HIGH TEA.

THE complications of modern life are many. Our grandmothers had an easy time of it, when they did their shopping within half a mile from home, never visited anybody residing beyond a short driving distance, while our grandfathers took all their meals in a regular way, and business was far too leisurely to keep dinner waiting. The fates forbid that some new invention shall make it possible for us to "pop over" to Edinburgh or Paris, or shall compel us to offend our friends in those places by shirking their evening invitations!

A pleasant north country custom, the combination of substantial viands with the refreshment of that meal which ladies love beyond all others, might well carry us through the difficulties which beset us on those days when, starting off for a long spell of hard labour among West-end shops, or picture galleries, or a summer day's expedition, we feel we may be terribly unpunctual for our six o'clock dinner, and that nothing would be so welcome to our jaded nerves as the aroma of the tea-pot? Again, why should not the caterer for our comfort on long, pic-nicking summer days be relieved of such elaborate responsibilities of knives and forks and spoons, of potted meats and leaking jam-pots? How much less burdensome—how much "nicer," to use that abused word which expresses so

much—a few simple, cleanly sandwiches and lovely fresh fruits, and then a home-coming to a bountiful meal, where the very latest adventures of the holiday may be summed up and discussed.

It was in this dilemma, intent on proving ourselves considerate to the wants of one of these expeditionary parties, that some useful brownie at our household hearth whispered, "High tea!" And the moment the thought came we exclaimed, "The very thing!"

It would suit everybody. Mr. C. would find some substantial viands to sustain him. No formality could separate Dr. B. and Miss E., and we shall be all in the drawing-room by eight o'clock. Nobody will go away starved.

"High tea" is a meal which can be arranged quite fittingly in many rooms, where any attempt at a "dinner-party" would look pretentious and absurd. It will not overwhelm even the modest breakfast-parlour of a suburban villa. It will not embarrass the thrifty mistress of a single servant. Its dishes are not of huge proportions or superabundant heat, and there is a pleasant, sociable easiness about it, which encourages polite little attentions among the guests themselves, and does not too severely tax the domestic waiting powers.

It can be made the prettiest of all meals. A well-chosen tea-urn is a graceful object in itself, and tea-china is generally much prettier than dinner-services, unless the latter be very expensive. Tea and coffee should be always offered, and there should be abundance of milk on hand. Let the china be as varied as possible: if every article can be different from the others, so much the better: if not, arrange those similar in little groups. Three plates should be allotted to each visitor—viz., a small one for bread-and-butter, &c., a larger one for the savoury dishes, and another for the sweet ones. These two last can be set on the table or reserved on a sideboard, as convenience or taste may dictate. Take care that a sufficiency of knives, forks, and spoons are provided —which seems an unnecessary reminder; but any informality of hospitality is too apt to degenerate into slovenliness, and servants want more direction and watching on these occasions than when they have harder and faster lines to guide them.

When possible, have a growing plant on the table, placed in a china pot or a pretty wicker fencing. This is the most pleasant decoration for an entertainment which must never be deprived of a sort of impromptu character. When flowers are difficult or costly to procure, a very pretty effect of colour may be made by a wise purchase and arrangement of fruit in a high epergne, the simpler in its form the better. Grapes and blushing apples are always refreshing to the eye, and can be had in winter. Remember to introduce no fruit, such as oranges, which would be unsuitable for eating with tea or coffee.

It must never be forgotten that high tea must offer some really substantial edibles. At the same time, there should be nothing difficult to serve or to partake. A cold fowl is always welcome, but it should be carved in readiness as should be some well-roasted and attractive-looking cold beef. But in addition to the cold dishes which must always figure at a meal instituted partly for the benefit of those who cannot be strictly punctual, there are one or two hot dishes which are very suitable for the more fortunate guests. Daintily minced and seasoned mutton, served up in a fencing of nicely mashed potatoes, will be found very acceptable to visitors coming from a distance, and really requiring a good meal. "Rissoles" are also deservedly popular. For these the best parts only of meat are chopped very finely; a quarter of its weight of bread-crumbs is added, then an onion boiled to a tender pulp, the whole flavoured with pepper, salt, and beaten egg in fit proportion to the quantity of meat and bread-crumb. If the balls do not seem to bind, some flour may be added. An ounce of butter will serve for the frying of several of these rissoles, and they must be very carefully turned. If considered too dry without it, they may be served with gravy.

"Kidneys sautés" are another suitable dish. Choose them of a nice size, and cut them the round way into thin slices. Dip these into flour well mixed with pepper and salt, and fry them gently, allowing not more than a minute for each side. Pour over them a little gravy thickened with flour, and serve them very hot.

"Potato croquets" are often very popular, and will go well with the kidneys, or by themselves. They are one of the simplest and cheapest of dishes. Boil and carefully mash some excellent mealy potatoes. Add pepper and salt and beaten egg sufficient to make a stiff paste. Make this into nice-sized balls, roll them in bread-crumbs, with a little more egg; boil some frying-fat, put the balls into the wire basket, and fry for a minute. They must be only of a light brown colour, and should be quite crisp on the outside.

For sweet dishes, open jam tarts are never out of place. In winter time take care to provide stewed pears or plums. If high tea is given in the days of strawberries, cherries, and currants, so much the better.

If one wants to indulge in a little "cookery," a chocolate *soufflé* is a nice dish, and not at all common; but it ought not to be in the bill of fare unless cocoa or chocolate is served, as well as tea and coffee. To make this, mix two table-spoonfuls of flour with two of powdered loaf-sugar, two ounces of butter, and a quarter of a pint of milk. Stir this over the fire till it boils; let it cool, and then stir in the yolks of four eggs and a quarter of an ounce of cocoa. Add the whites of eggs well beaten. Bake about forty-five minutes. Any other flavouring, such as vanilla, can be substituted for the cocoa.

"Marmalade pudding" is a variety among "mould" dishes, which introduces a flavour very suitable for a tea-table. This is made in the following proportions: —To one table-spoonful of marmalade, five ounces of bread-crumbs, two ounces of currants, one ounce of butter, two ounces of sugar. Melt the butter and mix it with the other ingredients, then add two eggs

well beaten, and half a pint of milk. Butter a mould and pour the mixture into it, tie a cloth tightly over it, and boil it for an hour and a half.

It should not be forgotten that at high tea there should be plenty of nicely-sliced bread-and-butter, and two or three varieties of cake of the simpler and lighter kinds.

We feel quite sure that, as a form of hospitality, high tea might become thoroughly popular. It is a meal at least as adapted for the requirements and exigencies of rapid London as it is for the quiet moorlands of the North, where it is such an old-established favourite. It should be always a genuine meal, and not a mere ceremony; and yet it is the meal least likely to become the sole "entertainment," or to be anything but a genuine refreshment for that interchange of thought and kindliness which should be the true purpose of all social gatherings.

WHAT IS A TORPEDO?

BY LIEUT. FRANCIS I. PALMER, R.N.

UNTIL quite recently, few well-educated people had more than a vague idea of what a torpedo was, and even now so little about it is known to general readers, that we propose to sketch some of the most interesting points of this important branch of modern warfare.

England's naval and with it her commercial prosperity considerably depend on the future development and employment of torpedoes, so the subject should possess more than ordinary interest.

In 1777—one hundred years ago—David Bushnell, an American, was the first to invent and use a submarine explosive machine, which he christened a Torpedo—*Torpedo vulgaris* being the scientific name of the Electric Ray or Skate, a fish which is said to kill its prey as by lightning.

Although records exist to warrant the assertion that explosive submarine infernal machines, *in some form*, were made use of about 2,000 years ago—and again in 1585, when the Dutch besieged Antwerp—the details are so meagre and uninteresting that we had better pass on to a time only one hundred years distant, when the torpedo—*as we know it now*—first took definite form.

Gun-cotton is the explosive used by the English authorities for torpedo purposes, from its being fairly safe to handle, and from the fact that it cannot be injured by water, thus eminently adapting it for submarine mine service.

Weight for weight, gun-cotton is about four times as powerful as gunpowder.

In 1797, Fulton, another American, revived the subject of torpedo warfare; he also designed a plunging torpedo-boat. After ineffectually trying to get the French to adopt it, he came to England, and the result of experiments made in this country induced Mr. Pitt, the then Prime Minister, to organise the first extensive torpedo attack. In 1804, Admiral Lord Keith set sail with the Catamaran Expedition, to destroy the French shipping lying off Boulogne. These Catamarans were coffin-shaped watertight boxes, containing a charge of powder to be ignited by clockwork arrangement. The attempt proved a complete failure, through the charges being too light, and being placed too distant from the sides of the enemy's ships.

From England, Fulton returned to America, a country soon to be engaged in war with Great Britain. By this time, the year 1810, he had further matured the art of torpedo warfare, by mooring torpedoes under water, to protect the entrance to a harbour, and by arming boats with explosives, to be carried at the ends of long poles. Both ideas are now used by all maritime Powers.

Although Fulton's experiments were generally successful, the American Government discouraged their further employment after ineffectually attempting to destroy some British ships in the war of 1812—14.

In 1841, Colonel Colt, of revolver fame, a third American, followed Fulton another step, and suggested the ignition of mines by the application of the galvanic battery, an invention which has given to the torpedo the high position it now occupies.

Englishmen, therefore, cannot lay much claim to inventiveness in this somewhat questionable weapon.

As little use was made of the torpedo during the forty years following the American War of 1814, we pass on to our war with Russia in 1854. The Russians employed both mechanical and electrical submarine torpedoes in the Baltic and Black Seas; and the knowledge that these infernal machines were hidden obliged the combined fleets of France and England to manœuvre with great caution. But beyond