

Fry's

300

Gold Medals, &c.

"It deserves all the praise it has received from the Leaders
of the Profession.—*Medical Magazine.*"

PURE
CONCENTRATED

Cocoa

THE

Nursing Record

EVERY SATURDAY
ONE PENNY.

AND

The Hospital World.

"QUI NON
PROFICIT DEFICIT."

EDITED BY MRS. BEDFORD FENWICK.

No. 725.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 22, 1902.

VOL. XXVIII.

Editorial.

THE MIDWIVES BILL.

WE have read with pleasure the amended Midwives' Bill, just published, which is to be brought up for its second reading in the House of Commons on February 26th. Not that we have receded from the position we have always maintained that Registration of medical and nursing specialists is a fundamental mistake, and therefore that it is inadvisable to legislate for midwives, as such. If, however, we are to have legislation for midwives and they are to be recognized by the State as independent practitioners, then such legislation should be framed on a just basis, on the supposition that midwives are a necessary class of workers, and not from the standpoint of enforcing control over dissolute and disreputable women, which seemed to be the intention of those who drew up the penal clauses concerning fines, imprisonment and hard labour with which the last Bill bristled. Coercion and police supervision never yet reformed any person, and if it is necessary to enforce them in the case of a class of women entrusted with the entire charge of lying-in mothers then Heaven help the poor.

Unquestionably the most important difference between the present Bill and that of 1900 is that the formation of the Central Midwives Board is now placed in the hands of the Lord President of the Privy Council instead of being deputed to the General Medical Council. We wholly approve of this alteration as tending to maintain the balance of power between interests which are not always identical, and as likely to ensure justice to both medical practitioners and midwives. In our opinion the only dignified position for the profession of medicine to adopt towards its allied services is to act, through its Societies and Colleges, in a consultative capacity to the governing bodies of these services. To attempt their direct control is to court friction and certain disaster.

In the case of the Midwives' Board the proposed constitution is that it shall consist of four registered medical practitioners representing the Colleges of Physicians and Surgeons, the Society of Apothecaries, and the Incorporated Midwives' Institute; two persons (one of whom shall be a woman) to be appointed by the Lord President of the Privy Council, and one person, appointed by the Association of County Councils. It is provided that the Board shall frame rules, subject to the approval of the

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)