

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The editor is not responsible for opinions expressed in this department. All communications must be accompanied by the name and address of the writer to ensure publication.

ARMY STUDENTS

Dear Editor: "What hours are you having off to-day, Polly?"

"Oh, nine-thirty till one," drawls a pleasant faced girl in blue (a "blue bird," in fact), coming down the hall. "Class from ten till eleven and oceans of work to do on the ward," and she strolls on to her "haven of rest," her room, while the evening nurses laugh and resume their respective naps or conversations. They've all had their turn at it, overcrowded wards and long, hard days of work, but laughing seems to be a habit nurses acquire, and for the most part, they thrive on it, too. Now the Army students, rather, Bluebirds, as they were known in the camps, do not mean to complain in any sense of the word, but they do have a few troubles. Scores of the Bluebirds are affiliated with civilian hospitals for special training, but during this course of training they frankly sever connections with the Army. For eight months they abide by the rules of the institution to which they have been sent. At Barnes Hospital, St. Louis, for instance, they work eight hours day or night along with the other students, without remuneration. The hospital students have uniforms provided, but the Army students arrive fully equipped. It's not that the Bluebirds don't enjoy working and working hard, but after training for twenty months, why should the Army students depend on home folks for "stamp" money? Several of the students are already looking forward to a month's furlough in the very near future and some of the girls will have to travel as far as Texas, New York and South Dakota. The Bluebirds readily agree that there is nothing to compare with the Army School of Nursing, yet three years is a long stretch, considered financially. Within two years the Fort Sam Houston group of more than sixty girls has decreased to something over twenty. Several of the girls only came in for the emergency during the last few months of the war, but many remained for a year and longer before resigning. While matrimonial reasons were advanced by several, some of the remaining number returned home and continued to nurse,—specializing typhoid cases, etc., at thirty and more per week. Lately there has been cause for a real "flutter" among the Bluebirds. A girl from Wisconsin, who responded to the emergency call for nurses in 1918, has received a bonus of more than one hundred and fifty dollars. What about the other states?

A BLUEBIRD.

(In response to an inquiry to the Dean of the Army School of Nursing on the subject of this letter, the following reply was received: "The announcement of the Army School which is sent to every student, states that a monthly allowance of \$15.00 is provided except for the period of affiliation. The arrangements with the affiliating hospitals provide that board, lodging, and laundry, and such allowance, if any, as is given their students, will be given the students of the Army School of Nursing. If students are sent to a hospital which does not provide an allowance for its own students, the students of the Army School receive no allowance while at that hospital. No instance is known of the affiliation with a civilian school which provides an allowance for its own students and none for the students of the Army School. Since July, 1920, the allowance from the Government to student nurses of the Army School has been increased from \$15.00 to