

months in some Lying-in Hospital, or in the Lying-in Ward of some Workhouse where instruction is given by the Medical Officers, and of having attended under the supervision of some Medical Practitioner or Registered Midwife at least twenty-five labours, provided always that a Board of Registration at their discretion may admit a candidate for Registration who has attended, under the supervision of some Medical Practitioner or Registered Midwife, at least twenty-five labours.

"She must pass the required Midwifery examinations.

"Provided always, that all women who are at the *passing of this Act* and have been for the previous twelve months practising as Midwives in England or Wales may be placed on the Register on production of (1) a certificate of good moral character from some magistrate, or clergyman, or other minister of religion in the town, parish, or hamlet in which they live, and (2) of a diploma in Midwifery from some existing examining body approved of by the 'General Council,' or of a certificate of competence from two Registered Medical Practitioners personally acquainted with them, on payment of *five shillings* for the expenses of Registration."

Now it will be observed that the second half of the third clause of these provisions completely nullifies the necessity for any systematic hospital training of any kind. The candidate may be registered if she can prove that she has attended under a Registered Midwife at least twenty-five labours, without any other experience whatsoever. Let us briefly see how utterly absurd this limitation makes the whole Bill. The very *raison d'être* of the measure is the protection of the public from ignorant Midwives. And yet the Bill if passed would have legalised a condition of affairs the analogue of which has been productive of endless trouble and confusion in the medical profession—the system, we mean, of a Doctor working with unqualified assistants. Oftentimes, a young student, from reverses of fortune, or from family necessity, finds that when he has successfully passed through his entire curriculum of study, he is not able to afford the heavy stamp and other duties incidental to the obtaining of his diploma; or perhaps he is not able entirely to complete his Hospital course of study. It is very frequent in such cases for the student to become for a time an assistant to a medical man in busy practice, whereby he obtains a certain amount of practical experience of the exigencies of medical work, and is, moreover, enabled to obtain some direct remuneration. But by better class practitioners this system has always been condemned as bad, because it is productive of many anxieties to

the principal; and in case of any serious error being committed, it may cause even a still more serious charge to be advanced against the unqualified practitioner. Only, be it noted, no medical examining body would dream of admitting the assistant to its examination on the ground that he had worked with his employer for any length of time, however prolonged. But the working of this provision of this Bill might easily do this. For a woman who had been working for twelve months and obtained—as she easily could—testimonials of competence from two Medical men might be Registered. Straightway she might take unto herself a pupil for a definite premium. As soon as these two together had attended twenty-five patients, every case of which might have been perfectly natural—and in fact half of the children might have been born in their absence—the pupil might present herself for examination, and with a very little cramming might easily pass successfully. Then immediately the newly-Registered Midwife herself might take pupils in like manner. We ask, how would it be possible in the first, second, or any subsequent link in this possible chain of teachers and taught for the pupil to obtain the accurate practical experience of a complicated case of labour? And if she were never taught and never saw such herself, how could she possibly teach or explain the subject to her pupils in their turn? As a matter of fact, this apprenticeship plan would be wholly illusory and useless in affording the slightest protection to the public that Midwives so trained and taught were capable in emergency of "guiding the whirlwind and ruling the storm." And just because the provision is entirely useless, we would say that any Midwives so registered would be doing a treble harm—to the public first, to the calling next, and to the system of Registration last. To the public, because it would give women, without the necessary experience, the title and the practical right to attempt to undertake the most serious operative measures; to the calling, because such women would inevitably, by their ignorance and incapacity, bring discredit on their co-workers; and upon Registration, because it would tend to reduce the standard from one of systematic institutional training to one of private and haphazard instruction, and, therefore, to drag down all these workers to one low dead level of inferiority, ignorance, and incapacity.

We maintain, on the other hand, that two distinct principles should be asserted and upheld in any Midwives' Registration Bill. First, that no woman should be registered as a Midwife who has not received a thorough training either from the medical, or from the nursing point of view,

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