

“Two Frenchman”  
by F. W. Hutchinson

The Frenchmen feared that the sharp eyes of unfriendly Indians might see the smoke and that they might come and cut off their scalps while they slept. They tied their canoes to the shore and they rolled themselves up in blankets, so as to be ready to wake in a minute and paddle away. They also made one of their men stay awake all night to watch for the Indians; but, for eight days, there was not a man in sight.

On the ninth day, they saw a path leading up from the river, and they knew that this path must go to an Indian village. Joliet and Father Marquette did not know if these Indians were friendly; but they were both brave men. Maybe

their hearts beat a little faster, as they thought that, perhaps, the Indians would kill them. They did not show any fear as they walked up the path to the village.

The Indians were friendly after all. The chief came forward with hands raised above his head, which was always a sign of friendship. Then others waved the long pipe of peace, which was the same as though they had said, "Let us be friends!" The two Frenchmen were invited to dinner, and the chief told them stories about the Great River and about the other Indians that lived along its banks. At last, when Joliet and Father Marquette said good-bye, all the Indians went with them as far as the river. The Indian chief gave them a present better than gold, silver, diamonds, or rubies.

You may want to know what was this present that was better than gold, or silver, or diamonds, or rubies. Well, it was a pipe. Not a stale old pipe, such as a man carries in his pocket, but the calumet, the pipe of peace. Wherever Joliet and Father Marquette went, all they had to do was to show this calumet, or pipe of peace, and every Indian knew that the great chief was the good friend of these French men. Many times this pipe saved their lives.

Wherever they went, Joliet and Father Marquette showed the calumet of the great Indian chief, and then the other Indians were friendly too. In time, the Indians liked them for their own sakes; so down the river they sailed, past big forests and beautiful, rolling prairies, until one

day they saw a wide, yellow river that flowed into the Mississippi. This was the Missouri, a great, yellow, roaring river. If they had time, the two Frenchmen would have sailed up it; but they could not stop. Day after day they sailed on down, down, down the Mississippi. They must have had a good time of it, seeing a new country all the while; but they did not go the whole way. When they had gone many hundreds of miles, they were told stories of some very cruel Indians who lived in the South. The friendly Indians said to them, “If you fall into the hands of these bad Indians, they will surely tie you to a pole and burn you alive. If you escape, perhaps the Spaniards will catch you for they are as wicked as the others.”