

BRITISH NURSES' ASSOCIATION.  
Statement of Income and Expenditure to Dec. 31st, 1888.

DR.	
To Donations for Preliminary Expenses ...	£8 0 0
„ 23 Life Subscriptions at £5 5s. ...	£120 15 0
„ 178 Life Subscriptions at £1 1s. ...	186 18 0
„ Donations ...	43 5 0
	£350 18 0
„ 261 Annual Subscriptions at 10s. 6d. ...	137 0 6
„ 1,918 Annual Subscriptions at 2s. 6d. ...	239 15 0
„ Sale of Cards for Meetings ...	0 12 0
	£736 5 6
CR.	
By Preliminary Expenses, Meetings, &c. ...	£49 2 4
„ Printing, Stationery, Postages, &c. ...	80 16 6
„ Office Expenses (including Clerk's Salary) ...	50 12 9
„ Expenses of General Council and other Meetings ...	£14 2 6
„ Expenses of Con- versazione ...	£185 15 10
„ Less Receipts ...	180 1 6
	£5 14 4 19 16 10
„ Travelling Expenses, Provincial Deputations, &c. ...	15 13 3
„ Balance at Bank, and in Treasurer's hands ...	520 3 10
	£736 5 6

We have examined the foregoing account with the receipt books and vouchers, and we certify that it is a full and correct statement.

F. H. WALLER, *pro* ROBERT BARCLAY, *Treasurer.*  
F. HARDY, *Chartered Accountant.*

London, January 10th, 1889.

Dr. Priestley then in graceful terms proposed a vote of thanks to Mr. Savory for taking the chair. This was seconded by Dr. Fardon and carried by acclamation. Mr. Savory replied, and the Meeting then concluded.

SOME SCIENTIFIC ASPECTS OF  
TRUTHFULNESS.

*A Paper read before the British Nurses' Association, on Friday, January 18th, by*

ROBERT BRUDENELL CARTER, F.R.C.S.,  
*Member of the General Medical Council; Ophthalmic Surgeon to St. George's Hospital, and to the National Hospital for the Paralyzed and Epileptic.*

MR. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,—  
The British Nurses' Association has adopted as its motto, that is to say, as a condensed description of the chief characteristics of its members, the words "Steadfast and True." I think I cannot be mistaken in supposing that the order of succession of these words has been determined by considerations of sound rather than of sense; for, while steadfastness in truth is one of the chief conditions of the advancement of the human race, steadfastness divorced from truth is

of little or no value, and steadfastness in error is prominent among the causes of much of the misery and evil which surround us on every side. I assume, therefore, that the Association has recognised, as a primary condition of success in the work which it has taken in hand, that this work must rest upon a basis of truth; or, in other words, that it must be directed towards the supply of real wants, by methods which will bear the strictest scrutiny to which it is possible that they can be subjected. If this be so, I may surely farther assume that truth, and hence truthfulness, are "subjects connected with Nursing"; and I may, without impropriety, endeavour to direct attention to some of their scientific aspects in an address which forms one of the series to be delivered to the Association.

It is an essential condition of any such address that it should, in the first place, contain clear definitions of the ideas with which it proposes to deal; and this, in the present instance, is a condition which it is not very easy to fulfil. We may define "truthfulness" without difficulty, as "habitual adherence to truth"; but the question "What is truth?" has been a source of perplexity to many persons besides Pontius Pilate. Dr. Johnson, although an accepted authority on the meaning of English words, will not greatly help us; for his first explanation of "truth" is "the contrary to falsehood," and we have only then to enquire "What is falsehood?" in order to discover that the explanation leaves us precisely where we were before. Dr. Johnson's second, and, as I think, better explanation, is "Conformity of notions to things"; and on this basis it may be possible to arrive at a proper understanding of what we mean. I do not think we are entitled to say of any proposition that it is "true," unless, firstly, it is expressed in clear and definite language, which will always convey the same idea to every person who hears it; language which shall not only not be liable to be misunderstood, but which shall not be capable of being misinterpreted. When we have such a proposition as this, which so far may evidently be either true or false, the further requirement is that it shall be capable of proof, of experimental demonstration. If it be true, certain consequences must follow from it under given conditions; and, when the conditions are fulfilled, the consequences will follow invariably. It is manifest, I think, that what is true in the sense of this definition is placed beyond the reach of controversy, can be proved to be true at any time, and cannot be disputed by any sane and adequately instructed person. No one doubts or disputes the universality of the law of gravitation; no one attempts to set it in defiance in practice; no one doubts

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