

Who is to Blame?

THE *Morning Post* is still publishing letters from various correspondents upon Nursing topics. Although we are glad that this paper is opening its columns to the discussion of any matters relating to nursing, we cannot but regret that it is altogether silent on the most burning question of the hour, namely, the Royal British Nurses' Association. It is, in fact, dealing with matters of detail, while it leaves the cause of these untouched. For instance, one nurse writes to say that matrons as a rule "lack that house-keeping training which is such an essential for all women, and especially for those who expect to regulate a great establishment successfully." Precisely, but the fault lies not with the matrons, who conscientiously fulfil, so far as they are able, the responsible duties of their office, but with those who are preventing nurses from obtaining, what the most thoughtful of them have long demanded, a minimum curriculum, and organised post graduate courses. These would of course include instruction in institution house-keeping, and the matron would consequently enter upon her post fully equipped for the duties of her responsible office. This would be a more dignified proceeding to our mind than inviting lady members of hospital committees to instruct their matron in duties which she has undertaken. If the press would support nurses in their just demands for liberty to organise themselves into a profession controlled by the State, it would have no occasion to publish complaints of the description alluded to. It is obvious however that but few fully qualified housekeepers enter hospitals as probationers, and that these probationers when they emerge as trained nurses have not picked up a knowledge of housekeeping by instinct. The public must therefore realise that if nurses are prevented from adopting a uniform curriculum, their own daughters, as nurses, as well as the patients in our hospitals, suffer from this lack of organisation, inasmuch as the house-keeping is not as efficiently conducted as if technical instruction were given to nurses in this art.

Obstetric Nurses' Registration Bill.

THE following is the Bill prepared by the Subcommittee of the Parliamentary Bills Committee, after consideration and amendment by the Branches:—

ARRANGEMENT OF CLAUSES.

Clause.

1. Short title.
2. Definitions.
3. Registration.
4. Privileges of registration.
5. Provision for existing midwives.
6. Constitution and duties of Obstetric Nurses' Board.
7. Training and examination of candidates.
8. Confirmation of rules.
9. Fees and expenses.
10. Register of obstetric nurses.
11. Publication of Register.
12. Notice of death of obstetric nurses.
13. Penalty for obtaining registration by false representation.
14. Penalty for wilful falsification of Register.
15. Prosecution of offences.
16. Civil and legal liabilities of midwifery nurses.
17. Exemption for registered medical practitioners.
18. Extent of Act.

A BILL FOR THE PROTECTION OF PREGNANT AND LYING-IN WOMEN AND NEWLY-BORN CHILDREN, BY PROMOTING THE BETTER TRAINING OF WOMEN AS OBSTETRIC NURSES, AND THEIR COMPULSORY REGISTRATION AS SUCH.

Whereas it is expedient that lying-in women and newly-born infants be protected against the evils arising from the practice of midwifery or midwifery nursing by ignorant and untrained persons:

Be it enacted by the Queen's most Excellent Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Lords Spiritual and Temporal and Commons, in this present Parliament assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:—

1. *Short Title.*—This Act may for all purposes be cited as "The Obstetric Nurses Act, 1896."

2. *Definitions.*—In this Act

The term "obstetric nurse" means a woman who attends in cases of natural labour, and during the lying-in period, under the rules, regulations, and medical control or supervision set forth in this Act.

"Obstetric Nurses Register" means a register of obstetric nurses kept in pursuance of this Act.

"Obstetric Nurses Board," hereinafter called the Board, means the Board constituted under this Act for the purpose of carrying out the provisions of the Act under the authority, control, and direction of the Privy Council.

3. *Registration.*—(1) From and after the first day of January, one thousand eight hundred and ninety —, no woman shall be entitled to take or use the name or title of obstetric nurse, midwifery nurse, or midwife (either alone or in combination with any other word or words), or any name, title, addition, or description implying that she is registered under this Act, or is in fact possessed of the skill necessary to act as an

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)