

benumbed by the awful, hopeless terror. Down! Down! Down! And at last I could hear something sounding as if from a bottom. It was a sound in which moans, and groans, and hisses, cries or rather incoherent sounds, of pain, of anger, of cold, derisive cruelty, were mixed into one fearful noise. As I came nearer I could distinguish the sounds, nearer still and I saw a struggling mass of shapeless, crowding creatures like to every kind of reptile I had ever heard or read about. There boas, and sea dragons, and other monsters were contending in dubious strife, and as I got closer to them I saw smaller breeds, snakes, and eels, and over-grown worms all crawling and struggling as if for existence, large ones swallowing those of a smaller growth, all wallowing together in filthy confusion. And now fright seemed to awaken in me: I tried to shriek but could make no sound, for this putrid, reptile atmosphere was not the atmosphere which carries the sounds that men make. I clutched wildly in the air to save myself from the awful sea of slimy life but only lost my balance and went down face foremost into the midst of it, felt about my eyes, and nose, and ears, and throat the clammy touch of snake whelps and worms, the spawn of the creatures that have been especially accursed; felt tighter round my legs, and arms, and body and neck the rough spirals of a black, hundred armed, ink-blooded sea dragon, and then awoke breathing gutturally and hard, panting, as only they who dream horribly can pant, trembling in every limb long after I had come to the happy, relieving realization that it was only a dream.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

