

## THE SURGES OF SOLWAY 18

Zipporah lit a candle, and instantly the cave was bright as with a fierce light. Paul could see the clammy black walls, the tangle of seaweed short and colourless, and underneath the hard damp sand of the pathway.

Zip passed the light back to him.

"Hold it high—higher than that—above your head; silly! I shall have more than enough to do with my hands in a moment."

The route continued. They seemed to be rising. The passage became contracted, and Glenkens had some difficulty in adjusting himself to the constant windings. But there was still the pallid seaweed along the walls, though perhaps this did not grow quite so high, and Paul knew well that the tide, now sullenly roaring in the arched mouth of the cave, would not be long in following them even thus far.

"Up with the light! Higher yet!" cried Zip.

They had come to the oblong irregular piece of water, which Paul had named the "well" of the cave. It was mostly of good clean water—only slightly brackish after each tide, but of such abundant gush that it soon cleared itself and became drinkable again.

As they went, the little horse stepped more and more gingerly, and Zipporah kept soothing him more and more with continuous whispering. Then at the edge of the well, standing before Glenkens, she slipped off her apron, tied it over his eyes and leaping lightly across the yard-wide water, pulled gently at the apron-strings.

But the little beast held back. Glenkens could not see and he was not satisfied. He knocked his hard little hoofs on the ground. It was of brittle shale and splintered under the shoe-iron.

"Change places," said Zipporah brusquely to Paul Wester. And after he had leaped to her side she gave him the strings of the apron in which the pony's head was hidden. She herself returned to the left ear of Glenkens, put her arm about his neck, and what they said one to the other no one knows but themselves.