



My DIARY of Three Years with the DIONNE QUINTUPLETS

by Nurse YVONNE LEROUX



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"They are getting to be scrappers," Nurse Leroux wrote.
"We often have to separate them."

Part V

AFTER the excitement of filming "The Country Doctor" was over, life in the quintuplets' nursery quickly resumed its normal routine.

With the movies out of the way, my diary reads:

"Dec. 16. The babes were inoculated (for diphtheria) today. They didn't mind it very much. The doctor hated to do it, I think.

"Dec. 18. Yvonne and Annette cut their fingers, but not seriously; put adhesive on them. Annette sucked hers off—and Yvonne is very proud of hers.

"Dec. 19. Yvonne and Emilie had a fight today. Annette and Emilie had a fight. Marie got into a fight and had her diaper pulled off.

"Dec. 21. They pulled the curtains and rods down today. Annette and Yvonne tried to tell me about the snow sliding down off the roof.

"Dec. 23. They had a grand time watching the Christmas tree go up. They are all so lovable and charming I could fill a book about them. . . . I've removed the curtains and rods."

I can't describe the babes' second Christmas. My brother died, and I went on leave of absence on Dec. 25. My diary resumes:

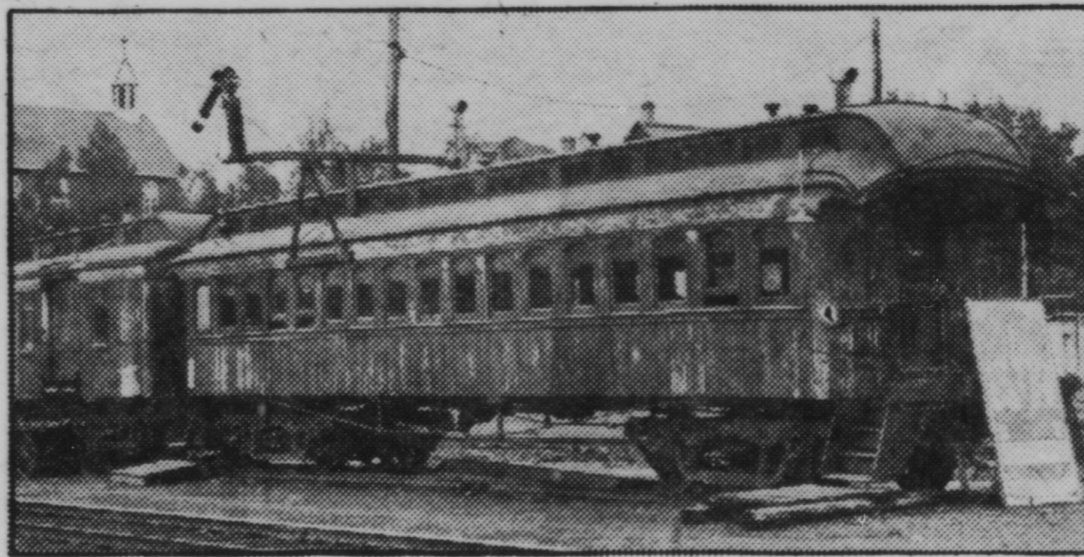
"Dec. 29. Babes recognized me and were glad to see me. Marie is very cross today. I guess she was spoiled.

"Jan. 2. Babes slept very well outdoors today. They have been rather restless. Have slight colds in the nose.

"Jan. 3. Yvonne blows her nose with great force. She reaches for the tissue and blows and blows—and then laughs at the stir she makes. They are getting to be scrappers—pull each other's hair and bite, and tease each other by offering toys and pulling them away. We have to separate them quite often, but they soon make up and play together again.

"JAN. 4. The babes have been climbing on radiators and falling or pushing each other off. We have finally managed to make them stop by taking them off each time and telling them that they're not to do this. They still fight. Marie delights in stealing toys, etc.

"Jan. 5. Went out of nursery for about five minutes; came back and nearly fainted—Yvonne was covered with blood. It was in her eyes, her hair, all over her clothes, all over the others who were standing around patting her on the back and getting some blood on their hands. She must have fallen on



The old railway station at Callander, Ont.—just a coach equipped with a semaphore and ticket office. It has now been replaced by a real station. . . .
At top, a rush of visitors entering the grounds of the quins' nursery.

something and cut her forehead open about half an inch. There was no crying, though—just a pleasant time. I put iodine and a bandage on but it soon came off—everybody picked at it.

"Jan. 11. Marie can stand alone. She is afraid of walking and slides down as soon as someone tries to encourage her.

"Jan. 12. Doctors up from Toronto to X-ray the bone structure of the babes to determine just how well they are getting along. The plates show very good and strong bone formation.

"Jan. 13. Emilie tried to climb out of the bathtub and fell out. Marie refuses to eat coddled eggs—we have to scramble hers. Yvonne is trying to eat alone and gets it all over.

"Jan. 15. Marie ducks her head under water in the bath—and also gets her mouth even with the water and gurgles. She is taking a few steps.

"Jan. 17. Marie is walking much better.

"Jan. 21. The babes are doing their best to talk. They point for toys and things and jabber away in earnest."

A NEW landmark in the girls' growth was recorded in the entry for Feb. 18—"Morning sleep stopped; babes allowed to play all morning"; and Yvonne provided the entry of Feb. 22, as follows:

"Yvonne has started climbing—up on chairs, out of the play pen, and also out of bed. She goes around picking things up for her sisters, who stand in the play pen watching her in envy and excitement, and cheer her on to greater feats."

Further entries from the quins' second winter:

"Feb. 25. Marie, who can hardly stand straight, climbs on radiators and chairs. It's hard work, but she's cheerful about it—especially if she succeeds.

"March 1. It is a sight to see the babes out in the snow. They are so warmly dressed they look like humpty-dumpties. Their rubbers are forever coming off and then they all start to yell and point to their feet."

Another sick spell occurred in March, but it soon passed, and by March 10 I was writing of their attempts to clean the windows in imitation of the maid.

"March 11. Yvonne, who can get out of bed quite easily, runs around getting toys for her less fortunate sisters in bed. They throw them down just to see her pick them up. . . . The babes love to wash their hands in the basin and we always have a hard time getting them to stop.

"March 12. The babes brush their own teeth. It is rather a haphazard brushing at times, but they get the hang of it. . . . Emilie and Yvonne won't stay in bed. They both get out as fast as we put them back. When spied they run and hide under somebody's bed, and giggle.

"March 20. Marie is walking very well. Guess the crawl stage is over. She loves biting her sisters, and must be broken of that habit.

"March 27. This is the fifth night Emilie has been put back in bed. First night—51 times; second night, 46—and so on.

"April 1. Emilie put back in bed about 15 times tonight.

"APRIL 2. Emilie started out of bed again tonight so I pinned the legs of her pajamas together, so she couldn't get over the edge of the bed. She fell asleep shortly afterward.

"April 3. Out in the snow for an hour today. They love walking around and occasionally sink through the crust; then everybody sympathizes with 'Ohhhhs' and 'Ahhhs'.

"April 6. Emilie insists on waking at 5:30 every morning. She can't get out of bed so she lies there and talks to herself. It is so nice—to lie there in the dark and listen to her. It is like listening to the birds in early dawn.

"April 16. Yvonne, Annette and Cecile can say 'Docteur.' They know his car when it comes and flock over to the window, screeching, when it appears. . . . They love to see their mother and father coming over.

"May 6. Marie is playing much better. She doesn't need so much entertainment and direction of playing. She is also being more sociable with the others, who are very sociable—that is they help each other out, give each other toys, smile at each other, etc.

"May 23. The babes kneel down of their own accord when a prayer lullaby is sung. It is really more of a squat, but they do very well, and try to cross their hands. They throw kisses at the picture of Jesus."

The quintuplets passed their second birthday without incident. Marie celebrated the occasion by saying "docteur" for the first time. We began the third summer of the girls' life without incident. A few typical diary entries:

"June 30. Cecile, Yvonne and Annette can wink. They bat their eyelashes and giggle.

"July 6. Marie combs her sisters' hair—with more force than effect. Emilie washes the floor—guess she has noticed the maids.

"July 17. The babes talk a lot among themselves. Annette has been talking the most. She might be the first to really talk.

"July 21. Marie fell today, and when her sisters went to pick her up she started to laugh. Every time they left her she would start pretending to cry, and they would run back to her. She found this so funny that she finally laughed so much she couldn't cry."

We had more movies that summer. Early in the fall I went on leave again. On my return the babes did seem so tall and sure of themselves. After that short absence I could see how independent they had grown. . . . they were slowly emerging from babyhood and becoming children.

THE END