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THE MYSTERY OF THE GREEN HEART

CHAPTER I

THE NEWS IS MADE KNOWN UPON THE FIRST DAY OF JULY

THE story of the Green Heart begins properly at Pangbourne upon the morning of the first day of July in the year 1908. A week had yet to run until the opening of the regatta at Henley; but Pangbourne, nevertheless, reflected aquatic anticipations of lively business and patronage.

Boats were sent down to Henley by the watermen every day. Steam tugs attached themselves to monstrous houseboats and began to tow them toward Reading and Shiplake. The inns were full of people who preferred to stay at some little distance from the regatta course.

To such an inn, the Swan, which lies but little removed from Whitchurch Lock, there came a little after five o'clock upon the morning of the first day of July a young Oxford boatman named Huggins, who beat loudly upon the door and implored the awakened sleepers to come immediately to his assistance.

"There's a boat agen the bank by the weir," said he, speaking as one who was utterly unnerved by what he had seen; "do you come along wi' me, for I'm blest if I know what to make of it."

Now Huggins was answered by an ancient waterman of the name of Jarvis, who slept in one of the attics above the river and