

“Two Frenchman”  
by F. W. Hutchinson

La Salle had two men who never complained—his faithful French friend, Tonti, and a faithful Indian friend. These two men, a Frenchman and an Indian, loved La Salle and did what he asked. The Indian knew the forest. He could find his way through the great, thick trees even in the dark; so La Salle took him as his guide. When everybody else was tired and cross, this good Indian was as brave and patient as ever. He loved La Salle because the Frenchman was always kind.

All the time the troubles of La Salle grew worse and worse. Sometimes the little streams were filled with ice, so that the canoes had to be moved on sledges. Sometimes these brave men had to wade

for miles in water up to their waists. Of course, the brambles and thorns tore their clothing to rags, and, when it grew cold, their clothes froze as hard as ice. Then they had to stop and build a fire before they could go any further.

These were times when La Salle's brave heart almost broke, but not once did he give up. He tried, day after day, till at last, after years of disappointment, La Salle reached the Mississippi's mouth. His patience and perseverance were finally rewarded. In February, over three hundred years ago, that La Salle gave the "Father of Waters" and all the country nearby to the King of France.

You can imagine the joy of La Salle when at last he reached the end of his long journey. He put up a cross on the

banks of the river. He asked all his men to kneel down and pray. Then it was that he named the new country Louisiana, in honor of King Louis, and, in a loud voice, called out that from that time on all the land should belong to France.

For many years, the great country of the Mississippi belonged to France. Years later, when the grandchildren of the men who had served La Salle were all dead, a new country grew up—our country, the United States. To us the French sold all this country of the Mississippi. The name of Louisiana is still the name of one of our states, and even today all Americans think of La Salle as a great and good man who did well for his country.

For all his good deeds La Salle received no reward. Two years after

finding the Mississippi's mouth, he returned with four ships and two hundred eighty men. He wanted to build the city and fort planned so many years before; but the boat captain was a very stupid and jealous man. He took La Salle to the wrong place. When La Salle wanted him to sail again and try once more to find the mouth of the river, this evil man would not do so; so La Salle started by land. He had no map, and it was much further than he thought.

There were many hardships. His men grumbled and would not do as he said. Two men, who were very wicked, hid behind trees. When La Salle was walking to the camp, they shot him dead. That was the end of Robert La Salle, the man who found the mouth of the Mississippi.