

Meat for the Kosher Market

The fight of the East side butchers with the beef trust calls attention to an organization, world wide in extent, whose age is measured by nothing less than that of the Mosaic law. There are nearly 4,000 kosher kutchers in New York—and that means 4,000 shops supplying meat which has been killed and prepared in the manner indicated in the Old Testament and the Talmud, and which is bought exclusively by at least 75 per cent of the city's Hebrew population. "Kosher," a word written in three Hebrew letters and displayed in the window or over the door of every orthodox Hebrew butcher's shop, means simply "approved." To the Hebrew, however, this word conveys the assurance that the meat offered for sale within has been inspected and passed by a rabbi of his religion. Just at present, also, it indicates a meat that costs more than twice as much as the meat lacking this guarantee—and that is the reason why the kosher butchers are fighting the beef trust.

"Flesh with the life thereof, which is the blood thereof, shall ye not eat," is one of the first of the Mosaic laws, given in the ninth chapter of Genesis, and it is an outcome of this law, say the rabbis, that most of the regulations to be found in the Talmud regarding meat have been made. The present system of kosher inspection is the practical application of these regulations to modern conditions.

In every slaughter house in the city patronized by the retail kosher butchers there is a Jewish rabbi, who appoints his "mashgichin," or inspectors, and his "shochat," or killer. Before the cattle are brought to the latter the inspectors examine them carefully. If a blemish of any kind is found in them—a wound, lameness, any evidence of disease—the shochat refuses to kill them, as they are unfit for the kosher market.

This shochat must be a man who has received a diploma from a rabbi. He must know something of the Talmud, must be well versed in the tenets of Judaism, as well as in the laws of hygiene. He is expected to be of a humane disposition, for, according to Rabbi Adolph Spiegel, who settled the kosher strike in this city four years ago, the humane treatment of animals is at the bottom of a good many of the kosher regulations. According to the latter, a shochat can slaughter in only one way, with one forward and backward thrust of a knife. This knife must be long, without a scratch or a dent on it, and so sharp that a single stroke of it brings instant death, a death without torture, to the animal that is pronounced worthy to be led before it.

As soon as the animal is killed by the shochat the rabbi connected with the slaughter house, or one of his inspectors, opens the body and makes a careful examination of every organ in it. The lungs especially are subjected to a rigid scrutiny. Air is blown into them, and if this experiment reveals a single blemish or hole the meat of the entire animal is declared unfit for the kosher trade and

is turned over to the regular butchers.

When the slaughtered animal, however, shows no imperfection to the inspectors the veins and arteries are extracted from the forequarters and thrown away. The hindquarters, with the veins and arteries still in them, are not used for kosher meat. But the forequarters, after they have been treated as described, are cut up into smaller pieces. Each of these pieces is then labeled and sealed with lead by the attending rabbi or his authorized representative, after which it is sold to the retail kosher butcher. On the label, besides the signature of the rabbi, are placed the date and hour of the killing—and, according to the kosher lay, the retail butcher is not allowed to sell this meat three days after the date given by the rabbi.

In Europe the kosher butchers sell the hind as well as the forequarters of slaughtered cattle. There, however, the veins and arteries are extracted from every part of the ani-

mal before it is considered fit for the market. Of course, even with this precaution, the orthodox Hebrew does not consider that the Mosaic regulation regarding the blood in meat has been sufficiently observed. For this reason, after the meat has been purchased from the kosher butcher, it is soaked for half an hour in water, then laid in salt for an hour, and again soaked in water, before all trace of blood is eliminated, and it is considered ready to be cooked and eaten.

These special rules governing the killing and preparing of kosher meat today were given by Maimonides, the famous Spanish rabbi and physician of eight centuries ago, who collected them from the Talmud and the Old Testament. As a result, in every country today, with one exception, where Hebrews are found, cattle are slaughtered for the kosher market in the manner described. The exception is Switzerland where the government has forbidden the killing of cattle with a knife, on the theory that the latter is an inhuman instrument, and that by employing it the Hebrew shochat

is guilty of cruelty to animals. Since the rules derived by Maimonides from the Talmud do not admit of any other method of killing, the Jews in Switzerland have been compelled to go without kosher meat. As a consequence, rather than break the kosher rules, many of the Swiss Hebrews have become vegetarians.—New York Times.

The wealthy old gentleman came up the steps dripping with perspiration and puffing like an automobile.

"Oh, father," faltered the beautiful heiress, nervously, "where have you been?"

"I have been attending to that French count who is after your hand and my bullion."

"Gracious, father, I hope you haven't been rude. The count is such a delicate gentleman. Didn't I tell you to handle him with gloves?"

The old gentleman smiled grimly. "Oh, I handled him with gloves all right."

"You did? Oh, I am so glad."

"Yes, the biggest boxing gloves I could find, and then I put a horseshoe in each."—Chicago News.

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