

In the Household.

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AFTERNOON TEA.

THIS being pre-eminently the season for that cosy meal, a few remarks about it will not be out of place.

In the first place, let the "cup that cheers" be all that it should be. Mrs. Lincoln, of Boston, says "never disgrace yourself by serving that abomination, boiled tea in a cold cup." So let us see to it that our tea be made in the best possible way.

Big "teas" are the easiest method of entertaining now-a-days, but for cosiness and sociability, there is nothing like the small Tea where conversation can be and is general; and these small Teas are nicest served in the English manner, where a low Canterbury table is brought out by a maid, or one of the daughters of the house, who then spreads a nice, clean cloth upon it, and then the cups and saucers (which have not been standing upon the table from day to day) sugar, cream, tea-pot; and also the accompanying bread and butter and cakes. I saw a pretty little device for carrying the latter the other day; made of white rattan, in the form of a flower stand with three shallow baskets to hold the different plates—instead of the usual stands for the flower pots. It also had a ring at the top by which to lift it. It was decorated with bows of blue ribbon, and was the prettiest and most convenient little thing I have seen for some time.

Then if you are fortunate enough to have a little spirit kettle, make the tea in the drawing-room; if not convenient to do so, let the maid bring it in hot.

There are so many good teas on the market now-a-days that it is hard to say which is the best; but whatever tea you use—whether it be Indian, Chinese, or Ceylon, authorities are all agreed upon one subject and that is the manner of making. Use one teaspoonful of tea, to one-half pint cup of freshly boiling water, and infuse it in an earthenware tea pot, which has been previously heated, by pouring boiling water through it. Let the tea steep for five minutes, but no longer, when it should be poured off the leaves—either into a silver tea-pot which has also been heated by boiling water, or into tea cups which have been heated by pouring boiling water into them. In making the tea, it is well to bear in mind that there are two ingredients in the leaves, "thein and tamin." The thein is a crystalline, alcoholoid soluble in boiling water, and is the ingredient that we wish to draw out of tea leaves and use; the tamin is the injurious ingredient, and as it is not soluble until it has either been boiled or steeped in water for about fifteen minutes; we will see the reason for not boiling our tea nor letting it stand upon the leaves for more than five minutes at most.

Concerning the tea-pot; I think it is Mrs. Whitney who says that tea never tastes quite as well as when made in "a little brown tea-pot."

I quite understand her fancy, but I suppose these same little brownies would be hardly acceptable in our drawing-rooms, unless some one sets the fashion. I wish they would. Our grandmother's were right, though tea is best made in a delf or china pot. It never tastes quite the same when drawn from a metal one—even a "solid

silver" beauty; while urns are detestations for anything except hot water.

If you prefer your tea a la Russe, you may take your slice of lemon—but I am writing of the plain, homely, English cup of tea, with its touch of cream and loaf sugar. After all, there is no preparation more delicate and refreshing.

Here is the legend of the discovery of the tea plant:

"Dharma, an Indian prince and religious devotee in or about the year 510 A. D. This prince had imposed upon himself a penance of doing without sleep, and got on very well in this way for some years, when, in his wanderings one day, he gave up and indulged in a nap on the mountain side. Upon awakening he was much annoyed at his weakness in giving himself up to sleep and in desperation pulled out his eyelashes and threw them on the ground. Returning the same way at a later period he was much surprised to find that the eyelashes had grown into bushy plants such as he had not seen before, and out of curiosity he nibbled some of the leaves and found that they possessed the peculiar property of inducing wakefulness. This interesting fact soon became talked about, and the plant was taken in hand and cultivated, and soon became widely spread."

Accompanying the five o'clock cup of tea is the,



CEYLON TEA GARDENS.

dainty fancy biscuit, or light fruit cake. Our readers will find the following recipes suitable for the tea cake:

Hermits—(Mrs. Lincoln)

One and a half cups sugar; one cup butter; two eggs; two cups seedless raisins; three tablespoonsful milk; one teaspoonful soda; one teaspoonful each of spices, cinnamon, nutmeg and cloves; flour to roll; cream the butter and sugar; add the eggs well beaten, then the milk. Mix the soda and spices, (cinnamon, nutmeg and cloves) with one cup of flour. Add the raisins—which first must be washed, boiled until tender in water to cover, then drained, cut in halves or chopped and floured. Then add flour to roll about a quarter of an inch thick; cut out in fancy shapes and bake quickly.

Light Fruit Cake—(Mrs. Lincoln)

Three-quarter cup of butter; one-half cup sugar; three eggs; one teaspoonful lemon extract; one half cup milk; three cups flour; three level teaspoonsful baking powder; one and a half cups mixed fruit, cream butter, add sugar gradually; then the beaten yolks and lemon. Mix the baking powder with two and a half cups of flour, and use the remainder to flour the fruit. Stir in the milk, and flour alternately, and then the white beaten stiff. Add the fruit last. Use

quarter cup of citron sliced very thin, quarter cup currants and one cup seeded and chopped raisins. A little mace will improve the flavor and not add to the color.

Lady's Fingers.

Beat together for ten minutes five eggs and one cupful of powdered sugar; if then very creamy and light stir in carefully one and one-half cupsful of sifted pastry flour and one teaspoonful of lemon juice. Put through a pastry bag on papered and greased pans. Dust with powdered sugar and bake in a moderate oven.

With the more formal five o'clock tea, the refreshments may include creams and jellies. Here are two simple receipts for ice cream, which may be useful.

Ice Cream.

Scald one pint of milk in a double boiler; beat together until very light the yolks of ten eggs and one-half of a pound of sugar; stir into this the hot milk, return to the double boiler and stir until the mixture is thick enough to mask the spoon. Take from the fire, add one pint of cream. When cold add one tablespoonful of vanilla and freeze.

Scald one quart of cream in a double boiler; beat together one cupful of sugar and the yolks of six eggs until light, add the well-beaten whites and beat again. Pour the hot cream over the egg mixture and return to the fire, stirring continuously until it begins to thicken. Take from the fire, strain and set aside until cold; add one teaspoonful of vanilla and three tablespoonfuls of of caramel and freeze.

Punch is both an artistic and favorite refreshment for serving at afternoon tea, especially when ladled from an old-fashioned punch bowl, by a pretty girl assistant. There are many recipes for punches, Italian, Roman, Fruit,—but we choose our favorite among them this month.

Roman Punch.

Peel the rind thinly from one orange and three lemons, put in a saucepan with one pound and a quarter of sugar and one pint of water. Heat slowly and boil for five minutes. Cool, and add one pint of cold water and the strained juice of the orange and lemons and freeze. When very hard work in gradually one-half of a pint of Jamaica rum, four tablespoonfuls of maraschino and one teaspoonful of vanilla. Pack and stand away for at least two hours. Serve in glasses.

Punch derives its name from the Hindustanee Panch, signifying five, the number of ingredients originally required—sugar, water, spirit, acid and spice. This number was in time reduced to four, and in an old English book of the last century we find the following lines:

"When'er a bowl of punch we make,
Four striking opposites we take:
The strong, the weak, the sour, the sweet,
Together mixed, most kindly meet;
And when they happily unite,
The bowl is pregnant with delight."

It was then a drink largely composed of liquors and served either hot or cold. To-day it is found in two forms, as a drink, spirituous or not spirituous, or frozen to a mushy consistency. In the latter case it usually has for a base a rich lemon or orangeade, which is frozen quite hard and some liquor then stirred in. This partially liquifies it. It is served in glasses before a game course.

Drink "SALADA" Tea.