

are returning to anything substantial in the way of a connection. However, those who remained behind have done their best for absent friends; and it may be that the Temple will before long assume that look of prosperity which it had before the war.

DAMAGES FOR NERVOUS SHOCK.

The question whether a person can sustain an action for damages for nervous shock caused, not by actions, but by mere words, was considered in a recent case in the King's Bench (*Janvier v. Sweeney*). A Frenchwoman claimed damages from two private inquiry agents for nervous shock, which she said she had suffered because of their conduct. She had been visited by one of them who represented that he came from Scotland Yard, and "wanted" her because she had been writing to a German spy. The plaintiff was engaged to be married to a German who was interned in the Isle-of-Man. It was stated that the real object of the defendants was to obtain letters from a woman, who was staying in the same house as the plaintiff, for the purposes of a divorce suit. The jury found that the defendant Barker represented himself to be an inspector from Scotland Yard, and that in doing so he was acting within the scope of the defendant Sweeney's authority. They also found that the statement of Barker was made with the knowledge that it was calculated to cause physical injury to the plaintiff. They assessed the damages at £250.

Mr. Justice Avory gave judgment for the plaintiff. He found that the matter was covered by the case of *Wilkinson v. Downton* (1897) 2 Q.B. 57, but inclined to the opinion that apart from that case he would have held there was no cause of action. He said: "To hold that every person has a legal right not to be frightened by some false statement made to him by another might lead to an infinity of trumpery or groundless actions; and to say that every one has a legal right to have the truth always told to him and not to be frightened by some lie is undoubtedly a wide proposition." It is interesting to notice that one of the Judges who decided *Wilkinson v. Downton* said this: "It is not, however, to be taken that in my view every nervous shock occasioned by negligence and producing physical injury to the sufferer gives a cause of