below the Triborough Bridge—where it is touch and go, no matter how skillful or careful the piloting. The East River is more treacherous than the Hudson. Its waters are turbulent, its currents are unpredictable, and its banks and bottom are lined with jagged rocks capable of ripping a vessel wide open. The tide in the East River runs at an

average of four knots, which is twice as fast as that in the Hudson. In the early days of tugboating it was standard practice for a pilot and his crew to take on a personal cargo of rum before tackling Hell Gate with a big schooner. Around Corlears Hook the wild currents and sharp bends compel the use of eight or nine tugs on a job that in ordinary waters would require only one. It is Kill van Kull, however, that causes tugboat skippers to speculate wistfully about some other line of work. Frequently, in that waterway, it is necessary to negotiate a channel thirty-five feet deep with a loaded tanker drawing thirty-four feet. What gives the cruise special flavor is the consideration that scraping bottom would probably cause enough friction to ignite the gasoline and blow both tanker and tugboat somewhere beyond Trenton.

Although the Hudson (usually called the North River by harbor men) is relatively dependable, it has its quirks. For example, there are times when the top twenty feet of its water is travelling in a direction opposite to that of the water underneath. Moving a giant liner drawing thirty-eight feet through this marine argument calls for delicate handling. The Hudson's irascibility is largely seasonal. During heavy fall nor'westers and spring floods, tugboat pilots maneuver ships into Hudson piers with respectful caution. In confined,



swiftly moving waterways like the Hudson and the East River, a big ship with her power shut off is a capricious and dangerous charge. For reasons unknown, a liner in this condition, unless the accompanying tugs are handled almost perfectly, is likely to bound off in any direction without notice. In waterfront language, this is known as "taking a sheer." When that happens, the tugs must jockey the ship back into position before it hits something. One of the more difficult operations in recent tugboat history, in which several companies participated, was the moving of the Normandie, completely dead in the water, from the Navy Supply Station in Bayonne to a pier in Gowanus Bay. On this trip the Normandie took six sheers; during the worst of them she missed Governors Island by only a couple of hundred feet. Had she hit it, one tugboat said, the debris left on the beach would have been worth about forty dollars as salvage. Almost any kind of collision involving ocean-going ships is costly. A medium-sized freighter rapping against a pier may stave in a lot of plates, and a good bump can knock down the pier shed and tear out a row of expensive pilings, not to mention the interesting things that might happen to the dock workers in the process. Not long ago a Liberty ship was whipped around by a vagrant East River current and thrown into the side of an aircraft carrier. A tugboat, caught between them, was cracked like a hickory nut, fortunately without serious injury to any of its crew. A ship attended by several tugs recently got out of control while docking and smacked against its pier. Although the accident was not important enough for notice in the newspapers, the damage to the pier and the ship exceeded seventy thousand dollars.

The Moran company has a safety record that tugboaters the world over admire. Moran likes to point out, with a laugh, that his safety record is no accident. It is rather, he feels, a heritage from his celebrated father, Michael Moran, who founded the company in 1860. Tugboating goes back to the early days of navigation in the Thames. Big English sailing ships would come in, loaded up with valuables from India and China, and then, catching a perverse breeze, distribute them along the river bottom. This was an extravagant sort of voyage; the owners indicated that unless something could be done, it would be cheaper to dig up a cargo of mud at Land's End and make a much shorter trip. The crews took to breaking out rowboats and towing the schooners

CONNECTICUT VALLEY

Call it the richest pocket of the world,
Which rumored in the ear of Milton's breed
Once bore the freeborn Englishman across,
Or from God-ridden Massachusetts, down.

A while the Indian stinking from his paint
Stalked the white villages and counted scalps
But turned, lacking concealment, to the hills,
Or else fell, richer by a musket ball,

Leaving the land divided, as were fit,
Between the men with implements to scratch,
Rescratch and smooth and currycomb the dirt
March after March unto the present hour.

Good Yankees these, and round about the sane
Practical hearts who fashioned all the nails
For the new nation, carving in spare time
Wooden nutmegs to sell to willing fools;

Ruling themselves by blue laws, painting pure
The plain church, blending beauty with the snow.
Death for adultery in the pretty towns
And strictness in the fields for centuries.

After three hundred years the motorist
Happening by may marvel at these streets
Where every dwelling bears the building date
In homage to the beauty of great age;

Where every ghost is laid, knowing how well
The pride of house is kept, both in the fields
Where dark tobacco sweetens under gauze,
Cows calve, corn stretches to the yellow sun;

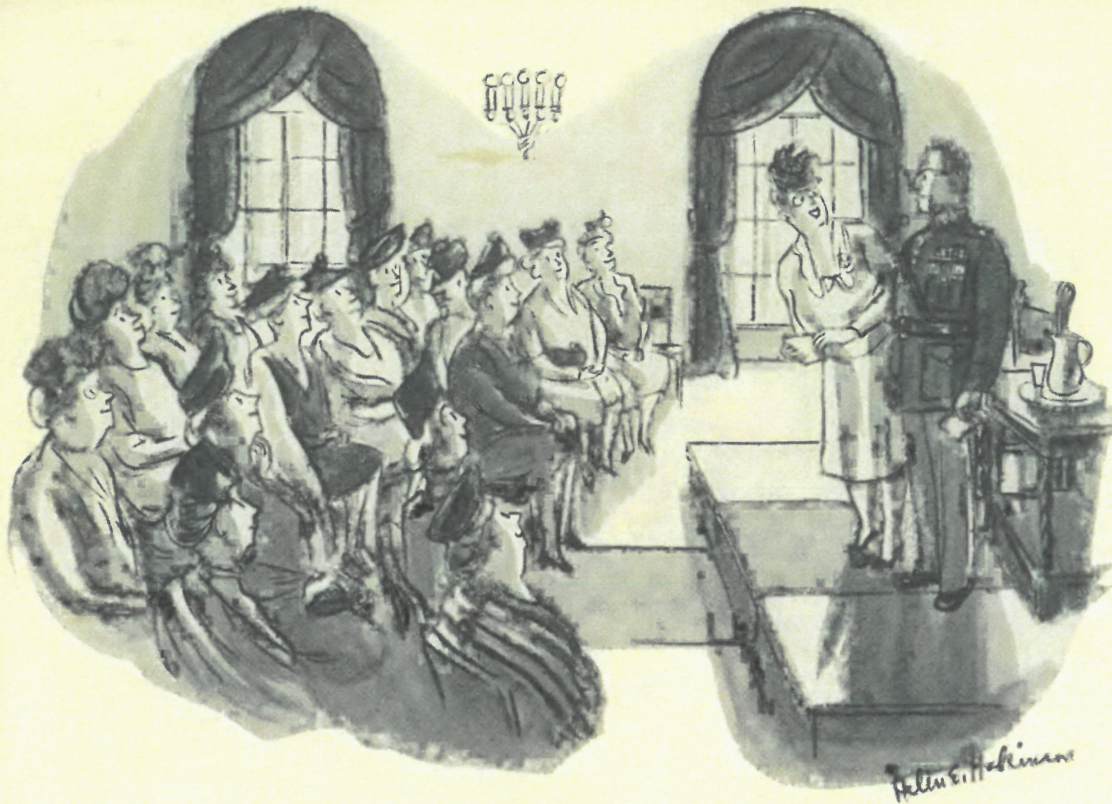
And where on lawns the Sunday gentry meet,
Insurance writers, toolmakers in tweeds,
The fibrous sons and daughters of the state
Driving hard bargains through the afternoon.

—KARL SHAPIRO

in and out, but this was never very satisfactory. At length, as frequently happens, somebody got an idea. In this case it proved to be an employee of the Clyde Shipping Company. He suggested, in 1819, that small boats driven by steam might be used to eliminate a lot of disagreeable rowing. Steam vessels of one kind and another were beginning to be much in evidence, following Robert Fulton's successful demonstration in

1807. The Clyde company found the steam towboats a useful innovation, and the idea spread. The first tugs in New York Harbor were small river packets that picked up extra profits, in slack seasons during the early eighteen-twenties, by towing sailing vessels to and from Sandy Hook, or the Hook, as this region is known in the tugboat world. Some of the packet owners soon concluded that hauling square riggers was financially sounder than hauling passengers and freight, and they started building vessels to serve only as tugs. In the early days contracting for jobs was marked by a kind of informal merriment. Some of the tugboat captains hung out at Fisher's Saloon, on South Street, waiting for private tipsters to bring tidings of an incoming vessel. These tipsters were usually Western Union employees who kept on the look-





"Major Crabtree is going to tell us some of his experiences as a rubberneck."

out for messages containing shipping information. If the news arrived that a four-master would be lying off the Hook at dawn, the captains would retire to the back room for a business conference centering on rum. The last man on his feet was privileged to board his tug and zigzag toward open water. Later on, as competition grew, the tugs stayed at Sandy Hook, their masters scanning the horizon with telescopes. At the first sign of a sail, the tugs would head out under full steam. Faithful reports have described the ensuing scene at the schooner as one hell of a mess. The rule was that the first tug to secure a hawser got the assignment. Frequently, by the time this legal detail had been attended to, most of the tugs were pretty leaky and crippled and the schooner itself was partly stove in.

MICHAEL MORAN, father of the current president of the Moran company, put a stop to the marine horseplay that used to characterize the trade. His affections had been transferred from the Erie Canal to New York Harbor in the fall of 1860. Michael had ar-

rived from Ireland, with his father, five brothers, and one sister (his mother died on the voyage over), and settled in Herkimer County in 1850. The boy was thirteen. He went to work driving the mules that walked alongside the Erie Canal pulling boats back and forth. It was, he felt, monotonous work for an adventurous spirit. Scenically, it had its limitations, and there was nobody to talk to, conversation with a mule being more or less one-sided. He often reflected that although he was making some progress, he was making no more than the mules. After a few years of this he decided that, quite literally, he was getting in a rut, so he bought a boat of his own. He first operated it on the canal, but he soon made occasional sorties down the Hudson, hauling mostly grain. By 1860 he had acquired several more boats and didn't care if he never laid eyes on another mule. He shifted his headquarters to New York and, while continuing to transport grain on the Hudson, studied the tugboat business. It was, he saw quickly, chaotic. In 1861, Moran established a tugboat agency, which eliminated the prevailing

haphazard method of obtaining assignments. In 1862, he married a Brooklyn girl, Miss Margaret Hagarty, and began thinking about a family. Eugene, his first child, was born in 1872. Not long after Michael's marriage he bought his first tug, a side-wheeler named Belle. In the next several years he bought other tugs and started naming them after his children, and then after his cousins, nephews, and nieces. His decision to use family names, his friends felt, was probably a labor-saving device, since the Morans were spreading like ivy. At present, the company's twenty-eight boats all bear Moran names, and numerous members of the clan are still unrepresented. The first headquarters were at No. 14 South Street. In 1880 they were moved to No. 12 South Street, and in 1898 they slipped another cog, moving to No. 10. They have been in the Whitehall Building for the past thirty-nine years. This last step was ordered, as a means of giving the enterprise tone, by Eugene Moran, who became president when his father died, in 1906. For several years before that, Eugene had functioned as the active

head of the company while Michael saw the sights in Florida and California.

The tradition of Michael hovers over the company like a guardian angel. During his long tenancy he ran things with what is described in novels as an iron hand. He was bold but pious, and he tolerated no monkey business. He lived with his family in Red Hook, a region of Brooklyn whose forthright manners often caused him severe pain. Michael was a large, sinewy man. His years with the mules had given him a muscular outlook not always associated with piety. As his fleet of tugboats grew, he often found it necessary to use a fleshly approach in refining the general spirit. Upon finding a couple of his subordinates drunk and brawling, he would seize them and start banging their heads together, meanwhile crying out admonishments mixed with Scripture. Under the stress of anger, he sometimes chose particles of Holy Writ that seemed irrelevant to his over-all message. "Gentlemen!" he would roar, giving their heads a smart rap. "Be kind, place your trust in the Lord. [Rapping again.] Look ye unto the hills, watch your language, confound you! [A particularly lively whack.] Straighten up, get back to your jobs. What God has joined together let no man put asunder!" Michael was especially biased against profanity; after hearing all he could endure, he delivered an edict to his employees that strong language was out. "Work up some substitutes, men," he said. "You'll find a lot of dandies." Several of the deckhands experimented with things like "Shucks," "Consarn it," and "Drat," but they gave it up early, quietly returning to their sturdy native eloquence.

The founder of the Moran company, despite his natural wish to make money as rapidly as possible, was a stickler for caution. He disliked taking chances with other people's property; it offended his sense of thrift. Consequently, he expended an unusual amount of time drumming carefulness into his crews. On the surface, this extreme devotion to safety seemed gratuitous, but, as his successors agree, it has proved remunerative in the long run. Rival tugboaters have occasionally called the Moran outfit sissified, but such trifles have caused no change in the company's policy. In the early days of the business, some independently operated tugboats exhibited a festive, rakehell attitude toward their work. Abstractedly hooking onto a valuable cargo ship, they would swing gaily through the harbor, the whistle tied down, the captain drunk, and the crew

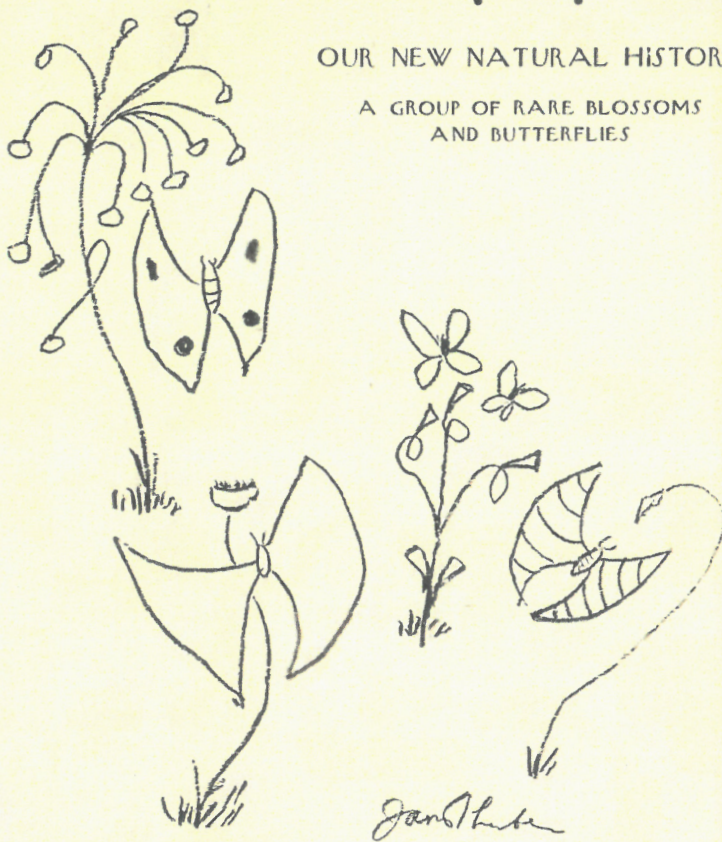
playing seven-up in the galley. It was sometimes possible to trace their course by the deposits of paint left on the sides of such harbor furniture as buoys, docks, anchored ships, and other maritime objects. These boats, which have since disappeared from view—downward, for the most part—made both the elder Moran and his son Eugene shudder violently. Eugene Moran likes to point out that his company now has contracts with most of the steamship lines that operate the largest vessels. "It's our reputation for taking pains," he generally adds, looking vaguely like Michael.

Among the steamship companies they handle is the Cunard-White Star Line, whose Queen Mary and Queen Elizabeth have lately been engaged in bringing American troops back home. The expected arrival of one of these giants fills the Moran offices with tension. Moran and his staff keep looking at their watches, and Moran mutters things like "One forty-six. A little

beyond Ambrose Light Ship," and "We ought to get her whistle now any minute." The very large ships usually plan to leave Sandy Hook shortly before the tide in the Hudson ebbs its last. At this time the job of easing any liner around the end of its pier and down alongside is much simpler. One day recently, the first hoarse call of the Queen Mary, carrying a record load of troops, was heard in Moran's office just before two in the afternoon. The president scrambled up, grabbing a pair of binoculars, and, with his white hair flying, ran like a deer up six flights of stairs to the roof. Other Moran workers were already on the stairway, but their employer, taking three steps at a time, passed them easily. As he opened the door at the top, the ship again sounded her whistle, lengthily, and then added four quick blasts—the V for victory. The powerful vibrancy of the noise was stirring; two girls standing near Moran began to snifle into handkerchiefs. "There!" one

OUR NEW NATURAL HISTORY

A GROUP OF RARE BLOSSOMS
AND BUTTERFLIES



Flowers (left to right): Baker's Dozen, Shepherd's Pie, Sailor's Hornpipe, Stepmother's Kiss

Butterflies (left to right): The Admirable Crichton, the Great Gatsby, the Magnificent Ambersons (male and female), the Beloved Vagabond

LISTEN: NOVEMBER 3, 1945

Can you whistle the theme song of the "Gypsies", or the "Eskimos"?

Where and when was your first crystal set anyhow?

Will you ever forget that first fight broadcast—that four-way battle-royal between the boxers, and you, and static?

Were you listening that very late night in the 20's when the radio suddenly woke up and said, "We've just heard that Commander Rogers and the crew of the PN9-1 have been found, safe, off the coast of Oahu!"?

Remember when a fruit company ran a code station and caused certain radio fans in Boston to complain: "That operator talks to every blank blank banana on every one of their blank blank ships!"?

There were giants indeed in the land in those early days of radio.

So throughout America the week of November 4 is to celebrate free radio's first twenty-five years. The air will be brilliant with fond and thoughtful reminiscence. From Sunday through Saturday CBS alone plans thirty programs tracing radio, before and behind the scenes, through its first lively generation. One of them is Norman Corwin's new version of *Seems Radio Is Here To Stay*. Every single one of them will be more than ordinarily worth hearing.

Percy H. Johnston, chairman of the Chemical Bank and Trust Company, called us up the other day to ask who was going to use an old 5-inch deringer pistol he had on his desk. Just came in, he said, from a friend in Kentucky who wanted him to deliver it carefully to the network.

Back in 1868 Frank and Jesse James walked into the old Southern Bank in Russellville, Kentucky, shot Nimrod Long (the president) and took away the cash. They later returned the money because Long's father had put their own father through divinity school. But on their getaway they dropped the gun, and the Longs have had it ever since.

Well, CBS has a notable story-teller on the air name of Milton Bacon. Bacon was visiting Nimrod Long's grandson in Russellville...that's George Briggs, the mayor. George told Milton about the gun. So the other day Milton wrote

George and asked him if he might borrow the gun for use on a CBS television broadcast November 13, and George said sure.

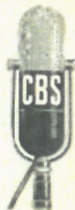
Fearing it might get mislaid, George sent it to Percy Johnston for reliable delivery, and that's how Percy happened to call us up, and you can see the gun on your television receiver on the 13th, from WCBW, New York. Frank and Jesse will positively not appear.

★

Were you on stage or in the audience the night of May 5, 1891—the opening night of Carnegie Hall? It was an all-Tschaikowsky program, conducted by Tschaikowsky.

If you were there, Andre Kostelanetz wants to see you. He's broadcasting an all-Tschaikowsky program Thursday night, November 15, on CBS at 9 p.m. EST. If you were a member of the original orchestra, maybe you'll get a chance to perform. If you were just a listener, you may be asked to say a few words.

★



The cast, the writers, and director were going through the script of a *March of Science* program on the *American School of the Air*. The subject was "Steam Pressure: The Story of James Watt's Life and Adventures." The dialogue got pretty thick in an explanation of the latent heat in steam. The director suggested rewriting, but it re-wrote even thicker. Someone said how about leaving that part out. Then Michael Artiste, 12 years old, cast as the young James Watt, stepped forward and said: "Latent heat means that a pound of steam imparts 6 times more conductive heat than a pound of water of equal temperature."

After a brief pause for adult humiliation, the rehearsal went forward.

This is
CBS
the COLUMBIA
BROADCASTING SYSTEM

of them cried, pointing. "There she comes!" The liner, huge and wartime-gray, was standing majestically up the foggy harbor, her decks packed with figures in khaki. Other horns and whistles in the harbor started to blow, and so did many on the Manhattan, Brooklyn, and Jersey shores.

The Queen Mary was to dock alongside Pier 90, at the foot of Fiftieth Street. At Twenty-third Street she would slow down and Captain Mason of the Moran company would go aboard, ascend to the bridge, and take command, relieving the Sandy Hook pilot and the ship's master, Captain Fall. Ten tugs would then approach and take her lines for the berthing operation. Most of the tugs would work from her port side, holding her against the slow tide and warping her gently around the pier.

Just now the tugs were carefully keeping at a distance. The Queen Mary, displacing ninety thousand tons, was travelling at eight knots, setting up a suction that might easily be fatal to a nearby small craft. A Navy blimp was flying a few feet above her stacks, and one of the old Sandy Hook boats, which would take off casualties, was trailing astern. By the time the liner was abreast the Whitehall Building the harbor noises were deafening. Hoots and whistles from tugs, tankers, oilers, ferries, factories, and railroad engines filled the air, and ticker tape floated down from office windows. All the girls on the roof were sniffing now, and Moran, looking through his binoculars and passing them around, was jiggling up and down in his excitement. Through the glasses the faces of the soldiers showed clearly. The expressions were curiously uniform—tense, desperately watchful, tired, and a little frightened. But quite happy. "By gad, sir," cried Moran, his eyes shining. "That is a rare fine sight!"

—ROBERT LEWIS TAYLOR

(This is the first of two articles on Mr. Moran.)

WHICH LUCEPAPER D'YA READ?

In normal peacetime years the net income from U.S. box-office receipts barely meets the cost of most Hollywood pictures. Profits come almost wholly from the foreign market, of which the British Empire is by far the most important segment.

—*Life*, October 8, 1945.

For though it is not true, as widely believed, that American producers depend for their profits upon the world market, it is true that the British market, one-half of the entire foreign market, often accounts for a profit that would otherwise be a loss.

—*Fortune*, October, 1945.