

Kosher Kitchens.

One of the things which we learn as civilisation and tolerance increase is to respect the religious beliefs of others, and strange though it may seem this appears to be one of the most difficult arts for human nature to achieve. In the past the nations have been so intolerant that, like Saul of Tarsus, they even believed they could obliterate a religious faith by persecution and bloodshed, and avowed followers of the Prince of Peace sought to do Him service by imposing Christianity at the point of the sword, and to check error with the rack and the thumbscrew, while the cruel persecution of the Jews by professing Christians is one of the very greatest blots on the world's history. These methods inevitably failed as do all methods which endeavour to deal with the things of the spirit with the weapons of carnal warfare.

At the present time the use of such means are in abeyance in this country in dealing with religious beliefs, though the mind of primitive man remains much the same, intolerant of any divergence from his own opinions; witness the drenching of a woman by means of a fire hose by order of the visiting magistrates in a Manchester gaol—but this by the way.

There is probably no class of the community more respectful of religious beliefs which are not their own than trained nurses, and the reason is not far to seek. Instead of maintaining a critical disapproval at a distance as is the case with most religious adversaries, they come into close contact with those who profess alien beliefs, and learn to respect those whose lives are influenced by them. And so in our hospitals, patients will find not only tolerance of the varied beliefs they hold, but a genuine desire on the part of committees, doctors, and nurses to provide for them those religious ministrations which they desire, whether from the clergy of the established church, of the Roman communion, of nonconformist ministers, of the Rabbis of the Hebrew faith, and so forth. All have free access to patients of their own persuasion.

It is this humane tolerance which has led the hospitals of the East End, where the population is so largely Jewish, and which, therefore, treat a considerable number of Hebrew patients, to devote special wards to their reception, and to arrange them with due regard to the religious views of the patients. So at the London Hospital, Whitechapel, wards containing 60 beds are allotted to Hebrew patients, and at the Metropolitan Hospital, in the Kingsland Road, some 13 more; and in each instance a Kosher kitchen, *i.e.*, a kitchen in which the

food is prepared, cooked, and served in conformity with the Hebrew law, and therefore ritually clean, is provided. There is also a Kosher kitchen at the German Hospital, Dalston.

At the London Hospital, the Kosher kitchen is arranged in connection with the women's ward, and when I recently visited this hospital, the Sister of the ward kindly explained the method adopted. The meat used in these kitchens is supplied by Jewish butchers, who slay the animals in accordance with Jewish law. A Jewish cook is employed, and she "koshers" the meat, *i.e.*, steeps it in water, again in conformity with the law, before cooking it. Very good it is also, I was told, both meat, fish, and beef tea being much superior to that cooked by "Christian" methods. When cooked it may be served by Christian hands, and the Ward Sister always carves the meat on the hot plate provided. Food from this kitchen is also supplied to the Hebrew ward for men, and, as patients of this creed and nationality overflow into the other wards, the nurses fetch their diets from the Kosher kitchen.

There are many points of ritual to be observed, thus, no strict Jews may take milk and meat at the same time, or have it served from the same basins at different times, so special basins are provided for milk and beef tea, and patients who are on full diet have their milk pudding served at 11 a.m., and their meat at 12 noon. Plates used for meat and butter plates and milk basins must not be washed in the same water. It is not "kosher."

At Passover time, special new crockery is used, for this season—the feast of unleavened bread—is the strictest in the year. All the bread used is supplied from the synagogue, and so strict is the rule as to the exclusion of leaven that the nurses working in the wards may only eat this unleavened bread during Passover time for such meals as they have in the wards. The result of this observance of the laws of their creed is that the patients in the wards seem most happy and contented. Although many of them only speak Yiddish, yet they are amongst co-religionists who can interpret for them if necessary. They were of all ages, from the granny in blue spectacles in the state bed in the corner, who persisted in looking in every direction but *through* them, to the baby of a few days old, with a wealth of soft brown hair, regarded by its proud mother with some anxiety, an anxiety appeased by the Sister, who told her that the pretty brown fluff would probably all come off, and be replaced by a crop more distinctly Hebrew. One or two other things were specially noticeable in this ward. Two bed-rests, one in enamelled iron, curved at the back, and by means of two side wings

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