It was not child’s play to venture out on such a night. The snow had accumulated into huge drifts, and common sense would have declared it impossible to negotiate the ordinarily bad trail in the black night without the guidance of a single star. Notwithstanding this, Carl took his lantern and proceeded to a settlement about a mile away where two American families lived. The women had previously made friendly calls on Lotten and promised their help, when needed, but who would ask anybody to venture out on foot in such a night and in such weather? These women did not belong to the cultured or so-called ‘better class,’ but on the contrary evinced in their manner a rather commonplace personality void of finer feelings. But under such a surface was hidden a warm, sincere and unselfish sympathy, and not sympathy alone, but a determination and willingness to help others in distress, characteristics perhaps more of Americans than of any other people, and of which we now found ample proof and always gratefully remembered. They left their husbands to care for the children and without hesitation followed Carl into the cold, dark, and stormy night, sometimes walking up to their waists in the icy drifts to our home, there to perform the voluntarily offered duties of Christian mothers.

In the expectation of what was about to take place, Petterson kindly offered to remain a few days and do the necessary chores, and next to God I have Polman and the two kind women to thank for the joy of having my wife survive that night and for the overwhelming pride in pressing my first-born to my breast the following morning.

A few months previously Mr. Breck and his two comrades in the mission field had moved to within three miles of our home. There, on a beautiful tract of land on Upper Nashotah lake, they had built their unpretentious cottage. Another section was bought in the name of the Episcopal church, on which they intended to later erect a chapel and a school and from which they would extend their missionary activities. On my visit Mr. Breck showed me around the beautiful oak meadow and the placid lake below, surrounded by wooded hills and dells, and also the nearby location for the foundation and building material for the proposed chapel. Within a few days Mr. Breck, according to my wish, put in an appearance at our home. The Scandinavian settlers were then not yet so numerous but what they could all join us in celebrating the act of holy baptism of the first Swedish-American child born in this region. And it seems to have been the first baptism in the whole district, as neither Mr. Breck nor his associates had ever officiated at such an event anywhere in their missionary field.

ASSOCIATION WITH INDIANS

The colonists were the only settlers on the lake and were happy to think of the abundant supply of fish that was
there for the taking. At the upper end they found a peninsula, at that time almost an island due to the high water and impenetrable underbrush on the connecting strip of land. It was thickly covered by oaks, lindens, and cedars, and had undoubtedly never been trodden by the foot of man. In the highest tree was an eagle's nest, and a proud pair of birds, majestically circling above, warningly defied any intrusion into their aerie and their kingdom. The narrative continues:

One day—the ice was yet clear as a mirror on Pine lake, and we were now quite familiar with its surroundings—we were much surprised at an unusual noise down by the shore. Suddenly four deer in wild jumps rushed by us and out on the ice, and almost at the same moment an Indian darting out with lightning rapidity pursued the fleet-footed animals and readily overtook them, whose light hoofs could not get any foothold on the slippery ice. With great agility and surety he cut with his battle-axe the hamstrings on one hind leg of each of the animals, who were thus made helpless and soon dispatched with his hunting knife. All this was a moment's work, and we had hardly recovered from our astonishment at this for us new and unusual hunting scene when the Indian, calm as if he had just caught a fly, gathered in his game and sat down in the midst of it.

This mighty hunter was a chief of the Potawatomi tribe, and the first Indian with whom we became intimately acquainted. He was invited into the white man's wigwam and treated to what the modest home could afford, and he showed in return an appreciation quite opposite to that of the Winnebago chief, who had shortly before visited us. He examined all our guns carefully, which did not seem to particularly strike his fancy, except a rifle, which had at one time belonged to King Fredrik of Sweden, and was now an heirloom in the family. For this weapon he was willing to 'swap' all his four deer with additional game to boot. My companion, however, to whom the gun belonged, did not wish to part with it at any price. The gun was then loaded for target shooting, in which the Indian took a special interest. Carl, my friend and companion, made a fairly good free-hand shot, but when the Indian's turn came, he took aim, resting the gun barrel against a tree, and scored a bull's-eye. The outcome was that the Indian was allowed to borrow the gun for a few days under faithful promises of its return. We had later many opportunities to observe how the Indians, skillful though they are, always rested the gun against a tree or on the knee. If within gun shot of a deer, the Indian first seeks a tree to steady his gun and then makes a
braying sound like that of a sheep, which generally makes the deer stop from curiosity, and finally he shoots. A deer is never shot at in flight.

Ke-Wah-Goosh-Kum, with several of his tribe, was camped for a few days at the north end of the lake. He promised us another visit sometime later and until that time begged for a loan of $2.00. In spite of our reduced assets we consented not so much in the hope of repayment, which seemed doubtful, but in the expectation that the favor would tend to create a friendly feeling on his part toward us. However, it was proven later that an obligation assumed by Ke-Wah-Goosh-Kum was not of the uncertain kind, as he some months later returned to this region and repaid the loan. I also had occasion later on to thank our friendship as the means of being extricated from a rather threatening situation.

AN INDIAN HUNT

Our old friend Ke-Wah-Goosh-Kum entered our cabin quite unexpectedly one day. Several months had gone by since his last visit, and although he had promised the return of the gun in a few days, he now, better late than never, brought it back in good condition and, consequently, did not violate the confidence which the white man had placed in him. In a few unintelligible words he tried to explain his long absence, but whether he had spent the time in hunting or in war with other tribes, we could not understand. From the manner in which he pointed at the rifle, as well as at his tomahawk, the inference could be taken either way.

The Indian chief, with his tribe, had again made camp at the north end of the lake where they remained longer than usual. We became closer friends, and a hunt was proposed—a favor rarely granted the white man by an Indian. The Great Spirit, they say, has taught the white man to make a living without hunting and, consequently, he does not need it, while the Indian must hunt or starve. They conclude, therefore, that the white man has no right to hunt.

It was apparent that quite a number of deer were here about, and we anticipated a great deal of game under the guidance of such an experienced hunter. The ground was well covered with snow, and it was impossible to penetrate the dense forest with any degree of rapidity without snowshoes. The chief got us some, and in my first attempt to use them, I learned why the Indians from early childhood were accustomed to walk with the toes straight forward. Personally, I was rather awkward, and my heels frequently got tangled up, precipitating me into a snowdrift.

After more than an hour's walk, we were told to separate, each taking a certain direction, as the hunt was about to begin. A small tarn at some distance away was agreed upon as a meeting place, where some other Indians would come who had been sent out before to form a sort of hunting-chain in an attempt to drive the deer in a certain direction. This was a disappointment, as I had hoped to be the personal companion of the