

From a photograph by Elliott & Fry.

THE PRINCESS CHRISTIAN HOSPITAL TRAIN.

BY SARAH A. TOOLEY

THE present campaign is specially notable for the number of schemes started for the benefit of the soldiers, and for the arrangements and appliances which have been made for the relief of the sick and wounded. One of the most novel developments is the hospital train recently despatched to the Cape, and which bears the name of the Princess who is distinguished for her thorough and practical knowledge of sick nursing and ambulance work. It is the first train of the kind constructed in this country, and some idea of the perfection of its arrangements will be realised by the fact that it has cost £10,000. This has been defrayed by various donations. The Princess Christian devoted to the train the balance of a Red Cross Fund invested in Her Royal Highness's name after the Soudan campaign of

1885, and the Borough of Windsor contributed the sum of £6,100 and expressed the wish that the train should be named after Princess Christian. A donation of £200 was sent by the Worcester Red Cross Committee, and it is pleasing to record, as

evidence of colonial sympathy, the gift of £50 from Canada.

The idea of a train as a rolling hospital originated with Sir John Furley, whose disinterested enthusiasm for, and active interest in ambulance work is well known. He was one of the founders of the Red Cross movement in this country, and has written and lectured upon the subject. As

a special commissioner for investigating ambulance work, he has travelled much on the Continent, and the adventures with which he met during the Franco-German War and the Reign of the Commune



From a photograph by H. Bullingham, South Kensington.

H. R. H. THE PRINCESS CHRISTIAN.

in Paris are related in "The Struggles and Experiences of a Neutral Volunteer." His devoted services to the cause of the suffering have met with many tokens of recognition. The Legion of Honour was conferred upon him by the French Government, and the French Red Cross Society presented him with a gold medal.

But to resume the history of the train. Military hospital trains have been in use on the Continent for many years, but were of a makeshift character. The best were composed of luggage-vans with extemporised fittings for the accommodation of the wounded. Trains of this kind were largely used during the Franco-German War, and it was probably an experience of the discomforts of these which impressed upon Sir John the need of properly constructed and fitted trains for the conveyance of the wounded. For some years he has urged upon the authorities the advisability of providing hospital trains for the troops in India, where fighting to some extent is almost always going on. At the beginning of the present war in South Africa iron frames adapted from a French pattern were sent to the Cape, and these have been used with good results, thus enabling the Army Medical Corps to bring the wounded without delay from the front to the base. Each frame carries three stretchers, and when the interior of a railway carriage has been cleared out, these frames can be put into position in a few minutes, and made ready for the wounded. Thus space is economised, and the sufferers can be conveyed with comparative ease in the absence of beds.

Excellent as this arrangement is, it did not satisfy Sir John Furley and his fellow members of the British Red Cross Committee. It was felt that in the long journeys which are entailed in South Africa over single lines of rail, with the numerous stoppages and shuntings which a hospital train must necessarily suffer, something more complete—in short, an independent, self-supporting rolling hospital—was indispensable. After several unsuccessful attempts to purchase and adapt carriages which were being built for the South African railways, and were required for Army purposes, the Central British Red Cross Committee voted a sum

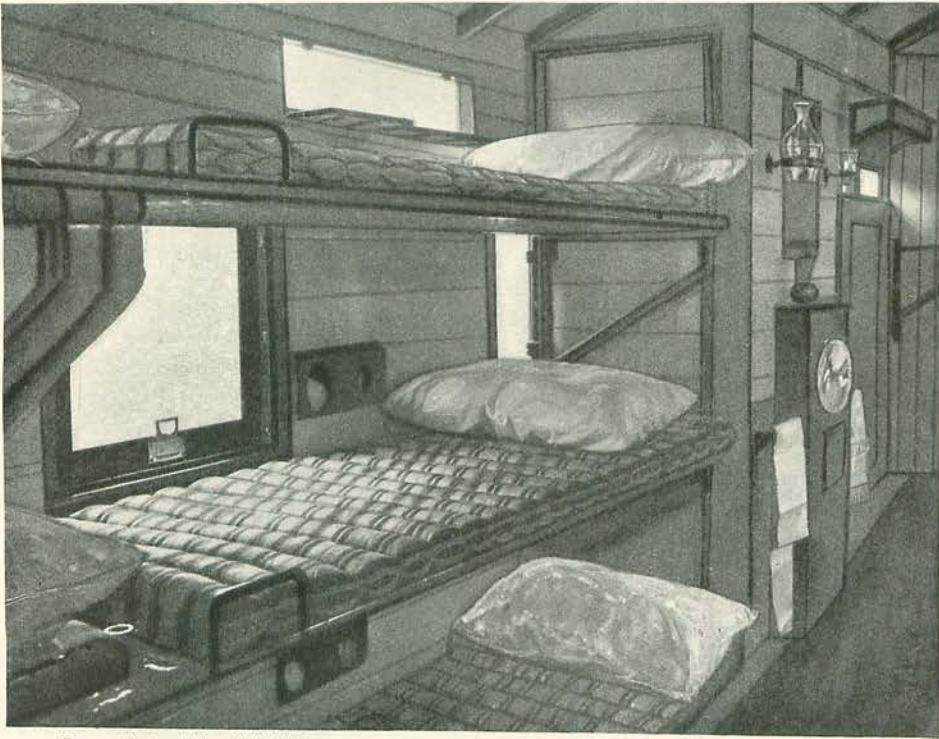
of money for the building and equipment of a complete hospital train. I have previously referred to other sums of money devoted to the Fund. It was on October 18 that the contract was signed by Sir John Furley on behalf of the Central British Red Cross Committee, and by Mr. William John Fieldhouse for the Military Equipment Company, Limited, Pall Mall, who bound themselves to complete it by January 13, 1900. So great, however, was the enthusiasm shown by every one who had to do with the making of the train—from Mr. Edmund Fowler, managing director of the Birmingham Railway Carriage and Waggon Company, Limited, Smethwick, where it was constructed, and the chief engineer, Mr. Frederick Nash, down to the humblest mechanic—that by December 20 it was so far completed as to be ready for inspection by Her Royal Highness Princess Christian. Under ordinary circumstances the train would have taken seven or eight months to complete, but by working at it day and night with two shifts of men it was finished in less than three months.

I retain a vivid picture of the crowd of workmen—hundreds of them—fresh from their toil, in shirt sleeves and with begrimed hands and faces, who assembled to see the arrival of the Princess Christian at the works, and how they cheered and cheered themselves hoarse when Her Royal Highness entered the train, and they saw how minutely she was inspecting the fruit of their toil. Never, probably, had anything been produced at those works which had been executed with such *esprit de corps*. Every man who knocked in a nail felt he had been helping in the South African campaign. Busy—and, I am afraid I must add, "black"—Smethwick was *en fête*. Even the poorest streets adjacent to the works were gay with flags and loyal mottoes, and groups of women, each with the inevitable baby in her arms and a toddler or two pulling at her skirts, strained their necks to catch a glimpse of the Queen's daughter. The Princess Christian was extremely touched by the reception given her by the people, and smiled graciously in response, though her own heart was heavy, for news had just

arrived of a severe battle, in which the regiment with which her son, Prince Christian Victor, was serving in South Africa, had taken part, and she did not know whether or no he was among the wounded.

A pretty little incident took place when the Princess reached Smethwick. Mrs. Fieldhouse, the wife of the managing director of the Military Equipment Company, presented a lovely bouquet to the Princess, and little Miss Fieldhouse, in anticipation that Princess Victoria would accompany her

and she is the head of the Incorporated Royal British Nurses' Association; but it is probably not so well known that the idea of having an Army Nursing Reserve originated with Princess Christian. It was she who in time of peace thought out the scheme for having a number of nurses, specially trained for military nursing, to be ready in an emergency like the present war to supplement the work of those special nurses trained at Netley by the Army Nursing Corps. The order of procedure is



From a photograph by Elliott & Fry.

BEDS FOR THE WOUNDED.

mother, carried a second bouquet. The little girl was greatly disappointed at the expected recipient for her gift not being present, but Princess Christian, when the circumstance was explained, graciously took the second bouquet, saying, "I will take it home to my daughter."

It will be generally known that Princess Christian has for many years been an active promoter of the nursing movement: it was at the instance of Her Royal Highness that the registration of nurses was adopted,

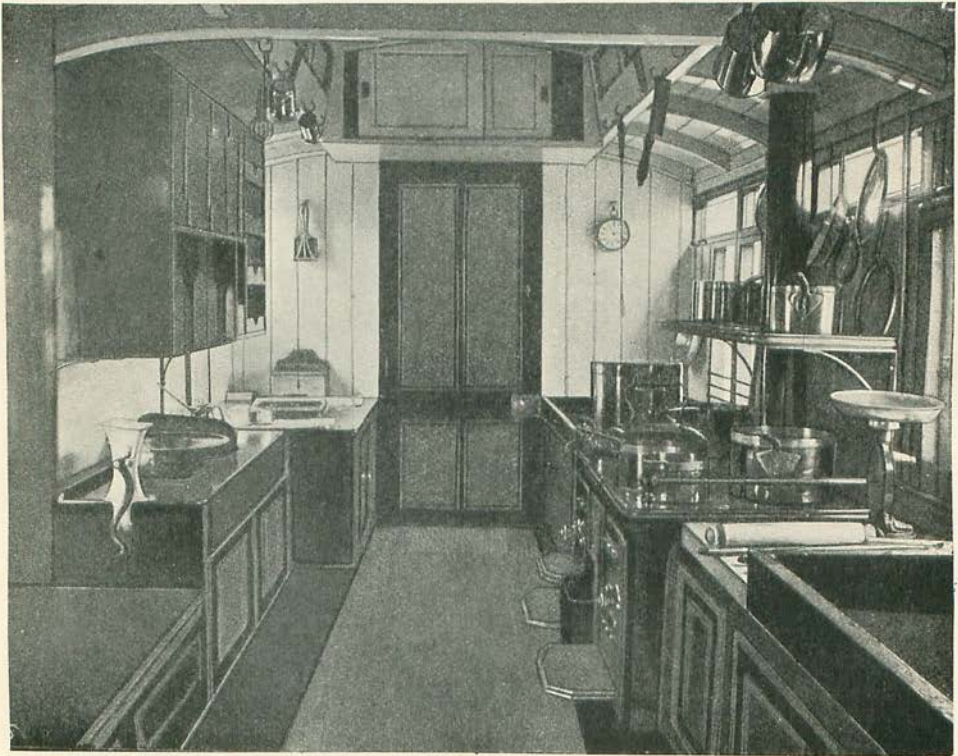
this: When war breaks out, the nurses of the Army Corps are the first to be sent out, their places in the military hospitals at home being filled by Princess Christian's nurses of the Army Reserve, who in their turn are sent to the front as occasion demands. They wear a dark blue and scarlet uniform, and a silver badge bearing Princess Christian's monogram. Nearly two hundred reserve nurses have been enrolled, and throughout the last few months the number has been added to weekly. The applicants

are examined by the committee, of which Princess Christian is president. Her Royal Highness has simply been indefatigable in her attendance at committees, and she has a personal knowledge of every nurse enrolled, and never forgets a name, while her own knowledge of nursing is thoroughly practical—indeed, ambulance work seems to fascinate her.

From the foregoing, it will be readily understood that Princess Christian's spec-

the buff blinds should be replaced by green ones, the latter being more restful to the eyes of sick people, and that some undraped windows beside the cots should be fitted with little curtains, for the patient to draw at his pleasure.

The first impression I received of the hospital train was that it looked very small and narrow compared with the Pullman by which I had travelled. I soon learned, however, that it had to be constructed



From a photograph by Elliott & Fry

THE KITCHEN OF THE TRAIN.

tion of the train was no mere formal walk through. Her Royal Highness examined everything in detail, and although she expressed unbounded satisfaction with the *tout ensemble*, her quick eye detected one or two things which might be altered for the benefit of the patients. For example, the doors to the wards were constructed to swing back of themselves, and the Princess suggested that certain patents should be added to ensure the doors shutting gradually and noiselessly. She further suggested that

on this narrow gauge to suit the South African lines. The train consists of seven bogie (nothing uncanny) carriages, each about thirty-six feet in length and eight feet in width, with a continuous passage through the centre. The wood is a pretty light-brown colour, and cupboards and drawers are painted white, and have brass handles. The first carriage is divided into three compartments: one is fitted with a neat arrangement of drawers and cupboards for linen and other stores; the next is for the

accommodation of two invalid officers, and has reversible lounges, which are sofas by day and beds by night; and the third is a similarly fitted compartment for the use of two invalid nurses.

The second carriage is also divided into three compartments: the first a sitting-room for the medical officers, which, in addition to the lamp in the roof with which each compartment is lighted, has a couple of patent brass swing candle-holders fixed on the wall for the special accommodation of the faculty when studiously inclined. The second compartment of this carriage is as cosy a dining-room as one could desire, and when the table is laid, has a very unique appearance. The tablecloth and serviettes are marked with a red cross. The dinner-ware is of pure white, and from dishes, plates, and covers gleams a red cross. The cutlery also bears the same beautiful insignia. Even the black coal-scuttles and shovels in use on the train are marked with a red cross, and so are the lovely little

clocks fixed so cunningly in sockets in the walls. There is nothing which the Boers can loot or confiscate without breaking the Convention of Geneva: the cross protects everything. Beyond the dining-room is a surgery, looking so attractive with its orderly array of bottles firmly fixed in sockets, and the walls so prettily arranged and ornamented that quinine seems robbed of

its bitterness and castor oil has a soothing effect. Perhaps that is why it has been deemed necessary to protect even the drugs with a red cross, or the enemy might swallow them as relishes!

Four carriages are fitted as hospital wards, each constructed to accommodate eighteen invalids and four hospital orderlies. It is here that the greatest difficulty was experienced by the designers. Owing to the narrowness of the train to suit the South African lines, it has been

necessary to place the beds in three tiers on either side the narrow gangway. Any one who has had anything to do with



Photo. by Elliott & Fry.

NURSE JONES
(Who has gone with the train).



Photo. by Martin & Salnow.

NURSE CRIGHTON
(Who has gone with the train).



Photo. by Elliott & Fry.

SIR JOHN FURLEY
(Who planned the train).

the lifting and moving of invalids will understand the difficulty of hoisting a helpless patient sideways on to a bed closed on all sides but one from a gangway two feet six inches in width, in which there is only room for one bearer at the head of the stretcher and one at the foot. This difficulty has been overcome by an arrangement of pulleys in the roof which enables a bed with a patient on it to be raised to the required level by one man, whilst the two bearers are left free to guide and fix it in position.

This novel arrangement was particularly interesting to Princess Christian, who expressed a wish to see its utility demonstrated. Accordingly a willing victim collapsed into a helpless position, his fractured limbs (in imagination) were bandaged and put into splints, and, having been laid on an ambulance stretcher, he was carried by bearers, just as a wounded soldier might be, to the side of one of the train carriages. The bed from the cot which he was to occupy was

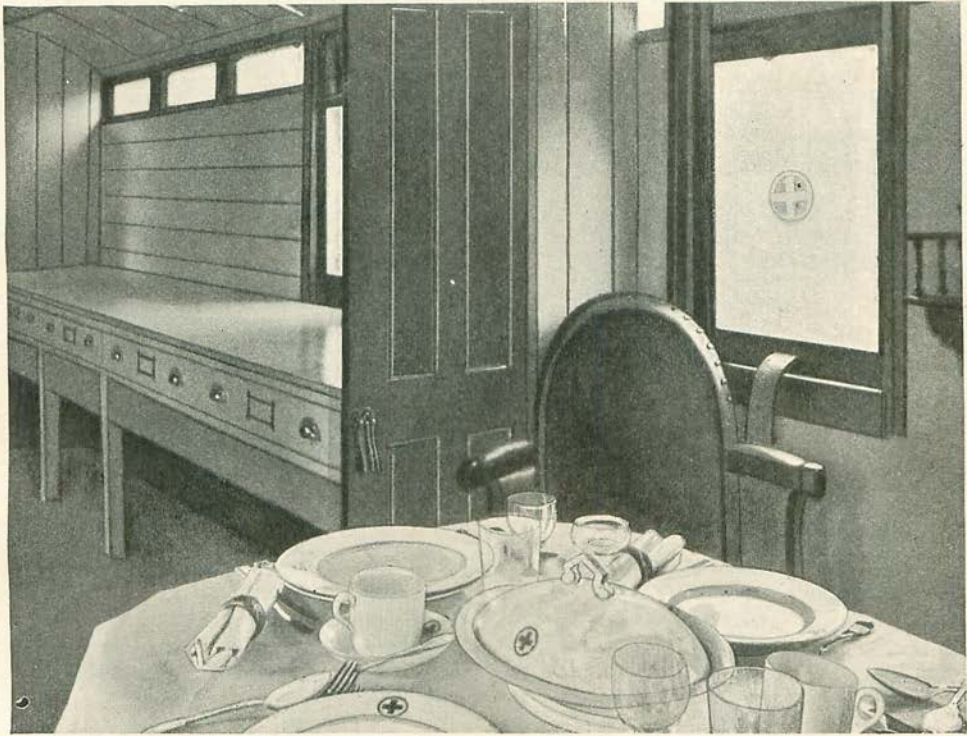
placed on the ground; four orderlies—one at the head, one at the feet, and one on either side—lifted him from the stretcher on to the bed, and then lifted him on the bed into the train, where the pulley arrangement was attached to him, and by it he was comfortably hoisted into his berthlike cot. The Princess was delighted at the success of the experiment. I should say that the cots are constructed on a new plan, and are to be named after Sir John—their inventor—the "Furley" beds.

Each of the carriages which compose the train is provided with a stove, lavatory, and storing-lockers. The seventh carriage contains the kitchen and pantry, with berths for two cooks and a compartment between for the guard. That kitchen, with its array of shining copper pans and dainty cooking-utensils of the latest invention, was "a dream." It carried the domestic arts into the region of poetry, and every lady who inspected it declared that she had never seen anything so perfectly lovely



From a photograph by Elliott & Fry.

TWO SLEEPING-BERTHS.



From a photograph by Elliott & Fry.

THE DINING-COMPARTMENT.

before. Sir John Furley and Mr. Fieldhouse, who were responsible for the interior arrangements, were forced to retire to hide their blushes. There were the most perfect hygienic appliances for cooking, cisterns for cold water storage, two large filters, a refrigerator, and everything that could be required, to the daintiest nutmeg-grater. On the return journey to Euston a sumptuously prepared luncheon, supplied by the London and North Western Railway Company, was partaken of by Princess Christian and the party privileged to accompany Her Royal Highness. After the meal, Sir John Furley and other members of the Red Cross Committee arranged with the representative of the London and North Western Railway Company to provide cooks for the hospital train. If they prove as perfect as the kitchen, the wounded soldiers will have many compensations.

Mere description cannot adequately convey the compact, dainty appearance of the train. Every square inch has been utilised, and

besides the fitted cupboards and drawers for linen, clothing, surgical and medical stores, cutlery, glass, crockery, provisions, etc., two lockers have been placed in the roof of each carriage for linen. The enamelled white iron-work of the interior fittings and the bright draperies produce a pretty effect. Nothing has been forgotten: the patients are even provided with whisks to keep off the flies! As the train may have to be loaded with its human freight in places remote from buildings, and exposed to sun, rain, and dust, an awning has been provided, suspended to hooks over the carriage doors and supported by telescopic iron posts. Under this shelter invalids can be transferred from stretchers to the beds they will occupy in the train. In the centre panel of each carriage is a conspicuous red cross on a white ground, encircled with the words, "Princess Christian Hospital Train," and below hangs an autograph portrait of the Princess. From sockets at the head of the train float the Union Jack and the Red Cross flag.