

Ella May and got what comfort she could from her loving hands.

"I'm feeling very, very sorry, Ella May," she said; "I don't know what to do."

And Ella May patted her hands and said, with the same wistful smile that had won Miss Mathewson's heart when first she saw her, "Poor ma'am, poor ma'am."

It was the same delicate little face but the frightened look had left it and given way to one of happiness. The hospital sojourn could not do much to mend poor Ella May's frail body, but it had bound up her broken spirit—or perhaps it was Miss Mathewson who had.

There had been a vacancy in the Children's Ward, in bed and nurse, and she and Ella May had moved in on the same day. Then had come a long round of different wards for Isabel; now she had got back as "N. C." and next week would begin a term of three months' night duty on the same ward.

But for Dr. Norton's unlooked-for announcement Isabel's world would have been *couleur de rose*. As it was she went to bed and cried herself to sleep. It was all so unexpected and unfortunate. Dr. Norton was the last man. For he had spoken with perfect truth when he said he had been unable to pay her any attention. The other men had managed to, and in spite of her woe Isabel smiled to herself when she thought of the sledge-hammer way Guy Norton had gone about his wooing.

"If only I had not stared at him so, as if he had seven heads," was her final moan before she dropped off to sleep to dream of a Dr. Norton who had developed these additions, forcing an engagement ring on her hand that rang out like a bell each time she moved. Then she awoke to find the getting-up bell over the door buzzing away furiously and daylight streaming in through the window.

She got up and wrote a note to him immediately. It was quite out of the question, and she begged he would

not speak of it again, she told him. However much she might like and respect him she could not fall in love with him simply because he had told her that he cared for her. He must forget about her as quickly as possible, etc., etc. The same little note that has been written from time immemorial.

She got an orderly to take it over to the doctor's side, and then went on duty and told Ella May that she felt better.

There were rounds to be made that afternoon with Dr. Norton, and Isabel dreaded them a little, but she consoled herself with the thought that her note had been very decisive. It was, perhaps, but Isabel had reckoned without Norton's force of character. It was not until the last bed had been reached and Isabel was congratulating herself on his obedience, that he spoke a word to show he had any thoughts save of the patients. Then he said,

"It was very good of you to write me that note, Miss Mathewson, but I can't take it as an answer."

"But you must, Dr. Norton," protested Isabel helplessly.

"I don't ask or expect you to care for me," he went on pleadingly; "I only ask you to let me know you a little better. That won't bind you to anything."

He was very gentle and persuasive, and after a while Isabel found herself half promising to see him somewhere sometime in the dim future.

"I want you to know my mother; she knows all about you," he said eagerly. "Do you know—she has been here twice to see you."

Miss Mathewson came to herself with a start. She remembered distinctly enough the sweet-faced old lady who had been pointed out as Dr. Norton's mother; but that she, Isabel, had been on exhibition! Her cheeks burned red at the thought, and she came to a swift decision.

"Dr. Norton," she said quietly, "the whole thing is absurd, impossible. I ask you to say no more about it. Don't you see it would put me in an utterly false position if I went to see your mother. She would say, very