

MRS. ALAN NICKOLS LONDON HOSTESS

Foster-Mother to American Soldier Boys.

Former Wilmington Woman Entertains Boys in Uniform—Keeps Open Her House to Make Them Feel at Home—"Mother to All."

(Hayden Church in Buffalo Express.) The other American mothers, over on the other side of the Atlantic, are exactly as keen on the American foster-mother as their sons are, which is saying a good deal. The American foster-mother, whose name is Mrs. Alan Nickols, does not have to take this latter fact on trust, for besides getting a flood of appreciative letters every day from her foster-sons, there come to her many from the sure enough, calling how grateful they feel for all the kindness and motherliness which she is continually showing them at their clubs and here.

Mrs. Nickols, whose American home is in Wilmington, N. C., and who is equally well known as a Colonial Dame, etc., in New York and southern social and intellectual circles, must now be described as one of London's principal hostesses. Her guests are the American boys aforementioned, and she meets them for the first time when they come in search of quarters at the American Officers' Inn, in fashionable Cavendish Square, London, of which she is the acknowledged life and soul. The American Inn, which was opened in January last by the American M. C. A., is absolutely the last word in a "home from home," as they say in England, for our fighting men. It is a combined residence and club for the officers of our army and navy. It is absolutely "IT."

Mrs. Alan Nickols, who is the incarnation of true United States hospitality, is the dominating spirit of the inn, and every one of them volunteers, who carry on this luxurious inn for our officer boys in London. The names of all those workers, if there were space for them all, would make rather an impressive reading. About 40 per cent. American and 60 per cent. English, they represent the absolute cream of society in this realm. Titles are as plentiful among them as colonels in Russia or nuts in Brazil. The very girl who presides over the telephone is a countess—the youthful and pretty Countess Poppenheim and another countess, Cora. Lady Stafford, works in the country. Mrs. Spender Clay, who was formerly Miss Pauline Astor, was one of the original founders of the inn and was working there daily until she recently turned her country place, Ford Manor, into a convalescent home for American officers and transferred most of her activities thence, and other notable British and American members of the staff there include the Countess of Beaumont, Lady Essex, Lady Alastair Innes-Kerr, Mrs. Robert Grant, Lady Ward, Whiteley Reid's daughter, the Honorable Mrs. Frederick Guest, formerly Amy Philips, Mrs. Cecil Higgins of New York, and ever so many others. Even the waitresses at the inn are the daughters of socially prominent English and Anglo-American families and the three girls in the office are the daughters respectively of an American banker and judge, the former Miss North, whose father was Judge Pierce of Indiana, and the Misses Lathrop, whose sire is the Junior partner in the New York house of Pinchot.

But the real genius of the inn, as everybody, martial guests and members of the staff alike will tell you, is Mrs. Alan Nickols. She is what you greet an American officer boy on his arrival, sees to it that he is made comfortable and shown no end of delightful entertainment during his stay, and aids him goodspeed when he leaves. And don't these boys fall for her, just! The best evidence of the extent to which they do so is the enviable title of "Mother" which they have given her, and as they are at the inn they keep her desk fragrant with flowers, and after they leave, wherever duty takes them, they never fail to write. I suppose that Mrs. Nickols is probably the only American woman, if not the only woman in the world, who has been honored by having not one, but several fighting airplanes named after her. "Mother Nickols" is what her aviator sons call their planes, and she told me that only on the day before my call upon her she had heard that another Mother Nickols had brought down a Boche machine.

Lord Nelson, England's greatest sea hero, once lived at No. 5 Cavendish Square, the first of the two mansions, now connecting, which are inhabited by the American Officers' Inn, at the side of the victor at Trafalgar, if it visits the place nowadays, must look with an especially kindly eye on the freshly groomed young, clean-skinned, lithe, alert and fecklessly groomed young representatives of America's navy who are to be found there at all hours of the day, either playing snooker in the fine billiard room, reading the papers in the commodious big armchairs which are everywhere or, mayhap, around tea-table, dancing blithely to the strains of a Victrola with the pretty English and American girls who drop in every afternoon for the special purpose of acting as partners in the foxtrot and the twinkle.

It is a fine sight, believe me, to see this great hostess of our young officers, the khaki slightly predominating over the blue in numbers, all of them having a perfectly dandy time in the hours of duty, and a still finer one to observe the delightful relationship that exists between them and their American hostess and mother. The inn, with its big rooms, beautifully furnished and appointed (the walls are covered with valuable paintings especially lent by John Lane, the London publisher), its restful dining room and spotless white bedrooms, each with its shower, suggests nothing so much as a big country house—the luxurious home of some good sport of an American or English woman who enjoys nothing so much as having it packed to overflowing with boys and girls, particularly the former, and who is free to come and go as they like and who just have to phone and say they are coming for a visit. This illusion of a house in the country is heightened by the gardens in the center of the square, a mass of trees and greenery which, ordinary private to the householders who play tennis on the courts there and stroll about in the sunshine in comfortable long chairs.

"What I want above all," said Mrs. Nickols, "is to have our boys feel, wherever they are, that they are at home, not 5,000 miles away or even 100, but right here. And the other

thing about a home for them must be the woman's touch. These boys of ours in England and France are woman hungry. At home they may have had so many skirts around them that they fled to their clubs to be free of them, but now the boot is on the other leg. In the training camps, in the trenches, on shipboard, they meet men, men, always men. That is why we make such a point of filling the house with delightful girls of the very best class, because our boys need female companionship so that, if they cannot find it among their own class, they may seek it elsewhere. It is to be found here.

"So far as outside invitations are concerned," she went on, "it is a case of an embarrassment of riches. One of the latest attentions that our men are being invited to is to dine here. Every week, now, Sir Francis Lloyd, who commands in the London district, sends four tickets for the Sunday service in the Horse Guards church, and he permits their holders to sit with the Horse Guard officers—the Guards being, of course, the most exclusive of all British regiments. For every week-end, the most conservative families, titled and otherwise, in England, families that, before the war, would no sooner have invited strangers to partake of a ye olde invitation from whom they were flown. These invitations are so numerous, in fact, that the difficulty is not to find places for our men to go, but to find guests enough to go around among the beautiful country girls here.

"There is almost no great name in England," she went on, "that is not represented in these invitations and none of our officers could make now a somebody's brother, and if I don't know young man made when first the inn was opened.

"When I go home," she said, "I suppose they will ask me if I meet any of the English aristocracy. And I don't say no, I didn't meet them, they only waited on me at table.

"I am just the proudest woman in the world with my big family of boys," Mrs. Nickols declared. "Every time that a new one comes pouncing in like a hungry hyena, I get the same thrill down my spine. I always think, 'this is somebody's son, somebody's husband, somebody's brother, and if I don't make him feel at home it certainly isn't for want of trying.'

I guess she does make them feel at home. We were talking seated on the big divan in the drawing room of the inn, and every boy who passed had a joke or a pat on the shoulder for mother. Mrs. Nickols generally wears the M. C. A. uniform, but on the regular American summer heat prevailed, she was all in cool looking white duck, and this fact was not left un-commented upon by her sons.

Alla, all got up in white duck, eh? I joked one of them as he came up. This boy is one of the American ferry-men who live at the inn. Do you savvy ferry-men? They are the boys who fly the new machines over to France to take the places of ones that have been crooked, and who fly the old ones back, if they are flyable. If not, the airman return by boat. This ferryman had just come up to announce that he was off. He and hearty hand-shake and a laughing farewell passed between him and mother. Both knew in their hearts—they always know—that this careless good-by might be the last, but Mrs. Nickols said the boy might have merely been taking a motor bus out to Richmond or down to Charing Cross.

COLORED CAPTAIN DESERTS COMMAND

Escapes From Camp Lee With \$1,625 of Company's Funds.

Officers Say He Disappeared With Wife of Well Known Negro of Petersburg—Believed to Have Gone to South America.

Petersburg, Va., Dec. 7.—Captain Frank M. Goodner, negro, commanding B company, replacement training center at Camp Lee, has deserted his command, according to official announcement at the camp tonight, and has absconded with \$1,625.90 of company funds. The officers says he disappeared in company with the wife of a well known negro man of this city. The couple purchased a ticket for Richmond last Thursday. Neither has been seen since. On that day Goodner drew the company funds out of a Petersburg bank, overchecking to the amount of \$25.

It is believed he has gone to South America. He is educated and speaks Spanish very fluently. Goodner served from 1907 to 1917 in the 10th cavalry, and from some time last year until June of this year with the 35th field artillery. Since that time he has been with the infantry. He is from Chicago, is married and has one child.

He is described as follows: Age 32; five feet 9 3/4 inches tall, weight 175 pounds; complexion, light chocolate.

ARRANGE FOR AVIATORS. Request of "Howard" to Mayor Moore to be Complied With.

Mayor P. Q. Moore announced last night that he had placed the matter of a visit to the city by a number of aviators from the Langley aviation field at Hampton, Va., in the hands of Councilman James M. Hall, James Holton, Chief of Police N. J. Williams and John Corbett, formerly of the aviation service of the army, and they will have the assistance of the Red Cross motor corps.

All that the mayor has learned of the proposed visit of the planes was contained in the telegram received Friday, signed "Howard," and in which request was made that arrangements be made for his visit, the date of which he failed to mention. The mayor has replied to the message stating that the request will be carried out.

It was stated last night that the Monk field, just east of the national cemetery, between Market and Princess street roads, will be selected as the landing place for the planes and will be marked as designed by "Howard." The motor corps has placed itself at the disposal of the committee and will offer its assistance to the aviators upon their arrival. It is planned that if the "air" visitors remain in the city long enough some form of entertainment will be arranged in their honor, a dance at the country club being suggested.

Members of the motor corps have appeared on the streets during the past few days in their new uniforms. They are of gray broad cloth, the bloomers extending into leather leggings with knee coats which are fastened around the waist with leather belt. They are quite attractive.

"HIS BRIDAL NIGHT" PLEASSED. Large Houses Witness an Unusually Good Attraction.

"His Bridal Night," a comedy with an entertaining plot and played by a capable cast well suited to their roles, was presented to good houses at the academy yesterday, matinee and night. Several attractive songs hits added to the success of the play which would have been complete without them.

The plot has it that Joe Damerall has just married "V" the twin sister of "Tiny" Joe and "V" have a quarrel immediately after the ceremony in the bridal boudoir which was caused by "Lent," who imagined he was in love with "V" and should have married her instead of "Joe." Prompted by Lent's intrigue "V" refuses to go on the planned honeymoon trip, trying up prearrangements everywhere.

"V" and "Tiny" played by the Sheridan sisters were the leads and they acted with rare intelligence. The plot of the play would have been more exciting, perhaps, if the likeness between the twins had been more pronounced.

THE BIG CREDIT STORE ■ FARLEY'S ■ PAY THE EASY WAY

A Convincing Christmas Story

Among today's greatest blessings is the FARLEY'S Easy-to-Pay Way. Just at this time, when profiteering in food is making the expense of living a distress FARLEY'S store presents a plan which enables you to dress smartly by paying just what you can spare each week or on pay-days. We wait for the money. The butcher, the baker and the grocer want you to pay cash when you receive the goods, or to settle in full at the end of the month. The cash department store expects you to do likewise. But FARLEY says: "Pay the same as you deposit your savings in a bank—just a little, but regularly." Some folks may say: "Oh, the FARLEY credit is wonderful enough, but FARLEY'S prices must be higher than cash-store prices, or else FARLEY could not afford to wait so long for payment."

In answer to this we urge investigation and comparison of our price. We go a little deeper than we ought to in cutting prices because we are anxious to demonstrate beyond all question that it is impossible for the cash stores to undersell us. Watch our sales. Look at the smart styles we show. Behold the enormous selections. They tell a more convincing story than any words we could put into print.



Women's Stylish Suits Materials—Wool Velour, Men's Serges, Tweeds, Poplins, Oxfords, Broadcloths. \$22 and up

Women's Winter Coats The greatest collection of high-class Coats we believe ever assembled at this price. You have the pleasure of choosing from newest and smartest looseback, semi-fitted and belted styles. \$15 and up

Men's Fall Suits \$20 and up

Men's Snappy Overcoats \$20 and up

Shoes For The Family

Clothing For The Boys



Farley Clothing Co. 116 Market Street Wilmington, N. C.

THREE WERE KILLED. Fifty Also Injured in the A. C. L. Wreck at Elrod Friday Night. (Special Star Correspondence.) Fayetteville, Dec. 7.—Three persons were killed at fifty injured when Atlantic Coast Line mail train No. 89 was derailed at Elrod about 7 o'clock last night. All those killed were negro passengers.

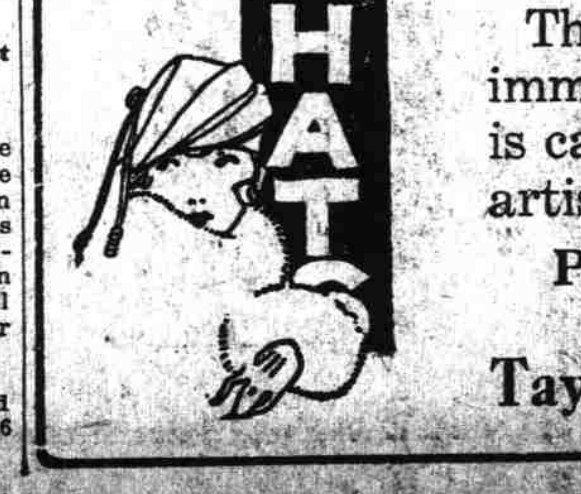


Useful Gifts--- What is more appreciated than a pair of Slippers or Shoes for a Christmas Gift? We have a large assortment in Felt and Leather Slippers for men, women and children, in different colors. Something for every man's family, at

PETERSON & RULFS Home of Good Shoes.

FARMERS' UNION TO MEET. Influenza Situation Will Not Prevent Annual Convention. (Special Star Telegram.) Wilson, Dec. 7.—On account of the influenza situation the report has gone out that the State Farmers' Union would not meet here next week as advertised. Such is not the case, however. The board of health has given permission and the convention will assemble here Wednesday, December 11 for a two-days session.

Renew your membership in the Red Cross—"Roll Call Week" December 16 to 21.—adv.



Taylor : Ladies' Hatter