

# Fantasy and Science Fiction

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*Cover illustration by Chesley Bonestell*

*(Space ship in trouble with meteor swarm; Europa and Jupiter in background)*

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"H. F. Heard," one of your editors once wrote in "The New York Times Book Review," "is a writer as unclassifiable as he is entrancing. He writes detective stories that are not quite detective stories and science fiction that is not quite science fiction, just as he employs a pseudonym that is not quite a pseudonym. For Henry Fitzgerald Heard is, as Gerald Heard, a serious student and advocate of eclectic mysticism, spiritual kin to Aldous Huxley and Christopher Isherwood; as H. F. Heard, he is the only man who ever won a \$3000 detective-story prize with a pure science fiction story." The recent publication of the curious and provocative *IS ANOTHER WORLD WATCHING?* (see this issue's Recommended Reading) has somewhat blended the two personalities, with Gerald plainly poaching on H. F.'s preserves; but the literary character remains as paradoxical as ever. For instance, he has published two collected volumes of excellent science fiction and fantasy short stories and novelettes; but he has hitherto never appeared in a fantasy or science fiction magazine. That's one paradox which we hereby abolish, by bringing you the first of (we hope) many uniquely Heardian concepts and treatments: this extraordinary study in psychobiology. The convincing characterization of a completely alien mind is one of the most difficult and stimulating problems that the science fiction writer can face; and we know of few more successful solutions than this.

## The Collector

by H. F. HEARD

(Vol. XLVII, Journal of Oceanograph Institute, Cookstown, Van Diemensland. Report of 15th Expedition. Appendix B.:— "In the Report of the 14th Expedition (Vol. XLV) there was noted the loss, while Atoll 345 S.W. Marshall Group was being catalogued, of Dr. Charles Mackay. An obituary notice reviewing his services to ichthyological studies appeared as an Appendix to Vol. XLVI. As Dr. Mackay's fatal accident has not been satisfactorily accounted for (the body not being recovered) the Institute feels that it is obliged to publish as this Appendix B the only record that throws any light, however baffling, on this mystery. What follows is the final entry from Dr. Mackay's diary giving his account of what befell him from the time that he left his party till, under the stress of some

*hallucinatory drive, probably due to sunstroke, and under the illusion that he had been marooned or abandoned, he took the dinghy to sea. Though, then, there would appear to be an obligation to publish this account, the Institute wishes to emphasize most strongly that it declines to suggest in any way where in the following account Dr. Mackay ceases to be objective. Of that point every reader must be his own judge. As a further explanatory note there is given in conclusion an excerpt from the log of the Thetis which covers the final incident in this tragic episode.”)*

I had reached the south end of the Atoll. It is somewhat an uncommon shape trailing away into a series of small islets. The outer reef is irregular and broken. All the rest of the expedition had stayed up on the north side where the yacht had anchorage. There was only the poorest here — little more than shoals. And certainly not much to study either. The island's geology seems coralline formation on an igneous base and perhaps again later intruded on by igneous disturbance. I went for a walk. We'd heard that there was nothing to see but some tumbled-down sheds at the extreme south point. The place — I forget who had reported that — had once been a pearling base and then for a while, when the pearling was abandoned, served as some sort of quarantine station. But it was all closed up and abandoned now, for a long spell. No one had been left on the island. Our expedition was doing a routine ichthyological inspection. We'd found what we'd expected — standard ecological conditions and littoral fauna-flora balance. As it was our last day here and we might now have a good few trawling and sounding in the open, I thought I might feel I had missed something if I didn't take the opportunity for the exercise.

In a way I was right.

I had come to where there was only one more small cove ahead. Then the coast line swept back north. I'd enjoyed the quiet monotonous tramp along the hard sand, from crescent to crescent of the small uniform beaches. At the end of the miniature bay I was now skirting stood the huts we had heard of. They were huddled near the little promontory that separated this shore from the final bay. They were dreary enough in all conscience. But, with that odd curiosity that is aroused by any abandoned buildings, especially ruins on an abandoned island, I went up to them peering about. I didn't enter any of the dismal half-dozen doors. After all, no one seems certain how long some contagious virus may remain latent and the place we knew had been used for quarantine. Somehow, when you're peering about, you tend to move cautiously — as though dozing bacteria might be aroused by a careless step and spring. An irrational pre-human 'linkage characteristic.' Still I was glad of it. It certainly seemed to have served. Indeed, I wish I'd

been far more cautious. For as I trod softly between the last couple of huts (they were close together) I got a chink-view.

No, there was nothing to alarm me in the abandoned settlement. But the narrow passage I was in sighted, as it were, my eye. I was in shadow, the sun was already sloping. The shadow kept sun out of my eyes. The beach beyond I saw as clear lit by the strong cross-light as though I'd been sitting in a darkened stall looking on at a flood-lit stage. That beach was bare, too — a sickle of smooth, almost white coral sand, the perfect sweep of its sea-edge only notched in one place by a small reef of low rock, that, emerging out of the sand, also kept just above the sea-level, so making a tiny circle-reef of its own. Perfect observation, perfect lighting, perfect unrelieved background. So I couldn't be mistaken. There was no chance I might be imagining. A man was standing there, not a hundred feet from me, standing on that rib of rock as it rose from the sand. He was looking down into the rock-circled miniature lagoon. We were so close that he must have seen me even in my narrow shadowed passage, had he not been engrossed watching something in the water.

Of course, it is always a little startling suddenly to come upon another person when you've been assured that nobody can be there. But I think I'd have hailed — if the light hadn't been so good and I hadn't known the spot's past. I'm an ichthyologist. Specialised before I left school. After fifteen, fishes were increasingly my world. So perhaps I tend to see everything, indeed everyone, somewhat in fish terms. What kept me staring was not so much the man himself. He was naked but tall and straight. It was his colour. He wasn't white, tan, bronze, yellow or black. He was greenish lead colour — one big livid bruise all over. 'He might be a merman,' I tried as a joke on myself. For it wasn't a pretty tint or texture — like greasy metal. And I guess I knew what would next swim into my mind — wasn't there such a name as Livid Leprosy?

Very carefully, much more carefully than I had come, I turned to go back. I emerged from between the two houses. A few more steps and I was back on the sand of the small bay by which I had come. Then, feeling I was safe, curiosity awoke. How could a leper have hung on here by himself? Living alone marooned on an abandoned island — that sort of thing figures largely in boys' books, little in real records. And a leper is a sick man . . .

I clambered up again by some rocks that ran out from where the huts stood and divided the two bays. I peeped into the one beyond. There was nobody there. Curiosity drew me further. The cove — as I'd seen before — was as open as your hand's palm. I looked carefully, scanningly. There wasn't a boulder or a scrub of bush where a cat could have hidden. I went down over the rock-barrier onto the sand shore toward its little lagoon where I had

seen my 'vision.' There wasn't a sign. Not a hint of the footprint. The whole thing must have been some sort of after-image, owing to my looking out from the deep shadow onto the highly lit open.

I had reached now the spot where I had been sure the image had stood. I looked down into the rock-edged pool, the model lagoon into which I had thought I had seen him looking. The water looked surprisingly deep, but still and clear as a block of green glass. I couldn't, however, judge how far down the bottom lay, for there rose from the floor a forest of tall-standing seaweed. My eye then ran round the ribbing of rock that enclosed this small lake. The tide was out — the full ebb of a spring-tide. Evidently when in, the sea flooded this pool. On the outer, sea-side, the ring of rock breakwater broadened like a bezel of a ring. This cape which had a minute beach of its own stood out into the main lagoon. Out on that little promontory, I thought, there'd be a good view of the whole southern point of the island. I was still in two minds whether the man I'd seen was imagination, or might — as unlikely — have sprinted off over the hard printless sand and be hiding in the still further off cove. The promontory did give me, when I had scrambled out to it, the survey I hoped. And not a sign of anything living — not even a perambulating gull.

'Visual illusion established,' I was saying to myself, as I got ready to return over the small rough causeway back to the main shore of the island — when, on looking where to put my foot, I saw a small siltage of sand that had filled a rock cleft. A little pad of sand just enough to put your foot on. I didn't though. For — well, I didn't want to spoil it. I wanted to look at it, study it, not tread on it and wipe out what had already been printed on it. It bore the mark of a naked foot. And it certainly gave the true Robinson Crusoe feeling — with the added shudder, it might be highly contagious. I carefully avoided the mark and hopped back clumsily along the rock ridge, back to land. The round trip and survey had taken me about ten minutes. As I glanced at my watch my mind spun round. So it wasn't illusion I had suffered from. Somewhere here someone — a very odd and perhaps a very unhealthy person — was lurking, was probably watching me. The dislike this thought roused was, I discovered, far stronger than had been the fear that my eyes might have gone wrong. Better see things that aren't really there than be seen by things that are watching you but you can't see. I dropped my plan of rounding the island, turned in my tracks and hurried back the way I'd come.

But the second time I found myself on what I felt was the right side of the quarantine huts I felt once more and even more strongly curiosity's counter-attack. How unscientific to give way to something like panic simply because I'd sighted an odd creature — certainly not as dangerous as a shark and prob-

ably considerably more interesting. I determined to have one last look at that last empty bay. And I was rewarded — by my third shock. The figure was there again.

I watched it carefully. I was standing between two rocks of the natural breakwater. It was, as before, with its back almost turned to me, gazing down into the pool. I could study the creature, and the light, as I've said, couldn't have been better. Surely leprosy, being a skin disease, swells, lesions and tubercles the flesh? This creature's skin was an utterly unnatural, yes a revolting hue, for any human. But I'd swear one thing — it wasn't diseased. Nor was the creature sick in any way. It stood as before tall and straight and with the grace of undeniable health. It had a greasy glitter over it. Certainly it was, I now could see, still dripping. But the texture, quite apart from the tint, did it resemble in any way even the most livid and chilled and sopped human skin? However that odd little question of dermatology was sunk by the odder problem of habitat. Where'd he been all the time I'd been out there? In the sea, of course. Yes, but that, of course, must mean some twenty minutes' submersion. It was really harder to think that he'd been down hiding at the bottom of that seaweed-curtained pool than that he'd managed to make himself by some chameleon change of that repulsive skin so that he was invisible on that bare-as-your-hand beach.

Suddenly he turned, caught sight of me and waved. I waved back. After all it was against all the odds that he was a leper. He was certainly unable to conceal any arms on a body without a stitch. He seemed friendly and I was certainly now curious enough to feel *that* more than any other feeling.

I beckoned him to come toward me. He beckoned to me. I laughed at the pseudo-flirtation. He grinned. I felt that the naked can safely be patronised by the clothed. After all if he was a submarine creature then he was in my province as an ichthyologist. If he wouldn't leave the water line I could at least get within conversation span and see if he could speak. As I got closer I felt, as part of the official exploration team, I had a right to examine all fauna and question any casuals.

"Who are you?"

His reply, "A diver," was given in that flat tone of so many English speaking Mongolians. Perhaps the eyes were a trifle slanted. The colour of course was no help. I was close enough now to see that the cornea was almost as green as the lids.

"A diver?"

He curled himself on the rock. I stood looking down on him. We were a dozen feet apart now. He dangled one foot in the water. "I work on my own. I knew your lot had been here. You're going tomorrow, aren't you?"

He had evidently spied on us while we loaded the yacht. I didn't confirm

but counter-questioned, "I thought the pearling had stopped here?" I wanted him to go on about himself. Perhaps he'd show why he was lying. I kept my remaining distance, too. Though now within three or four yards the skin did look healthy enough (if greasy green is possible as a health tint), still, the man must have some general complaint — of the liver I guessed.

"Yes it did stop," he allowed, apparently honestly.

"And then there were quarantine quarters over there?" I pointed at the huts.

"That didn't last long."

"Why?"

"Oh, I was told there were only a few, and they all disappeared."

"How?"

"Drowned's the story. A skipper that used to land supplies said the last man told him the others all went that way, and then, on the skipper's last call, the last man was gone — no trace of him."

"So you came along to see if you couldn't drown too or if not salvage those who had sunk!"

His tone had provoked me to counter what I took to be some sort of sullen attempt at satire. He didn't seem, though, to notice my sarcasm. "I guess they'd heard, as I did, about the pearls."

"Didn't the old pearlers clean the place out?"

"They thought they did . . ." he paused, "but they missed the real beds."

"And how did you find them — especially as all your predecessors managed to get sunk?"

"You'd like my story?"

"Of course!"

"I'm a half-caste — mother Chinese, father, she said, a Scotch skipper. She never felt he was bad to her. Left money for me — I don't remember him — she saved it all. She said he wanted me to be a doctor. So I went to the medical school at Singapore. Say, I loved medicine. The Chinese profs were fine fellows. I took a course on respiration under one of them. He combined East and West as Sing' does. For his Parkinson cases he used silver needle acupuncture — ephedrine for Addison's. And for his t.b. cases he'd go right back to Mencius, the Great Mang."

"What's that?" I asked as the fellow seemed rambling, and added, "I'll be having to get back to the yacht. Anyhow what's all this got to do with your being a diver?"

"Everything! Without that I wouldn't even have got down the first couple of fathoms. In t.b.," he went on complacently, "the problem's to rest the lung, isn't it — and yet not have your patient suffocate?"

I'd heard doctors enough to be able to nod honestly. The queer creature had, maybe, swept up some medical jargon from some drunken ship-doctor free-associating in his cups.

"Well, if you can practically suspend breathing without suffocation you'd get cures. He did."

"How?"

"Oh," he replied airily, "it's all in the later commentaries on Mang. It's called all sorts of nearly nonsense names — 'vanishing breath,' 'heaping up breath,' 'breathing through the navel,' or gill or fish breathing. He taught me. Said anyhow one should know. Never be ill if you breathed right."

"You're a specimen of the regime?"

"Yes, I learnt it. But couldn't go on. My mother died and I couldn't find where she'd hid the rest of the money — maybe it came by remittance and stopped at her death. I had to go into business. Pharmacists and jewelers link up in any China town. I was taken by a jeweller. But he paid too little for me to hope to save enough to go on with my medical courses. I'd *got to make more cash. And he did show me how.* A peach-tint coloured pearl was coming now and then on the market. 'If you could find those beds — for that tint surely comes from one place — you'd never need to practice medicine,' he told me. 'Any idea where they could lie?' 'Just that the place was worked twenty years ago,' he answered, 'and is somewhere southwest of the Marshalls.'

"It certainly wasn't much to go on; but I had luck — at least I thought so then. As I've told you, I met the skipper who used to victual these quarantine quarters. He swore that these men marooned out here had some of these pearls. 'Wouldn't wonder,' he added, 'if the actual beds may lie somewhere close.' 'Then why not go for them?' I naturally asked. 'Laddie, don't you know that there's only one sort of salt-water man more superstitious than a skipper, and that's a diver? The place's got a bad name, whether the pearls gave it or not. There's no end of stories of haunted bays where your lungs cave in and currents pin you down, cramp you or freeze you. Mermaids weren't thought up for fun, no more than witches were.' . . . But he gave me my bearings and you see I got here."

"And got the pearls and settled down too healthy to need to practice medicine and no doubt too wealthy also!"

Again the green beach-comber didn't seem to notice my incredulous sarcasm. "I dived. You see I was, as it happened, peculiarly equipped to dive. If you learn breath-control you can hold on under, go further and get more when all the others have to come up. My Prof had showed me Gorer's account of the Moll fishermen on the West African coast. Also Behanin's study of his work done at Yale after Kavaliananda had trained him."



I switched from this pseudo-physiology. "And you found, of course, your predecessors' bones all 'coral made'?"

"I did find out why they sunk."

I felt I had found out enough to be sure that the man was some sort of tale-spinning lunatic, a balmy beach-comber. Of course, it's not impossible to strike on such a case of a marooned madman. I think I have heard of a couple of such cases. What the man had told me was obvious fantasy. I began to be glad I hadn't been more bluntly incredulous. It was certainly time to be getting back to the yacht. I'd had my walk and a fantastic tale to boot and certainly the teller was as weird as his story. The man wasn't really sick, even if he did look diseased. Anyhow I wasn't responsible for him. We couldn't take him with us. No port health authority would let such a complexion pass: even the police might have views about him — and of course (final dismissal) quite likely he didn't want to come with us. Certainly he didn't seem unhappy nor as far as I could judge undernourished. I had turned to go when he called after me. What he said did stop me.

"You don't believe a word I've said, of course. But I can show you what gives some point to my story — the pearls."

"Where?" I threw over my shoulder.

"Just over there," he pointed across the little breakwater to the miniature island. "I keep them in a rock-crevice just under water. They keep their lustre best that way."

I naturally knew enough of oysters and their calcine callousnesses to know that was true. I hesitated. Obviously he feared I was going.

"Here," he said. I don't know where he had had it hidden — probably in the sand by his foot. But what he was holding out to me was plump and large as a fine hazel nut. In his greasy green palm it shone like a quiet flame in a dirty bronze cup-lamp. It showed up so vividly on that dingy setting for it was luminous as sun-lit peach-blossom. "The others are better." He got up and started across the little reef break-water. I followed.

By the time I arrived out on the little peninsula — for I crawled while he trotted over the jagged coral and slag — he was already lying flat down, his face almost touching the still water of this pool, his right arm thrust down under, to the shoulder. "There." He was pointing under the water. I crouched beside him. The surface rippling made by his movement cleared. I could just see his 'protective coloured' fingers combing back some sea-weed fronds, lying near a small nest of sea-moss — a nest filled with objects about the size of finches' eggs. He picked out a couple and flexing his arm raised them within an inch of the surface. I could see, through the water, they were richer in glow than the one he had already shown me. He turned his head to me, inviting me to take them. I stretched forward and down to touch them

— perhaps the water was magnifying them — felt myself slip, had just time to gasp a full breath and then was plunged head over heels.

It was a straight dive. But when I struck out to bring myself up, I couldn't. I'd caught in the sea-weed. A coil I could feel was round one leg, and, as I thrashed, the other leg was caught. My arms became snarled, too. It is hard to keep methodical when you have only some fifteen seconds left to loose your knots and get back to air. My struggle became blind. I felt as though the tendrils that had me held were pulling at me, not I at them. My head whirled. The smeared daylight vanished. I was wrapped in total dark.

But suddenly my main exhausting agony was relieved. I was breathing. I didn't know if it was air. I thought it was so thick and dank that it might have been a kind of breathable water. I couldn't hear a thing save the gasping and heart-pounding of my body. Perhaps it meant that the water was already in my lungs, the struggle really over. I had heard that once the lung is filled the agony ends though you may be still faintly conscious for a few very long seconds. I was dead, though still in my body.

Then I noticed that I could feel. I had a sense of touch. I was shut in some narrow cleft. I felt the sides pressing on me, clammy, sticky. Repugnance leaves you, of course, when you are in great peril. But this contact was so repulsive that I soon felt rising in me an intense nausea. I found I could smell, too. The black fume my lungs laboured in was revoltingly fishy. I could not raise my arms. My whole body seemed to have become plugged into some submarine crack lined with putrefying sea-anemones or jelly fish. But my head must somehow have emerged into some small chamber that contained an air which, however foul, fended off for the time being total suffocation.

I began to recall my last above-surface moments. I had slipped into the pool, of course. But how had I managed to get caught like this? And, where, in the name of salvage, was the green diver? If he was the amphibian that he claimed, no moment could be more apt, more welcome for a demonstration. Then I did feel a movement, a kind of shudder. Caught under some dense tangle of weed, a tangle that somehow captured air of a sort, I was now being pulled at — the green diver's struggles to get me free were the cause of the shudders? I was helpless to respond, but thank heaven they continued, became stronger. I felt my body being bent as the clammy coat that held me was twisted. Then suddenly I felt I was turned over, I was standing on my head for the blood rushed to it. A second after some kind of blast struck me. I was driven upwards with great force. I shot free and on for a short distance. Then felt myself flop, tumbled over onto sand. Of that I was sure, by the touch. But I was still as blind as I'd been in the cleft. The air, however, was far less foul though far from fresh. I took a deep breath and called out. I

heard my voice ring. I must be in some chamber fairly spacious. The slight suggestion of echo was however my only answer.

Then, as I crouched listening, I could hear a faint lapping. I gathered my sprawled self as far as 'all fours,' crept thus over what felt like a floor of sand-covered rock and found the end of this area was marked by an abrupt edge. Some depth under this ledge I could hear the water lapping. As I listened, however, even that died down. All I could do was to continue to explore by touch. Then the damp of sopping clothes began to make me shudder. I took them off. The place, though vault-like, wasn't cold. As soon as I was naked I ceased to feel chill. I continued my touch finding. Retreating from the brink, I patted and pawed my way backward till I found a rockwall. Stretching up as far as I could, I found the rock going on but tending, I judged, to cove over. When I went right or left, in a dozen paces I found I was back at the brink. I was in a submarine cave, half of which — at least at present tidal level — was filled with air. That was all that touch could tell me. I was blind, and now that the lapping had died down my ears were as uninformative. There wasn't a gurgle or a drip anywhere. That gave me my first hope. For semi-aquatic rock-rooted creatures, when the tide is out, generally ooze and give out small sucking noises. I must be above high-tide level. I shouldn't drown. I should die slowly of thirst instead — of course, a worse alternative but because the death-sentence was dated not today but next week I found myself a little less despairing.

I had naturally given up hope that my queer companion could have followed me. Some bubble-explosion of 'marsh gas' perhaps released by my struggles had thrown me up into this rock-pocket. I crawled and patted my way to the brink again. I began to reach down to see whether I could touch the water surface. I was stretching my finger tips as far down as I could and yet touching nothing when my retina gave a sort of 'after-image' recording — the kind of thing you see when you accidentally press on the optic nerve by the eye socket. But when I blinked I saw it wasn't subjective.

It wasn't any sort of light I knew. But it was nearer phosphorescence than any daylight. It grew stronger. It was being emitted by some object down below, in that well up through which I must have been driven. The trouble was that though the illumination grew, it didn't show up anything. It was more like a spread of blue fog. Though it wasn't blue it was the kind of colour you might imagine might lie behind blue. It grew now rapidly till the whole space down into which I was peering seemed flooded. It came pouring up toward me. I tried to see my arm that was stretched out down into this atmosphere but the mist engulfed it. Suddenly I was aware that the unseen water below me was splashing. I drew back instinctively. Something was clambering up toward me. I crouched until I was bundled up against the

back wall. The luminous fog poured up. Then it seemed to condense, take shape, and, lit as though a statue made of fluorescent tubing, before me was standing the green man.

I was so relieved that I put out my hand. My relief switched to fresh panic when my fingers passed through his skin as though it were shadow. I heard a laugh, though, and a moment after, "It's some sort of refraction effect." I saw the figure move. He was still a couple of feet from me but I felt my own arm being touched. It was an additional uncanniness that sight and touch wouldn't coordinate here. But there was no doubt that was the present state of things.\*

"You fell in," he began, "and I plunged after you. You were caught . . ." he paused.

"I was caught, yes," I took him up. "Yes, by what? How did I get carried here?"

I could see his face now. But it's amazing how difficult it is to judge expression on features lit from inside. The puckers that shadow-sign to us human emotional play are somehow reversed. I felt he must naturally be expressing concern, as muscle-rippings I could see went on round the mouth and eyes. But it might just as well have been humour. It's hard to judge expression even in a photograph negative. His voice, though, did register concern, even perhaps alarm. He certainly seemed to hush it. "They can't hear, can they?" he questioned.

"What?"

"Well . . . fishes!"

I thought I had better humour him — he was clearly mad, but if he could get here he could get me out, and he must have been fairly truthful about his swimming powers. "Most of them are certainly deaf," I assured him.

"But what about . . . squid?"

"Pretty certainly deaf, too. But go on. How did I get here? Is this a sort of periodic tidal whirlpool? We've got to get out, you know; with your swimming powers we can. It's just a dive down and up, isn't it? If we get through

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\* (Note: This part of Dr. Mackay's record, though it cannot have happened to him, is nevertheless in accord with some research — of which no doubt he had read — done in the middle thirties at London University, wherein it was shown that after considerable time in total darkness the human eye can perceive objects illuminated by nothing but ultra-violet light, and further, the objects though seen with comparative clearness, are perceived with a displacement of some 2 feet and at an angle of 45 degrees above their actual station. It is, of course, just possible that the spectrum of the luciferin of some aquatic animals may contain, together with radiation of visible light, some U.V. radiation as well.)

at a time when that pulse isn't driving, we can do it together, can't we?"

"Rather too far for anyone who hasn't had special respiration training. You got here . . ." again he paused, "because you were brought, carried — the way the others were."

"The others? And by whom?"

He crouched beside me. "Nobody knew . . . why these dawn-pearls, as they were called, weren't fished. All that was said was that the beds had given out. All that was whispered was that if you got down there you wouldn't come back. And certainly *I'd* have followed the rest if I hadn't had the super-diving training I've told you. You escaped," he went on more slowly, "because . . . he's learnt."

"Who's learnt, what's learnt!" I was shuddering now, not from the dank place but from fear. The light, which I thought came from his unhealthy skin, I now noticed came also and now increasingly from the well-shaft. He beckoned me. We crawled to the brink. The shaft now was not only full of light but it had cleared. It was limpid. I could see the water level — I judged some dozen feet down. And then, through that, I could see maybe another twenty feet. It was clear to the bottom. And indeed the light as it came up from there showed things most brightly down on that floor. For on that floor lay two cables — cables with knots and bosses on them and each cable about six inches in diameter I judged. The light came from these hawsers. They were of the same sort of colour as my companion's body but of stronger radiation. The luminosity of the cables pulsed, fluctuated as the cables themselves twisted and writhed.

"They're tentacles!"

It wasn't a question. It was my involuntary disgust spurting words. I knew well enough what must be behind such tubing. They began to curl and spiral. Two more came in sight. But these latter ended in huge mittens, almost handshaped flippers, studded over with thorn-edged vacuum-pads. I knew what was being unrolled toward us: the tentacles of the giant of all the Cephalopods — the ten-armed monster, the Decapod.

These cables paid themselves out and came swarming up like Hydra itself, a forest of leprous boa-constrictors each with a hundred fanged mouths. I shrank against the back wall at the moment that the two mitten flippers came over the edge. They flowed over the floor and were soon accompanied by their eight satellite snakes. By some kind of tactile sensitiveness they seemed — perhaps they could sense my warmth — to have no difficulty in cornering me. They paid no attention to my companion, who, crouched also against the wall on the other side of the cavern, looked on. When they had me cornered they waited a moment. For what? There was a threshing and plunging like the sucker of a giant pump, a rush of water that swept our

little ledge, a huge heave, and over the edge, lit by its own uncanny luminescence, like a moonrise in Hell, the vast bulbous bulk of the giant decapodic trunk-head, hoisted itself onto the rock.

The cavern was awrithe with its arms: the well blocked by its mass. Otherwise I'd have made a plunge for it and died trying to get away. I gave the squeal of a mouse when the cat grips it, as the tentacles lapped and lifted me. Through the slither of its coils and the continual grunting wheeze of the great bag-pipe of its body, I could just hear the green diver calling, "Don't struggle, don't struggle. He'll kill you straight if you do. Give way. It's your one chance. Go limp!"

I tried to. I had read that squids will often let fall something that ceases struggling. This didn't. But the cables though they held tightly didn't strangle. I was lifted up and swept to the edge. I saw the great, expressionless soup-plate of an eye, the size of one of the yacht's portholes, regarding me. 'I suppose he'll drown and then eat me.' It was the last dismal flicker of hope — to be suffocated before being dismembered — and it was drowned when the fringe of eight secondary tentacles was suddenly thrown back and I saw into the cavern made by the 'apron' or cowling from which the ring of limbs sprout. I saw the great parrot beak of the mouth. Then with a flop the monster clammy cape-extinguisher had come down on me.

I was in total dark. My vehicle heaved and then plunged. I gasped and could just breathe. I struggled but was held as though bound up in rubber sheeting. Yes, I was back into the condition in which I had been caught after falling into the pool. Disgust and panic paralyzed me. I almost hoped for the sharp pain that would tell me an artery had been bitten through and I would die quickly. But it didn't come. My lungs continued to keep me gaspingly alive. I think I was confined like this longer than the first plunge, before I felt myself heaved and manipulated. Then once more the head-overheels whirl, followed immediately by the violent expulsive moment. Again I was thrown out and lay winded.

I was in the dark, this time lying on smooth rock. I was so beat I must have lost consciousness. When I sat up, everything was still. I was alone. But this place had light of a sort and not that ghastly blue. This glow did come up through the water, but it was daylight, true daylight, though made tremulous dusk because it was coming through I judged some fathoms of sea. But I'd swear it was sunlight, however filtered. The sun should have set, I remembered, in a feeble attempt to orient myself, at least in time. But even as I peered down into the shifting green light I could see that it was growing stronger. I couldn't doubt it: I was watching the reflection or refraction of dawn in this marine world.

Somehow that started up my hope again — or what I've called hope's

physiological counterpart, which at its lowest level of all is hunger — the will to live. Yes, I felt hungry. After all, the sea shore has one advantage over nearly every other site. You can generally find free food of a sort. I began to hunt about the ledge. I found no mussels though and couldn't dislodge any of the rock-clingers. I could here reach my hands into the water, but though small minnows were darting about they were wisely wary of my fingers. Then, just as I was going to give up and fall into a deeper dudgeon, I came on a couple of large scallops and, what is more, open. I pounced on them to thrust a pebble between their shells before they could close. But they made no reaction. I bobbed my head down to smell if they were dead. Then I saw they had been wrenched off their rock and their hinges broken. I gulped them down: they were perfectly fresh.

Not till then did it enter my mind that this was an odd little accident. Indeed, not till then did I find my mind trying to set out in proper order the nightmare journey that had brought me, naked and ravenous, to this blind-alley pot-hole. It seemed I must be a double Jonah. Twice I'd been swallowed by a sea-monster and twice regurgitated. The incident was horribly, grotesquely disgusting. Yet not only had I not suffered any damage, I wasn't even — as storekeepers say — 'soiled,' at least no more than a wash would remove. Before however I could consider whether that might not be my next step I spun round, for I'd been touched. The green diver was standing above me.

"Did you get me these scallops?" — I pointed to the shells, which I had found in a corner of the cavern; and so, evidently, had missed his follow up of me to this my new place of deposit. It was a silly question of course but of course it's the way the mind works when it's really lost its bearings. The big issue stuns so one fiddles over trifles. Men going to the scaffold notice that their shoelace has come loose and stop to retie it. Of course, the creature must have prepared this cold breakfast. So when he said "No" I was as stubborn as a mental patient. And I guess I was, for all intents, just that. "Then who?" I asked with the triumph a child questions a grown-up caught lying. And he seemed to fall in and play his part — looked vague, uneasy and then said, "I expect there're more."

We hunted and found a couple of oysters open, six prawns with their heads whipped off and a brace of large crab claws with the shell-casings split so that I could draw out the meat. I ate them all with childish pleasure. Then turned again on my companion, "Of course you got these ready." Again he shook his head. Then seeing I naturally didn't believe him, he beckoned me to the back of the cave. It was dark there of course but I could just see that the rock wall didn't quite come down to the floor. He crouched and then was gone. But I heard his voice. So dipping down I crawled after.

Suddenly hope had shot up. He had a secret way out. This was the land entrance to this sea grotto. You had to lie flat and worm along. But after a while the roof lifted. We'd entered a large place. I got to my feet. Then stopped dead still. Oh it was pretty enough, this cave, lit as the other had been by the weaving green-golden light that came up through the water. And it was fantastic enough to hold anyone's attention. For it was decorated, yes, richly decorated.

I couldn't remember for a moment where, before, long ago I had once seen decoration like this. Of course I had difficulty in recalling the place, because the two spots were so differently located. But at last it flashed into my mind. It was during the time that I'd been taking one of my marine biology courses at the great oceanographic institute and aquarium at Naples. I'd run up for a short visit just to glance at Rome and someone had taken me to that strange Campo Santo of the Capuchin Monks. There the earth preserves the bodies of the Fratiri, so when they are sufficiently 'cured', they are mounted round the walls as mural decoration and their canopies and niches are fashioned with considerable ingenuity and no little taste out of the ribs, limb-bones, skulls and pelves of the less honoured lay-brothers.

Of course, this place I now found myself in couldn't really compete with that. For one thing the raw material was less abundant here. But an effort, yes quite a good one, had been made. There were not more than a dozen niches. But the canopy work was made happily enough with coral branches, dolphin ribs, and fish vertebrae; and shark jaws made capacious cupolae. Half the niches were already filled, completed — in the same way as the Capuchin Campo Santo. Of course the skin was gone. But the skeletons were complete to the last phalange. And as a final finish a pair of large rosy pearls shone as artificial eyes in the eye-sockets of each skull.

I was just going to scuttle back into the rock-cleft in blind flight from my ghastly companion and this treasury of his, when he suddenly seized me. I had no idea how strong he was, and, conversely, how slippery, how impossible to break from or to hold. He had me down in a few panting moments. But then, to my surprise, he dragged me back into the cleft out which we had crawled into this — this aquatic funeral parlour. I thought, or rather felt, I might spend my last breath in a yell. But he stifled that, too. He didn't, however, get his fingers over my eyes. Perhaps he didn't want to. So out of our wainscot cranny-slit I was squinting along the floor from which I had just been so unceremoniously swept. And what I squinted made me lie still. For up over the brink of the well and out over the floor were flowing those grey greasy thorny cables.

They rippled on, till with a gulp and a surge that sent a small wave almost into our cranny the monster bulb with its soup-plate eyes heaved into



view. I shortened focus, though, for at that moment a tentacle came writhing past our hide. It didn't, however, investigate, but my eye didn't leave it. For, neatly coiled in the curled tip, was quite the largest pearl I have ever seen — and need I say of a perfect rose-pink.

The tentacle went on. And now I saw that every one of the eight subsidiary arms held in it some object — a shell, a sprig of coral, the skull of a fish. The whole thing, form and movement, reminded me of some worse than Black Art idol come to worse than human life.

This huge snake-complex swept forward with a sinuosity that had about it a nauseating flavour of affectation. You felt that the monstrous horror was showing off, registering charm, displaying feminine elegance. It was impossible to avoid this grotesque suspicion of aestheticism, as, one by one, the eight subsidiary arms offered each its object, placing pearl, bone or coral on some point, trefoil, coign or cusp of the great reredos. And as the tentacles played about, fussing like a woman dolling-up her toilet table, the two great main flipper-ended arms with their thorn-edged pockings postured and waved as though miming exclamations of delight. In comparison with the incessant flow and flourish of these boneless rubber coilings, the 'willowiest' of ephebes was an upstanding, straight-forward, angular bit of engineering. And yet this great greasy boss of intestine-fringed succulence was, of course, far more formidable than a charging mammoth. It could pull the toughest human athlete limb from limb with the idle nonchalance of a maiden depetalling a flower to the tune 'he loves me, he loves me not.'

At last, however, these affectations and hesitations came to an end. The monster was apparently satisfied with its composition. So this was where the other pearl-divers had ended, 'full fathom five,' with the pearls they coveted and longed to see, set in their heads, as their eyes refused to obey the Shakespearian formula. The ten coordinated snakes were at rest. The giant squid would now go and we'd have another chance to escape.

Perhaps I stirred prematurely. All I know is that the tentacle nearest me suddenly coiled. There was no lazy aestheticism about it now. It struck like an anaconda, struck and wound round me and whipped me out of my chink as a hooked pin whips a perrywinkle out of its shell. I found myself held for a moment in the air. Then I was being carried backwards. A moment more, with two other tentacles to help, I was being packed neatly into a vacant niche in the reredos. Through the weaving of the tentacles I could glimpse first one huge soup-plate eye and then the other judging the pictorial effect. The tentacles held me as gently as though I were a piece of an egg-shell porcelain tea-service being put away in its curiocabinet. But I could see within six inches of my nose the claw-thorn fringes of their suction pads. No doubt when the general proportions of figure to niche had been settled —

well then, as we strip unnecessary leaves off a spray of flowers we have selected for a particular narrow-necked vase, my flesh would be stripped deftly off my skeleton, my eyes plucked out and instead of their watery gleam two of the most lustrous pearls put in the gaping sockets.

My flesh was as cold as the monster's. Indeed, I'd have slumped like a melted candle had not these horrible living ropes with incessant fondling held me in shape. I therefore not unnaturally thought it was blessed unconsciousness when I felt my head spin and my body whirl. It was hardly possible to realise, until it was over and the slither of the last tentacle had ended with a gurgle, that I must have been stuffed back into the crack out of which I had been so unceremoniously fetched for such a disconcerting 'fitting.' I lay with my eyes closed for a little. Then peeped under my lids 'shamming dead.' I could see along the floor into the funeral throne-room. Yes, the vast creature had retracted the jungle of snake-limbs, had swept them in, round and under it, as a cat folds in its forepaws to serve as a cushion to sit on — so the mouse may the better imagine it had gone to sleep. Though of course this horrible up-side-down creature was poised on its tubing as an up-turned bottle might be balanced on a heap of dead eels. Naturally a cephalopod, a 'befooted skull,' can have no true face. Facial expression is then out of the question, so upside down makes no difference. Gradually, however, as I watched my gaoler perched on the edge of the water dive that could lead me to liberty, the whole vast bag that blocked my path began to flush from its blue mould colour to a rich yellow.

"It's pleased," I heard a whisper near me. I swivelled my eyes to the back of the cleft in which I was lying packed. The green diver was crouched behind my shoulder. The sound of a wave however made me re-swivel my eyes. With amazing speed the giant decapod had resunk himself in his well. My human friend — for such at that moment he seemed in comparison with our only other associate — evidently sensed my utterly baffled questioning.

"Yes, that's his way of showing emotion. He can show a whole range of feelings by a gamut of coloured flushings. He has quite an amazing number of such tints." I did remember learning that some of the cephalopods do show fear by changing chameleon-like their colouration. But I certainly was in no mood for natural history. And my companion, seeing wisely where my main immediate interest was rooted, turned to our own species.

"Yes, those up there," he pointed to the half filled reredos, "those were the last of the pink-pearlers. Yes, they got in on something big, I allow . . ."

"It caught and killed them. . . ."

"I, I don't think so . . . I mean not intentionally. It, it is decorative. I mean it is — how do you say it? aesthetically-minded, beauty-interested. Do you know anything about giant squids?"

"Well, they are far the cleverest of all the under-water creatures. They might have gone far in evolution if they could have got out of the water." I ran off my aquarium information. It was faintly reassuring to remember I was or had been a naturalist. I used, I remembered, to smirk superiorly at the unscientific disgust most lay-folk showed when viewing squid. I often pointed out how elegant their motions were to a true nature lover. "Trouble with them," I heard my voice reciting, "is their structure's so limited."

"Then there might be a genius squid . . . ?"

"Yes. . . ."

"And it might develop beauty-sense?"

"Well, you said that already!" I felt as irritable as a badly wounded man. "Everyone knows the bower-bird does and it's got a brain about as small."

"Then that's what it's done. It tumbled to the fact that we like pearls and it took to the fashion, caught the taste."

"And then went one better in aesthetic detachment and killed the pearls just to help out the decorative design," I snarled at his detachment.

"No, no, I don't think quite that. . . ."

"Well, did they all conveniently drown themselves as soon as the aesthetic possibilities of their skeletal structure occurred to this boneless monster?"

Then suddenly my fumbling jokes, a sort of feeble vomiting reaction of the mind under the stress of too much fear, all died away. I had brought up in my mind a real solid question and one he could and he must answer. "And what about *you!*"

"That's why I'm not sure about the others — that they were drowned."

"You mean to say that they, one by one, died in their beds of old age and this submarine monster dung-beetle crept out and, to save the survivors trouble, and in the name of world-wide hygiene, carried off the cadavers, taking, as his fee, only their bones! You know you killed them!" I flung myself at this half sea-creature, half living-corpse that kept this ghastly pet. No doubt he'd feed me to it when he'd enjoyed a little further its pretty play and teach it some further pretty beach themes with my brachia. But I'd get him first. . . .

Of course it was no use tackling a thing as greasy as an eel and as lithe-strong as a python. Indeed it took him so little effort to down me as we writhed upon each other in the crack that his voice went on without pant or gasp till with me neatly trussed, he continued our conversation. But what he said, and said so quietly, was still arresting enough to quieten me, to deflate my effort to throw him off, to make my last gust of courage end in a gasp of deeper horror.

"No," he remarked slowly, like a chess-player checked and suspecting check-mate, "no, it's not my pet. I'm its. And *they* were. At least I'm sure

that's what it intended. You remember, I called out to you, 'Don't struggle'? Well they did. Oh, of course quite naturally, and fatally. If you'd struggled enough you know you'd have suffocated in that cape. Besides, then he didn't know his business."

"What do you mean!"

"I mean he hadn't perfected his technique."

"What the devil . . ."

"Well, I told you *I'd* got, by chance training, a very uncommon, very useful technique for diving. That certainly saved my life. When it caught me, I didn't suffocate because — well you know, and I didn't struggle. And then that super-squid brain evidently tumbled on the fact that we have to breathe air, just about the same time (just in time, in fact) that I tumbled on the complementary fact that he wanted not to drown me but on the contrary to keep me alive. Some air (as you know, not at all pleasant but distinctly more so than suffocating) naturally clings under the apron from which the tentacles spread. Well, it learnt, as does the water-spider, to capture a large bubble of this. Not for its own use, of course — as does the spider. But for its freight, its possible passengers."

"For us?" He nodded. "My, we can't stay here" seemed obvious reaction in favour of action. So his "One gets adapted" struck me as insane defeatism. "We *must* get out!"

"But I've told you, there's no danger. Indeed quite the reverse. He's wishing to keep his pets. He kept you. He got that meal ready for you. I'm quite free here — just act as a companion for an hour or two every day: help him with his designing. He loves learning new patterns. He's out most of the time. Goes off the deep end — don't they call it? He's a deep fellow of a fish, but really quite a good fellow at heart. As long as I turn up when he wants to be amused, I'm free to do what I like. Where else'd I be so free!"

I looked at the green, greasy flesh. He'd said he'd had some hospital training. Of course, he was right — as far as he went. He'd be locked up under half an hour in an isolation ward if any port doctor set eyes on that hide of his. But I, I was quite another kettle of fish. I needn't skulk here and it happened to be the very last thing in the world that I wished to do, or intended. "Well, you can certainly stay. I'm going. . . ."

"But I like you. I want some company. I'd like a scientist companion. Beside, he'll never let you go. He wants to enlarge his collection."

"I to be part of a mollusc's menagerie! You bet!" I rolled over and out of the cleft — he had taken his grip off me and I was on my feet out in the large Memorial Chapel with a couple of twists. A fish-researcher caught by a fish! To be pinned down under such grotesquely turned tables — why, the absurd humour of it roused me to make a get-away on the spot. The fish-

monster would find that it had caught a tartar in catching an ichthyologist.

I ran through again in my mind all I knew about the cephalopods. Yes, they were quite the strongest, cunningest, cleverest of all the true underwater creatures. And, without a doubt, this was a sport, a super-squid genius. But he couldn't come onto land. There, of course, he had to rely on his amphibian ally — his decoy.

The word slipped into my mind. Why hadn't I realised it before! This verdigris salt-water-sodden-slippery diver — of course he had trapped me for his master's collection, decoyed me to look for the pearls and then neatly enough tipped me into the lurking monster's embrace. In a moment the situation was plain as a prison. Of course it was nonsense to try and persuade my glaucous gaoler to escape with me! He was there to hold me while the owner of the two-piece menagerie, with mortician museum attached, was away on deeper business. So seeing the lie of the land and the depth of the seaplot I switched over onto the new knowledge.

It was clear that I'd never get out of this trap without my warder's help. The only path out of these cells was through the tidefilled tunnels and so, by a long diving swim, up to the shore. But whatever the green diver might be he was clearly no liar about his diving powers.

He, too, had now come out into the skeleton-girt cave. "It's being under such long stretches and then having to breathe so oddly, that gives your skin that color?" I questioned as carelessly as I could. Few people can resist answering admiring enquiries about their prowess, and when so selfcentred generally cease to attend carefully to their questioner.

"Yes," he answered readily enough, "that and the adaptation of the skin to constant soaking. You'll get like that too. Then instead of wanting to dry your skin you'll hate not having it wet always."

It was certainly not a prospect that gave me anything but a distinctly negative cutaneous thrill. But I didn't let my reaction get into my voice. On the contrary I remarked, "Well, you'd better start giving me a few practise dives, hadn't you? Anyhow I need to be taken out for a drink. One doesn't dehydrate here but still you know I need to be fresh-watered off and on!"

He took my joke in good part and naturally was willing to show off. I'm far from a bad swimmer and know a little about respiration exercises to get the lung super-oxygenated for extensive breath-retention. I took a series of deepened and accelerated breaths and then with my hand on his shoulder we struck down through the water out of the museum of our collector, headed for the sunlight.

But though he did almost all the actual swimming I nearly didn't make it. He dragged me out and slumped me like a sack on the spit of sand that led

to the causeway which so linked it to the mainshore. As I lay gasping on my back I saw that the sun had just begun to heel over to the West. I had been under not 24 hours — but for the age it seemed, I might have been buried at sea and now after an aeon of submersion here was the resurrection — 'the deep giving up its dead.'

I was too spent to try any exact time-tabling. And when having pummelled and first-aided me, making me vomit a lot of sea-water, he hauled me onto his shoulder, carried me to the main shore and there settled me in the warm sand I just let him. I fell to sleep, sinking down as though I really had drowned. Once I recall waking to find a large shell with fresh water in it. I gulped that and fell off again as though it had been opium.

It was only on my second waking that my time-orientation flashed back on me. Of course I must get back! Perhaps all that I had gone through was a nightmare — a touch of sun after having lain down to dry myself after a dip? Across the time-gap, filled with this fantasy, I saw the real past, clearly enough, urgently enough! Of course the yacht was due to go. They would wait for me but they'd be sore at being kept waiting. I must go at once.

I looked round. There wasn't a sign of life anywhere. And beside me (and they were warm in the levelling light of the sun and with the hot sand under them) were my clothes. As I slipped them on my mind too took civilised sensible shape. Of course — a touch of sun after a doze after a dip. I certainly felt groggy enough on my legs when I got on them. But without delay I set off stumbling along the shore, back toward the island's north end. The effort restarted my circulation and though my head ached, I wasn't making bad going, till on looking back to see how far I'd come I saw something that certainly made me think I'd been too slow and must mend my pace. There was a figure running over the sands in pursuit of me.

I did manage to break into a run as well as a cold sweat. It was no use, though. He was gaining as quickly as a greyhound on a spent hare. I managed to scramble over a reef of rocks that running out separated a couple of the small bays, dropped down on a pebble-strewn cove, and, knowing that I couldn't run another yard, crouched flat under the rock over which I'd come. The nightmare was true — that was all. I'd been caught — caught on the threshold of escape to be dragged back to be pet No. 2 of this ghastly collector until he tired of my simple antics — or my companion grew jealous when they'd see that I served better as something stiller than the stillest of still-lives.

At that moment my green gaoler leapt down from the rocks above. He didn't see me — I think his submarine life had dimmed his sight — as I crouched immediately behind him. He was scanning in a myopic way the crescent bay of sand that stretched away before us. My hand shut on a

sizable pebble just fitting and filling one's fist. I rose. He heard me — or caught sight of me out of the corner of his eye — and whirled round. I whirled round my arm. It was as natural a reflex as beating off a hornet. The crack of stone on skull was so sharp it might have been stone on stone. But that was the only sound. No cry and he settled down gently on the pebbled sand. A new spurt of energy took me. I leapt over the body. I was back at the yacht anchorage without once pausing. But then I did slump with a vengeance — there was the anchorage — but no yacht! They had sailed. No doubt they had tracked my trail and finding that it ended in that pool they were certain I was drowned. No use waiting to find a body in these all too well populated waters.

I don't know how long I sat there. The night had come on before again hunger, the spur of pointless living, made me hunt around. Of course I didn't have much difficulty in finding the cached food. When I'd eaten and made myself some coffee (for one of the island's springs came out here and a cooking lamp was stored in the shed) I felt my energy tide-in again. I found at the back of the shed some tarpaulins and wrapping myself in them slept well enough, for to pillow me I had the comfort that I was now safe from pursuit.

With this morning's light my feelings have gone up from resignation level to something like hope. I have a good chance of making a break-way and indeed of catching up with my party. For on going out of the shed I saw the other side of it. What I'd missed, last evening — for the shed stood in my way. The other side of it was a fissure on the coral which we had cut and cleared till it made a wharf inlet, so that freight could be unloaded from the dinghy right along side of the shed. To my surprised delight I found that the dinghy was left there moored to the wharf side.

Naturally it was clear to me from that moment what to do. Firstly I fetched a notebook from the steel cupboard. It is of primary importance that I put down a clear consecutive account of my adventure through the last couple of days. Unless I have it recorded while every detail is photographically clear in my mind, the whole series of incidents is so improbable that under cross examination (as so often happens when a man has had an anomalous experience) I might easily contradict myself over some detail and my entire narrative be discredited. I certainly realise how I myself should feel if this story were to be told to me instead of my being myself the narrator, and, if I may be permitted to use the word without prejudice, the patient.

Well, I have now come to the end of my account. All that remains is to stow this book in the dinghy's fore-locker. I have hoisted the sail, can scull the dinghy out to where I can catch a breeze. I have on board water and

stores. A good south wind is blowing. I should make the inhabited islet group north of this atoll perhaps by sundown or at latest by tomorrow.

Terminal Note from the Log of the *Thetis*, Captain L. Jackson, Master, F.R.O.S. "It is perhaps hardly necessary to enter that the *Thetis* had *not* left the island. When Dr. Mackay did not return, supplies and the dinghy were left at the north anchorage and the ship sailed to the south of the island to investigate. Having failed to sight him on any of the beaches, a landing was made on the east side of the island and the small hinterland was thoroughly explored for any evidence of the missing man. This necessitated staying on that side of the island for the night. The next morning, coming north, we sighted the dinghy making for the open sea. There was a heavy swell running outside the cover given by the island. Dr. Mackay, who was sailing the dinghy, was signalled by us to turn back. He paid no attention. Through glasses it was clear that he had not seen us. He was bending over his port bow. He seemed, too, to be having trouble with the tiller. The boat appeared to be failing to answer the helm. By this time the dinghy had entered the full ocean swell and disappeared for a couple of seconds in the trough. On its appearing again it was derelict. Dr. Mackay could not be seen. On succeeding in getting a rope round the dinghy's prow, the *Thetis* returned with it to anchorage. On inspecting the dinghy Dr. Mackay's diary was found. On examining the tiller and rudder traces of fine circular indentations, some as much as a couple of inches in diameter, were found on them both. Because of statements in the diary we sailed again down the east coast of the island to settle if possible where Dr. Mackay contracted sunstroke. Coming to the terminal south bay we landed, finding the rock pool that figures so prominently in his story. We discovered, here, above highwater mark, confirmatory traces that he had lain on the beach. We also traced his footsteps part of the way back toward the north anchorage. However, on the spot which seemed to agree with his description of the place where he imagined he fought with a pursuer, there were no traces. At this section of his run he had gone down onto the tidal sand and his own footsteps were obliterated."

