

by the Russians under Prince Bebutoff. The intelligence was regarded as momentous, as it was considered certain that the Russians would follow up their success by renewed efforts in Asia. It was highly desirable that Great Britain should have a representative there, to keep her informed of the state of the respective armies, and as to the general course of events. Colonel Williams, who was thoroughly familiar with the ground, and of whose abilities the War Office justly entertained a very high opinion, was forthwith despatched to the scene of action as Her Majesty's Commissioner. He reached Constantinople on the 14th of August, 1855, and put himself into immediate communication with Lord Raglan, Commander of the British Forces in the Crimea, and with Lord Stratford de Redcliffe, the British Plenipotentiary at Constantinople. He then set out for his destination, accompanied only by three men, viz.: Lieutenant Teesdale, Mr. Churchill, and Dr. Sandwith. On the 24th of September the little party reached Kars, and Colonel Williams forthwith set himself to work to reorganize the Turkish forces. He found that there had been gross peculation and mismanagement, and that the equipments and commissariat were in a wretched condition. The army was an unsightly rabble in rags and tatters, bearing, except in the matter of numbers, considerable resemblance to that famous regiment with which Sir John Falstaff refused to march through Coventry. The rations served out to the men were scanty and foul. The officers were shiftless and incompetent. The payment of the troops was more than twelve months—and in some cases more than twenty-two months—in arrear. As a result, a state of insubordination prevailed. Drill was altogether neglected, and many of the troops were absolutely too lazy to take exercise. Such was the condition of things which prevailed when Colonel Williams arrived at Kars.

His first proceeding was to send off despatches to Constantinople representing the state of affairs. His next was to make an attempt to evoke some sort of order out of the chaos which prevailed all around him. Upon receipt of the despatches Lord Stratford de Redcliffe submitted the situation to the Turkish Government, and urged them to find a remedy. In response to this appeal the Turkish Government sent to Kars an insolent and incapable drunkard named Shukri Pasha, who, instead of being of any service to Colonel Williams did all he could to thwart his efforts at reorganization. The Colonel, after much routine and delay, was appointed a Lieutenant-General in the Sultan's service. In his commission he was styled Williams Pasha; and this is the first instance on record of a Christian being appointed to high rank in the service of the Sublime Porte under his own proper name. The custom had previously been to bestow Moslem names upon such officers, when promoting them to positions of distinction. In the following November Lieutenant-General Williams, repaired to Erzeroum, which he placed in as efficient a state of defence as the means at his disposal rendered possible, leaving Lieutenant Teesdale behind at Kars to maintain discipline there. In the following spring he was reinforced by Colonel Lake, Captain Olpherts, and Captain Thompson, from the Indian army. The fortifications at Kars were strengthened and largely reconstructed, and provisions were stored up for a siege, for it was known that a strong Russian force under General Mouravieff would attempt to take the place. The attempt was not long delayed. "Never, probably," says a recent historian, "had a man a more difficult task than that which fell to the lot of Williams. He had to contend against official stupidity, corruption, delay; he could get nothing done without having first to remove whole mountains of