

# Terrifying Ordeal of Daring Lady Mackenzie

Rescued Just in Time When Trapped Under Water  
in a Treacherous Coral Crevice and Surrounded by  
Hideous Marine Monsters

It Was Necessary to Send Down  
an Expert Deep Sea Diver to  
Rescue Lady Mackenzie from  
Her Submerged Prison.



How Lady  
Muir  
Mackenzie  
Looked  
Wearing  
the  
Glass-  
Faced  
Diving  
Helmet.



**LADY MUIR MACKENZIE,** British society leader and sportswoman, who was recently entertained extensively in America, has written back to friends, telling of her complete recovery from what she calls "the most terrifying experience of my life."

The first woman to dare the dangers of deep-sea diving, she was caught like a trapped animal in a crevice of coral rock forty feet beneath the ocean surface, off the Bahama Islands, and was only rescued, after an hour of nightmare horrors, when, at the risk of immediate drowning, one of the leaden shoes was torn from her imprisoned foot.

Lady Mackenzie has an international reputation for bravery. The young widow of Sir John Muir Mackenzie, former Governor of Bombay, she has hunted tigers and elephants in India, and has been a member of several big game expeditions in the interior of Africa.

Little did she think, when she stopped for a few days to visit the quiet, semi-tropical port of Nassau, on her way home after a round of social activities and lectures in the United States, that she was on the threshold of an ordeal that would bring her nearer to death than any of her former experiences in the African veldt or the Indian jungle.

Perhaps it was the very tranquillity of the lazy social life in sunny Nassau that tempted her to an adventure which no other woman had dared undertake. The ocean floor off the Bahamas is a coral formation, teeming with bright colored submarine life, and Lady Mackenzie went one day with a party of friends to enjoy its beauties in a glass-bottomed observation boat. Peering down through the translucent water, she was fascinated by the moving panoramas—rainbow-hued tropical fish, waving fronds of vegetable growths like submerged palms or giant ferns—queer phosphorescent little creatures that moved like fireflies in the semi-darkness—and now and then a great, gray shadow flitting beneath the boat, torpedo-shaped and sinister.

"Oh, how I should like to go down there," sighed Lady Mackenzie. "My dear! You'd never dare," shuddered the other ladies. And such an idea did seem absurd as they sat there with their dainty French frocks and gay parasols among the

silken cushions of the luxurious pleasure boat. "But why not?" said the intrepid Englishwoman, rather to herself than to the others. And the next morning bright and early, Lady Mackenzie was telephoning around Nassau for a competent deep-sea diving crew.

The professional divers—when Lady Mackenzie found them—were as much opposed to the idea as her friends had been. They pointed out that no woman had ever been down in a diving suit—it was a dangerous occupation that only the strongest men engaged in—and even then there were often accidents.

But Lady Mackenzie was insistent—and when one has the combined power of social position, wealth, feminine good looks, and political prestige into the bargain—one usually gets what one wants. So it was arranged that Lady Mackenzie was to make her "debut"—the first of her sex—as a deep-sea diver.

And the following morning out they went, Lady Mackenzie, with six expert divers and divers' assistants in a big, flat-bottomed motor-driven diving barge, which anchored in forty feet of water, off the coral reefs.

Air-pumps, ladders, tackle, oxygen-tanks and special emergency equipment were all in readiness—a complete diving suit for Lady Mackenzie—weighing more than she did by a hundred pounds—and another diving suit for one of the men—in case anything went wrong—for the Englishwoman insisted on going down alone.

She was dressed in knickers and flannel shirt—no room for skirts and frills in such an adventure—and was helped to don the diving suit of heavy sheet-rubber covered on both sides with thick twill. The cuffs were adjusted to fit tight around her wrists and rubber bands slipped over them to render the "joints" water-tight. The trousers of the suit encased her feet and ended in leaden-soled boots, each weighing over twenty pounds. The suit ended at the neck in a heavy-

"An Enormous Cuttlefish Advanced Its Tentacles Toward the Terrified Woman's Neck."

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the "trick" of moving around comfortably in her ponderous armor. For more than an hour she wandered in a dimly lit fairyland of jeweled forests, fish as beautiful as gaily colored birds, queer monsters and goblins. If a great hammer-headed shark sometimes nosed by, or a cuttlefish came prowling with its serpent-like tentacles and shunted off quickly into the darkness, she was not unduly frightened, for she knew what sort of monsters she should encounter, and had been told that not once in a million times would one of these creatures venture to attack a moving human figure in a diving suit.

From time to time she signalled, by jerking the life line, that all was well, and finally decided it was about time to signal to be hauled to the surface.

To do this she turned to face the direction of the barge, and in turning, her foot caught in the crevice of a coral rock. With a slight tug and jerk, she sought to release herself—there was a sharp, twinge of pain, but the foot remained imprisoned.

Beginning now to be frightened, she knelt as well as she could on one knee and tried to disengage herself with the aid of her hands.

It was no use. She was caught, like an animal in a steel trap. Her foot was jammed in the crevice in such a way that she couldn't get at the buckles of the heavy lead-soled boot.

Besides, to tear it off would have been dangerous, for a rip in the rubber suit, even as far down as the foot, would have let in the water and drowned her before she could have been dragged to the surface.

She was trapped, fettered as securely as if her ankle had been fastened with an iron chain—forty feet beneath the ocean.

The thought of drowning filled her with terror. But not with so great a terror as the presence of the sharks and writhing creatures, which seemed to sense her helplessness and to be coming closer than they had dared before.

An enormous cuttlefish, emboldened by her immobility, approached and advanced one of its snake-like tentacles toward the terrified woman's neck. When she threw up her arms to defend herself, the monster sluggishly moved away.

No tortured movie heroine in a serial "thriller" ever went through so horrible an ordeal in make-believe as Lady Mackenzie endured in reality beneath the waves.

She had signalled "trouble" on the life rope, but she didn't dare to give the signal to be hauled up, for fear the rope would break or the diving suit be torn apart.

All she could do was continue signalling that she was in distress, and wonder, with trembling horror, what the end might be.

Meanwhile, on the barge, the men were moving with feverish but efficient speed. Despite the fact that no signal to "pull up" had been given, they tried tentatively to draw her to the surface, and realized at once that either she or the line had become stuck.

As quickly as the other suit could be adjusted, a professional wrecking-crew diver in the water, groping his way along the life line to Lady Mackenzie's side. It took him only an instant to realize her plight—but releasing her was not so quick a matter.

After tugging as much as he dared to release her foot without risk of tearing the suit, while she watched with anguish-drawn face through the glass of her helmet, he made signs for her to wait, and had himself drawn to the surface.

In less than ten minutes—each one of which seemed hours of agony to her—he was at her side again with a sort of toriiquet of heavy rubber, which he fastened and tied tight above her foot. Then, with the aid of a knife, he ripped off the heavy shoe and she was free.

She was haggard and half-fainting when they lay her on the barge and unscrewed the huge helmet from her head, but she smiled pluckily and assured the men—who were now more frightened than she—that everything was all right.

And so it was. Except for the nervous shock, she was fully recovered within twenty-four hours, and to-day her physicians assure her that she experienced no permanent ill-effects whatever from her terrifying experience.

Lady Mackenzie may renew her tiger and elephant hunts in the Indian jungle. But her friends have her own word for it that she will never again go diving in the deep blue sea.