

the war, and the cost of living doubled, it wasn't an easy matter to manage that wedding. Mother had left it up to Temple and me, and though Temple's only a servant, she's been with us so long, she's just like one of the family; and though I'm only nineteen, which is three years younger than Lettie and five older than Edith, I'm a first-rate little manageress, if I do say it myself, and can make a nickel spread over a dime's worth of value pretty nearly always. There are almost no economy dodges I don't know, from drippings to dyed lingerie ribbons.

But this time Temple certainly did think of a new one. She kept looking at the eggs—eggs were 85 cents a dozen—and the butter—butter was 76 cents a pound—and at the great big pan we had to make the round cake in, and she mourned. At last she edged up to me and spoke low.

"Say, Miss Kathy," she began, "I'm thinking"—

I stopped chopping raisins and citron and waited. She had the light of battle in her eye.

"Miss Lettie only wants the big cake for ornamint like—ain't that so?"

"I've told you a thousand times," I said wearily, "that it's to be in the centre of the refreshment table, in Grandmother Gainsley's old silver tray. And you know you're to cover it with one of your marvellous hard white frostings, with all the fancy stuff and curleycues that it could possibly have if it came from Trazzini's." (Trazzini being our very best caterer.)

Temple took the big pan and turned it upside down, meditatively.

"Look here," she said. "What if I was to take this pan, now, upside down, just like the cake will be when we turn it out, and cover the pan with my icing, and dress it up with all the curleycues and fancy dewdiddles and all—wouldn't it look just like a real cake, and wouldn't it do just as well for a centrepiece, and wouldn't it save us two dozen eggs and all that sugar and butter—enough eggs for your ma's and Miss Lettie's breakfasts for a week? Ain't that a grand idea, Miss Kathy, dear? And we'd make the other cake and cut it up and put it in the little silver and white boxes and give them to the guests, and devil a soul will know the differ but you and me. What d'ye say now? 'Twould be saving a dollar sixty in eggs alone—and the butter!"

N OBODY but those who have had to scrape and pinch the way Temple and I've had to do will appreciate what a temptation it was. I'd been perfectly sick thinking about the bills that would be coming in the first of the month. Lettie hadn't spared money on her trousseau, and mother'd had a new dress, and Edith and I had to have new ones, too, because we were to be bridesmaids; and though I'd made them myself, and they were only organdie, they'd required new slippers and silk stockings and hats—I'm not fool enough to try to make hats for an occasion like this. I know it was going to take a year's hard times to get us back to normal again. Mother can't understand about bills. She always thinks shopkeepers ought to be glad to supply us with things because we're such nice people and had such wonderful ancestors.

As for this wedding breakfast spread of Lettie's—that had been almost the last straw. She and mother had wanted to hand it all over to Trazzini, which meant that we'd have another bill of about \$500, for it was going to be a proud, splurgy affair. I can tell you. Our big old house and our garden are just fine as a background for parties—I often wish they weren't when I see the bills for chickens and finger-rolls and ice cream. I'd made Lettie agree to be married in the garden, pointing out to her tactfully that she was one of the few girls whose complexion could stand exposure to sunlight, and also that our Baltimore Belle rose vine over the arbor—we call it a pergola now—would be in full bloom, and she and Edgar and the rector could stand before it. The real reason I wanted a garden wedding was because it would save money in house decorations. Our house is pretty shabby and takes a lot of fixing to hide it. I'd been praying every night for six weeks that the weather would be good, for I meant to have the wedding spread served in the garden, too. Which brings me right back to food again.

Temple and I had gone over every item, and we knew that we could make the jellied bouillon and the sandwiches and the salad and the patties, all by ourselves, at about one-tenth the cost of Trazzini. The ices we'd buy, but little cakes to serve with them and the wedding cake and coffee and claret cup we'd make. We had it all figured out

to the last centime, I can tell you, and even so it ran to a fearful sum of money. So when Temple suggested this perfectly simple way of saving several dollars, do you wonder that I looked upon it with a kindly eye?

"Nobody'll ever know but you and me," she repeated. "After Miss Lettie's married and gone, who's to look after the remnants of the wedding feast but you and me, Miss Kathy? We'll melt down the sugar icing off the pan and use it for pudding sauce, too. Oh, there won't be a thing wasted, whereas if we have a great big cake to be eaten up it'll last forever and be bad for yours and Miss Edith's stummicks. Your ma won't touch it, as you know, for fear it'd fatten her up. What do y' falter for? It's the grandest scheme I ever had, I'm sure. Look at them eggs—and that butter! It's a crime to be wasting it, to say nothing of the expense."

I LOOKED at the butter and eggs, and I looked at the pan, and I wondered. If anything should happen that it would be found out, Lettie and mother would never forgive me, and, indeed, I wouldn't forgive myself. I wasn't going to have our family made ridiculous before the Sparthwaites and their set, as well as all the other people Lettie had asked. It would be a wonderful tidbit for the society papers—they'd already been rather catty about the daughter of the shabby genteel family, who'd managed to land a Sparthwaite. "But if anybody should lift the tray, Temple—it'll be so much lighter than

You can have some of 'em in the mush when it gets too tiresome."

It was all just as simple as that. I will say for Temple that she kept her word. We went ahead and baked the cake that was to be cut up, and it came out fine. I was sort of afraid Edith might be poking around again, and I knew she'd notice that we hadn't baked the round cake, but luckily she stayed away. As for Lettie and mother, they never came into the kitchen. All Lettie said was, in that sweet dependent way of hers, just a few days before the wedding: "Kathy, dear, are you sure everything's going to be all right?"

"If we only have good weather," I told her, "there isn't anything that can go wrong."

"Edgar says his best man is so anxious to meet you," went on Lettie. She was trying on one of her trousseau gowns—a little blue and white dimity—and she looked like a garden party angel in it.

"Oh, that nice Dr. Blaine we met at Narragansett," said mother, who was sitting by to help. "A charming man, quite delightfully brusque—and with a black mustache. Why is it so many brusque men have black mustaches? The two almost always go together."

I collapsed on the bed. I was tired. Temple and I had cleaned all the silver that day. Charming men, with or without black mustaches, were nothing to me at that moment. All I wanted in the world was to get that wedding over without a hitch.

Lettie had forgotten about Dr. Blaine by this time and gone back to thoughts of the wedding. "I do hope

sight of Temple's and my wedding cake scheme, but Lettie's word brought it back, and I had a shiver of premonition. However, I knew there was plenty of the other cake to give her a piece of it, and she hadn't said anything about the round one. It seemed safe enough, but oh, my guilty conscience troubled me about the sham. I had—if mother will permit me to use one more scrap of vulgar slang—I had a hunch.

"I'll see that you get a piece, all right," I promised. "and now I'm going off to bed, for I've got to be up early to-morrow and begin to get the house cleaned. Please don't be around more than you can help. Temple and I are going to sweep, scrub and polish the furniture."

Lettie came over and gave me a fond good-night kiss. "Little sister," she murmured, "you're so good—and so wonderful. What would I do without you?"

What, indeed, I wondered myself.

THE day before the wedding, in the afternoon, Temple and I locked ourselves in the pantry, drew down the blinds and lit the electric light. I went to work cutting the cake, and she draped that old tin pan in the most marvellous coating of icing you ever saw. It was like snow and hoarfrost. Delicate flutings ran over its top, drawn into a delicious whirl in the centre. Exquisite little shells were placed all round the edge. It wasn't overdone, either. It was just right, and when Temple had finished it was a regular fairy cake—provided, of course, fairies are the size of broodingnags and eat cake. I could hardly get my own work done for watching. It really was a masterpiece.

Somehow, I hardly know how, we got the lovely thing off the pastry board and onto the beautiful old silver tray that is the choicest piece of all the old Gainsley silver.

"When that gets a wreath of roses round it," said Temple proudly, "there's no one but will admire it as much as you and I, Miss Kathy. And all I hope is that the next one I ice will be for your wedding, with a grand, fine young man as wealthy and as handsome as this Lieut. Sparthwaite, or even more so."

"Well, I'm not going to have a fake cake. I'll tell you that," I declared. "It'll be the real thing or none."

"And well said," exclaimed Temple. "There's naught of the fake about you, Miss Kathy."

But as I looked at the beautiful deception I was helping to practise on my own sister, I wasn't so sure.

I WOKE up early, early in the morning, and before I was even half awake I listened to hear if it was raining. It wasn't. So I struggled slowly out of bed and went over to the window, half afraid to look out, for even if it wasn't raining it might be cloudy. But no, if ever there was a summer dawn that looked like the real thing, it was Lettie's wedding morning. The sky was that wonderful clear, still gray-blue that means sunshine all day long.

"Thank heaven for that," I said, and proceeded to hop into my clothes and hustle down to the kitchen. Two of Lettie's bridesmaids and five of Edgar's distinguished friends were staying in the house, and that meant breakfast trays.

Early as I was, Temple was before me, and we hustled round like mad, keeping as still as possible so that none of our guests would hear us and wake. We leaped at the downstairs part of the house and cleaned it sublimely. Then, while she got the trays ready, I cut bushels and bushels of flowers. I always arrange them on the back porch, and there I was snipping stems and pouring water behind a barricade of vases and bowls and jugs and great heaps of roses and larkspur and honeysuckle, when I heard someone walking through the dining-room. I looked round, and there was Dr. Blaine, Edgar's best man, black mustache, brusque manners and all. I'd met him the night before, but hadn't a chance to speak to him—indeed, I'd hardly looked at him. I was none too glad to see him this morning, for I was wearing a very dirty pink bungalow apron and a pair of old white pumps that were a disgrace.

"I'm so sorry you woke so early," I said, "for in half an hour you'd have had your breakfast tray, all comfortably in your room."

"I always get up early, and I'll slip over to the Inn for breakfast. That'll be one burden off your shoulders. Can I help you with these flowers?"

I hate to be helped with flowers, and I suppose I looked it.

"Oh, I can arrange them just as nicely as you can," he said. "I've lived in Japan and studied the native method. It has many superiorities over ours."

"Maybe it has," I agreed. "But I'm afraid I can't change my whole scheme of decoration even so." And then I was ashamed of being so rude, and I relented. "If you'll put those pink roses in those blue and white china jars, it would be a help."

He didn't say another word, but fell to work, and really he arranged them beautifully with his square blunt-



SHE DRAPED THAT OLD TIN PAN IN THE MOST WONDERFUL COATING OF ICING YOU EVER SAW.

a real cake," I objected weakly.

"Now, don't be foolish, Miss Kathy," said Temple, with contempt. "Who is there that goes about at weddings lifting up the fancy dishes? If that worries you, I can slip a brick under the pan."

"All right," I said at last. "Let's do it, Temple. But don't breathe it to a soul. It's our secret—yours and mine. If Edith finds it out we might as well publish it in the papers. And the waitresses we have in for the reception mustn't suspect, either."

"They won't come until after the table is all arranged," said Temple. "As for Miss Edith—I'm going to put this cake when it's baked under lock and key, anyway, for it needs all of its two weeks' mellowing. Then, the day before the wedding, when you're cutting it up and putting it in the boxes I'll be busy putting the fine, thick, fancy icing on the pan."

She gathered up the eggs and butter we'd saved and carried them away. "There's enough here to last us right up till the day of the wedding if we're careful," she gloated, "and nothing more need be bought; and as for raisins, we'll now have a store to last till Christmas time or thereabouts.

the food isn't going to look homemade and stupid," she said, pulling at the dimity sash. "I can't see why I didn't have Trazzini, after all. I might have had Edgar pay for it afterward—without his knowing it, of course."

"Well," I fired up, "we're poor, Lettie, but before I'd see a sister of mine skin her husband out of the money to pay for her wedding breakfast, I'd work myself to shreds. Don't you worry about the food. It's going to be the best you ever ate, and it will look all right, too. Trazzini would be out of business if Temple and I ever took up catering in a serious way, believe me."

"You use such vulgar slang, dear," said mother sweetly—just the way I talk to Edith. "Skin" and "believe me!" It really isn't done."

"I'm so glad I got those darling little boxes for the wedding cake," said Lettie, taking no notice either of mother or me. "When Temple cuts it, do remember to bring me a little piece, Kathy—I might forget to taste it on the day of the wedding. I have so much to think of, and I'd really like to have a bit of my own wedding cake."

I'd been so busy I'd almost lost