

Royal British Nurses' Association.

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CHRISTENING AN AMBULANCE TRAIN.

On Wednesday, October 25th, there was an interesting little ceremony at Goodmayes Station when Her Royal Highness the Princess Arthur of Connaught, R.R.C., S.R.N., "christened" one of the ambulance trains. On arrival Her Royal Highness was received by Dr. Aylwin-Gibson, who is in charge of the train, Dr. Crawford in charge of another ambulance stationed near, Dr. Oakley of the Ministry of Health and Miss Watts, R.R.C., Matron of the Civil Nursing Reserve. On her way to the spot where the ceremony of the afternoon was to take place the Princess inspected the members of the Staff—Registered Nurses, members of the V.A.D. Detachment and Orderlies. Breaking a bottle of champagne on the train Her Royal Highness gave it the name of "The Good Companions." This name we are told was inspired by the spirit of good comradeship that has prevailed among all members of the different departments of the ambulance train from the early days when they worked together with the greatest energy to bring the train to the condition of shining perfection to which its general appearance had attained and to "furnish" it to full efficiency to meet whatever claims might fall upon it in the future. The "finished article" gives evidence of what busy hands and heads, productive of ideas, can achieve. After naming the train the Princess wished it successful journeys and good luck, and all success to those in charge of it and its work. The members of the staff were next presented to Her Royal Highness who shook hands with each, and the last to be presented handed to the Princess a beautiful bouquet of red carnations and asparagus fern.

The Princess was next conducted over the train in which she showed much interest. The little dressing stations on it came in for a special share of attention and explanations were given in different departments by Dr. Aylwin as to the various details which claimed attention.

A most delightful tea had been prepared by the nurses and Her Royal Highness cut the fine christening cake, while photographers seemed as keen to catch a picture of this as of the main ceremony of the afternoon. The train mascot was brought out for inspection—a very amiable black cat who appeared quite to realise that he is one of the group of "Good Companions" and had an air of knowing that his was not the least important of officially recognised appointments on the train even although it had never been confirmed in precise terms by the Ministry of Health. We were also shown the Coat of Arms of the train, drawn by a member of its V.A.D. detachment and indicative of no small versatility in the artist: humour and good draughtsmanship.

Altogether the little ceremony was a very pleasant interlude in these days of war and rumours of war. All were delighted that Her Royal Highness had been graciously pleased to come so far to name the train and they felt

pleasure in the obvious interest which she felt in its work. R.B.N.A. members who chanced to be on the staff were especially delighted with her visit. Altogether the whole atmosphere of the afternoon was in itself a justification for the name which the train is to bear; the proceedings were a good augury, said someone, that harmony, good fellowship and efficiency would prevail.

THE CHRISTMAS CALENDAR.

The Christmas Calendar is now ready and we ask our readers to remember it when the time comes to select their calendars for Christmas. We sent out well over 200 cheques last Christmas to nurses of whom most would otherwise have had a lonely Christmas, and little in the matter of Christmas cheer but for our effort. We shall be glad, therefore, if nurses will help us, as they have done in the past, to provide for our very scattered Christmas banquet to which so many look forward. It takes no small amount of work to meet the required sum and its attendant expenses which must be considerable this year. The calendars are to be sold at the usual price of 1s. 6d. each and, as so many nurses will find it difficult to arrange for having them posted this year, we shall be glad to attend to this for them if they so wish. In that case they must send their cards (one to be enclosed with each calendar) the name and address to which each is to be sent and sufficient to cover postage (i.e., 2½d. if sent in an open envelope, 3d. if the envelope is to be closed).

The calendar this year is entitled "Candles." The idea of the title was taken from a verse in Proverbs: "The Spirit of Man is the Candle of the Lord" and the collection of quotations is dedicated to those who, by their inspiration and fine literary gifts, have produced these 366 quotations to light our path through what promises to be a memorable and very difficult year for all. The light of a beautiful thought, to carry through each day cannot but help to bring tranquillity, courage and inspiration for the tasks that have to be met. It might perhaps be suggested that it was not altogether wise to make the venture of again publishing the calendar this year, for very large quantities have to be ordered to meet the work we wish to accomplish. In the first place, however, we should be loath to disappoint those who have, for so many years, relied upon us to see to their comfort and good cheer at Christmastime and also, as a matter of fact, the type for the calendar was completely set up some time prior to the declaration of war. In these circumstances there was nothing for it but to proceed with the work and to rely as usual upon the kindness of those who are ready to help with what we have described as very scattered hospitality. One good point about the calendars is that nothing could be more easy to send by post, a matter of considerable importance when the transmission of gifts is bound to be more complicated than usual.

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