

“Two Frenchman”
by F. W. Hutchinson

Joliet and Father Marquette talked it over for a long time. They decided it would be wiser to go back. Slowly they sailed up the Mississippi, crossed land to the Great Lakes, and back the same way they had come. On the way home, graceful, white swans with long, beautiful necks swam on little silver lakes. In the dark, green forests were cattle, goats, and beautiful brown deer with wonderful horns. At last they reached Quebec. All the townspeople wanted to hear of their great adventures and lucky escapes.

There was a brave man named La Salle, who heard these stories from the mouth of Joliet. This La Salle was a very great man in France. His family were

nobles and were very rich. Young La Salle, whose first name was Robert, had been well brought up and had been taught many things. He even became a priest, and everybody said that Robert La Salle was a good and wise man.

Robert La Salle wanted to go to America, not only to find new lands, but also to find a new way to the Pacific Ocean. He gave up being a priest and went to the new country of America.

La Salle was a wise man who thought a great deal and now he thought of a new plan. His plan was to build French forts, very little but very strong, along the Great Lakes and the Mississippi River. At the mouth of the Mississippi, he planned a great fort. He wanted to put French soldiers in these forts, so that the whole

river and the country around would belong to France. When this was done, Frenchmen could go everywhere to get furs. Soon little cities could be built. There would be a great, strong New France in America, so the dream of Champlain would come true.

The first thing La Salle did was sail down the great Mississippi and find the best places for his forts and trading posts; and this was not an easy thing to do. In those days, it was a long, hard journey from Quebec to the mouth of the Great River. La Salle tried many times before he succeeded. On the first trip, his ship was wrecked in a great storm and nearly everything was lost. Then, he had no food and had to sail back many miles for bread and meat. Later, his money ran

out, and he waited until he had sold enough furs to buy a new ship. When his men tried to sail on the lakes, the wind blew against them. Many times they had to sleep on the icy ground with nothing but the sky over them. Often they had no food but a few handfuls of corn.

The worst trouble that La Salle had was with his men. They did not want to do much work, and they were always complaining because the journey was so hard and because they had nothing to eat. They knew very well before they started that it would not be easy, and they ought not to have complained; but so it is with people. Some, like La Salle's men, will grumble and grumble over every little thing, while others will bear all sorts of hardship and never say a word.