

table he might have steered in-shore! Again and again I confounded—as far as mental ejaculations could do it—his suggestions.

I was rapidly becoming frantic when I met a person who hailed me.

"Hello!" he said, "are you after a canal-boat adrift?"

"Yes," I panted.

"I thought you was," he said. "You looked that way. Well, I can tell you where she is. She's stuck fast in the reeds at the lower end o' Peter's Pint."

"Where's that?" said I.

"Oh, it's about a mile further up. I seed her a-drifting up with the tide—big flood tide, to-day—and I thought I'd see somebody after her, afore long. Anything aboard?"

Anything!

I could not answer the man. Anything, indeed! I hurried on up the river without a word. Was the boat a wreck? I scarcely dared to think of it. I scarcely dared to think at all.

The man called after me and I stopped. I could but stop, no matter what I might hear.

"Hello, mister," he said, "got any tobacco?"

I walked up to him. I took hold of him by the lapel of his coat. It was a dirty lapel, as I remember even now, but I didn't mind that.

"Look here," said I. "Tell me the truth, I can bear it. Was that vessel wrecked?"