

"*Si, señorita, es el diablo mismo!*" he answered, releasing her and drawing his *machete*.

Lying flat, hooking his legs under a thwart, and hanging half his body's length over the boat-side, he felt carefully down into the obscure water, and severed one tentacle after another. Elsie's foot was still held fast, however, and her rescuer dared not cut beyond the guidance of his left hand. Suddenly, untwisting his legs from the thwart, he slipped overboard head first, caught the soft body of the monster, and with one swift, careful, unerring stroke sheared off at their base all the tentacles which were holding it to the ground.

As he returned to the surface and shook the foul water out of his eyes, he caught Elsie by the waist and lifted her. So impetuous was his effort, and so impetuously did the over-wrought girl second it, that she fell into the boat headlong, with the monster still hanging vindictively to her foot by two maimed tentacles.

The lean Cuban, his white clothes dripping and bedraggled, was beside her in an instant. With his prompt *machete* he shaved off those two remaining tentacles, then transfixed the swollen body of the monster between the