

With regard to the report of the Medical Defence Union, published in the *British Medical Journal*, it was a most misleading statement that any undertaking was ever given by this Association to print any such foot-note asserting that the nurses in the List were not qualified to act as midwives. For what really passed between the two associations I will refer you to the Editorial in the *Nurses' Journal*, and to the account of the General Council, which appeared in this week's *Hospital Nursing Mirror*, you will see that your views with regard to the desirability of hospital training for midwives are fully endorsed by the Governing Body of the Association.

There are, it is true, a very few names in the Midwives' List of Nurses who have not had this additional training, but they are the names of old members who joined in the early days of the Association; they are fast dying out, and it would be discourteous to them to omit them from a list of midwives as they have all obtained certificates in that special branch of work. I am sending you the list and you will see that those who have not had training in general hospitals are such a small minority as to be scarcely discernible. I hope I may have an opportunity of seeing you on the subject now that you are returned to England. I shall be away next week, but after that I shall be glad if you can call and see the new offices, and I will give you full particulars relating to the midwives' question.

I am, yours very truly,
(Signed) G. A. LEIGH, Secretary.

[COPY.]
1, Shrewsbury Road,
Bayswater, W.

July 9th, 1901.

DEAR MISS LEIGH,—I beg to acknowledge yours of the 5th inst.

I am glad to see that the R.B.N.A. have seen in time the trouble which was likely to take place.

A promise, no doubt, had been made, or why did the Association alter the title of the midwives' list in the February, March, and April numbers of this year in the *Nurses' Journal*, and advertise this separate list at a penny.

The London Obstetrical Society issued a Diploma, which I possess and paid for, stating that the possessor "is, in our opinion, a skilled midwife, competent to attend natural labour."

I therefore still object to any note being appended inferring that the word "diploma" is to be understood as a "certificate." Such as the following note referred to:—

Note.—"Previous to June, 1895, the certificate granted by the London Obstetrical Society was called by this body 'a diploma.' Since 1895, the word 'certificate' has been substituted, and it should be so understood in the following List," which the Council has sanctioned, as it has no power to deprive those persons who hold this Diploma from the Obstetrical Society of London, of the status which it confers, and I hope no such note will appear appended to the Midwives' List in the R.B.N.A. roll.

Pardon me for saying that, as you are not a trained nurse or midwife, you may not grasp the significance of this question—it is one of great importance, and this difficulty seems to me to have arisen because the Executive Committee of the R.B.N.A. allowed the issue of a list of Midwives in the first instance. We

never asked for it, and it is a pity the nurses are thus dragged into the midwife controversy.

I am leaving London in a few days, so shall not be able to call.

Yours truly,
GEORGINA B. MACVITIE,
M.R.B.N.A.,

and of the League of St. Bartholomew's Nurses.

[We are pleased to comply with Miss McVitie's request to print the temperate letters she has sent to the Secretary of the Royal British Nurses' Association, to be placed before the Executive Committee, and we have no doubt had the demand which the Medical Defence Union made last year to change the name of women holding diplomas and certificates from the London Obstetrical Society qualifying them to act as "Midwives," into that of "Midwifery Nurses," been brought before the governing body of the R.B.N.A., and also reported in the official organ, that the nurse members—especially those holding Midwifery Diplomas—would have then and there declared their objection to any such proposal—and the medical secretaries of the two societies concerned, would have been saved humiliating positions in the public press. It was this policy of "suppression," the dealing, one might say *in camera*, by the medical clique who govern the R.B.N.A., with the nurse members' affairs, to the exclusion of all knowledge and powers of expression upon their part, which caused the years of protest by a conscientious minority, who left the Association in a body when Mr. Fardon and his supporters thrust the new bye-laws through the packed Executive and General Council in 1897.

Had not Mr. Bateman published his dealings with Mr. Fardon in the *British Medical Journal*, and had not this journal taken up the question from the nurses' point of view, the members of the Royal British Nurses' Association would have been kept by the present officers in complete ignorance of the whole question, vitally important to them from a professional and economic standpoint. *Not one word has ever been printed in the Nurses' Journal, the official (or as it is commonly termed the officers') organ on this matter.* We entirely agree with Miss MacVitie that such a list is quite superfluous, and that it would be far more advantageous to the members to have their various certificates, and diplomas appended to the general entry of their names in the Roll of members. This Midwives' List was instituted by the present officers without the consent of the nurse members, and their names placed on it in conjunction with those of women who are midwives only and *not nurses*. The whole thing is another of those stupendous blunders perpetrated again and again during the period of control of the R.B.N.A., by Mr. Fardon, Sir James Crichton Browne, and Dr. Bezly-Thorne, the direct result of the determination of this clique to *govern* and not *co-operate* with the nurse members. No trained and certificated nurse with any knowledge of affairs, would have initiated such a scheme. But even these potentates must not be permitted to imagine that they can suppress the name of "midwife" and substitute that of "midwifery nurse" without a protest. As it is they have climbed down, and Mr. Fardon must be left to deal with the Medical Defence Union as best he can; his position is not an enviable one in the opinion of honourable people.—ED.]

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