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lips. Only once did he pause suddenly in the midst of a breezy refrain, and that was when he glanced into the tiny house and realized what a cozy home it would make for himself and his granddaughter.

The breeze was now freshening, and there were several boats coming down the river together and under full sail. He was in the very act of turning the draw when a carriage dashed upon the bridge, with another scarcely twenty yards behind, and both evidently in a great hurry. The first would reach him considerably in advance of the first boat, with ample time to open the draw, so he waited, though he could hear the sharp "Ahoys!" of the boatmen.

It was now that his experience of winds and tides stood him in good stead. A swift glance, and he could have told to almost a second when the boats would reach the draw. He waited until the first carriage had swept across, and then, with a warning call to the other coachman, swung the draw open to the leading boat, which was less than twenty yards away. After they had passed through he shut the draw for the second carriage.

The coachman was red and angry. "Look here, you bridge man," he cried, "what'd you shut us back for? We're in a big hurry, an' could 'a' got through in another minute, an' there was plenty o' time. D'ye know who I'm carryin'?"

"James! James!" came a stern voice from the carriage; "that is enough. The man did just right. I was watching. It was as fine a bit of calculation as I ever saw." Then as the carriage came opposite the old man, "Let me—but hello! where is the regular keeper?"

"Why sir, I—think he's gone over to ball game for just a few minutes," hesitated the old man.

"And left you to fill his place?"

"Yes, sir."

"You are an experienced bridge keeper, I see."

"N-no, sir. I never tried the work before this."

"U'm! Then you are quick to pick it up. The young man showed you about it, I suppose?"

"No, he—he was in quite a good deal of a hurry, an' just asked me to look out for the work. But I'm handy about pickin' up things. I've been on board ship most o' my life, sir."

"Oh, a sailor. That accounts for your judging of the boats' speed. You're a friend, or perhaps relative of the young man?"

"No, I'm a stranger to everybody here. I've been lookin' for work, but couldn't find any. I was just—sittin' down here a while when the boy spoke to me."

"U'm! a stranger, and he asked you to look out for his job, and did not wait to tell you what to do. You said for just a few minutes, I believe. Can you tell me exactly how long he has been gone?"

The old man hesitated. "Well, ye see, sir," he apologized, "there was a ball game, an' ye know how boys are about such things. Ye mustn't be hard on him. I've done the best I could, an' don't think anything's gone amiss. The money's in on the table there, every cent. The boy means all right, I'm sure."

"Can you tell me how long he has been gone?"

"Two hours, mabbe," reluctantly. "You could not find a job, you say. How would you like this one of bridge keeper?"

The old man caught his breath, and a look came to his face that momentarily transfigured it. The man in the carriage saw, as he had seen everything, even to the work of the broom and brush and the unusual polish of the foot passenger' gate. But the old man shook his head.

"Thank ye kindly, sir," he said, "but I can't do it. I don't want to get the job away from the boy."

"He has lost it already. If you do not take the place some one else will. I think we have made a mistake about young blood. What do you say?"

"Why—I—I—yes, an' thank ye,"

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