

marshes form a tract more than fifty leagues square, and are traversed by no river save that of Louisiana [the Mississippi]; its course lies through the midst of them, and part of their waters discharge into it. Other waters fall into the Ste. Croix River, which is situated northeast of them, at no great distance. Still other marshes and lakes are situated to the west of the St. Peter River, into which their waters flow. Consequently, the Scioux are inaccessible in so swampy a country, and cannot be destroyed by enemies who have not canoes, as they have, with which to pursue them. Moreover, in those quarters only five or six families live together as one body, forming a small village; and all the others are removed from one another at certain distances, in order that they may be able to lend a helping hand at the first alarm. If any one of these little villages be attacked, the enemy can inflict very little damage upon it, for all its neighbors promptly assemble, and give prompt aid wherever it is needed. Their method of navigation in lakes of this kind is, to push through the wild rice with their canoes, and, carrying these from lake to lake, compel the fleeing enemy to turn about, and thus bewilder him; they, meanwhile, pass from one lake to another until they thread those mazes and reach the firm ground.

The hundred Hurons became involved among these swamps, and without canoes; they were discovered by some Scioux, who hastened to spread the alarm everywhere. That was a populous nation, scattered along the circumference of the marshes, in which they gathered abundance of wild rice; this grain is the food of those people, and tastes better than does rice. More than 3,000 Scioux came together from every side, and besieged the Hurons. The loud noise, the clamor, and the yells with which the air resounded showed them that they were surrounded on all sides, and that their only resource was to make head against the Scioux (who were eagerly striving to discover their location), unless they could find some place by which they could retreat. In this straitened condition, they concluded that they could not do better than to hide among the wild rice, where the water and mud reached almost to their chins. Accordingly, they dispersed in various directions, taking great pains to avoid noise in their progress. The Scioux, who were sharply search-