

# **WRECKAGE, SEVEN STUDIES**

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Wreckage, seven studies by Hubert Crackanthorpe

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**HUBERT CRACKANTHORPE**

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SEVEN STUDIES

BY

HUBERT CRACKANTHORPE

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*"Que le roman ait cette religion que  
le siècle passé appelait de ce large et  
vaste nom : 'Humanité' ;—il lui suffit  
de cette conscience ; son droit est là."*

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## PROFILES

### I

IT was one of the first warm afternoons of the year ; the vigorous rays of the sun lent the young leaves, whose delicate green suffused the wood, an exquisite transparency.

All was still ; the rushes clustered immobile on the banks of the little stream ; no breath of wind ruffled its surface.

Alone a water-rat splashed, and gently rippling the water, swam across.

On the bank a girl was sitting, her white cotton dress rucked about her knees, displaying a small pair of muddy boots, which dangled close to the water's surface. Her body was thrust forward in a cramped position, as with both hands she held a long, clumsy-looking fishing-rod. She was watching

## *Wreckage*

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intently the movements of a fat, red float, which bobbed excitedly up and down.

She was bareheaded, and her crisp, auburn hair was riotously tumbling about her ears and neck.

Quite pale was her skin, but pale, transparent, soft; exquisite was the modelling of her fresh, firm lips.

There were great possibilities of beauty in the face; but now an all-absorbing look filled it, the forehead puckered over the eyebrows, the lips set tight together.

A little way off, on the grass, a young man, in a grey flannel suit, was lying on his back, his face shaded by her big-brimmed straw hat, inside the ribbon of which were tucked some bunches of primroses; one hand thrust in the armhole of his waistcoat, the other thrown back over his head—the limp abandon of his pose betrayed that he was asleep.

Down darted the fat, red float. Awkwardly the girl tugged at the rod; the line tightened, swaying about from side to side.

### *Profiles*

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"Maurice!" she called; then louder, as he did not wake.

Maurice started, pushed the hat from off his eyes, murmuring sleepily—

"Hullo! what's up?"

"Make haste, do! I can't hold the rod any more."

He jumped up, took it, and in a minute or two the fish was floundering on the grass, its sleek, silver sides gleaming in the sunlight.

"Why, Lilly, it's quite a big one," he exclaimed.

Tall, with fine, broad shoulders, and a small, well-shaped head, evidently not a quite young man; but a trick of raising his eyebrows with an air of boyish surprise, made him appear some years younger.

"He pulled like anything. I should have had to let go the rod in another minute. My arms ache all over," she added, ruefully.

"That rod's too heavy for you. I'll have to get another, if we're coming fishing again."

"Oh, yes! Of course we are. I love it."