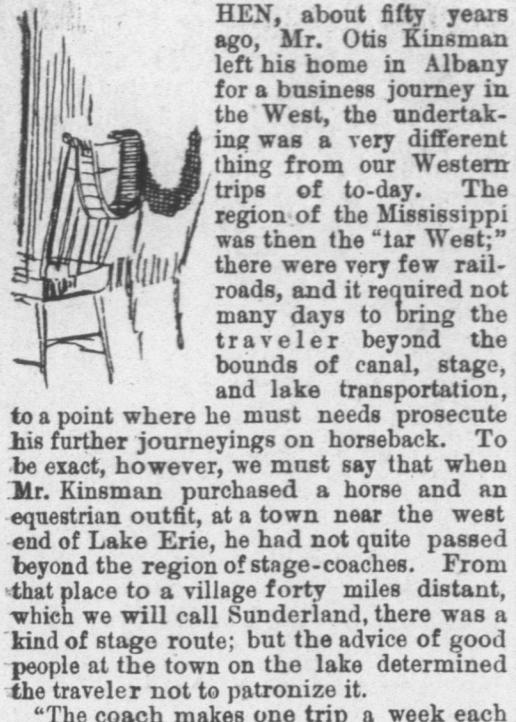


## THE TWO ROADS IN LIFE.

BY JAMES FRANKLIN FITTS.



HEN, about fifty years ago, Mr. Otis Kinsman left his home in Albany for a business journey in the West, the undertaking was a very different thing from our Western trips of to-day. The region of the Mississippi was then the "far West;" there were very few railroads, and it required not many days to bring the traveler beyond the bounds of canal, stage, and lake transportation, to a point where he must needs prosecute his further journeys on horseback. To be exact, however, we must say that when Mr. Kinsman purchased a horse and an equestrian outfit, at a town near the west end of Lake Erie, he had not quite passed beyond the region of stage-coaches. From that place to a village forty miles distant, which we will call Sunderland, there was a kind of stage route; but the advice of good people at the town on the lake determined the traveler not to patronize it.

"The coach makes one trip a week each way," he was told, "and don't leave here next till day after to-morrow. It starts long before daylight, and gets in long after dark. Once I never got through till after midnight—fact! It's a corduroy road, with holes in places deep enough to hide a wheel. And then—"

"Thank you," interrupted Mr. Kinsman.



"Can you take care of me and my horse to-night?"

"The inducements are very strong not to go in this way. I think I will begin my horseback experience here."

He found the road almost as bad as it had been described to him, and though a horseman can get along much better on a poor highway than can a vehicle, it was near ten o'clock at night when he rode into Sunderland. Had not the distance he had ridden, and the time it had required, persuaded him that he must be at the end of his weary day's journey, he might have doubted the fact. Late as it was, there was a moon which showed him a settlement of scattered buildings, put up with little care in the arrangement of streets, and looking not at all like the thrifty and well-ordered village near his Eastern home. But everything yields to hunger and fatigue, and he was not just then disposed to be critical. His friend at the lake town who treated everything in that new country as the proper subject of a joke, had told him that there were two taverns in Sunderland, both of which were about as bad as they could be.

"But which is the best?" Mr. Kinsman asked.

"Well, sir, there ain't any best. Go to either of 'em, and you'll wish you'd gone to the other."

With this information, our traveler did not think it necessary to spend any time in examining and choosing. He stopped at a large frame house before which a round sign in a frame on a high post swung and creaked in the wind, and shouted a loud "Hilloa!" The door opened, and from a lighted room a man appeared in the doorway.

"Can you take care of me and my horse to-night?" the traveler asked.

"I suppose so. Here, Sam: take the animal. Come this way, sir. We can't do very well by you—travel is small, and times hard. Sam, tell some of those lazy women to get the gentleman something to eat."

The room into which the landlord conducted his guest was the bar-room; and to a man of Mr. Kinsman's refined taste and correct principles it presented a repulsive scene. It was odorous with strong tobacco; glasses and decanters filled the shelves behind the counters. At each of two tables in the middle of the floor sat four men, the landlord being one of the number, deeply engaged in playing cards by the light of tallow candles. Small piles of silver money on the tables showed that they were gambling. The faces of all were inflamed with drink, and occasionally a half-suppressed oath was heard. So disagreeable was all this to the guest that, after taking in the whole scene, he was about to request that his horse be brought round, and to seek other quarters, when a movement of the landlord brought his face fully into the light. Mr. Kinsman's attention was immediately arrested by it. He looked long and carefully, and reconsidered his intention. When supper was announced he followed the woman into the next room, and after satisfying his hunger, returned to the bar-room. The clock struck eleven, when the landlord threw down his cards and declared there should be no more playing that night. He had seemed to Mr. Kinsman to be laboring under a sense of the bad impression that the surroundings would make upon his guest; and when some of the players demurred at quitting so soon, he grew emphatic and peremptory, extinguished all the candles but one, and bade them begone. When he was alone with the traveler, he began a half-apology; but the latter soon interrupted him.

"All this speak: for itself, Samson Larrabee," he said. "I am glad to meet you again, but very sorry to find you as I do. You have grown no better in twenty years."

The landlord started back with astonishment.

"Why—why, my name isn't Larrabee!" he said.

"Then you have taken another," said the traveler, quietly. The other stared at him, and then cried out:

"You can't be Otis Kinsman?"

"Indeed, I am; and here's my hand, Samson."

The landlord slowly held out his own. He did not seem well pleased that he had been recognized, and he did not for a moment answer the cheery salutation. Then he said:

"Well, Otis, you've found me, and you'll be welcome to the poor entertainment I can give you; but I'll have you know at the start that I won't submit to any of your sermons. Do you want to go to bed?"

Mr. Kinsman looked very sorrowfully into the face before him, disfigured with excess and bad passions, and simply bowed. The landlord took a candle and he followed him up stairs to a meanly furnished chamber. With a muttered good-night, Larrabee was about to go, when the other's hand was laid on his shoulder.

"Wait, Samson," he said; "there's something I must say."

"Oh, pshaw!" was the impatient answer. The hand detained him, kindly but firmly.

"I have a right to speak," continued Mr. Kinsman. "Was I not your friend when you had very few friends? Did I not try my best to save you from yourself? Remember our boyhood, Samson, and how we were seat-mates at school. I say I have a right to speak to you."

Larrabee took the only chair in the room, thrust his hands in his pocket and his feet out in front, and uttered a dogged "Well?"

"My own life has been a happy and prosperous one since you last saw me," pursued Mr. Kinsman. "I have a beloved family; I have gained a competence; I believe that I have the respect and confidence of my fellow-citizens. I do not say these things boastfully; when I thank God every night that they are as they are, I also pray not to be led into temptation. It is my responsibility to Him and to you that is heavy upon me now. I could not kneel to-night in entreaty for myself and for those I have left at home, did I fail to meet the duty that is thrust upon me this night. I say to you, Samson Larrabee, that all that I am you might have been had you not hardened your heart against the appeals of your best friends and persisted in your evil courses. You—"

"Mighty few 'best friends' there were," was the sullen interruption.

"Don't wrong me in that way, Samson! Did I not try my best to save you, before you utterly went to the bad? After you had sent your wife broken-hearted to the grave, did I give you up?" When the story of the robbery came out, which naturally turned the few against you who were still your friends, you know how I clung to you, and how hard I tried to save you from State's prison. And when your punishment was ended, who offered to take you into his employ, and help you to fight the hard battle to gain honor and respect?"

"It was hopeless," said the sulky Larrabee.

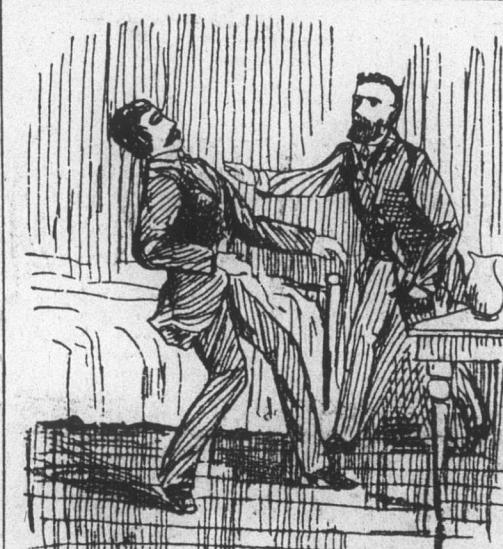
"It was not hopeless!" The fine features of the speaker lighted up with enthusiasm, and his face became radiant. "The fight could have been won then—and it shall be now, if you will give heed to me. My errand here will take me almost to the Mississippi, where I go to purchase a very desirable tract of wild land. On my return I will stop here, and you shall go back with me. I have work for you to do; I remember your ability in business before you threw yourself away. Abandon these degrading associates; close your disreputable business; trust to me, and I pledge you my word!"

The speaker stopped abruptly; an ashen pallor overspread his face, and he sank back upon the bed. Larrabee sprang up, seized the water jug, and dashed part of its contents into the sufferer's face. Observing that it produced a reviving effect, he proceeded to loosen the vest, and, as he did so, he observed between it and the shirt a stout woven belt, such as was used at that day to carry money. He felt with his thumb and finger at the edges, and found it alternately hard and soft in places, as though it contained both gold-pieces and bank notes.

Presently Mr. Kinsman opened his eyes, came back to consciousness, and sat up. He smiled as he saw the landlord standing before him with the water-jug in his hand. "Thank you, Samson," he said. "I'm nearly right again; you did the correct thing. You never knew that I was subject to such attacks, although I began to have them long before you went away. Partial failure of the heart, the doctors say, caused by excitement. I must be careful. There's something more I wish to say, but it's better not to say it now. Think earnestly of what I have said, and in the morning we will talk again on this subject."

So they separated for the night.

Samson Larrabee was up betimes the next morning. He swept the bar and the hall, and gave directions that a good breakfast should be prepared for the guest. He amazed one of his boon companions of the previous night, when he came in and asked for a dram, by telling him sharply to go about his business. He was strangely restless. He strolled about; he



He sank back upon the bed.

sat down and tried to read; once he went out to the front of the house, and looked up at the window of the room where his guest slept. Finally he told the kitchen girl to go up and knock at the door of the chamber and say that breakfast would soon be ready.

The girl went up, and in a few moments returned with the report that she could get no answer from the room.

Then Larrabee went up. The girl, apprehensive of something wrong, had lin-

gered on the stairs. The white face and tottering step of her master as he came down scared her.

"What's wrong with the gentleman, sir?" she asked. "Is he sick?"

"He is dead," said Larrabee, huskily.

The village where these events occurred, although having its full proportion of the lawless and the vicious, was yet under the control of law and order; and a thorough and searching investigation followed. Because of the bad character of Larrabee and his surroundings, it was prosecuted with an expectation of establishing his guilt; but it resulted in his complete vindication.

A post-mortem examination disclosed such a condition of the heart of the deceased that the doctors declared that, in connection with the absence of any external marks of violence, and any other apparent cause, there could be no doubt that death had resulted naturally from organic failure. The money-belt, containing a very large sum, was found upon the body. Samson Larrabee detailed to the Coroner's jury with exactness all the incidents of Mr. Kinsman's stay at his house that have been set down in these columns, and much of what he said was corroborated by others. The verdict was in accordance with these facts. It should be added that sorrowing members of the family, who shortly came from the East to claim the remains, fully concurred in this verdict.

People at Sunderland who had been dissatisfied with this result on account of their feeling against Larrabee, arising out of his vicious life, were soon convinced by the conduct of the man himself that they did him injustice. He was, literally and emphatically, a changed man. The profound sorrow which he exhibited upon the sudden and startling death of Mr. Kinsman could not possibly be feigned. His testimony at the inquest, while given in such a way as to produce a decided impression of its truth, was frequently interrupted by his great emotion. From that day he quit his bad associates, discontinued his business, and turned to hard and honest toil. As the place grew in population and importance, the better man within Samson Larrabee grew with it. And his fortunes flourished in due proportion. He acquired wealth and public honors; he reared a family in virtue and usefulness; there was not a measure for the public improvement, charitable, religious, or educational, that did not find in him a powerful supporter. His life was prolonged beyond the period of three-score and ten; and it is the simple truth to say that he died lamented by all who knew him or knew of him.

White the belief remained unshaken that no crime was committed upon that memorable night at Larrabee's inn, yet, in the minds of those who knew the depravity of the landlord's character before that time, there was a feeling that the whole truth had not been told. The sudden and astonishing change effected in that character seemed to them not explained by anything that had been told. At time went on, and the occurrences here related faded from the recollection of men, a few of the older residents of the place were accustomed to get together, and in reviewing the strange and notable things that had occurred since the settlement of their village, to declare that there was, after all, a mystery about the Kinsman affair.

They were right, although they were not permitted in life to know its solution. But a few years have elapsed since a very aged clergyman, once settled in Sunderland, died in a city far beyond the Mississippi. The human heart and conscience are not made for secrecy; they must confide their sorrows and burdens to other sympathetic hearts; and to this good and reverend man did Samson Larrabee unbosom his secret in the days of his new and better life. The substance of what he said will conclude this history.

The frame of mind and temper in which Mr. Kinsman found his wayward schoolmate that evening was not such as to help the earnest appeals which the good man made to his better nature. Larrabee had been a loser at the gaming-table, and had been drinking upon this evening. The feelings with which he discovered the identity of his guest, and heard him incidentally speak of his own prosperity and happiness, were feelings of hatred and envy. His heart never softened while his friend continued to reprove and entreat him, nor did the eloquent and truthful words arouse any sentiment of gratitude in his breast. When Mr. Kinsman fainted Larrabee almost mechanically took the means to revive him; and while doing so the discovery of a large treasure upon his person instantly excited his cupidity. He went to his chamber and lay down, but not to sleep. Thoughts of the belt, and its rich store of gold and notes, possessed him. Other thoughts of ventures at the gaming-table followed. Then the devil prompted him with the suggestion of how easy it would be to smother a life so frail as that of Mr. Kinsman, and how certainly the death of the latter would be attributed to natural causes. The demon made short work of the man in that conflict. In the still hours of the night, Samson Larrabee had actually stood by the bedside of his sleeping friend, fully prepared for assassination and robbery. In his after years, in spite of his changed heart, in spite of the beauty of his life, this shadow was ever upon him—that he had been a murderer in heart, if not in deed!

As he stood there, preparing to execute his dreadful purpose, a change came over him. Mr. Kinsman was sleeping tranquilly, his benevolent face wearing a look that was almost a smile. The hands of the would-be murderer were arrested by an agent more powerful than anything of mere human means. Conscience cried out within him; a sense of his own ingratitude, and of the unselfish devotion of this friend, smote him keenly. He was a boy again, and sat upon the same seat with Otis Kinsman, studying from the same book. He thought of how he, the older and stronger of the two, had once protected little Otis from the tyranny of a large boy. And now he was about to kill and rob him! He turned and silently left the room.

Perhaps, thus far, enough had happened to work this man's thorough reformation. In the morning, before the startling calamity of the night was made known, his conduct showed that conscience was at work. But the discovery that he made in Mr. Kinsman's chamber that morning plucked him as with a hand of iron from the bad, and turned his feet into better paths.

"If man ever died for man," he solemnly said to the clergyman, "then dear Otis died for me. His life went out from the effects of my eager efforts to win me back. Can you not imagine how I was awed? The visible finger of God seemed raised before me in warning!"

He sank back upon the bed.

It is the easiest thing in the world to discover all the defects in a man when we do not like him.

## MECHANICAL.

A NEW regulator for governing the flow of gas into the furnace of a steam boiler is made by having two chambers, one for steam and the other for gas, each having a diaphragm in connection with valve-openings and connecting lever between the two, whereby an increase of pressure in the steam-generator simultaneously moves the diaphragms in opposite directions, thus diminishing the flow of gas by reducing the size of the valve-opening.

TO CONVEY the iron ore from the San Juan mines in Spain, which lie behind a mountain, to the trunk line, an endless chain railway two miles in length is used. From the tips on the trunk line to the summit of the mountain, which is 1,712 feet above them, is a distance of 2,790 yards, an average gradient of 20.4 per cent., the maximum gradient being 43 per cent. The surplus power on the one side of the mountain is utilized in hauling up the ore from the mine on the other.

THE measurement of the candle-power of electric or any other light is accomplished by comparing the shadow cast by a rod in the light of a standard candle with the shadow cast by the light to be tested. By moving the latter toward or away from the rod a point will be reached at which the shadow of both will be of equal intensity; and the intensity of each is directly proportional to the squares of their distance from the shadows; for instance, if the light to be tested is ten times the distance of the candle, its intensity of light, or illuminating power, is 100 times as great.

A MACHINE has been brought out for cutting up old timber into firewood, and tying it in bundles ready for sale. It consists essentially of a chopping-knife actuated like a mortise chisel. The timber is fed into the machine in lengths of about six inches, and the chisel splits them up along the grain of the wood. They pass out of the machine into a box, which, by agitation, settles them into the smallest bulk. They are then formed into bundles by mechanical means, compressed, and bound by wire. A firewood-bundling machine, worked by a pedal for smaller requirements, has also been introduced.—*Cassell's*.

RETAINED in perfect running order in the United States Steamboat Inspector's office in this city is an oscillating engine constructed in 1809 by Daniel French. It is only of model size, and is probably the first engine of the kind ever constructed. Its description is simple. Having its piston-rod attached directly to the crank-pin, as the crank revolves the cylinder oscillates upon trunnions, one on each side of it, through which the steam enters and leaves the steam-chest. The valves are within the steam-chests, oscillating with the cylinder. It is perhaps as satisfactory an engine of this class as has ever been built, for it is well known that the mechanism of the actuating valves in oscillating steam engines has seldom proved perfectly satisfactory in its operation.—*Louisville Courier-Journal*.

THE Trial of Aaron Burr.

Immediately upon the close of his office as Vice President, Burr started on an expedition to the Mississippi Valley, to work up among the people of that locality his scheme for establishing an independent republic west of the Mississippi. He found a number of citizens and some Government officials ready to fall in with his plans, and there seems little doubt that for a time James Wilkinson, General-in-Chief of the army and Governor of Louisiana Territory, was inclined favorably toward the scheme. Probably this was because he was not aware of its extent and enormity at first, for later he made every effort to thwart the plan, and it was through his information that the attention of the Government was called to Burr's plans. In November, 1803, Burr was arrested and summoned before a grand jury at Frankfort, Ky., but no bill was found against him, owing to difficulty of procuring witnesses, and he was released, and his friends celebrated his triumph with a grand ball. But meanwhile President Jackson had commissioned Graham, the Secretary of the Orleans Territory, to investigate the reports about Burr, and immediately afterward he issued a proclamation against "an unlawful scheme set on foot for invading the Spanish dominions." Graham, securing from the Legislatures of Ohio and Kentucky the requisite authority, seized a number of boats on the Muskingum and Ohio Rivers which Burr had fitted out for his expedition. Burr, hearing of the seizures, made his escape to the west shore of the Mississippi, but a body of militia was sent, under the President's proclamation, to arrest him. He had previously had all his cases of arms thrown into the river, and therefore assumed the pretense of utter innocence of any hostile intentions, demanding that he and all those with him should be searched, and his boats examined for evidence of his revolutionary designs. As nothing of the sort was found, a strong sentiment in his favor was aroused. He was brought before the Supreme Court of the Territory, but the Grand Jury not only refused to bring any indictment against him, but presented charges against the Governor for calling out the militia to arrest him. Burr, now free, resolved to disband all his followers and leave the country.

Old men should be careful of their health. They should not go to the theater in damp weather without a shirt. It is also advisable to wear something on the feet. Old men will find it to their interest not to remain on a railroad track until after a train has passed. Well-read physicians now generally agree that heavy freight trains, especially late at night, are hard to digest.

Old men, especially in a cold climate, should not go in swimming until after the first of January, nor recline on ice in the evening.

An old man should marry a very young woman. It teaches him that there is nothing in life after all, and reconciles him to death.

By observing these and other rules old men have attained great age.—*Arkansas Traveler*.

scheme for the overthrow of the national authority in the Western States and Territories. As there was not sufficient evidence against him, however, on this trial, he was acquitted.—*Inter Ocean*.

## Snake Stories.

Mr. Josh Bailey, of Brookville, Florida, was lounging in a hammock one hot afternoon when an ominous noise warned him that a rattlesnake was near by and ready for business. Mr. Bailey tumbled out of the hammock just in time to avoid the reptile's spring, but recovered himself quickly and caught the snake by the neck while it was still in midair. Then he took the vicious reptile back to the woodshed, and laying its head on a block chopped it off with a hatchet. The snake was 7½ feet long and nearly ten inches in circumference. It struggled desperately while in Mr. Bailey's grasp, and winding its coils around his arm almost crushed it.

Sheriff Roberts, of Hart County, Georgia, was awakened from a sound sleep by the clammy touch of a huge snake which crawled directly over his face. The reptile's belly felt like a big icicle, according to the Sheriff's account of the incident, and seemed to take an hour in passing. Finally, to his great relief, the reptile drew its slimy length away, and the Sheriff struck a light and tried to find it. But the snake had disappeared, and,