

"Now then," said the doctor, "if we are all ready! Have you got anything in the way of an ambulance here? No? Then bring some oars and ropes. I don't suppose there's much the matter, but we should be ready for anything. You come with me, my man, and show me where it is. And Johnson, get some brandy, if you please."

He addressed himself to one of the servants of the inn, who obeyed him with alacrity. Men love a leader, and this young fellow led by right of knowledge. As the group moved away toward the weir bridge, they heard shouts of laughter from the little room down by the water's edge. The cries came from a company of undergraduates making ready for their morning bathe, in ignorance of the tragedy.

Behind them an early train on the Great Western Railway went by with a roar and a vomit of flame to Didcot and the junction. The steam-tug which was towing Huggins' racing boats to Henley, lay moored by the opposite bank, and steam poured from her valves. This robbed the scene of its silence, for the river had no other craft to show, and the streets of Pangbourne were without any signs of life. Moreover, the church clock struck half-past five as they reached the weir bridge, and this quickened all their steps.

Huggins had said that the boat lay among the reeds, but none espied it until they came to the very place where it had anchored itself, and then three of them saw it together. It was an ordinary skiff, such as is used for pleasure purposes upon the Thames, built of teak and handsomely furnished with blue carpet and cushions. Driven by the stream, it must have narrowly escaped the main current of the weir, but accident or the wind had turned it aside at the last moment, and now it lay against one of the piles with the stern swung round against the bank.

Within the boat lay the body of a woman who might have been any age from twenty-five to thirty. Her hands were clasped together in an attitude which suggested prayer or pain. Her head was bowed so that the jewels upon her neck were visible, but more remarkable than these facts was that of her dress. She