

HOW DO YOU WEAR?

Administering the Oath to Witnesses in Our Courts of Justice.

HOW TO TELL A PERJURER.

People Who Take an Oath Mechanically and Without Reverence.

THE TROUBLES OF FAIR WITNESSES.

A Simple but Solemn Oath-The Sick Witness-Scenes in a Courtroom-Persons Who Will Not Swear, but Affirm-An Ancient Form of Oath-A Curious German Superstition-Swearing on the Bible-Kissing the Book-Tricks of Witnesses-A Lady's Sad Dilemma-A Story of Character-A Safeguard Against False Testimony.

OU swear by Almighty God, the searcher of all hearts, that the evidence you shall give in this case shall be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, and this you shall answer to God on the great day!

Such is the oath taken by witnesses before the courts of Pennsylvania. It is a simple form of words, but its very simplicity is the soul of eloquence. Spoken with uplifted hand, there is a ring about this oath of the grand old Bible vows. It is difficult to imagine anyone callous enough not to be impressed by the solemnity of such a declaration.

Yet, in our courts of justice, the casual

number of those who affirm is yearly increasing. Several clerks of the courts informed the writer that they always look with suspicion upon an affirm. "We believe that he's afraid to swear," one of them said, "though I suppose a good many really have conscientious scruples."

visiting is daily becoming the cold, matter-of-fact manner in which the various witnesses declare the truth of their evidence, and call upon their Creator to support the statements they are about to make.

A short time since the witness advanced into one of Pittsburgh's criminal courts. There was a very important case before the jury—a murder case in point of fact. The murder had been of an aggravated character, but the circumstances would give the man arrested for the crime; everything demanded the greatest caution. One of the objects of an oath in such a case, should undoubtedly be to impress the witness fully with the importance of his testimony, and the grievous nature of perjury committed by him.

Upon one witness the conviction, or pardon, of the prisoner really depended. His evidence was the crucial point in the trial. One of his names being called, he stepped up to the table, clearly delighted because all eyes were fixed on him. He had been called by a happy name, and he was naturally pleased to see that he had been called by his own name, and that he had been called by his own name.

WHY MOUNTAINS WERE BUILT. Remarkable Theory of the Origin of Two New Zealand Peaks.

The islands composing New Zealand are 800 miles from the nearest continent, and the largest boat that navigates has no bigger than an Indian canoe. They resemble neither the South American Indian nor the native of the Australasian continent.

The Right Position. A lady was once called as a witness before Mr. Tenney-D'Eyncourt, the Bow street judge.

CUSTOMS IN OTHER LANDS. In almost every country the witnesses' oath varies. The custom in her Britannia Majesty's realm is to kiss the Bible; but a few years ago affirmations were legal.

There is another kind of man, who clenches his fingers, and trembles somewhat while receiving the oath, but this man is not necessarily a perjurer. He may suffer from moral cowardice, or mere nervous affection.

somewhat consulting that the dipping in blood has been abolished. It would be rather expensive if a fresh victim had to be slaughtered every day for the law courts, not to mention the complications which would arise were lady witnesses compelled to dabble their lily hands in blood.

Even in these latter days difficulties arise in the swearing of the fair sex. The deers creatures will get a little frightened and begin to lower their hands before the oath has been fully administered. Many of them do not hold up their hands at all, but contrive to keep it suspended about half way. When ordered to lift it higher, they jerk it the three-fourths of an inch and then drop it to fall once more.

The older generation of Germans observe a curious superstition when swearing. They close the two last fingers of the hand, leaving the thumb and two first fingers pointing upward. This is symbolical of the Trinity, and they believe that the oath will be invalid if the custom be not followed.

A good many people prefer swearing on the Bible. Catholics especially are very particular on this point, and nearly always refuse to swear on the Douay version. Some people, however, prefer certain portions of the Bible. Some months ago an old gentleman belonging to the Dunkard sect

asked in the Registrar's Court that he might be sworn "on the Four Evangelists."

The Registrar was rather surprised. Such an oath was quite new to him. He finally agreed to swear on the Bible, and, opening the Bible at the Gospel of St. Matthew, administered the oath. The old man kissed the page reverently, and was overjoyed.

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ALL KINDS OF PEOPLE ASK FOR HELP.

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The replies which are made to these begging letters would perhaps be equally interesting—that is, if the recipients ever vouchsafe to make any response. That they do in some cases I have found, upon investigation, to be the fact.

To a letter received by him a few months ago, requesting the loan of \$50, and offering security therefor, Mr. Astor replied as follows:

Mr. Astor begs to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 10th inst., and regrets being unable to decline making the loan of \$50 requested.

This was written upon black-edged paper and by Mr. Astor himself; it is a rare occurrence to find a letter which takes any notice of the sender.

Mr. Elbridge Gerry is well known to be a charitably-disposed person, and on that account he has not considered this request too much of a liberty.

To this well-merited and very definite demand the following was sent:

THE NEW YORK SOCIETY FOR THE PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO ANIMALS. THIRD STREET, CORNER FORTY-SEVEN AVENUE, NEW YORK, October 1, 1889.

DEAR MADAM: President Gerry directs me to say in reply to your letter of the 1st inst., that he must decline to grant your request on the above named subject.

Mr. Gerry's letters are all passed by a committee of the society, and those which relate to business affairs, and which are interested are laid upon his desk. All others of whatever nature are considered as "charity" and are not opened.

The Vanderbilts, of course, receive letters of similar nature from all sorts and conditions of people, but the man with a "valuable" name in the neighborhood of several hundred dollars. There is the poor student or artist, who begs the loan of \$500, which will enable him to buy a new pair of trousers, who cannot pay his rent, and wants "to borrow the loan" of \$12. No notice is taken of any of these letters.

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