

# The Country Doctor



A Novelization of the Twentieth Century-Fox Film, Starring the Famous Quintuplets With Jean Harlow, Dorothy Peterson, June Lang, Michael Whalen and Slim Summerville

### BEGIN HERE TODAY

DR. JOHN LUKE, county doctor in the little north woods settlement of Moosetown, has just been through a perilous diphtheria epidemic. He goes to Montreal to appeal to company officials to build a hospital in Moosetown.

r. Luke's nephew, TONY, who flew to Moosetown with antitoxin, is still there, waiting until his plane can be repaired. Tony is much interested in Mary MacKENZIE, daughter of the lumber company manager.

The day before Tony is to leave he and Mary admit their love for each other. MacKENZIE, seeing them together, goes into a rage and swings an ax at Tony's plane.

### NOW GO ON WITH THE STORY CHAPTER VIII

MONTREAL was a revelation to Dr. Luke. He hadn't been there for nearly 20 years. The city had changed. Everything had changed. His brother, Dr. Paul, took him about the city, covering all the old familiar places they had known as students.

But most of all, aside from his mission to the "company" offices and Sir Basil Crawford is behalf of the hospital, Dr. Luke wanted to see and study modern hospital methods at Curzon street, where his brother was one of the staff physicians.

So, as soon as formalities were disposed of they set out. Dr. John told the story of the diphtheria epidemic in detail, and stressed Tony's part in conquering it.

"You needn't worry about Tony, Paul," he concluded. "He worked hard all during the epidemic, and he's a good boy. I shouldn't wonder if he'd make a name for himself some day."

Dr. Paul had some reason to be skeptical of his son's seriousness toward the future. There had been escapades, and a general unwillingness to "buckle down." "Name for himself as what?" he asked skeptically. "Physician? Flyer? Pianist? Pugilist?"

"Is he a pugilist, then?" asked Dr. John, surprised.

Paul answered dryly. "Well, my barber tells me he's known in local boxing circles as—" and he winced slightly—"The Murderer's Medic."

Dr. John chuckled. "Better change the name," he said. "Might be bad for business."

"Well, anyway," pursued Paul, "it is settling down any, we'll certainly owe it all to you. What's this about his thinking of a country practice, anyway?"

"Perhaps I'm not the only influence there," twinkled Dr. John.

"Girl, eh?" suggested Dr. Paul.

"Yep, and a 21-jewel stem-winder," returned his brother.

"Good enough," conceded Dr. Paul. "I don't mind if it's a girl. Down here it was always girls."

Dr. Paul's limousine drew near the hospital. The country doctor's eyes glistened as he surveyed the magnificent building. There was a wistfulness in his voice as he said, "Gosh! I wish you could lend us just one floor!"

The blue eyes behind his spectacles sparkled as the gleaming wonders of the hospital unfolded before them. Splendid, luxurious rooms and equipment, with what seemed to Dr. John whole squads of nurses, internes, physicians and surgeons for tonsil operations and simple adjustments which he had often himself performed in

kitchens by the yellow light of kerosene lamps. A degree of surgical sterility unthinkable without hospital conditions. Cabinets of beautiful forceps, and complex steel instruments. Plenty of all kinds of supplies and antiseptics. X-ray rooms and mechanical therapy devices of which he had only longingly read.

But when they came to the maternity ward, the doctor fairly beamed. The footprint identification cards, the incubators regulating heat, humidity, oxygen, the improved obstetrical forceps and partial anesthesia devices, kept Dr. John in a delightful wonderland for more than an hour. And when Dr. Paul pressed on him a new type set of forceps for use in multiple births, he was more delighted than any child with new toys at Christmas.

But the business remained. He had come, not for pleasure, or even to post up his medical knowledge, but to get a hospital for the Moosetown district.

The next day found him cooling his heels at the "company" offices, waiting to see Sir Basil Crawford.

For an endless time he waited, to be told finally by a secretary that Sir Basil was forced to leave for the day, and would see him briefly on leaving. Dr. John Luke was not accustomed to be so treated in Moosetown, where his word took on something of the authority of law. But there was nothing to do but wait and grow more irritated and discouraged every passing minute.

Finally Sir Basil appeared, with hat, coat and stick. Dr. Luke rose to greet him with "This is most kind of you, sir."

"Dr. eh, about the hospital at Moosetown, wasn't it, Dr. Luke?" fumbled Sir Basil. "We must proceed with caution. Can't afford to set an expensive precedent for other districts, you know. Takes time, uh!"

"But epidemics like our diphtheria this winter..." began Dr. Luke.

"Unquestionably always such a danger on the frontier posts," said Sir Basil. "Must guard against it, of course, but a hospital—"

"In this particular case..." began Dr. Luke desperately.

"I believe all the circumstances are all set forth in form 48 which you have been good enough to fill out," broke in Sir Basil stiffly. "It will be brought to my attention in due time..."

and now, you must excuse me. I have a luncheon engagement with the governor-general, and one doesn't keep the governor-general waiting. Perhaps I shall have the pleasure of seeing you

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at the Royal George. I am to address the association. Good-by, doctor."

He was gone. Humiliation, disappointment, utter despair surged up in Dr. Luke. Was his life-long dream to be lost thus, in a mass of forms, letters, and official indifference?

Even in the midst of his despair, a plan was forming in Dr. Luke's mind, a last, desperate means of getting his case at least a hearing.

"Dr. Paul was happy to get him an invitation to the local association dinner. Honestly proud of the country doctor who was his brother, Dr. Paul contrived to have him seated at a small table near the speakers' table at one side of the great banquet hall of the Royal George hotel, where the medical elite of the Dominion were gathered. Dr. John Luke, in his "best" suit, was only slightly conspicuous among the immaculate black and white evening dress that filled the hall.

Sir Basil Crawford spoke as promised, a long, rambling set of generalities and positivities. He preened himself, hemming and hawing, as he sat down amid the usual applause. Then the little plot of the country doctor began to work itself out. As in a dream, he heard the toastmaster rambling on:

"... I now have the pleasure of presenting a member of our profession who has rendered great services to mankind and to science—Dr. Luke."

Started by his own name, Dr. John Luke half-rose, though he knew the introduction was intended for his more famous brother, Paul. But Paul picked up the cue smoothly, without interruption. Rising instantly, he began.

"I venture to interrupt here simply to add a word to our toastmaster's introduction of my brother."

Dr. John swallowed uncomfortably, and heard Paul's voice continuing, "He is a country doctor. I know of no more valiant calling. His strength and courage in the face of a grave diphtheria epidemic in the north country this past winter were a lesson for every physician in Canada!"

Paul beamed at the country doctor's table. "Gentlemen," he went on, "I am proud indeed to introduce my brother, Dr. John Luke."

Paul sat down with a gesture to his brother to rise and bow. Paul was happy at being able to get him this recognition.

But Dr. John was not merely bowing. He was walking along the speakers' table to a position directly in front of Sir Basil. Paul grew apprehensive. What was his brother going to do? Sir Basil himself, recognizing the caller of the afternoon, leaned forward negligently.

Ill at ease at first, the country doctor began with pleasantries about small-town practice, and drew good-humored laughter and applause from the tolerant-superior audience. As he groped his way, Dr. John gained self-confidence. He went on:

"Another comforting thing about being a country doctor, is that HE GETS PAID!" Here there was appreciative laughter from the fashionable audience.

"Of course I was a little long on eggs this past year. I confess I had to eat a good many more omelets than I like—everyone from proud fathers to tooth-ache sufferers paid me in eggs. Of course I got other pay, a cord of wood, a horse-collar, two hogs, a fine Plymouth Rock

chicken. I also collected nearly \$137 in cash during the year."

The laughter which greeted these sallies was suddenly stilled when the doctor switched to a serious vein.

"But I do envy you city doctors—one thing, gentlemen—a hospital!"

Then Dr. John Luke forgot himself, forgot everything but the babies of Moosetown, and Sir Basil, turning toward that embarrassed individual, he continued passionately:

"I want a hospital more than anything else in the world. That's why I came to Montreal—that's why I came here tonight—to appeal to the one man who can give it to us. But he's been busy—too busy to hear about it!"

The country doctor was ablaze now with the earnestness of his plea. The toastmaster made embarrassed cluckings, endeavoring to interrupt the torrent. Sir Basil cleared his throat and flushed.

"I can't help it, gentlemen!" the doctor hurried on. "I've got to finish. It isn't fair to my people up there to be operated on on kitchen tables. It isn't

fair that babies have to be put in the kitchen oven because there's nowhere else warm enough to keep them alive. It isn't fair that whole families come down with infectious diseases just because there isn't any place to isolate the sick ones!"

A murmur rose from the whole hall. Their guest of honor was obviously being embarrassed. The toastmaster rapped sharply.

"I'm not blaming you, sir," the country doctor went on, speaking almost directly to Sir Basil. "You have many problems, and we're only a few poor people 'way up north. But you must KNOW these things. You must DO something!"

The toastmaster rose decisively. "Sorry, doctor," his voice came sharply. "I'm sure that at another time we would be glad to hear more of your problems. But tonight our time is short."

Overborne at last by the feeling of hostility in the hall, Dr. Luke mumbled a "Thank you, gentlemen!" and sat down.

Dr. Paul in quick sympathy

came down from the speakers' table and seated himself beside his brother, a reassuring hand on his arm. Dr. John sat staring straight ahead of him, unseeing, filled with a sense of shame and failure.

He half-rose perfunctorily as a distinguished-looking guest paused at the table.

"A very fine speech, sir!" the beribboned guest said to him earnestly. "I—I was very deeply moved, indeed!"

"Thank you, doctor," muttered Dr. Luke, too shaken by his experience to see through misted glasses who had encouraged him. The stranger moved off.

"Great snakes, John!" whispered Dr. Paul in his inheeding ear. "That's no doctor! That's the governor-general of Canada!" (To be continued)

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