

## THE WAVERERS.

IT has been said, few men, and no woman, are capable of friendship; and again that women cannot even act in harmony together for the furtherance of a common end. Swayed rather by emotion than guided by reason, they are apt to view things through a personal medium; and strong in likes and dislikes, they are weak in that essential spirit of union, the subordination of personal to general interest; hence they have failed to combine to forward their joint interests, or to raise and improve their industrial position. Be all this as it may, the women of to-day have a remarkable opportunity afforded them of refuting these unworthy imputations, for the members of a useful and honourable occupation have formed themselves into an association for the purpose of raising the position of the Art of Nursing, and promoting the welfare of every woman engaged in it. To this end, some of the foremost members of the Medical and Nursing professions have come forward with generous zeal, unsparing devotion, and admirable business capacity, to carry out the aims and objects of this great Nursing Association. It is hard to understand how any Nurse in the kingdom can fail to give her moral and material support to those who are working so wisely and so well, to forward her personal and professional interest. The question, "Why do you not join?" must be far harder for a Nurse to answer than "Why do you?" For an annual subscription of rather more than half the sum that "Betsy Jane" adventures upon her weekly "penny dreadful," that will—

"Freeze her young blood,  
And make each particular hair to stand on end  
Like quills upon the fretful porcupine,"

every Saturday night of her life, any Nurse can now become a Member of the British Nurses' Association (under suitable conditions), and secure to herself advantages never before offered to the women of any industry.

But for all this there are waverers. Some Nurses hesitate about joining on the plea, that they "will wait and see how things go before doing so." Would it not be worthier and wiser to *help* and see? They would "see" far more by helping than waiting, and could judge for themselves as to the merits, or demerits, of the B. N. A. They are under no covenant to remain with us a day longer than they please. Other Nurses stand aloof on the score of *status*. Unhappy word! which they repeat with parrot-like iteration, and evidently have the vaguest possible idea as to its true professional meaning. They remind one of the mythical old lady who, having got hold of the

word "Mesopotamia," and being in blissful ignorance as to whether it applied to person, place or thing, "aired" it on all possible occasions, under an impression that it gave her consequence, and "sounded" well.

To the question, then, What *status* will it give me if I join the B. N. A.? I frankly answer, None! nor will it make you a better Nurse; but there is little doubt you will show yourself a wiser woman for taking that step. Association, *per se*, confers no *status*, but it may, and I believe will, lead up to it in due time. Those Nurses who argue they had better not join until they get *status* by it, and do by this negative attitude deprive themselves of their best, if not only, chance of ever getting it, pursue a line of reasoning very much akin to that peculiar form of logic politely called "ladies'."

The B. N. A. has no more *status*-giving powers than the Associated Brassworkers, or the Amalgamated Engineers, or those somewhat exclusive gentry the Authorised Plumbers have. But I entertain no doubt in my own mind, that were those practical men of taps and pipes once convinced that they ought to be incorporated, they would go for incorporation almost to a man; and I would venture to make a pretty fair guess as to the opinion they would hold of those members of their craft who kept aloof from the fray, to "wait and see" the result—perchance a victory they never helped to win, but fully meant to share the spoils of!

The Barber-Chirurgeons of two centuries ago, the nucleus of our modern Medical profession, had no more *status* then than the Nurses of to-day, and never would have had had they not striven for it. *Status* is a matter of legislation. The subject of Medical Legal Registration—and, doubtless, Nursing Legal Registration will follow on similar lines—was admirably gone into in the Editorial of the *Nursing Record* of January 31, and I strongly advise every Nurse to read it and think it over.

Those Nurses who "rush" for *status* are, as it were, trying to balance a pyramid on its apex, and with about the same practical result. What good will it do me then to join the B. N. A.? Nurses may ask. Much, every way; if they will only calmly consider its lofty aims, its practical schemes, its wide and far-reaching possibilities. And I predict the day is not far distant when even the waverers will gladly share our pride in membership.

M. HUMFREY.

CULTIVATE the habit of using spare minutes. The amount of good work done in what is usually spent in listless minutes—quarters of hours and waiting-times—would fill us with wonder and regret.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)