

settlers under the same conditions and circumstances; while the Belgians themselves had been too busy to cultivate friendly relations with the German, Irish, or Scandinavian settlements, ten or fifteen miles away from them. They had not yet exercised their right of suffrage. The people of the county regarded them as of little or no account; and probably for that reason the Belgians had not yet been able to obtain any help, either for the building of churches or schools or for procuring teachers,—not even help for opening highways leading to their settlements.

The time for action had now arrived. It did not take long to demonstrate to the leaders of other settlements, and of the county at large, that the Belgians could vote quite as well as they could; that they had some rights which entitled them, if not to their sympathy, at least to respect, and that one of those rights was the privilege of voting for whom they pleased. The first election attended by the Belgian pioneers, was one for the town of Green Bay, held in April, 1858. The nearest polling-place was near the wind-mill at Bay Settlement, ten miles away from the Belgian settlement. There the Belgians went, 230 strong, all prepared with tickets especially printed for them, marching in double file to the poll; and there they for the first time in their adopted country exercised their rights as American citizens.

It is needless to say that every man on that Belgian ticket was elected; and from that time on, the Belgian element was recognized in this and adjoining counties as an important factor in the election of town, county, and state officers. The ice is now broken; the Belgian settlers are regarded by the people of other settlements as an honest, industrious, and intelligent people; their friendship and their votes are courted.

The writer having been at this and following elections chosen justice of the peace, town clerk, and school superintendent, was instrumental in establishing school districts, building school-houses, and obtaining teachers. Roads were