

The Mid-wives just

# PETITION:

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Gentlewomen of that faculty.

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V Which said complaint they  
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last, being the 23. of Jan. 1643.

*With some other notes worthy of observation.*

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Printed at London, 1643.

The Mid-wives Bill

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With some other necessary observations.

Printed at London 1643.



# The Midwives just Petition, or a complaint of divers Gentlewomen of that faculty, &c.

*Humbly Shewing,*

**T**Hat whereas many miseries do attend upon a Civill War, there is none greater than the breaking of that conjunction which marrimony hath once confirmed, so that womens husbands being absent at the Wars, they cannot enjoy that necessary comfort and benevolence which they expect from them : this, if well considered, is a shrewd matter and doth give beginning to a naturall depopulation of towns and Cities, when the causes of populous fertillity are any wayes hindered, whereby all places, especially this famous City, must needes become very thin of people, and great want of men fit for employment both for Church and State, and all corporations must necessarily from thence ensue, for men grow not up on a suddain, there must be a seed time before harvest, bearing of children before their birth, as we very well know, who in that kind have been great assistants unto women, and constant deliv-ers of much good to the Common-wealth.

And whereas we are called Mid wives by our profession, wee knowing the cases of women better than any other, as being more experienced in what they sensibly suffer since the wars began, living the religious lives of some cloysterd Nuns contrary to their own naturall affections, if they could by any means help it without wronging their husbands: Our Petition shall therefore consist of many branches, whereby the injuries of women in this present age may be clearely discerned, for it is a great wrong that

women should want their husbands and live without comfort, whereby we Midwives are also undone, for as women are helpers unto men, so are we unto women in all their extremities, for which we were formerly well paid, and highly respected in our parishes for our great skill and mid-night industry, but now our Art doth fail us, and little gettings have we in this age barren of all naturall joyes, and onely fruitfull in bloody calamities, we desire therefore that for the better propagating of our owne benefit, and the generall good of all women, wives may no longer spare their husbands to be devoured by the sword, but may keep them fast locked within their own loving armes day and night, perfecting their embraces in such a manner as is not to be expressed freely, but may be easily conceived by the strong fancy of any understanding women; We Mid-wives must be as secret as night and close in all conceites, but wee know most assuredly that this would bring about much content, while our selves should feast high at Christnings, and nurses also should more frequently be paid for their monthly keeping of women: we have with much horror and astonishment heard of Kenton-Battayle, wherein many worthy members and men of great ability were lost to the number of 7563. who were buried thereabouts by the Church-wardens, Clerkes, and Sextons of the adjacent Parishes, as they have lately delivered upon their severall oaths, which doth make us humble Petitioners, that blood may not hereafter be shed in such a manner, for many men, hopefull to have begot a race of souldiers, were there killed on a sudden before they had performed any thing to the benefit of Mid-wives, which was a great losse and hinderance to the Commonwealth; whereby some maydes were deprived of promised marriage, and wives by the hand of death were quickly Widdowed, and with them the hope of posterity was also extinguished, it is therefore hereafter to be desired that Warre may not eat up and devoure the youth of this Kingdome, but that men may performe the blessing given to *Adam* by encreasing and multiplying, thereby

thereby to repayre the great havock and losse which this unnaturall War doth make in England. Heretofore the happinesse of the English women was compared unto heaven, but now they have just cause to tremble at the report of every gunne, which can send a speedy death to their instruments of conjunction and delight, without whom they are but halfe themselves, and being indeed nothing in themselves, from them they receive perfection, weight, and number, and grow as rich in children as they are in beauty, while wee Mid-wives shall fare and feede the better for their frequent christnings and gossipings.

We take notice what divellish new Engines for Warre are daily invented by the Cyclops and such like Artists, to destroy one another; namely the Poleax, Petronels, Carbines, Firelocks, Snap-hances, Pistols, nay cases of Pistols, Granadoes, and their hand Granadoes, and the Morter peices, and your terrible two-edged swords, able to affright poor women to see such naked weapons; then the Cavalliers, and your Dragoneers, and your Engineers, which are those persons which exercised those weapons: such instruments were never used, or scarce seene in England, and all out of jealousies, doubts and feares; because you men will not confide in one another: All these weapons are but to destroy brave man which should be preserved and kept for better uses and purposes: It were farre better for those men that they followed their owne trade, and the old game of England at home with their wives; then for them to runne abroad to be a common souldier, and stand Sentinel two or three hours in the cold for a little Suffolk cheese and a peice of browne bread, and at length kill one another for eight pence a day, with the night to boot too: and it may be lose a limbe or some other good joynt: when indeed and in very good sooth

they need not stand at home so long by nineteene parts, and have more thanks (if not a reward) for their paines.

It were nothing so irkesome to us poor Midwives that our trade is now decayed, if the sword in the scabbard were used and employed against a Forreigne Enemy; it would not then be halfe so grievous, for the old proverbe saith, what the eye sees not, the heart greives not at. But we poor Midwives both see, and our hearts know it and now our tongues confesse it; that it is a lamentable case when the sonne shall goe out against the father; father against the sonne; brother against brother, and kinsman against kinsman, this wee speake is grievous to be thought on; and we condole even to the lower-most angle of our triangular hearts.

Wee desire therefore that a period may be set to these unhappy differences, and that the generall and naturall Standard may no longer lye couchant; but that women may be fruitfull vines, that there may be no armes, but such as will lovingly embrace women, and because wee know that some upon different occasions desire to absent themselves from their best beloved, having first plunderd their chests and took away that they have, we desire that such men may be compelled forthwith to return to their wives, or beare on their heads the fortune which they have most worthily deserved, being guilty of that punishment by their long absence.

And whereas all are not Penelopes that can withstand the siege of a strong temptacion, but must yeeld up the Fort to the flattering enemy of their long preserved chastity, it is better to keepe then to make that fraile sex honest: let not therefore the drumme wound the ayre no more with false stroakes, nor the pike bee bathed in the blood of guiltlesse men, let not the sword ravish from our  
bosomes

bestowes the delight of our lives: this word husband speaking benefit and comfort both to Wives and Mid-wives, since our felicity cannot subsist without the others fertility and fruitfullnesse, and therefore let us Mid-wives whom it most nearely concernes, desire that some order may be taken; that the old song of England may not be againe revived, *flow men of London*: And that the delicate sex of women may not lye in their bedds like cold marble images cut out by some Artificers hand, but being full of warme spirit and life, they may oblige the world to them by repairing the losses of this War, and have husbands as formerly at their command to maintaine them bravely, and bring them yearely under the delivering power of the Mid-wife, which cannot be done unlesse the Wars cease, and men returne againe unto their wives.

Moreover we have just cause to feare those dreadfull prophesies which point so directly at this age, foretelling that there should be a great scarcity of men, and such a-  
bundance of women farre exceeding the other, both in strength and number, so that a hundred should run after one, being a fearefull prodigy in nature, and a dearth to be more feared, then that of Corne or any other commodity: Coals are not so necessary as husbands warme in bed, and comfortable at board, and therefore in this sad age it is fit to take a view of the calamities of women in other nations, for if men be scarce, all other plenty is nothing to women, they consumate our happinesse, and make us richer then all the precious stones of the Indies, therefore most deplorable will the continuall losse of more Souldiers be, since they might live to comfort us, and declare their undainted valour in the soft and delightfull field of love: And whereas most certaine intelligence brought unto us, that many notorious Papists, doe resort to the Queenes Standard, lately by her erected at  
New.

Mother  
Shiptons  
Prophecie.

New-castle:we desire likewise that our Standard may once again be set up in our City and Suburbs; for we mid-wives know that women are not so cold or out of soule, but that they can endure a fight bravely under a Standard, and can use a weapon as well as men if they get it in their handling, let their courage therefore teach them to fight for their owne priviledges, and if they prove the weaker vessels, yet wee Mid-wives desire that the distresses of widowed women bee looked upon with a charitable construction, not doubting but by all good willers to their sex, their Petition shall be regarded as the publique voyce of their long conceal'd affections, shewing also how greatly necessitated they have bin in their husbands absence, whose happy returne shall satisfie their longing, and gives us the Midwives of London great cause to rejoyce. And we shall humbly pray, &c.



*FINIS.*







