

1649. had left their provisions and a reserve corps to cover their retreat in case of repulse. As the sound of these two attacks had drawn a number of Huron warriors to the ground, the next two days were spent in skirmishes, the issue of which varied greatly, and especially near St. Mary's, which was only a league from St. Louis.

This was a pretty populous town, many Frenchmen residing there with the missionaries, and a careful watch being always kept. Nevertheless, two hundred Iroquois approached on the 17th, to see what face they made ; but, advancing somewhat too far, they fell into an ambuscade. Many were killed, several taken, and the rest pursued to St. Louis, where the main body was encamped. The Hurons, ignorant of this, were in turn taken by surprise. When they least expected it they found themselves confronted by eight hundred men, and no means of escape left. Yet they did not lose heart. They fought all day ; and, in spite of the inequality of numbers, the advantage was for a long time on the Huron side. But at last, spent with weariness, unable to wield their arms, reduced to a handful, and most of them wounded, they were all made prisoners.

They were the bravest men of the nation,¹ and great was the consternation at St. Mary's when their defeat became known. Fears were even entertained that the place could not resist an assault if the enemy attempted it ; and the whole of the ensuing day passed in anxiety and alarm, the more founded, as the Iroquois were actually approaching. To avert the threatened misfortune they had recourse to Heaven, and invoked St. Joseph,²

¹ The Hurons who sallied out were Atinniaocenten or Bears, the *élite* of the Christians of the towns of the Conception and Magdalen. Their skirmishers in front were routed by the Iroquois, with loss ; but they drove the Iroquois behind the still standing palisade of St.

Louis and stormed it, taking thirty prisoners. Here they intrenched, and held it till all were killed or taken. The Iroquois lost nearly one hundred : *Relation de la Nouvelle France*, 1649, p. 12 ; *Gobat, Relatio Historica*, p. 79.

² *Creuxius, Hist. Canad.*, p. 543.