



# Mr. Thruppy Assaults the Mole

By Laurie York Erskine

*You'll like Mr. Thruppy and be just as surprised as Mr. Robinson was. A salty person, he is*



Illustrated by Herbert Morton Stoops

MR. HERBERT THRUPPY stepped down to the solid planking of the Liverpool dock and strode off toward the waiting-room as briskly as a slight limp would allow him. He emerged from behind his boat, the Buttercup, and the muffled commerce of the Mersey unfolded before him. He stopped and lit a pipe.

It was Wednesday evening. Mr. Thruppy's evening off, and, clad in his shore-going best, Mr. Thruppy was walking forth to visit Clara May Robinson, who had promised him. Moreover, in Mr. Thruppy's locker in the waiting-room reposed a bright scarf and a bag of sweets which he was to have the pleasure of bearing to that lady as a tribute and an offering. The evening, it might appear, was, for Mr. Thruppy, an evening full of promise.

Yet Mr. Thruppy was not happy. This was due to a combination of sinister but ineluctable circumstances. There was, to begin with, the war. To go on with, there was Mr. Thruppy, who, because of a deficient foot, was not "in it." To go even farther, there was Duncan Mathew Pentecost, who undeniably was "in it"; and to wind up with, there was Mr. Pentecost's shore leave, which augured the presence of that hero in the intimacy of Clara May Robinson's home that evening. In the face of all this,

reflected Mr. Thruppy, would the bright scarf and the bag of sweets avail him? Mr. Thruppy could only hope. Hoping, he limped on his way toward the waiting-room.

In the little parlor of her home in Merton Street, Clara May received Mr. Thruppy's tribute with a reassuring exclamation of pleasure.

"Why, 'Erb," she cried. "'Ow like you! Foolish boy!"

Mr. Thruppy looked upon the bright sparkle of her eyes, the pink flush of her firm, full throat, and visibly glowed. With rough hands he gripped her, but she wriggled from his clutches, laughing.

"Naughty boy!" she cried. And then, as the eager Mr. Thruppy bore down upon her once again, "No nonsense now, 'Erb. There's company!"

"Wot?" The disillusioned 'Erb paused in his pursuit as a horrid doubt oppressed him. "Not that stoker chap?" She reproved him brightly.

"Stoker chap? Stoker chap? Why,

'Erb, 'ow you do go on! There's Mr. Pentecost out in the kitchen with Father and Charlie. 'E's got shore leave, you know, and 'e's come 'ere first thing 'e does."

A large voice boomed forth from the kitchen.

"The Indestructible," it declared, "is this salt cellar, 'ere, an' she wasn't 'arf coppin' it!"

GLOOMILY Mr. Thruppy followed Clara to the kitchen. Here a rubicund sailor of dray-horse proportions was bent over the kitchen table, upon the oilcloth cover of which he was maneuvering certain spoons, forks and salt cellars with scientific exactitude. Clara's father and the boy, Charlie, hardly looked up at the entrance of Mr. Thruppy. The booming voice of the sailor held them in thrall.

"And 'ere," boomed the sailor, moving a fork with great deliberation across the bows of the salt cellar, Indestructible, "'ere's Warspite." With which an-

nouncement, he glanced up fondly at the returning Clara May, and moved over to make an unmistakable place for her between his large bulk and Mr. Robinson. To Mr. Thruppy's despair, she took it. Incensed, he essayed to displace Mr. Robinson, but Mr. Robinson was avidly intent on the science of naval warfare as expounded by the sailor, and he resented Mr. Thruppy's intrusion.

"Now then, 'Erb," he remonstrated, "my feet ain't no door mat, yer know. There's other sides to the table, ain't there?"

Mr. Thruppy had to admit there were. He limped around to the unoccupied side of the oilcloth and looked upon the proceedings with a cold disapproval that suffered for lack of recognition.

"They'd steamed in," explained Mr. Pentecost, "to put them German cruisers out of action. But Indestructible copped it in 'er engine-room, an' there she was. The battle of Jutland,"—he looked up from the table and seemed to address a large audience—"if I do say so 'oo shouldn't, wasn't no picnic."

Table of contents appears on page 53



"You told us that the last time," complained Mr. Thruppy morosely.

"Now, 'Erb," pointed out Mr. Robinson, "I'm surprised at you."

"She copped it," pursued the sailor, rather lamely. "And that,"—he waxed triumphant—"that is w'ere we cyme in."

He stood erect now, for this lecture had become enlarged and elaborated by repetition in many a waterside pub, and Mr. Pentecost had acquired a platform manner.

"The Warspite," he proclaimed, "steamed into the Indestructible's insistence, an' the results was as I shall proceed to tell yer. The punishment we took was somethink 'orrible. Of all the ships that partook of that ingigement, none was 'it more 'orribly than we was. 'Elpliss under the guns of a relentliss foe, we saw our turrirts blowed awye an' our crew derrsimeriated. The slaughter," he declared impressively, "was somethink 'orrible to see."

"It's a wonder you wasn't sunk," murmured Mr. Thruppy, shaking his head.

"It was," agreed Mr. Pentecost suspiciously.

"With glarss bottoms, an' all," pursued Mr. Thruppy.

"Glarss bottoms?" roared the sailor. "Glarss bottoms?"

"YUS," said Mr. Thruppy firmly. "Glarss bottoms. Or else 'ow could you of seen all this outa the stoke 'ole?"

There was a marked silence.

"'Erb," said Mr. Robinson at last, "I'm surprised at you."

"Surprised or not surprised," cried Mr. Thruppy desperately, "wot I says I repeats. If Dunc, bein' a stoker, wasn't in the stoke 'ole w'ere was 'e then? On the bridge?"

"Look 'ere, me lad," rumbled Dunc ponderously. "I'm not takin' any lip out of a narsty little slacker wot perends 'e's got a ningrowin' toenile w'en 'is country calls." With a movement as ponderous as his voice, he swung around the table and faced his traducer. "W'en the battle called me," he declared, "I was there, stoke 'ole or no stoke 'ole. 'Oo are you, may I arsk, to carst inspersuns on my acks?"

"Don't be silly," warned Mr. Thruppy. "You talk like you was the only blighter that was down below shovelin' coal w'en the guns went orf. An' shovelin' coal precious little ever since. You toffs orf the Grand Fleet might come down to the riverside some fine day, and know wot it looks like to see a man work."

"Yah," snarled Mr. Pentecost rudely. "Ridin' in a bloomin' ferryboat! Fine work for a man w'en there's a war on! Slackin', that's wot we call it in the fleet."

"Say, 'in the pubs,'" said Mr. Thruppy, "an' I'll believe yer."

"Goor—" grumbled Dunc. "Fer two pins, an' 'excep' fer the presence of a lydy, I'd knock yer bleedin' teeth aht."

Mr. Thruppy smiled fondly upon his own clenched fist, which resembled a seven-pound ham. Then he looked up at his friend the stoker.

"Try it on," he said brightly. "There's lots of room outside. An' there you'll ave the advantage—you can run faster than wot I can."

"Dunc!" cried Clara May.

"'Erbert!" roared Mr. Robinson.

"Tike 'im on, Dunc!" shrilled Charlie. "'Erbert," repeated Mr. Robinson firmly. "I'm surprised!" With great dignity he stepped between the two deep-breathing antagonists, and had what he immediately recognized as his moment. "That you should insult an' aggravate a guest of mine in my own 'ouse," he complained more in sorrow than in anger, "is more than I expected! And a man 'oo 'as defended 'is country,

too! I'm glad, 'Erbert, that you've shown yer narsty spirit. I'm glad to see you as you rarely are. To think that my li'l girl should of been so near to marryin' such a narsty, ill-tempered deck 'and is almost more than I can bear to think of. I must arsk you to go, 'Erbert. I must arsk you to please refrain from yer attentions to Clara May until you can come 'ere in a more 'umble spirit."

"'Umbler spirit!" cried 'Erbert in the heat of his despair. "'Umbler spirit be blowed! I'm as good as any coal-'eavin' swob of a stoker, any day you like to nime! Is it my fault I 'ad me foot crushed in the lines of dooty? Is it my fault the perishin' admiralty only wants sailors that can 'oof it like a bloomin' gazelle? 'Umbler spirit, indeed!"

At Mr. Thruppy's reference to his crushed foot and his vain efforts to enlist, the eyes of Clara May softened, and her brows were contracted in a little, painful frown. Seeing this, her father, whose sympathies were obviously anti-Thruppy, became instantly a man who would stand no nonsense.

"Come on," he urged sternly. "Pop orf, 'Erbert, an' pop orf wile I still feel friendly."

Mr. Thruppy turned in mute appeal to Clara, in whose eyes the pained sympathy still lingered. Then, glowering upon the complacent visage of Mr. Pentecost, he turned slowly away from them, limped through the doorway and was gone. But a light step followed him, and Clara May was at his elbow as he reached the street door.

"TAKE this," she whispered hurriedly, and into his hands she thrust the bright scarf which he had brought her. "Keep it for me," she murmured. "An' do something, 'Erb. Do something! Or Father—'e'll make me . . . An' I don't want nobody but you!"

Upstairs a door was slammed roughly open.

"Clara!" cried the harsh voice of Mr. Robinson. "Clara May!"

And then—Mr. Thruppy was alone. And yet he was not alone, for with him was a presence, a light, ethereal presence, which had emitted an almost imperceptible sound of sobbing in his ear; which had pressed his lips with a warm and soft and ineradicable kiss. . . . For a long time Mr. Thruppy waited in the street below for the emergence of Stoker

Pentecost; and while he waited, his spirit, alas, was not an 'umble one. . . .

When he returned to his work on the ferryboat Buttercup the following morning, Mr. Thruppy bore the marks of conflict. There was an eye that withdrew coyly into the seclusion of a puffed and colorful protuberance; there was an ear which flamed in startling scarlet, and there was a fist. . . . Mr. Thruppy gazed fondly upon that slightly lacerated fist as he walked down the dock that morning, for it had stood him in good stead. Somehow, he had always been able to depend upon that fist. It was a hard, disproportionately big fist, and because of its genius for making infallible and effective contacts with chins at which he aimed it, it had always done much to compensate Mr. Thruppy for the handicap of his crushed foot. . . .

He was surprised to find, on his arrival at the dock, that besides the Buttercup and the Primrose, whose daily runs required their presence at this time on the Liverpool side, there stood 'longside the dock the Daffodil and the Iris, which should have been, by rights, across the river. To Mr. Thruppy, a



Hand to hand! Close quarters! Black figures were pressing backward, screaming in a strange





language. And Mr. Thruppy's fist went here and there. Like a machine he wielded that deadly fist

whole-souled advocate of the right of things, this was mildly offensive. By what *right*, argued Mr. Thruppy, had these interlopers got to his side of the river? Why didn't they stay over t'other side, where they belonged? And wot, inquired the aggrieved Mr. Thruppy of himself, was all these nobbs standing about for?

The question referred to a group of gentlemen who in the murky light of morning were gathered in consultation about the dock master; but in lieu of a satisfactory answer to it Mr. Thruppy was only vouchsafed an order.

"Hi, you!" hailed the dock master. "Come 'ere!"

MR. THRUPPY turned from his pilgrimage to Buttercup's deserted deck and limped toward the power which ruled destinies.

"What boat you with?" demanded the power.

"Buttercup," admitted Mr. Thruppy. "Deck 'and."

"Well, lay orf for the morning," ordered the power, making a note. "And lend a hand aboard the Daffodil. She's got to be put in trim. Special."

"Aye, aye, sir," said the obedient Mr. Thruppy, his grievance expanding within him, and the dock master turned back to his companions, several of whom, Mr. Thruppy remarked resentfully, wore naval uniforms.

Daffodil and Iris, Mr. Thruppy found, were swarming with men who were busily occupied in cleaning the two boats from stem to stern and from top to bottom, and inasmuch as he was given the job of polishing brasswork, Mr. Thruppy soon forgot his grievance against this violation of the rights of things in the ardor of his task. For Mr. Thruppy was no mean polisher of brasswork. He craftily stole the time to procure from his locker the only brass polish worthy of the name—for, like all connoisseurs, Mr. Thruppy cherished his own brand—and likewise the rags of varied weave which he had discovered by experimentation were most effective. And a square of chamois skin he procured, and three brushes of various stiffness and ingenious design. Thus equipped he again boarded the Daffodil and proceeded to burnish the dull brasses of that vessel so that they became bright gold beneath his chamois,

and brilliant jewels under his flying brush. All else forgotten, Mr. Thruppy became absorbed in an occupation which held him with a strange enchantment; and among those things which he forgot was the luncheon hour.

BY LUNCH time he was down in the engine-room, still vigorously polishing. Thus, he didn't see the cleaning crew desert their tasks and abandon ship for the amenities of the noonday meal, and he failed to notice that the engine-room had become deserted. He was so preoccupied in his art, indeed, that he failed also to notice the descent into the engine-room of an officer of the ferry line, accompanied by a trim young officer who wore the uniform of the Royal Navy. He first knew their presence when the ferryman bespoke him.

"Come on," cried that retired seaman. "Look alive, my man! Up you go and off you get!"

Mr. Thruppy stood at attention and regarded him, bewildered.

"Beg pardon, sir?" inquired Mr. Thruppy.

"Get off!" repeated the elderly officer, as though amazed that Mr. Thruppy had

not immediately vanished. "Leg it! This boat's been taken over by His Majesty's navy, and they don't want any deck-hand swobs about here."

"Oh!" exclaimed Mr. Thruppy. He still stood, while the information seeped into his conscious mind. "Ah!" Then it was in. He had it. The bright thought and the burning fact were, in the mind of Mr. Thruppy, leaping, quivering actualities.

"Well then," he declared suddenly. "'Ere I stay!"

"W'at the 'ell!" roared the elderly seaman. "'Ave you taken leave of your senses?"

But a preposterous stubbornness had entered the soul of Mr. Thruppy.

"I've said wot I've said!" he declared simply. "'Ere I stay! The perishin' nyvy 'as turned me dahn time an' time again because I couldn't win no steeple-chase with this 'ere foot. But now they've took over this boat, an' now 'ere I am on board. An' 'ere I stay! If they want to tyke me orf o' 'ere," his voice arose in desperate self-assurance to a bellow, "they've got to call out a bleedin' sight better lot o' men than the kind of a sailor I mashed up an' sent to the 'orspital larst night!"

DUMFOUNDED, the elderly seaman stared at the blasphemer, and while he stared the trig young naval officer took a position immediately in front of Mr. Thruppy and coolly stared Mr. Thruppy up and down.

"Do you mind—" he said at last. "Do you mind repeating what you said?"

"I said," declared Mr. Thruppy with great deliberation and a firmness which belied the horror with which he heard his own voice, "I said that the whole blarsted nyvy 'asn't got enough good men to tyke me orf this 'ere boat in a state of consciousness!" And he stopped breathing.

Still the young officer looked him up and down.

"Did you do all this brasswork?" he asked.

"I did!" gasped Mr. Thruppy, letting his breath go.

The smile of the young officer became grim. Mr. Thruppy, his eyes glued to those of the young officer, felt that this was a bloke a man could work for.

"Are you tired of living?" the youth inquired gently. "Are you so beastly anxious to die?"

"Any bleedin' 'Un that can kill me," said Mr. Thruppy with perfect understanding, "is welcome to. That's fair enough."

Still the young officer reflected, his gray eyes coolly regarding Mr. Thruppy.

"Can you wield a paint brush?" he asked abruptly.

"Like a breezin' disy," declared Mr. Thruppy lucidly.

"Come with me," said the young officer. "We can use you."

With a fast-beating heart Mr. Thruppy went.

Somewhat to Mr. Thruppy's chagrin, he was not permitted to proclaim in person at the home of Clara May Robinson the fact of his enlistment in the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve. He wasn't even permitted to write about it. The Daffodil and Iris, it appeared, were required to sail at once for a port whose name could only be breathed in the most sacred privacy, and privacy was a privilege of which Mr. Thruppy found himself almost immediately deprived. He had only time to gather his few belongings from his room on the waterfront before he was flung into improvised quarters on the ferryboat and assigned his duties as deck hand on its voyage to that mysterious port.

There followed months of drilling toward incomprehensible ends for unmentionable reasons. Mr. Thruppy's work had to do with (Continued on page 43)



# Meet the Colonel



Wide World

*William J. Donovan, Assistant Attorney General of the United States, is the traffic cop of big business. When financiers contemplate mergers he directs them. When monopolies raise their heads he splits them. And his authoritative hand halts business crimes before they can flash past the law's red light. Even Chicago's racketeers were brought up short when they turned a federal corner*

Colonel William J. ("Wild Bill") Donovan, Assistant Attorney General of the United States, photographed at his desk in Washington

**W**ILLIAM J. DONOVAN is positively not a rough man. Smilingly and most tranquilly he, at this writing, holds the office of "The assistant to the Attorney General of the United States."

But he *can* be rough if need be. Ask the "N. V. Amsterdamsche Chininefabrik, et al." That's the quinine trust of Europe and elsewhere, with the exception, thanks to Mr. Donovan, of the United States. As sellers of quinine to America this trust sought to fix prices, maintain resale prices, engage in boycotts and make discriminations.

"In Europe," says Colonel Donovan, "they have a different idea from ours concerning monopolies. Over there governments frequently pass laws to create and perpetuate monopolies. In the United States we pass laws against them."

After the well-schemed hold of the European quinine monopoly on the United States came to light it lasted about as long as a mosquito bite. Donovan waited for the next shipment to reach the port of New York. By luck it was a large one: 383,340 ounces. That may not mean so much to you until you learn that it really amounts to about 40,000,000 "flu" doses; enough to help ease the misery of perhaps three million individuals through a week of fever, aches and sneezes.

Colonel Donovan's men "arrested" this quinine; locked it up in the government's warehouse in New York. From there it could have been issued, if necessary, at decent prices, to America's drug concerns.

That the cargo was worth over \$200,000 to the "N. V. Amsterdamsche Chininefabrik, et al." mattered not in the least to Colonel Donovan.

## Forceful Gentleness Succeeds

Into court the amazed and somewhat stunned "Dutch defendants," as the official records described them, were hauled. They were informed that monopolies were not permitted to Americans and that they could not be permitted to foreigners; and they were enjoined from further tricks of the sort. Then they got their quinine back.

Usually Mr. Donovan proceeds with a forceful gentleness to reach his ends. He was brought to Washington from

Buffalo by an old law-school master, Attorney General Harlan F. Stone, to clean up the office after Daugherty's muddy régime. He did that quietly and effectively.

Recently Donovan's office has been afoot in the racketeering underworld of Chicago.

A white-haired business man of seventy years, creator and president of a great kitchen-cabinet manufacturing firm, had visited Chicago. A call came to his room in one of the city's finest hotels.

"We've been sent to take you over to the So-and-so apartment," said a young man.

"I'll be right down," said the business man.

Two bright-looking, well-dressed young men met him below and introduced themselves as secretaries of one of Chicago's contractors.

They led the visitor to a taxicab. They rode for a time.

"Ugh!" grunted the visitor, suddenly. He had been poked in the ribs on his right side; poked hard. And the next instant he was poked even harder in the ribs on the other side. Revolvers.

"Sit still, you old blankety blank!" ordered one of the young men. "You're out on a ride with us. By rights this should be a one-way ride. You haven't come across with the dough for those cabinets you put in apartment houses. We're going to give you a chance. You're going back to the hotel with a whole hide this time, but if you don't come across to the right boys, you'll get a ride the next time you come to town. And if we don't get you, we'll take the chief guy in your Chicago office. How'd you like to get him croaked, just because you're stingy?"

That American business man went back to his hotel room, as soon as he was freed, and, as quickly as he could arrange the financial transaction, he "came across." No lugger passenger ever surrendered more readily to pirates; no citizen ever yielded more unhesitatingly to a highwayman's revolver.

"I can't risk the lives of my Chicago representatives," he told federal officials, later.

Chicago police, under that strange civic blunder, Mayor Thompson, and the

Cook County officials, under that incredible state's attorney, the defeated Crowe, seemed helpless. It was useless for any American business man to go to them for justice or protection.

But Chicago's racketeering, like a spreading cancer, had finally begun to extend into the field of interstate business. That made it a matter of federal concern. And there's where William J. Donovan, assistant to the Attorney General of the United States, stepped in.

## Too Wild for the Sergeant

This man Donovan does things differently. For instance he used to take his troops in France on long, fence-hurdling, ditch-jumping, cross-country runs, to make 'em hard. Who ever read of such a thing in soldier books? And he made 'em hard, too; his men were the New York Sixty-ninth. Once he ran a bunch of them about three miles. Finally they all stopped and laid down.

"What's the matter with you boys?" shouted Donovan, standing over them. "Can't you run with me any more?"

"No, we can't, Colonel," said one Irish sergeant.

"Well, why not?"

"Well, Colonel," pleaded the sergeant, "you're different. We ain't as wild as you are."

You'd have thought Mr. Donovan would have sent a horde of secret service men and hard-boiled department lawyers to fight the Chicago racketeers. But he didn't look on the thing as a fight but as only a quiet, powerful process of law.

Wherefore, one summer day last year a red-haired, blue-eyed, modernly gowned young lady seated herself in an office in the squat grimy federal building in the city of Chicago, and sent out word, through Department of Justice detectives, that she wanted certain of Chicago's racketeers to come to see her. Mary is her name, Mary J. Connor. She had power, this young lady; all

the power of the Department of Justice in Washington was behind her. That is why the racketeers, most of them as rough as she is gracious, visited her.

She afterward declared to friends that some of these Chicago racketeers were the most amazing human beings in all the world.

One of them, famed for his employment of gunmen, turned up in her office one morning not by any means a beetle-browed thug with square hands but a slender, smiling, clean-toothed, long-fingered, he-dainty. The first morning he called he wore a faultlessly tailored blue suit, a blue silk shirt of a texture almost as thick as flannel, a blue tie, blue collar, blue socks, and a wide-brimmed Panama hat of the \$500, woven-to-order variety. The hat band was a wide, wrinkled and most carefully folded blue silk scarf. A lapis lazuli ring and tie pin completed the youth's ensemble.

His interrogation wasn't finished the first day. Wherefore, he turned up the next morning, all in tan silk, except for his suit, from socks to hat band. Could he keep up his record the third day? He did. He was in soft green, with amethyst jewelry.

Other racketeers who went into that office of Mary Connor's were rough and heavy-jowled, with little personal vanity except in their amazing power and their barking he-man strength—usually displayed with treacherous guns, rather than with arm muscles. But they discovered that Miss Connor had under her orders and direction a group of Washington secret service men who could be as rude and rough in their ways as any racketeers.

Miss Connor seemed to be able to move these detectives through the mazes of racketdom as if they were mere checkers on a board.

"Where were you last night?" she'd ask one of the rough boys. He'd lie to her, usually, and then she'd tell him the truth.

It was all very impressive to the



Arthur W. Wallace, Chicago painters' union official, indicted in the kitchen-cabinet racket