DR. ANDREW SMITH AND THE ASSISTANT-SURGEONS IN THE CRIMEA.

To the Editor of "The Times."

SIR,—I beg to transmit to you the memorial from the assistant-surgeons in the Crimea to Lord Panmure.

As you published the memorial of the surgeons we hope you will not object to insert in *The Times* ours also.

The subjoined memorial was sent through Dr. Hall and General Simpson to Lord Panmure, but, having somehow fallen into the hands of Dr. Andrew Smith, it was returned to us by him with a letter, of which the enclosed is a copy.

Your obedient servant,

Crimea, Sept. 22.

A. B., (for the Assistant-Surgeons.)

Army and Ordnance Medical Department, Aug. 17th.

SIR,—I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter, dated the 31st ultimo, forwarded for my consideration and transmission to the Minister at War a memorial from certain assistant-surgeons of the army serving in the Crimea, praying for an amelioration of their condition, and certain advantages in point of rank and retirement.

In returning the enclosure I regret to have to inform you that it is not in my power to forward it for the consideration of Lord Panmure, as it contains at least one statement which I do not admit to be correct. The statement is as follows:

"That promotion appears at the present time to be conducted on no definite plan, and is not regulated, as it should be by considerations of merit, seniority, or service in the field."

Independently of this reason, I also consider the document one I could not with propriety forward to Lord Panmure, as it purports to be suggestions for the improvement of the department simply by a body of assistant-surgeons, by far the majority of whom can scarcely be supposed yet to thoroughly know the working of the present system, or what would be the effects of what they propose.

I have, &c.,

ANDREW SMITH, Director-General.

Dr. Hall, Principal Medical Officer,
British Army, Crimea.

"To the Right Hon. Lord PANMURE, Secretary of State for the War Department."

"The Memorial of the Assistant-Surgeons of Her Majesty's Army in the Crimea humbly sheweth,—

"That your lordships memorialists have seen, with much concern, during the progress of this campaign, that, while the exertions of medical officers individually have been recognised as leaving nothing to be desired, the working of the medical department, as a whole, has not proved satisfactory; and, understanding that, in consequence, a reorganization of the medical department of the army is in contemplation, we take this occasion to represent, for your Lordship's consideration,—

"That the present rank and emoluments of assistant-surgeons are not of a character, apart from other considerations, to retain in the department medical men of talent and proficiency, to whom is open the prospect of higher remuneration as practitioners in civil life. Having in a great majority of instances no means beyond those afforded by the practice of their profession, medical men hesitate to enter a service in which, however honourable and desirable in many respects, the small remuneration allowed them is notoriously insufficient for maintaining their proper standing, or enabling them to associate on terms of equality with their brother officers.

"That while the assistant-surgeon, having first arrived at the age of twenty-one, must have also undergone a long and expensive course of professional study previous to assuming the subaltern rank allotted to him,—one wholly unworthy of the dignity of the profession to which he belongs,—the executive officer may, without any special preliminary education, join the army at a very early age, and, within the short period of two years, attain a rank for which a medical officer can become eligible only after a lengthened period of service.

"That the much more rapid promotion of executive than of medical officers during time of war implies also an undeservedly low estimate of the exertions of the latter, who share the danger of battle, privation, and climate, and are exposed to the additional risk of life from constant intercourse with the wounded and diseased, but, unlike their fellows, reap from their services, however distinguished, neither advantage nor reward, in consequence of the long period of service enjoined by the 'regulations' before promotion.

"That promotion appears at the present time to be conducted on no definite plan, and is not regulated, as it should

be, by considerations of merit, seniority, or services in the field.

"That the ill-defined nature of the duties of assistant-surgeons is not only open to objection, but their being required to combine the functions of dispenser, dresser, and clerk with those of physician and surgeon is incompatible with, and unworthy of, their true position.

"That under ordinary circumstances medical officers are denied the leave of absence desirable for professional improvement and other purposes.

"That the period assigned for the retirement of medical officers is unnecessarily prolonged, exceeding that of other officers actually by one-fourth, and virtually by one-half.

"That your Lordship's memorialists cannot fail to regret that the augmentation of the army should have failed to accelerate promotion in the medical department alone, in consequence of the introduction of civil practitioners to the posts of authority and emolument thus created, to fill which your Lordship's memorialists humbly consider the permanently appointed members of the department not only better entitled, but from their knowledge of the peculiarities of military practice even more competent; and believe the adjustment of the various causes of objection above detailed could not fail at all times to attract to the regular channel of the department a sufficiently large number of the most highly-gifted and accomplished of the profession to render in any future emergency all extraneous aid unnecessary.

"Your Lordship's memorialists therefore humbly pray—

"That the pay and rank of assistant-surgeons be increased.

"That five years be the *maximum*, instead of at present the *minimum* service required for promotion, and that the substantial recognition of service in the field, so liberally bestowed on military officers, be extended to assistant-surgeons, whose services are not less onerous or deserving.

"That the professional experience gained in so wide a field of observation as that afforded to those who have served in this campaign, and which no length of home service could have supplied, be duly considered in the regulation of promotion.

"That medical officers be relieved from the duties of dispenser, dresser, and clerk, and that competent persons be appointed to discharge those functions.

"That the leave of absence hitherto denied to medical officers during time of peace be allowed them on proper occasions.

"That the length of time occupied in preliminary education, amounting in most instances to not less than five years, be taken into account in regulating the period of service required of medical officers previous to retirement.

"And your memorialists will ever pray, &c.

"THE ASSISTANT-SURGEONS IN THE ARMY
BEFORE SEBASTOPOL."

Correspondence.

"Audi alteram partem."

PARISIAN HOSPITAL PRACTICE.—ÉCRASEUR OF M. CHASSAIGNAC.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—A new surgical instrument, called the *écraseur*, devised by M. Chassaignac, surgeon-in-chief of the new and splendid hospital Lariboisière, is just now attracting the attention of the profession in Paris, and seems about to create a new interest in practice, and to form an important addition to the *armamenta chirurgica*.

The *écraseur* is especially adapted to the removal of pediculated tumours, and for sections in which it is important to avoid hæmorrhage.

It is so adjusted as to embrace the part to be cut by a loop of chain presenting a plain surface with which the section is made. The two extremities of the chain, entering the tube of the instrument placed in contact with the point where the division is to finish, and successively and at determined intervals drawn by a balance lever, worked at the opposite extremity of the tube. Every successive diminution of the loop is retained, and thus the operation may be completed within any specified time deemed expedient, having reference to the state of the patient, and the vascularity or hæmorrhagic tendency of the parts.

The end proposed to be attained by the *écraseur* is section