

CHAPTER V

Town Hall Tonight

THESE ARE MAGIC WORDS WHICH OFTEN CHANGED THE monotony of our lives into the lilting rhythm of waltz-time. Manitou had the name of being a good show town, which means we all rallied to the call when the word went forth that some concert party, dance, or magician was coming. Our population being then, as now, about nine hundred, we, the footloose and show-minded, could fill the hall, so I think we got every attraction that, in the early nineties, ever took to the road.

And how we enjoyed them! Harold Nelson, and his Shakespearean players, the Cosgroves, with Marietta LaDell, Jessie McLaughlin, Edith Miller, Edith Sutherland, Nanny Strachan and Gavin Spence, the Swiss Bell Ringers—the beautiful Palmatier sisters, the Jubilee Singers, the Webling sisters, and our own George Rutherford and Minnie Ruttan.

I can recapture the feeling of rapture as we walked to the hall, carrying our coats on a fine spring or summer evening. The fine weather did not mean the end of the concert season for us. Far from it. No doubt the entertainers preferred warm weather and we were never too busy to come.

The hall may have been a drab little place, with nothing but a raised platform and coal oil footlights, but when the blinds were drawn and all the lamps lighted and the audience assembled, no opera house that I have ever been in gave out a greater feeling of high