



HIGH TEA for TWO

SOME years ago the American tea hour of five o'clock was one of the most delightful interludes of the day. It was an hour for relaxing, for exchanging interesting bits of news and pleasant gossip gathered during the day, for soothing nerves frayed by business, and for gaining new energy for the hours that still lay ahead of bedtime.

Then came the frantic rush of today with its ever unequal race between the clock and the crowded calendar and the tea hour was lost in the mad scramble. In lieu of a quiet half hour during which one sat in comfort and refreshed oneself with a tasty sandwich or biscuit and drank a cup or two of the hot, stimulating beverage, men and women began the socially barbaric custom of gulping a quick highball while still talking shop and then off again to the next appointment.

The pendulum of social graces once more seems to be swinging back and the tea hour and tea table are again taking their rightful places in the day's activities.

One Hollywood hostess of note who never permitted the tea hour to lapse in her household, perhaps because it is a British one, and who is an ardent advocate of its widespread return is Ouida Bergere Rathbone, wife of the handsome English actor, Basil Rathbone.

Tea at the Rathbones is a treat that increasing numbers of guests are discovering with delight. Whether you are an invited guest or drop in unexpectedly, you will find a warm

welcome, charming informality, good tea and good talk.

Mrs. Rathbone herself always presides at her tea table in the drawing room whether her guests number four or forty. And that drawing room, incidentally, is one of the dramatic surprises of Hollywood. Every detail of its unusual treatment was designed by Mrs. Rathbone.

So simple is the reception room leading to it that the drawing room breaks upon one with heightened force. In the reception room, rather small, are trim little window boxes of white metal filled with blue and white hyacinths.

Color is dominant in the drawing room. The walls, woodwork and ceiling are in a monotone of robins-egg blue, a novel shade you must admit. Bordering the white marble fireplace, over which is a wide white mirror extending to the ceiling, are wide bands of cobalt blue mirror, their purplish cast brilliantly enhanced by proximity to the paler blue. On the opposite side of the room and between the French doors are two more columns of mirrors, reaching from the floor to ceiling.

THE French doors, draped in ivory satin and overdressed with cords of ivory silk open on to an English garden. The carpeting is in white broadloom and the upholstery of the various pieces of furniture is in ivory white, vivid blue and cerise velvet. In one corner stands a tall four-paneled screen of blue on which is painted large tropical flowers in white with

red centers and foliage in three shades of blue. A grand piano stands in the opposite corner and is covered with a fitted slip of ivory satin heavily embroidered in small figures in bright colors.

FRESH flowers are always found in abundance in this room. Unique combinations and arrangements are stressed but their color always is white or blue.

Adjoining this room and entered through a wide archway is the bar, a striking room also designed by Mrs. Rathbone. The walls of this room too are of robins-egg blue as are the Venetian blinds whose coral cords match the coral valance over them. A large circular seat is built into the bay window recess and is upholstered in a durable material in coral, pale green and beige in striped design. The stools before the bar are upholstered in coral leather and the floor is of darker coral linoleum with a banding of white.

The small, upright "play" piano is painted white with blue and coral trim and the white backgammon table boasts a board and men in blue and coral and two chairs painted blue and upholstered in coral. The bar itself is severely modernistic and a large octagonal coffee table with a glass top stands before

the circular seat. In this room the flowers are always in white or shades of blending reds.

Darker blue and red is the color scheme of the dining room which is in contrast to the feeling of the drawing room and bar. Dead-white walls make an effective background for the blue curtains of a rough material which are edged in brick red wool fringe and tied back with red cords held by red wooden discs. The broadloom carpet is in blue and the chairs are covered with slips of blocked linen in red and white design and edged in red fringe. The sturdy refectory table and chests are of antique Spanish and English oak.

FOR the tea hour a graceful Sheraton table is placed in the drawing room and Mrs. Rathbone sits behind it in a high-backed chair of red, a color which emphasizes her dark beauty. The table setting which she prefers is a cloth of fine Venetian lace, cathedral candles of white in two massive silver sticks, and fragrant English tea roses in tall Georgian cups of silver. The tea service, of course, stands before her and the various dainties to be served with the tea by Eric, her butler, lie on silver platters on the table. Cloves are always impaled on the slices of lemon and milk, as well as rich cream, is provided for such guests as may prefer it in their tea.

A typical Rathbone tea table holds sandwiches made of cucumber, caviar, chive and cream cheese, currant jelly, and water cress and mustard, and always fashioned from the thinnest possible slices of bread; golden brown scones; mints and roasted nuts; butter and nut cookies; and cubes of angel cake as light as the proverbial feather.

To other hostesses Mrs. Rathbone gives the following three of her favorite recipes:

Angel Cake: Beat ten egg whites until foamy; add one teaspoon of cream of tartar and a speck of salt; pour one cup of sifted white flour into the egg whites; add two teaspoons of vanilla and mix thoroughly. Pour in an angel cake baking tin and bake one hour in a slow oven.

Scones: Mix and sift two cups of flour, four teaspoons of baking powder, two teaspoons of sugar, half a teaspoon of salt. Work in five tablespoons of sweet butter. Add two well-beaten eggs and one-third of a cup of cream. Place on flour board and roll three-quarters of an inch thick. Cut in squares, brush with egg-white, sprinkle with sugar, and bake fifteen minutes in a hot oven.

Nut Cookies: Mix half a pound of chopped walnuts, half a pound of butter, half a pound of white flour, one-fourth pound sugar, one teaspoon of cinnamon. Mold into roll and place in icebox. When hard cut into slices and bake in moderate oven until light brown.

MRS. RATHBONE'S TEA SERVICE:

- Table—Sheraton
- China—English Worcester
- Cloth—Venetian lace
- Service—Georgian Sheffield from William Haines
- Candlesticks—
Georgian Sheffield
- Napkins—Irish linen

or TWENTY



Entertaining becomes an art under the expert direction of Basil and Ouida Rathbone. It follows the hospitable traditions of Basil's British background. Mrs. Rathbone generously reveals some of her famous recipes here