

THE ETIQUETTE OF LUNCHEONS

By Mrs. BURTON KINGSLAND

ONE of the cleverest of Frenchmen defined a club as "a Paradise from which Eves are excluded." We will be more polite and say that a "lunch party" is the nearest feminine approach to the same kind of enjoyment that is at present open to us—in the absence of our respective Adams.

Unlike our English sisters, American women seem to have a hearty enjoyment in each other's society. A "progressive" English girl once explained the reason of the pleasure of American women in this respect. "In your country," she said, "there are men enough to go around."

Be the reason what it may, the popularity of ladies' luncheons seems to demonstrate the fact, and the success of such entertainments is a foregone conclusion if a few simple rules are followed.

IN the first place it is, of course, of the highest importance to bring together people who will be congenial. A certain lady, prominent in New York society, confessed to having invited her guests "alphabetically, and so got through her list," while all are more or less tempted to ask those to whom they are indebted. But the pleasantest results seem to follow when a few people previously acquainted are brought into contact with a few new friends. The familiar faces make them feel at ease, while the new ones stimulate them to make an agreeable impression.

It is well to send the invitations for a luncheon a week in advance. Such a time is generally sufficient to anticipate other engagements, and a longer time is apt to raise greater expectations than perhaps may be realized. I should advise a written invitation under all circumstances, a friendly, cordial little note, as spontaneous as possible. Let your friend feel her welcome in advance in its every line. Never repeat the same note, but let your friend's personality possess and inspire you. A verbal invitation takes one at a disadvantage. Your friend may have some reason for not wishing to accept, and may not have that Englishman's "courage of his opinions" who answered an invitation to dinner with: "Cannot come; have no lie ready!"

IF you doubt your cook's ability, by all means hire one for the occasion, and preserve your peace of mind. Excellent cooks may be had in all cities, large and small, who, for three dollars will serve a very dainty repast, and things freshly cooked in your own kitchen have a superior flavor to anything sent from a caterer and warmed over. If your servant be inexperienced, write legibly on a sheet of foolscap the exact character of each course, with any directions that you may desire, and pin it up in a conspicuous place in the pantry for reference. The servant may quietly consult this before each course without taxing the memory, while the hostess may devote herself entirely to her guests without feeling any further responsibility.

TWO persons are required to serve a table as it should be done. A waitress should wear a black dress with ample white apron, untrimmed, and a small cap—the woman's equivalent for a "dress suit."

In setting the table, more latitude is allowed in the matter of napery for a luncheon than for a dinner. "A fair white cloth" is considered to be in the best taste for the latter, while at luncheon the tablecloth may be as elaborate as desired. It is well to dispense with gas altogether if possible; the light from many wax candles is most flattering to the surroundings of table and room.

A pretty novelty for lighting the table is a large central lamp with its silk shade, and four smaller ones at the corners, surmounted by similar shades made in miniature. When these are of rose-color the effect is most becoming—a thing not to be despised. The flowers are set in a circle around the central lamp.

At a formal luncheon nothing edible is placed upon the table but the fruit, cakes, bon-bons and "hors d'œuvres." A supplementary dish of French candied fruits or the Vienna roll wafers tied like fagots with ribbon, is very decorative. Laced papers should be interposed between all these things and the dishes containing them—except, of course, the "hors d'œuvres."

When luncheon is announced, it is enough that the hostess rise and simply say in a gracious manner: "Ladies, luncheon is served; will you follow me?" The friend with whom the hostess is most intimate is generally given the foot of the table, and the guests she desires most to honor are seated at her right and left respectively. It is customary now for the servants to pass everything, beginning with the lady at the right and left of the hostess, and, going in opposite directions, it brings each course last to the lady of the house.

THE custom of giving favors at luncheons has been so much overdone as to have led to the idea being abandoned altogether. Flowers, and occasionally a small bonbonnière are the only gifts now considered to be "in good form." The name cards are, therefore, brought into greater prominence, and may be made to contribute to the artistic, complimentary or amusing features of the occasion. On the reverse side a quotation appropriate and flattering may be written.

Freshness, daintiness, absence of ostentation, while using all that one can command that is artistic and tasteful, should be the characteristics of a luncheon.

Without the slightest wish to deceive, all should go so smoothly that the general impression is left with your friends, despite their knowledge of entertainment, that you live every day as they find you when they are guests at your table.

PRETTY LUNCHEONS AND DAINY TEAS

A Page of Rules, Ideas and Suggestions by Successful Entertainers

THE MENU OF A LUNCHEON

By FELICIA HOLT

LUNCHEONS are considered by many to be expensive luxuries, and only within the reach of the few. This is not so. There is no reason why the mistress or the daughter of the house whose income is limited should not have luncheons, and pretty ones, too. A dainty luncheon for a few friends calls for but little trouble or outlay. Do not, at the first essay, have too many dishes. Five or six courses make a dainty and toothsome repast. In winter employ oysters on the half shell, for which you pay twenty cents per dozen; serve five on a plate with a piece of cut, not sliced, lemon. Then serve a clear soup, or purée of tomatoes, asparagus or peas—these latter being made as deliciously from canned as from fresh vegetables. For the third course I would suggest chops, broiled or breaded, and French peas; those in the glass jars are freshest, and one jar at forty-five cents will be sufficient for eight people, if served on the plate; with this mashed potatoes, browned, or potato boulettes, should be passed. A salad should come next, either of lettuce or tomato, with mayonnaise or French dressing, the latter consisting simply of vinegar, olive oil, salt and pepper. Thin water crackers and a good cheese should be passed with the salad. If you wish to order an ice from a confectioner do so; if not, some sweets, such as preserved ginger, strawberries and cake, should come next, followed by small cups of royally strong coffee, with cream and sugar passed, and this will close your very pretty, and surely not extravagant, luncheon.

If you desire an entrée, you can buy a pair of large sweetbreads, enough for eight persons, if served in china, silver or paper shells; parboil them, pick them to pieces, rejecting all fine membranes, chop rather fine, melt a tablespoonful of butter and add to it a tablespoonful of flour; then add one-half pint of milk, or better still, cream, stirring constantly until it boils. Then put in your sweetbreads and stir over the steam of the tea-kettle for about five minutes; add a half-spoonful of salt and a dash of white pepper. This will be delicious to the taste, and a considerable addition to your bill of fare.

A less expensive dish is calves' liver, cooked until tender, chopped fine, seasoned with cayenne pepper, salt and Worcestershire sauce, a little mushroom catsup and a dash of Madeira or sherry wine served in individual shells of china or paper. This was eaten by an English gourmet at a lunch, and he went away wondering "what that awfully good dish was."

FOR A SHAKESPEAREAN LUNCHEON

By AGNES CARR SAGE

HERE is given one of the popular authors' luncheons, Shakespeare is more often chosen for the aptness in which his works lend themselves to suitable quotations. For a moderate menu that can be altered and enlarged at will, the following may serve to some as a helpful model:

"To thee and thy company, I bid a hearty welcome."
The Tempest.

MENU

OYSTERS ON HALF SHELL

"Canst tell how an oyster makes his shell?
No—nor I neither."
King Lear.

CONSOMME

"If you do expect spoon—meat, bespeak a long spoon."
Comedy of Errors.

CHICKEN PATES

CELERY FRENCH PEASE

"A dish that I do love to feed upon."
Taming of the Shrew.

SALTED ALMONDS

"The cover of the salt hides the salt, and therefore it is more than salt."
Two Gentlemen of Verona.

LOBSTER SALAD

"We may pick a thousand salads, ere we light on such another."
All's Well That Ends Well.

ICED CABINET PUDDING

"Good sooth, she is the queen of curds and cream!"
Winter's Tale.

FANCY CAKES BON-BONS

"As at English feasts—so I regret the daintiest last, to make the end more sweet."
Richard III.

FRUIT

"The royal tree hath left us royal fruit."
Richard III.

COFFEE

"Now we sit to chat, as well as eat."
Taming of the Shrew.

Shakespeare has been the writer chosen throughout this menu, but Washington Irving and Charles Dickens deal much with feasting, and from their creations lines as apropos can be selected.

AN OLD-FASHIONED TEA

By FRANCES E. LANIGAN

OUR grandmothers dearly loved their "tea parties," and out of compliment to the dearest of them all, a New York society girl recently sent out invitations to a "Lace Tea." The cards of invitation were white, with a design imitating Honiton lace across the top, and in addition to the invitation, which read: "Miss Amy Lee requests your company at an old-fashioned tea, in honor of her grandmother, Mrs. De Lacey Baker, on Monday evening, September twenty-sixth, eighteen hundred and ninety-two," the word "Laces" was engraved in one corner of the card.

The result was that the guests came in old-fashioned costumes, with hair well powdered, carried old-fashioned reticules, wore tiny black patches upon their faces, and, of course, their choicest pieces of lace. Tea was served in the dining-room; a snowy damask tablecloth covered the table, at the head of which was placed a large silver tray upon which were arranged, in perfect symmetry, the dainty white and gold china teacups and saucers. Upon either side was placed the quaint silver tea service of Queen Anne pattern, with its gracefully-curved, fluted handles. Old-fashioned candelabra, with plain white wax candles, and no new-fangled paper shades, stood upon lace mats on either side of a china bowl filled with crimson dahlias. The guests were in number ten. At each place was laid a plate of white and gold, a large damask table napkin folded perfectly square, a knife and two-pronged fork, both with white ivory handles, and a heavy silver dessert spoon. At the foot of the table was a large white and gold platter filled with slices of cold chicken garnished with nasturtium leaves, and upon either side similar dishes, containing daintily-cut slices of ham and tongue. The bread was cut in thin slices and buttered, so that neither butter plates nor butter dishes were needed. At certain equal distances stood little white pots of preserved strawberries and gooseberries, a jar of orange marmalade, and a pretty flat china dish of honey in the comb. Tiny little dishes in which these dainties were to be served and silver spoons of dessert size stood near. Low baskets of silver covered with lace held golden sponge and rich, dark fruit cake, and upon two silver trays, covered with lace, stood little Dresden china cups filled with custard, upon which a generous supply of nutmeg had been grated. The tea was hot and fragrant. There was no ice-water, nor, indeed, ice visible anywhere, yet everything looked cool, attractive and beautiful, and the dainty grandmamma in her old-fashioned flowered silk gown and lace cap and kerchief, sitting in the seat of honor, looked not one whit less attractive than her sweet granddaughter, similarly attired, who poured the tea.

A UNIQUE LITERARY LUNCHEON

By M. M. MORLEY

A YOUNG girl, noted for originality, sent out recently dainty luncheon cards in one corner of which was written in a neat hand: "You are requested to come wearing an ornament symbolical of some well-known book."

The result was delightful. One fair maiden came gowned in white and wearing a large black hat, which was ornamented in front with a large old-fashioned cameo pin. The quaint ornament was set in a circle of pearls, and bore the full-length figure of a woman. This was almost immediately recognized as "The Woman in White." Another symbol, which was decidedly more clever, went a long time unguessed. This was two large initials, nickel-plated letters "S" and "B," which were mistaken at first for Mrs. Wister's pretty story "The Initials," but which were later found to be intended to symbolize "Nicholas Nickleby." A lottery ticket stood sponsor for "Great Expectations," and a simple "R" for George Eliot's "Middlemarch." But the guessing did not begin in earnest until the guests were seated at the table. There they found as place cards little white books with their names and the date traced in gold upon the cover. In these dainty souvenirs they wrote their conception, or interpretation, of each guest's symbol, and then passed them around the table, to have each guess rectified or confirmed on the opposite page, thus obtaining the autographs of all present.

One young girl at the table appeared in a gown of misty gray with a soft white wing on either shoulder. She represented Cooper's "Wing and Wing." One of the cleverest devices was a little blank book attached to one young woman's belt, with "Le Journal de Talleyrand" engraved upon the cover; this for "The Diplomat's Diary." Another girl wore a calendar containing the names of the three months June, July and August. This was, of course, intended to represent "One Summer." "The Gold Bug" was there in the form of an ancient Egyptian scarab, while "The Moonstone," "A Bow of Orange Ribbon," and "The Rose in Bloom," had each their representative. A flower-bedecked Gainsborough shaded one fair face that smiled coquettishly "Under the Lilacs;" while "The Three Feathers" waved proudly over another. The last one to be guessed was that worn by a certain dainty maid who carried in the belt of her dull blue gown a bunch of Marguerites. Why should they have been slow to remember dear, foolish little "Daisy Miller?"

A TALK ABOUT TEAS

By Mrs. BURTON KINGSLAND

THE modern "tea" is the lineal, though degenerate, descendant of the "salon" which, for years in England, and especially in France, played so conspicuous a part, and where woman first attained that social pre-eminence that has since been conceded as her special prerogative.

Up to the time of the famous Marquise de Rambouillet, there was no society apart from the court; but in her celebrated "salon bleu," it is said that "the social instinct was born," and the coarse pleasures and noisy gaieties of the court were deserted by the more cultured for an intercourse more varied, polished and informal than had hitherto existed. The result was a series of reunions so charming and so popular as to have passed into history; and, therefore, would it not be well for us to study their conditions of success, and endeavor to throw a little more life and interest into our receptions and teas by a judicious imitation?

At these charming salons the same people met often; and this, I think, we may profitably follow. Give, if you must, one all-inclusive reception to your acquaintances, but if you would enjoy your friends, have them "in numbers few." Either invite a few congenial spirits once a week, or still better, because affording more variety, let a dozen friends agree to meet as often at each other's houses in turn.

THIS was tried last winter in New York by a party of friends with great success. Nothing more informal and delightful could be imagined; for in large cities real sociability is fast dying out, and if anything can revive it some such plan may.

The hostess in this instance received her guests in a pretty tea gown, a cheerful fire burned on the hearth, a few flowers added their fragrance, comfortable chairs were drawn up in cozy nearness to each other, while the divans were made most alluring by a "riot of downy pillows." In one corner stood the dainty tea-table, with its steaming urn, egg-shell cups, bright silver and snowy napery. Every guest was welcomed with evident pleasure. Formality was entirely banished. As the hour selected was from five until six, the husbands, brothers and intimate gentlemen friends found it extremely agreeable to drop in on their way home for a chat and a cup of tea.

ANOTHER suggestion comes to us from the "salons." There the literary stars of the day were wont to essay the quality of their light on a smaller audience before giving it to the world; and though we are not so ambitious, it may be tacitly understood that should we hear a good story, get some strong or helpful thought from our reading, or hear some piece of news, that we treasure it to be shared at our "tea party."

A little music is always welcomed at a "tea," and can be previously arranged for from among those invited. As to the edibles, there is generally a bit of pleasant emulation where there are several hostesses; and though nothing is "en règle," at a "tea" but bread and butter, a little cake, and the "cup that cheers," there is ample opportunity for the display of taste and individuality in the manner of their serving, and the variations may be endless, taking this simple fare for a "theme." The home-made bread, spread on the loaf and cut very thin, as in our grandmother's day, the little finger-rolls lined with "pâté de foie gras," brown bread, rather thickly covered with some especially delicious butter, are all acceptable, while, of course, the cake may be infinitely varied.

The Russians always take their tea with slices of lemon, which seems to suit nearly every palate, and in very thin glasses in preference to cups. They contend, too, that tea should be drunk immediately after its infusion, before the water has time to attack the stem of the leaf.

The little two-storied tea tables are most convenient, and some are further supplemented with wings of the size of plates. It is preferable to keep all its belongings on the table itself, and not distribute them on all the adjacent furniture, as is often done. If possible, have a little table here and there, or other convenience whereon a cup may be laid, while some small napkins give one a feeling of security against accidents.

ONE of the features of Washington society last winter was a succession of "Literary Teas." Friends met together at regular intervals, and each brought a newspaper clipping, poem, or short story, which she read for the general entertainment. Sometimes it was merely an anecdote, but each selection was either witty, sparkling, amusing, or imparted information in an enjoyable manner.

Another party of friends of more serious tastes chose an historical period to be studied. At their meetings one lady read a paper on the fashions of that day, about which she had fully informed herself. Another wrote of the prominent men; a third of the forms of entertainment and recreation then popular, while others gave the results of their investigations about the state of art, the religious movements of the time, and even the "fads" then prevalent. At the end of the season all the materials so contributed were collected and printed for distribution among the members of the "Tea Party," who were pleased and surprised to find it so complete a history of the period. To make such reunions successful the rules to be observed are few and simple.

Let everything pertaining to the refreshments be dainty, the room cozy and cheerful, the guests well selected, the welcome hearty; and the hostess will assuredly feel, on the departure of her friends, the truth of the old adage that "the pleasure of giving pleasure is the greatest pleasure!"