

inefficiency in action, and of intemperate habits. In a few weeks they were found useless; and during the Varna cholera half of those weakened and predisposed by drunken habits, became its victims. On the embarkation of the army at Varna for the Crimea, the wagons were left behind; partly from limited transport, it was said but mainly, I suspect, from the bad conduct and inefficiency of the pensioner drivers. The want of these carriages was felt at the battle of Alma, and the blame fell on the scape-goat of the Horse Guards, the Medical Department.

The Cholera, as is well known, was destructive at Varna and its neighbourhood; and its bad effect on the troops that contracted the disease, but escaped death, were afterwards painfully apparent before Sebastopol. Convalescents thus reduced were weakened both in body and mind, predisposed to Diarrhoea, and peculiarly unfitted for the hard work, privations, and exposure to cold and wet in the trenches, during a long winter siege.

An extensive relapse of cholera took place early in the siege. During this time every medical officer that Dr. Smith could lay his hands on was ordered out, and additional supplies of medicine and medical comforts were forwarded to the Tower for shipment. If some of these arrived late, at wrong destinations, or were lost altogether, the fault did not lie with the medical department. Its Chief, according to his orders and language, transmitted every medical package for foreign service to the Tower, carefully directed, and apprised the officer to whom it was consigned, by Post, of its approaching shipment, and prepared him to take charge on its arrival. This was done in every instance. If, in the hurry and confusion of this great and impromptu expedition, medicines and surgical necessaries went astray, the blame did not lie at his door.

The want of medical officers was complained of at Alma and Balaclava, but this is not to be wondered at. In an engagement every wounded man is apt to consider himself neglected if he is not at once attended to, not reflecting on the wants of others under the same circumstances, and the necessary limitation of the number of Surgeons. We had some hard work in the Peninsular war, and I have heard the same complaints made; but nobody of any intelligence now repeats them. No doubt the fearful cholera epidemic, and the sanguinary engagements near Sebastopol, following one another so fast, demanded greater medical assistance than the Peninsular fighting. And it was afforded. At the Varna embarkation the proportion of medical officers to strength was one half greater than the average of the three last Peninsular campaigns. And considering the War office reductions this fact is most creditable to Dr. Andrew Smith.