

presentment of death which is, we believe, largely responsible for the repugnance many persons feel for seeing their deceased friends, and trained nurses in private houses can do much to overcome this feeling, which is surely unnatural.

After a death has occurred, it is advisable that the relations should leave the room for awhile. The nurse, with the assistance of another person, if possible, should then proceed to compose the body. The bed should be covered with a long mackintosh and sheet, and a draw-sheet and mackintosh also. The body should then be straightened, the eyes closed, the hands folded on the breast, and all garments except one removed. The jaw may be kept in position by a small piece of wood, or even part of a pen-holder, covered with lint; one end of it is placed in the hollow between the clavicles, and the other under the chin. This answers the purpose excellently, and is very preferable to the four-tailed bandage, the difficulties and disadvantages of which are obvious to all nurses. After this the body should be covered with a sheet and allowed to remain undisturbed for about two hours. It is then washed, cavities if necessary being packed with wool, a clean shroud or nightdress put on, and covered with a clean sheet. The object in arranging the body should be to make it look as natural as possible.

It is well that the relations should see it, for the first time at all events, on the bed, but, for obvious reasons, it is advisable that it should be placed in the shell within twenty-four hours after death. Flowers should be placed on the body and about the room, and the whole made to appear as unfunereal as possible. The calm and majesty of death will appeal to, and comfort mourners, if it is unsurrounded by the hideous paraphernalia in which undertakers, and their abettors, of the type of Mrs. Gamp, delight.

It is much to be desired that every parish should have its public mortuary, and every church its mortuary chapel, where any parishioners who desire it may rest until the day of burial. For the poorer classes especially, the need of some such arrangement is a very pressing one.

## Legal Matters.

### CANNING v. SIVELL.

THIS case, which is of the utmost interest to the public and the nursing profession, and which we commence to discuss in this week's editorial, came before Judge Emden at the Lambeth County Court on April 1st.

It was a claim by Miss Margaret Canning, the proprietress of the Ings House Nursing Co., operation, of 81, New Bond Street, W., against Mr. Sivell, a retired gentleman, living at Croxsted Road, Dulwich, for the balance of an account of £34 13s. 6d. for board and lodging and other expenses incurred in connection with the nursing of Miss Sivell, defendant's daughter. Mr. A. B. Shaw was counsel for the plaintiff, while the defendant was represented by Mr. Lithiby, barrister.

From the opening statement of Mr. Shaw, it appeared that Miss Sivell was a victim of acute melancholia, and Mrs. Sivell arranged that the young lady should be admitted to plaintiff's establishment. Mrs. Sivell expressed a wish that her daughter should be treated by the Weir-Mitchell process, which, said counsel, was a method combining electrical treatment with massage and special dieting.

The plaintiff's case was that on her pointing out to Mrs. Sivell the very expensive nature of this process, the latter consented that her daughter should undergo a process of massage treatment, together with a special dietary, at a charge of six guineas per week. Miss Sivell was admitted a patient on December 11th, and her case was under the immediate supervision of Dr. Forbes Winslow.

The plaintiff gave evidence in support of her counsel's opening statement.

Mrs. Robinson, who said she had had no experience in sick nursing, deposed to having been engaged by plaintiff to sit up by the young lady in December; and Nurse Clarke, who was formerly connected with plaintiff's "house," described the special dietary given to the patient, which, she said, consisted mostly of salt beef, white herrings, eggs bought at sixteen a shilling, and milk made from the cheapest brand of the condensed article.

Dr. Forbes Winslow stated that he did not consider the food described as at all proper for a patient in the condition of Miss Sivell to have.

Mr. Thomas Robinson, formerly secretary to Miss Canning, said that on one occasion Miss Sivell expressed a wish to have some fish. Thereupon Miss Canning gave him sixpence, with instructions that he should buy a two-penny piece of fish from a fried fish shop.

Judge Emden said the action was of grave importance, having regard to the serious allegations that had been made. The case revealed the existence of a nursing venture, which, although described as co-operative, was not co-operative except for the purpose of deceiving the public. He was bound to come to the conclusion that the whole of the transactions on the part of the plaintiff were deceptive, and that the agreement

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)