

to write as you please. No one wants bare facts; no one is satisfied with bare facts; we want to light candles of imagination in the minds of our people". . . .

I did not tell all this to Wes. He had a blunt way of puncturing some of my beautiful balloons, and the worst of it was he was generally right. Very rarely have I had the satisfaction of saying to him: "I told you so". Many years after, Robert E. Knowles defined Wes in a brief sentence: "That man of yours", he said, "can do a lot of washing in a very few suds." So I held my peace but worked hard. I interviewed people, walked miles, dug into the newspaper files in the office of the *Manitou Mercury*, making elaborate notes and dreaming great dreams of what a native writer can do for a community.

I had no difficulty in getting the old-timers to talk. They blossomed out under my rapt listening, and I soon saw that every house had a story. I got the low-down on the family rows, hot off the griddle. Many of the people in Manitou had come from the same part of Ontario, and I found out that they had long memories for old sins and old sorrows. One thing bothered me. I had to do indirect advertising for the business firms, for of course, like all up-to-date magazines, we had to depend on advertising for our revenue. Our expenses would naturally be heavy, for we were going to use the best of everything. We were going to make our province known far beyond our boundaries.

It was not so easy, for example, to make the Ice Cream Parlor and Confectionery, sound attractive, where the fly-paper hung from the ceiling far into the autumn, and the proprietor, big, fat, lazy Bill Summers, had to be sent for by the Post Master to empty his box. Bill had an excellent excuse for this. He said he knew that all his letters were bills, and he never did like bills, and besides he knew what he owed the wholesale as well as they did,