

How the Paris Municipality Assist the Unemployed.

By Edward Conner.

The registry offices of Paris intended to benefit the working classes of that city, are an old grievance, while to remove the difficulties which these offices produce, perplexes the wisest heads. The Legislature has to all appearance renounced the subject in despair. Periodically, the disputes between the said offices, and the artisans that constitute their customers, attain boiling point, consequently necessitating the intervention of the authorities, so as to prevent the destruction of life and property. This shows that the question involved has two serious sides worthy of consideration. The Registry Offices, known as *Bureaux de Placement* cannot be dispensed with, at least not until more satisfactory arrangements exist. They manipulate nearly four-fifths of the entire business connected with the providing of suitable employment for artisans, professionals, and servants of all classes. Further, these Bureaux are private property, and are conducted by persons who gain their livelihood merely by providing employers and hands with the aid they need in exchange for certain stipulated fees. They have a practical as well as a wide range of experience in the bargain; for instance, they know the character and social standing of the majority of the houses requiring their help, as well as that of the majority of applicants likely to suit. They are professional agents, not philanthropic, or amateur individuals. Now it is precisely the fee question that forms the rock upon which the harmony between agent and applicant splits. There are many charitable associations, as well as private establishments which deal with the great subject of providing occupation for the temporarily out-of-work, and the general unemployed. By the decree of 25 March, 1852, and that has never been recalled, it is laid down, that "no person could set up a registry office without first obtaining the sanction of the municipal authorities, which permission is only to be accorded to such persons of recognized morality." The same decree also regulated the right of tariff, and which could neither be augmented or diminished; that right was due to the Bureau, after it had duly secured a place; not the less, the demanded sum was only definitely acquired in the eyes of the law, after a determined lapse of time. That remuneration once paid, no other claim was to be made. Violations of the said decree engendered a fine of one to fifteen francs, plus five days imprisonment. The municipality could suppress a concession; thus out of the 317 Bureaux in existence, it suppressed no fewer than 26 within eight years, say about one per cent. All then indicates that these private officers meet a want, and are supported from their technical knowledge of employers and employed. If the state decided to suppress them, the proprietors of same would

of course have to be indemnified; besides how, and why could and should the State prohibit the industry in the case of establishments conducted in a faultless manner? There must always be dissatisfied applicants. Who is to blame if the interested parties, after they have been brought together, cannot agree? On the fixed fee being paid to the Bureau, the latter supplies the applicant with the address of an employer in want of hands, more it does not profess to do. On the other hand, if the new comer makes up his mind to leave say the next day, he is free to do so of course; in which case, he has no other resource left, but to try another registry office, and that implies a fresh fee to be paid. Those difficult to please, and the "rolling stone community" soon associate in consequence, and make common cause, and having the same object in view, namely: to organize partial strikes and create dangerous disturbances, they find themselves in the clutches of the police, and are locked up.

(To be continued.)

The Administration of an Oath.

The word oath as applied to law means "an appeal (in verification of a statement made) to a superior sanction, in such form as exposes the party making the appeal to an indictment for perjury if the statement be false. Few can explain the origin of the custom of administering an oath, or why the particular form so well known to every one is used.

An investigation of the subject shows that the form at present used is a development of measures taken in early savage times against men who broke faith to save themselves from harm or to gain some coveted good. At the stage of civilization where social order was becoming regular and settled, the wise men turned their minds to devise guarantees stronger than mere yes and no. Thus, the ordeal and the oath were introduced, that wrong doing should not be concealed or denied, that neighbors' claims should not be backed by false witness, and that covenants made should not be broken. The principles on which these ordeals and oaths were invented and developed may to this day be plainly made out.

The two intellectual orders of early times were the magicians and the priests, and each advised after the manner of his own profession. The magician said, "With my symbols and charms, I will try the accused, and bend the witness and the promiser." The priest said, "I will call upon my spirits, and they shall find out the hidden thing, and punish the lie or the broken vow."

The magical element in oaths is the earliest and underlying, the religious element, comes later; both are allied in their fundamental principles, ordeals being proceedings for the discovery of wrong doers. While oaths are of the nature of declarations of undertakings, which may be best defined as observations made under super-

human penalty, such penalty being either magical or religious in its nature, or both combined. The forms of oath vary in different countries.

The natives of New Guinea, swear by the sun that it may burn them, or by a certain mountain that may crush them, or by a weapon that may wound them if they lie; ruder savages of Brazil, to confirm their words, raise the hand over the head or thrust it into their hair, or they will touch the points of their weapons. The raising of the hand is a gesture calling on the heaven God to smite the perjurer with his thunder.

The two accounts of savage ceremony introduce us to customs well-known to nations of higher culture. The successor of the primitive gesture of the holding up the hand remains to this day among the chief acts in the solemn oaths of European natives.

It is unnecessary to trace the evolution of the oath from the savage to our times. The forms in use in Canada are the same as in Great Britain. The modes of administering a judicial oath in Scotland and England are not the same.

In Scotland the witness holds up his hand and swears to tell the truth as he shall answer to God at the day of judgment, in England the ceremony consists in taking a New Testament in the hand and kissing it. The formula in which the invocation of the Deity is made "So help me God" is an obscure form of words which is said to mean the same as the Scotch oath but this is not the case. A well known English judge speaking of the different forms of swearing in different countries said, "in no country in the world are the words worse contrived either to convey the meaning, or express the obligation of an oath."

The words "So help me God" are an abbreviation of the form originally used, and although ancient English or German records fail to give the early history of the phrase, this want is supplied by a document preserved in Iceland. The form which is pre-Christian in its character was introduced into Iceland from Norway in A. D. 925. The object upon which it was then sworn was a metal arm ring, which was kept by a priest who reddened it with the blood of the ox sacrificed and the swearer touching it said, in words that are still half English "Name I to witness that I take oath by the ring-law oath, So help me Frey, and Niordh, and almighty Thor as I shall this suit follow or defend, or witness bear or verdict or doom, as I wit rightest and soothest and most lawfully."

This is the full formula which very nearly represents that of which we keep a mutilated fragment in our oath form.

Two of the Gods referred to, Frey and Thor, are those whose names we commemorate in Friday and Thursday, and Niordh is a Norse war god.

(To be Continued.)

The town of Ingersoll laid over eleven thousand dollars worth of Silica Baryte walks during the year 1899.