

“Two Frenchman”
by F. W. Hutchinson

Many years ago, two Frenchmen, traveling through a new, wild forest country, came upon a cross that was all covered with flowers. As there were no white men in this country, the Frenchmen wondered who had put the cross there, and who had placed the flowers on it. Later they learned that the Indians in this part of the country had laid the flowers on the cross. Then the Frenchmen knew that these Indians were friends because, everywhere the French went, they carried the cross and taught the Indians who loved them to place flowers on it.

These two Frenchmen were very good men. They treated the Indians kindly, and the Indians, who liked to be treated

kindly, were also good to the Frenchmen. If you want people to be good to you, then you must always be kind to them.

All the Frenchmen who came to America knew this, and from the first they were kind to the Indians. The Spaniards had been very harsh. They had killed them or made slaves of them, and sometimes the Indians had been cruelly beaten until they died. They had been tortured, too. It is no surprise that the Indians did not love the Spaniards.

The English and Dutch who came to America were not quite so cruel as the Spaniards, but sometimes they, too, treated the Indians harshly. For a very little wrong they would shoot an Indian or burn down a whole Indian village. Besides, they were very proud and

thought that the Indians were only savages and they did not want to have anything to do with them.

The Frenchmen who came to America acted much more wisely. They really loved the Indians, and often lived with them in their poor little villages. Some of the Frenchmen had been great lords in their own country. They had had beautiful castles with fine, big rooms, and gold and silver and wonderful carpets. They had had many servants to wait on them, and everything in the world that they wanted.

Yet, these men were not too proud to sleep on the ground in an Indian hut or to share with him a meal of corn and dried meat. They hunted and fished with the Indians. They smoked their pipes.

Indians and Frenchmen sat around the roaring campfire and talked together, or looked up in silence at the bright little stars. Wherever the Frenchmen went, they put up little chapels, and here Frenchmen and Indians kneeled down side by side and prayed to the good God. The French priest would baptize their children, and, when they grew old enough to understand, he would teach them about God and the Bible.

Some Indians became Christians, and hung flowers on the little crosses which the Frenchmen built all over the country. And so it was that when our two Frenchmen saw the flowers on the cross, they rejoiced and were glad, because they knew that even in this wild country, far away from France, they were with friends.