

This is an exceedingly important judgment, and is destined to prove of much value. We feel confident that no surgeon will abuse the privilege accorded by such a judgment. It will always be recognized as the proper procedure to secure in advance the patient's consent to all that may have to be done; but in unforeseen contingencies this judgment may furnish much needed protection.

THE TAKING OF INFANT LIFE.

Recently a case occurred in a Chicago hospital that has given rise to a good deal of discussion. Dr. H. J. Haiselden who had charge of the case declined to perform some operation that might have saved or prolonged the baby's life. His contention was that of the child lived it would of been malformed, mentally defective, and probably become a criminal. The parents consented to allow the baby to perish.

It must be well within the experience of many medical practitioners to have seen children come into the world where death would be decidedly preferable to life with all the infirmities of mind and body, that such a life must mean. But this raises the wide and important question of how is the decision to be arrived at with regard to permitting such a child to die as would be seriously maimed physically or mentally; or making an effort to prolong its life, and doing the best for it that can be done to attain the best result.

Coroner Hoffman, of Chicago, after a consultation with Dr. J. D. Robertson, Health Commissioner, and Dr. H. G. W. Reinhardt, who performed the autopsy, decided to hand the case to a jury of experienced medical gentlemen. The six chosen were: Dr. John B. Murphy, world-known surgeon; Dr. Arthur Rankin, professor of anatomy at Loyola University; Dr. Howard Chislett, dean of Hahnemann College; Dr. D. A. K. Steele, dean of the Physicians' and Surgeons' College at the University of Illinois; Dr. Henry Lewis, professor of obstetrics, Cook County Hospital; Dr. Ludwig Hektoen, professor of pathology, Rush Medical College and University of Chicago.

The permission to take the life of a deformed infant by allowing it to die for lack of proper attention, or of more actively bringing about its end, must be very carefully safe-guarded. Should the time ever come when it may be thought proper to end the life of monsters, this cutting short of their lives must needs be done under conditions of very great care. Provision must be made for the most careful consultation and weighing of the facts of these cases. It must never be forgotten that the duty of the medical profession is to assuage pain, to cure dis-