

men in other parts of the country—because he has styled his draft measure a Bill for the “protection of pregnant and lying-in women and newly-born infants by providing for better training of persons as obstetric nurses, their supervision and compulsory registration as such.” The definition, however, of the term employed is essentially different from that which has been hitherto used in previously proposed measures, and clearly shows that the women in question are not to be permitted to act in any way as Midwives claim to act—that is to say, as an independent and inferior order of practitioners. Because Dr. Rentoul defines an Obstetric Nurse as “a person who acts, or is entitled to act, as an Obstetric Nurse in all cases of labour, under the direct supervision of a registered medical practitioner, and who nurses mothers and infants under such regulations as are laid down in this Act, or which shall be from time to time laid down by the Divisional Obstetric Nurses’ Board.”

The Bill provides that no person, unless registered under this Act, shall act as an Obstetric Nurse in any public Hospital or Institution, or under the supervision of any registered practitioner; and any person who so acts without being registered shall be liable to a fine of twenty pounds. But, at the same time, the Bill makes the necessary provision that nothing in the Act shall prevent any person from assisting any mother or child, provided such assistance is not given for fee or reward. The chief privilege of registration is that only registered Obstetric Nurses can recover fees, for services rendered in such a capacity, in any court of law. It is further provided that no registered medical practitioner shall employ any registered Obstetric Nurse to perform any duties other than those laid down in the Act for her guidance; and, upon proof that any registered practitioner has transgressed this provision, the Bill provides that his name shall be struck off the Medical Register. This is a remarkably stringent provision, and we imagine that it is liable to be somewhat misconstrued.

Next, the Bill provides that any person who holds a certificate as a Midwife shall, upon payment of a certain registration fee, be allowed to register and to act in future as an Obstetric Nurse; and the same provision applies to all who have been previously engaged for five years in Obstetric Nursing.

Clause 7 of the draft Bill introduces another and most important provision. It directs that every registered Obstetric Nurse shall annually apply for and obtain a Certificate of Registration, and that, for every such Certificate, the Obstetric Nurse shall pay an annual fee of one shilling and sixpence. If she omits to take out this annual Certificate, her name may be erased from the Register, and will only be re-entered thereon after the payment of all arrears. The Bill next deals with the machinery for carrying out the Act, but this is so important that we must defer its consideration until next week.

“Disruptive Tactics.”

OUR attention has been called to a report of last week’s meeting of the Chelsea Board of Guardians, under the heading “*The Princess Christian v. The Chairman.*” The wire-pulling which prevails in Chelsea is now notorious in professional circles, and nothing could better exemplify its ill effects than the proceedings in question. A Guardian formally proposed that Princess Christian should be asked to open the new Nurses’ Home of the Infirmary; the proposition, being unprecedented in connection with a Local Government Institution, found only one supporter, the Board resolving that, in accordance with invariable custom, its Chairman should open the new building. The “true inwardness” of this attempt to ignore the Chairman, in order to pander to the vanity of one of the officials, is, doubtless, fully appreciated in Chelsea; while all Nurses who value the great work which Princess Christian has accomplished for their profession will deeply regret that Her Royal Highness’ name should have been so injudiciously employed.

In Memoriam.

As we go to press, we learn the sad news of the death of Miss Mary Cadbury, the Lady Superintendent of the Queen’s Hospital, Birmingham, which took place on Tuesday, somewhat suddenly, from acute meningitis, after a slight operation on the ear.

Miss Cadbury’s death will be profoundly regretted by all who knew her personal worth and devotion to duty, and we feel sure that her fellow members of the Royal British Nurses’ Association will join with us in sincere regret that their Association, and the profession generally, has suffered so great a loss.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)