

PUBLIC HEALTH.

ISOLATION HOSPITAL DIFFICULTIES.

ONE of the difficulties liable to arise in the working of isolation hospitals, which forms an important part of public health administration in England, is illustrated by a complaint which reaches us with regard to a patient sent in by one of the neighbouring practitioners, being induced by the hospital nurse to cease to consult the doctor who had sent her in, and attend after her return home at the surgery of the visiting surgeon to the hospital. The case had been reported as one of diphtheria, and antitoxin serum had been injected before sending the patient to hospital, but the nurse told her she was not suffering from diphtheria nor ever had been, and based on this opinion of hers the advice to change her doctor. So far as we know, the visiting surgeon was not aware of the nurse's interference, as in that case he would doubtless have refused to treat the patient so recommended; but the doctor who had sent her in, being naturally annoyed, wrote a letter of complaint to the Hospital Committee, in which, after describing the nurse's conduct, he spoke of it being a case of touting, "held by the Medical Council to be infamous conduct, and punishable by removal of the offender's name from the *Medical Register*." The Hospital Committee thereupon instructed their clerk to write that the action taken by the nurse was against their wishes, and that she certainly should not have instructed or influenced the patient in the way complained of. They very properly took no notice of the suggestion of infamous conduct, etc., repeated twice in the complainant's letter, and there for the present the matter ends. If the facts have been correctly reported to us, we think it is to be regretted that the visiting surgeon treated the case at his surgery without perhaps making full inquiry as to where she had previously been treated, and that the complainant in his letter to the Committee went far beyond the bounds of his just complaint against the nurse's conduct.

OBITUARY.

FRANCIS WOODHOUSE BRAINE, F.R.C.S.

WE record with much regret the death of Mr. Woodhouse Braine, one of the early pioneers of anaesthesia in this country.

Born in 1837, Francis Woodhouse Braine came from an Oxford family, his father being a well-known general practitioner in Mayfair. Little record has been kept of his early life, but in 1854 Braine joined the medical school of St. George's Hospital, and became M.R.C.S. Eng. four years later. At his hospital his ambitions and proclivities led him towards surgery, and he occupied the posts of House-Surgeon, Surgical Registrar, and Demonstrator of Anatomy; but under the influence of Mr. George Pollock, whom he helped at his operations, Braine gained experience in anaesthetics. After a few years of general practice the opportunity occurred which determined the trend of his life's work. Mr. Potter, who had devoted himself with enthusiasm to the practice of anaesthetics in 1864, met with the misfortune of losing a patient under chloroform. He never gave another anaesthetic, and offered his practice to young Woodhouse Braine. Here was his chance, and although to accept it meant relinquishing his surgical ambitions, he took Mr. Potter's house in Maddox Street, and started as a pure anaesthetist. At this time he and Mr. Clover were the sole exponents of the art, and Woodhouse Braine soon acquired name and fame with a lucrative practice in this branch. In 1861 he had become L.R.C.P., and six years subsequently took the Fellowship of the sister college. Woodhouse Braine was one of the first in England to commence the use of nitrous oxide, which in those early days was manufactured at home and carried about in large bags. One of his earliest hospital appointments was to the Dental, now the Royal Dental Hospital of London. He remained on the staff for a quarter of a century. In 1872 the authorities at Charing Cross Hospital determined to appoint a special officer to administer anaesthetics, and offered the post to Woodhouse Braine. This honour was accepted; the position enabled him to be one of the first lecturers upon the uses of anaesthetics, and for eighteen years he carried on this hospital work. His only other hospital appointment was to St. Peter's Hospital for Stone, an institution to which he was attached for sixteen years, and to which he was Consulting Anaesthetist at the time of his death. Various societies were indebted to him for strenuous work, and particularly the Medical Society.

During his tenure of office as Secretary he arranged the

move to the Society's present house in Chandos Street; in token of appreciation of his services he received a medal from the Society and was elected a Vice-President. The Odontological Society also *honoris causa* added his name to its roll of honorary members. In 1893, when the Society of Anaesthetists was founded, Woodhouse Braine gave his unstinting support to the movement and served for two years as President.

In his special branch of practice he was conspicuous as a thorough-going advocate of ether, and was among the first in this country to extend the use of this anaesthetic which he gave habitually in succession to nitrous oxide. More a man of action than a writer, Woodhouse Braine has left comparatively few papers, although those which he contributed to our columns and those of other journals dealt rather with practical than theoretical aspects of anaesthesia. But there was another side to the character of Woodhouse Braine; he was in every sense a keen sportsman. Under the *nom de guerre* of "Frank Stanley" he took part in swimming matches at a time when swimming was little recognized; he hunted twice a week and threw himself into any game of skill with that energy and keenness which characterized all he undertook. All who came in contact with the man felt the subtle influence of his kindly personality and few who when in trouble sought his advice and aid came away without sympathy and the shrewd counsel of a man of the world. Of fine physique and untiring activity, he never admitted his inability to pursue active life, and it was this refusal to accept his physical limitations which caused him to overtax his powers and contributed to his death. Many will mourn Woodhouse Braine and none more than those who were associated with him in his work as an anaesthetist.

WILLIAM GEORGE WEAVER,

FORMERLY HONORARY SURGEON, ROYAL BUCKS HOSPITAL.

THOUGH continued ill-health had somewhat diminished the circle of his friends, there are many persons in Bourne End, Aylesbury, and elsewhere, who will hear the news of the death of Dr. William George Weaver, of St. John's Wood, with much regret. Dr. Weaver's family hailed from Herefordshire, but his father had settled and married in Tasmania, and Dr. Weaver was born in that Colony. Nevertheless, though he regarded himself as a Tasmanian, the greater part of his life had been passed in the home country, to which he came in the late Seventies to take up the study of medicine. He joined the medical school of Westminster Hospital, his career as a student being one of marked distinction, for year after year in each annus medicus he won most of the prizes open to him, and was also appointed a Prosector of the Royal College of Surgeons. Later on, after serving the hospital as a resident medical officer both on its medical and surgical sides, he was appointed an Anaesthetist to the hospital, and in the school Assistant Demonstrator of Anatomy. At this period he anticipated an uninterrupted career in England, but the illness of his father made a visit to Tasmania desirable, and for a few years he practised his profession in Hobart Town. He then returned to England and married, settling in practice at Bourne End. In this place he remained for some five years, but reasons of health connected with his family led to his moving and re-establishing himself in the drier locality of Aylesbury, where he early received appointment on the staff of the Royal Buckinghamshire Hospital, and acquired a very extensive practice. His career in this town, as also at Bourne End, was of a most successful character, but after some six or seven years symptoms of renal trouble showed themselves, and eventually he decided to give up practice altogether. He then took a house in St. John's Wood, making that his head quarters, but spending the less clement months of the year at different health resorts. Last winter he had one or more attacks of a hemiplegic character, and though he recovered sufficiently to be able to get about until quite recently, he continued to lose ground steadily in other ways. His death, which occurred at the early age of 48, took place in London, but his remains were removed for interment to Bath, a locality with which, through his wife, he had a family connexion. During the period of his active career, Dr. Weaver took considerable interest in ambulance matters, and for several years was an Examiner and Lecturer to the St. John Ambulance Association. He is survived by his wife, but leaves no children.