

The General Medical Council and the Supplying of "Diplomas" to Midwives.

BY ROBERT REID RENTOUL, M.D.

THE following Memorial was received by the General Medical Council at their November Session; and the following Resolutions were then adopted:—

The Memorial of ROBERT REID RENTOUL, Registered Medical Practitioner, Hartington Road, Liverpool, to the President and Members of the General Council of Medical Education and Registration of the United Kingdom.

Humbly sheweth as follows:—

1.—That your memorialist begs to call the attention of the President and Members of the General Medical Council to the action of those registered Medical Practitioners who have, in different parts of the United Kingdom, formed Schools of Midwifery and Examining Bodies, at which examinations in Midwifery are conducted and Diplomas granted, qualifying the possessors of such diplomas to practice that branch of Medicine known and recognised as Midwifery.

2.—That the action of such registered medical practitioners, your memorialist submits, is opposed to the Medical Act of 1886, which empowers certain Universities and Corporations only, to hold examinations and to grant diplomas entitling the holders to practice medicine, surgery, and midwifery, and to admit to such examination only those candidates who present certificates showing they have undergone a period of at least five years' training in medicine, surgery and midwifery.

3.—That those bodies which had, previously, the power to grant a separate diploma, or license in midwifery to those *not possessing any medical or surgical qualification*, have allowed such power to lapse.

4.—That no objection is raised by your memorialist to the action of those registered medical practitioners who train women to act as monthly or obstetric Nurses; but, on the other hand, he feels that such registered practitioners have no more right to grant a diploma to those obstetric Nurses than have practitioners who train medical or surgical Nurses, to grant a diploma to these; qualifying these to practice medicine or surgery only, or both. And that such granting of diplomas must invariably depreciate the diplomas granted by legally constituted Licensing Bodies.

Your memorialist humbly submits that the action of these registered practitioners to which he calls attention:—

- a. Aims at the repeal of the Medical Act, 1886, and is antagonistic to the views held by your Council upon Medical Education.
- b. Tends to bring about a retrograde movement in medical practice, and a reversion to conditions recognised as undesirable.
- c. Interferes with the proper and efficient training of the Medical student in practical midwifery, so endangering life.
- d. Interferes with the perfecting of the education of the newly qualified medical practitioner in practical midwifery, so endangering life.
- e. Aims at establishing, by law, an order of midwifery practitioners other than those recognised by the Medical Act, 1886, and independent of registered medical practitioners.
- f. Acts as a dangerous precedent to those registered medical practitioners who wish to examine and grant to any person either a diploma in medicine only, or in surgery only.
- g. Supplies a body of imperfectly educated and partially examined midwifery practitioners, thus (a) endangering the health and lives of lying-in women and infants, and (b) creating a public danger.
- h. That these registered practitioners grant a diploma or certificate which is said to be a diploma entitling the possessors to practise at least that branch of Medicine known as Midwifery; so trenching upon the powers of examining bodies as placed upon them by the Medical Acts; and that such diploma must, to a large extent, mislead the public, and be a source of danger to lying-in women, and to infants.

Your memorialist would, therefore, pray the President and Members of your Council to take into their consideration the making of a Rule or Bye-law—

- a. Restraining the aforesaid action of these registered practitioners as being contrary to the Medical Acts, and subversive to the views of your Council held upon medical education.
- b. To make a Rule or Bye-law enacting that when any registered practitioner employs a person possessed of a diploma in midwifery alone as his assistant in midwifery, such employing will be brought by your Council under their resolution relating to covering, and which was passed by your Council in April, 1883.
- c. To make a Rule or Bye-law enacting that your Council will hold the conduct of any registered practitioner to be antagonistic to the meaning

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[previous page](#)

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