

—the pickets about one foot in diameter, and squared on the outside.¹

It was no long labor to build such a defence. In 1727, the missionary, Father Guignas, voyaging up the Mississippi, passed Prairie du Chien, and made an establishment on the north shore of Lake Pepin. He wrote in his diary: "The day after landing we put our axes to the wood. On the fourth day following, the fort was entirely finished."²

On the thirteenth of March, 1682, La Salle's men, near the mouth of the Arkansas, "threw up a rude fort of felled trees in less than an hour."³

Lest it should be thought that Prairie du Chien is too far west for us to expect to discover a French fortification there, let it be noted that before 1724, Fort Orleans had been built hundreds of miles up the Missouri, near the mouth of Grand River.⁴

On the whole, every one familiar with the habits of French pioneers in the wide West, will admit that many forts must have been thrown up by them in emergencies, and then have perished without their names ever being put on record. "They had no poet, and they died."

Even in the absence of all evidence then, it would appear a bold assertion that there was never any French military post near the mouth of the Wisconsin, unless "some official French document can be discovered giving an account of such work, or some traveler mentions it."

But is all evidence of a French fort at Prairie du Chien lacking? By no means.

In the *American State Papers* regarding Public Lands⁵ we read that on February 25th, 1818, Hon. George Robertson, from the committee on public lands, reported to the house of representatives, that "in the year 1755 the gov-

¹ Pike's *Travels*, App. p. 38.

² Shea's *Early Voyages Up and Down the Mississippi*, p. 172.

³ Parkman's *La Salle*, p. 278.

⁴ Davis & Durrie's *Hist. Missouri*, pp. 11, 12; Dr. John Mitchell's *Conquest in America*, p. 196.

⁵ Vol. iii, p. 341.