

At this time it was generally believed that the allied French, English, and Turkish armies would relieve Silistria, cross the Danube, and attack the Russian on its left bank. Under this impression Dr. Smith sent three medical officers to Vienna, with instructions to call there on an eminent physician, who had made two campaigns on the Danube, and learn from him, and by their own observations, the medical topography of the country about to be the scene of military operations. They were directed to descend the river, survey the country carefully on both sides, proceed by Schumla to Constantinople, and then prepare and transmit separate and full reports.

I know those three gentlemen well. One of them was my Regimental Assistant-Surgeon in 1827. They were men of general and professional ability. They forwarded valuable reports, which the Director-presented to the Secretary at War; and I believe they were sent to Lord Raglan.

During the Peninsular War, especially in the great battles, the British means of conveying the wounded to the rear were defective, and inferior to the French. There were some spring wagons appropriated to this duty, but they were not scientifically adapted to the purpose, and besides, were too few in number. And when the seat of war lay in rugged or mountainous countries the waggons could not approach the wounded, and mules were required. I know that this was strongly urged on the Duke of Wellington by Sir James McGrigor, his chief medical officer, after the battle of Vittoria; and that a long official correspondence on the subject followed. But the defect was apparent, and a new transport organization was projected. It is very probable that if peace had not ensued so soon after, this desideratum would have been accomplished. But the cessation of the war, the pressure of the economical interest, and the hope of long undisturbed international relations extinguished this, and many other military improvements.

Mr. Guthrie, the eminent London Surgeon, concurrently with Dr. A. Smith, the Director General, called the attention of Government to the necessity of establishing some transport like the French ambulances, when the Turkish expedition was in preparation last year; and the latter gentleman devised a wagon, which was submitted to the military authorities, and approved by them. I have been informed that eighteen of these vehicles were sent to Varna. A corps of drivers was necessary, and steps were taken to organize them as soon as possible. Here the Government appears to have made a great mistake, which produced serious bad consequences. Contrary to the strong and repeated objections of Dr. Smith the drivers were chosen from the military pensioners, men of long service, between forty and fifty years of age; discharged for