

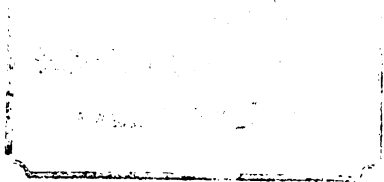
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"THE DIGNITY OF OUR CHARACTER AS
RATIONAL BEINGS": IMAGES OF
WOMEN IN AMERICAN COOKBOOKS,
1820-1860

By
Peter Iversen Berg

A THESIS

Submitted to
Michigan State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

Department of History

1982

ABSTRACT

"THE DIGNITY OF OUR CHARACTER AS
RATIONAL BEINGS": IMAGES OF
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This paper is an attempt to suggest that many American women, between 1820 and 1860, were not as insulated, or as separated from the business world as might be assumed from previous historical research. In an effort to discover how most American women may have thought and behaved during the period of industrialization, I have examined over thirty American cookbooks published between 1820 and 1860.

The image of women projected in these cookbooks was not at odds with the male world of work. As active participants in a unified entrepreneurial enterprise aiming to achieve economic success for the family, women had to bring system and order to the world of domestic life; they had to perfect techniques to deliver services effectively and efficiently; they had to manage finances competently; and they had to create and insure a pragmatic educational environment for their children, the future members of America's entrepreneurial families.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I wish to thank Dr. Gordon T. Stewart, Dr. Peter D. Levine, and Brooke V. Heagerty for their helpful suggestions and encouragement throughout this study. The staff of Special Collections, Michigan State University Libraries also deserve special praise for their diligence and kindness in locating many of the cookbooks. Finally, I wish to acknowledge my thesis director, Dr. Stephen Botein, who first suggested cookbooks as a field of research. His ever thoughtful guidance and assistance in preparing this study will always be remembered with deep gratitude.



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I

In the past fifteen years numerous articles and books have been devoted to the experience of women in nineteenth-century America. Many of these studies have focused on the rise of industrialization and the changes this meant for the status of women. The major interpretation of this process suggests that before industrialization most families were dependent upon an agrarian economy and a system of production located in the home. A division of labor existed and distinctions were made between men's and women's work, but functions overlapped and it was not unusual to see women working alongside their husbands. To some extent, then, historians believe this agrarian economy maintained a form of occupational equality between the sexes. The work of both husband and wife was necessary for the economic well-being of the family.

By the nineteenth-century, however, the development of a market economy and the beginnings of industrialization had begun to change the nature and place of work. The home system of production, which involved the whole family, gradually died out and was replaced by an economic system that was located outside the home. This new



economic system, historians note, involved only men and single working women who toiled predominantly in factories and shops. Although this change was most prevalent among the urban middle-classes in the Northeast, it also affected people engaged in agriculture, who saw the family farm transformed from a unit of subsistence to a market conscious, profit-making business.

This interpretation has revolved around a particular sociological theory, which insists industrialization led to a separation of work and home. According to Talcott Parsons, the best known of "functionalist" theorists, separation of the worlds of work and family was necessary for the stability of each institution and for industrial society as a whole. The "functionalists" argue that "the institutions of the family and workplace divided into geographical and emotional units-specialized in their separate activities without mutual interference". Men dominated the world of work while the separate world of home and family was the domain of women.

The theory of separate worlds, or "spheres", appears especially plausible when viewed in light of ante-bellum literary evidence. In the first half of the nineteenth-century both male and female authors created a new popular literature consisting of advice manuals, novels, essays, magazine stories, poems, and sermons, which advocated and reiterated women's limited role in



the home. The ideology of this literature established norms by which women were to be segregated and insulated from the public world of work. Repeatedly, women were told to stay in the home in order to cultivate their superior moral nature and remain aloof from the competitive and often uncivilized world of business.¹

Recently, challenging the view that the status of women was declining in ante-bellum America, some historians have argued that the ideology of separate spheres guaranteed to women an area of relative autonomy, which benefited and enhanced their status. Nevertheless, these historians accept the proposition that nineteenth-century women existed apart from their husbands with different views, concerns, goals, and fears.²

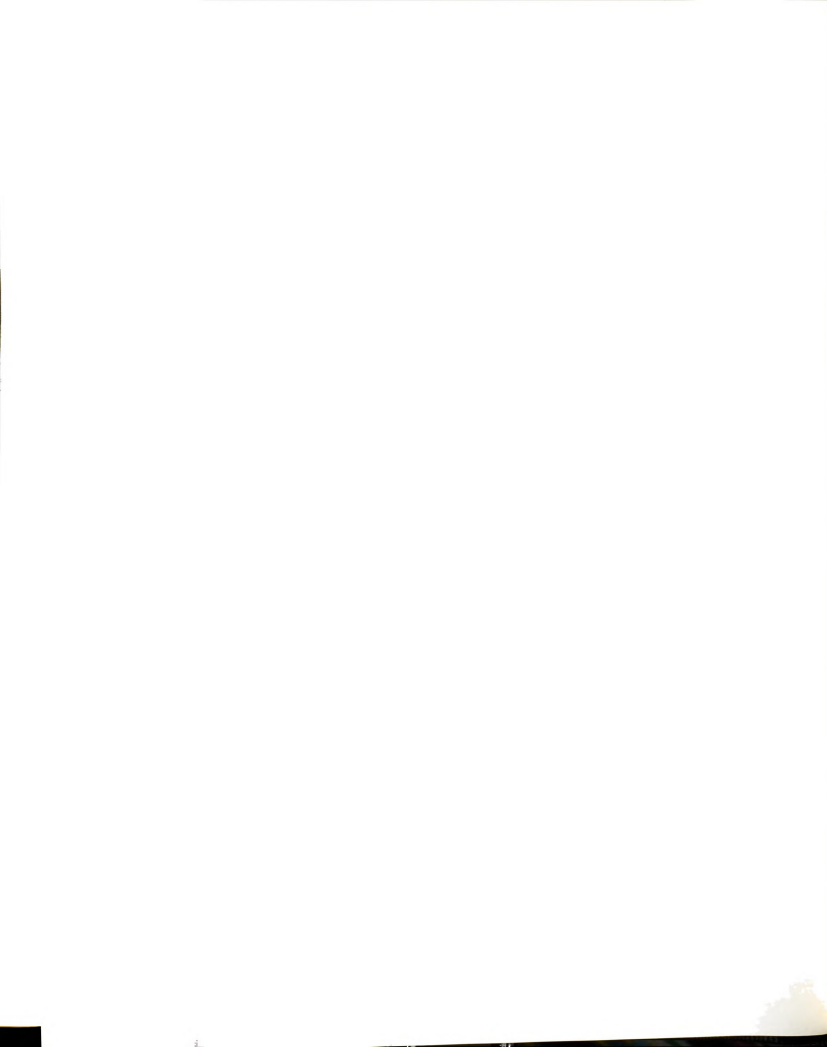
Despite the prevalence of "separate sphere" ideology in the popular literature of the period, it may be time to scrutinize its significance with skepticism. One reason for such skepticism is that there is increasing doubt about the validity of "functionalist" sociological theory applied to the history of the family. As one critic has noted, Parsons and others of his school formulated, "a structural model for the evolution of institutions, perhaps a worthy enterprise in itself, but ill-suited to studying the process of interaction between work and family." In other words, "functionalist" history is limited by its emphasis of how institutions fit

together; it tends to ignore how people cross institutional boundaries.³

Another problem involves time. Within the space of a few decades women supposedly turned away from an economically important role in the family to a narrowly confined role concerned solely with child rearing and moral regeneration. Could so profound a psychological revolution have occurred in so short a time? Indeed, considering the simple facts of domestic proximity, could the "sphere" metaphor have reflected emotional reality?

Finally, the evidence used by historians to substantiate many of the claims and conclusions in their studies of women and work appears somewhat unreliable, especially if the objective is to discover the real feelings and behavior of most nineteenth-century American women. This evidence consists of a wide assortment of the most overt prescriptive literature, supplemented by scattered diaries and memoirs. Most such evidence seems to have been produced by upper middle class women living in the Northeast.

This paper is an attempt to suggest that many American women, between 1820 and 1860, were not as insulated, or as separated from the business world as might be assumed from previous historical research. During this period American society was immersed in the pervasive and powerful currents of the capitalist market place.

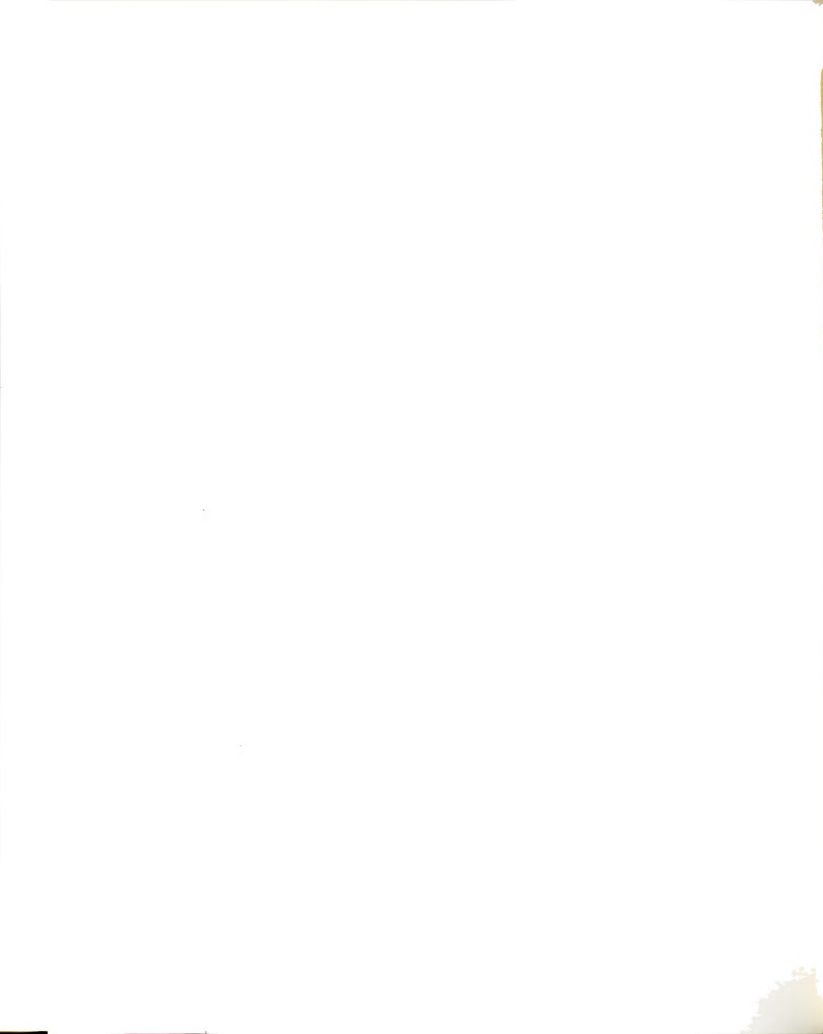


It is difficult to believe women could have been indifferent to this larger environment while their husbands, alone, worked frantically to achieve economic success. Rather, it appears many women may have had an excellent grasp of their market-conscious society and accordingly may have accepted new entrepreneurial responsibilities. If entrepreneurship may be defined as simply "getting things done",⁴ women were entrepreneurs when they helped their husbands climb to economic prosperity. As members of emerging entrepreneurial families women had to eschew the often genteel life prescribed by sphere ideology and exhibit the same traits as their husbands: self-denial, practicality, initiative, resourcefulness, and energy. Women perhaps understood that a domestic work force consisting only of submissive individuals, who could make no decisions on their own and could produce only under the prodding of another, were a dubious economic resource to their husbands. This is not to suggest that as participants in entrepreneurial family life women became liberated from constricting sexist stereotypes and behaviors. To the extent that their values merged with those of their husbands, however, it is untenable to claim that women led separate lives divorced from the real world around them.

In an effort to discover how most American women may have thought and behaved during the period of

industrialization, I have examined over thirty American cookbooks published between 1820 and 1860.⁵ One problem inherent in a study of this nature is the uncertain relationship between norms and behavior. Did the image of women seen in these pages reflect their real situation? This is a crucial question and unfortunately cannot be answered definitively. Cookbooks are promising source material, however, because they were meant for intensive practical use and consequently carried a certain amount of realism and common sense not often found in other types of literature written for women. Whereas much of the latter literature freely sentimentalized or romanticized woman's role in the home, cookbooks had to meet the tests of everyday experience. It is possible to glean enough information from their prefaces, introductions, and recipes to speculate about reader consciousness and behavior.

In addition, cookbooks are a valuable body of evidence because of their popularity. It is reasonable to suppose that their themes were an expression of broad middle-class taste and interest. Cookbooks were relatively inexpensive, which made them available to a wide and diverse audience. The Good Housekeeper, Sarah Hale's first cookery volume, sold for 50 cents in 1839, and Eliza Leslie's Directions for Cookery sold for \$1.00 in 1853.⁶ The speed with which some cookbooks sold bears



testimony to their appeal. The Good Housekeeper sold a thousand copies in one month,⁷ The New England Economical Housekeeper and Family Receipt Book, which sold for just 25 cents, sold out its first edition of fifteen-hundred copies in only fifteen weeks.⁸

Perhaps even more important was the continuing demand for many cookbooks. The Frugal Housewife, for instance, was first offered to the American public in 1829 and was into its twenty-eighth edition by 1842. Sales figures for best cookbooks may not have been extraordinary by the standards of contemporary popular fiction, but publications of the latter sort were usually just seasonal events and consumed for leisure purposes instead of habitual reference.

Cookbook authors were themselves concerned about the costs of cookbooks and their availability to women of a moderate income level. Writing in 1852, one author, Mrs. Bradley, announced her intention to compile a cookbook that combined "cheapness with great value" and price it "within the reach of all."⁹ As the author of The Complete Cook explained, by including the whole realm of domestic science she could "swell our small book to the dignity of a three volume work; but by doing so we should place it beyond the reach of that class to whom its precepts will prove most valuable."¹⁰



Combining the evidence of a conscious attempt to make cookbooks available to all interested readers with their enduring popularity and relative inexpensiveness, it seems safe to assume that access to this literature was not restricted to affluent readers. Instead, it appears cookbook readers between 1820 and 1860 were located in a broad stratum of American society. Most were probably married, white, middle-class, American born of British Protestant heritage: there is no reason to doubt that they included inhabitants of farms, rural towns, and cities.

The image of women projected in these cookbooks was not at odds with or in contrast to the male world of work. As active participants in a unified entrepreneurial enterprise aiming to achieve economic success for the family, women had to bring system and order to the world of domestic life; they had to perfect techniques to deliver services effectively and efficiently; they had to manage finances competently and responsibly; and they had to create and insure a pragmatic educational environment for their children, the future members of America's entrepreneurial families.

II

Alongside advice for practical living, a few cookbooks sweetened their contents with sentiment.



Characteristically, Catherine Beecher ended hers with this consoling message to her readers: "Remember then, that you have a father in heaven, who sympathizes in all your cares, pities your griefs, makes allowances for your defects, and is endeavoring by trials, as well as by blessing to fit you for the right fulfillment of your high and holy calling."¹¹ But most cookbooks contained no sentiment whatsoever. In fact, some cookbook authors believed that lack of sentiment enhanced the appeal of their publications. For instance, Mrs. A. M. Collins, designed her cookbook "to supply a want which is not fully met by larger and more pretentious volumes, which frequently are burdened by superfluous matter...".¹² A few, like Prudence Smith's Modern American Cookery, offered no preface or introductory material. "A great defect in many works," observed the author of The National Cookbook, was that the cook had to wade "through a formidable amount of reading" before she learned "the process of making a pudding."¹³ As Mrs. Bradley simply noted, "Lengthy prefaces, and labored introductions" were "seldom if ever read."¹⁴

It was no secret to ante-bellum entrepreneurs that for a business enterprise to grow and prosper order and system had to be established and maintained so that work and productivity would not be interrupted. If adherence to this rule often guaranteed success to a businessman,



it also proved useful when employed by his wife in their home. The terms "order", "system", and "efficiency" appeared in many of the cookbooks. The home, like the shop or factory, was to be a thoroughly regimented and technical world. A goal of all women, cookbook authors believed, should be a home managed according to a detailed and comprehensive plan.

The importance of efficient home management was illustrated by Mrs. Mary Randolph's belief that, "the government of a family" bore "a Lilliputian resemblance to the government of a nation."¹⁵ Mrs. Ellet fully understood the same point. "As a country cannot be governed without laws," she noted, "neither can a household; and the mistress should be as absolute in her own house as a sovereign in her dominions."¹⁶ The author of The American Matron also perceived the similarities between a government and a household of laws when she urged "American wives and mothers to adapt their households, practically, to those social and political institutions," which were "intended to afford competence...to all, and overgrown wealth to none!"¹⁷ Even the best planned system of home management required modification, but once a system had proved itself worthy it became "inviolable law."¹⁸

A major feature of domestic management was a "written schedule," so that each phase of housework could



be accomplished with swiftness and efficiency. The necessity as well as the propriety of "well-regulated domestic arrangements in the household" could not be questioned, declared Mrs. Hall.¹⁹ Like a conscientious business manager, a wife took command of her home and awakened every morning to "examine minutely the different departments of her household [in order to] detect errors in their infant state," when they could be "corrected with ease."²⁰ This was not possible, however, unless women reduced "to practical rules the best theories concerning an extensive and varied range of household duties."²¹

The use of well-planned system for efficient housework was especially important for women if they lacked domestic help. Cookbooks assumed the overwhelming number of American homes did not have servants. Only five of thirty-two cookbooks specifically mentioned servants and these complained of their shiftlessness and obstinance. That only a few cookbooks discussed servants implied that the nineteenth-century woman spent most of her time working. She presumably had the aid of her children, but most of the work would have been hers alone. Sarah Hale pronounced it "rare to find a married woman" who did not "superintend personally" to the duties of the household, whether her husband was rich or poor. Perhaps somewhat wishfully, Hale believed even "the most

delicate lady...would scarcely boast of retaining a hired housekeeper to perform her duties; and no lady would gain credit or consequence in society by doing so."²²

Obviously, during this period women were expected to take their work seriously. They were not creatures of leisure or fashion, nor were they shy or weak. Comparable to their market-conscious husbands, the woman described in these cookbooks brought rationalization to their work." The immediate plan of every family," urged the author of The Cook's Own Book, "must be adapted to its own peculiar situation and can only result from the good sense and early good habits of the parties, acting upon general rational principles."²³ Work in the home and work in the business or factory had to be accomplished much in the same manner. Both depended on system and both succeeded or failed according to the ability of the worker to complete a series of tasks quickly and competently.

The woman would be recognized as household magistrate, but her status so achieved would not be separated from her husband's: a smooth running household was not an end in itself. Instead, the aim was to provide support for the endeavors of the businessman. Husband, as head of the entrepreneurial family unit. There were "numerous instances", Mrs. Cornelius pointed out, "of worthy merchants and mechanics, whose efforts" were



"paralyzed and their hopes chilled by the total failure of the wife."²⁴ Status and success would come only when women insured "social peace at home"; if they could not, "misery and ruin" would follow.²⁵

III

Practicality meant special technical competence and nowhere was this competence more important than in the kitchen. "To be an able and successful cook should be the aim of every prudent housekeeper," noted one author, "for we know of no surer mark of sloth or negligence than an ill-spread table. For if incapacity and indifference be allowed to exist in the kitchen, need we be surprised to find it in the parlor."²⁶ To prevent an "illserved table," cookbook authors provided their readers with recipes which had been "fully tested" and judged successful by "actual individual experience." Mrs. Collins confidently declared that many of her recipes were in "regular and constant use" in her household, while most had been "thoroughly tested during an experience of twenty years."²⁷ Unspeculative recipes were also the goal of Hannah Widdifield's cookbook: "No receipts are contained in this volume but those fully tested, not only by the author, but by the best judges in this as well as other cities."²⁸ Experience was the priority of Elizabeth Lea, who had "applied to persons of experience, and



embodied the information collected in a book" to which she had added "the results of their own experiments" as the years had "matured her judgements."²⁹

Besides providing readers with "fully-tested" recipes, cookbooks emphasized practical dishes over more complex and ornamental creations. The New England Economical Housekeeper and Family Receipt Book left out "such receipts as were not of practical utility" and "added more than fifty new ones."³⁰ Practical dishes were respectable, and "infinitely preferable," noted a Boston Housekeeper, and she urged her readers to serve a dinner of "far less show where nobody need be afraid of what they are eating!"³¹ Because ostentatious dining might end badly, Mrs. Bradley decided her cookbook would "furnish plain and practical recipes,"³² another cookbook author testified that her recipes would "be found to be practical, clear, simple, readily understood and as easily followed."³³ Mrs. P. H. Mendall summed up her outlook when she entitled her publication, A Practical Receipt Book.³⁴ The following are two examples of the "practical receipts" that dominated American cookbooks during this period:

Codfish

Fresh codfish is good to boil, fry, or make into a chowder. It is rather dry for boiling. Salt cod should be soaked all night in water, with a glass of vinegar. It will make it like fresh

fish. In the morning take it out, put in fresh water, and place it three or four hours over a moderate fire, where it will keep warm without boiling-boiling hardens it; take it up, and take off the skin; serve it out with milk gravy.³⁵

Plain Baked Rice Pudding

Allow one small cup of rice to one quart of milk, sweetened with sugar, and baked in a slow oven until the milk disappears.³⁶

A few cookbooks did offer foreign recipes or others of an elegant character, such as the following:

Cod

The head and shoulders, comprehending in weight two-thirds or three-quarters of the fish, is much better dressed separately; the tail being much thinner would be broken to pieces before the thicker parts are done. The best way of dressing the tail, is to fry it. For boiling cod, allow plenty of room and water, that the fish may be perfectly covered. Put it in blood-warm water, with a large handful of salt. Watch for its boiling. that it may be set a little aside. A small cod will require twenty minutes after it boils; a large one, half an hour. When the fins pull easily, and the eyes start, the fish is done. Slip it very carefully on the fish plate, that it may not be broken. Take out the roe and liver, which are much esteemed; they will serve to garnish the dish, together with horse-radish and slices of lemon, or fried smelts, or oysters. Sauce, oyster. The sound, a fat jelly-like substance, along the inside of the backbone, is the great delicacy of the fish. Cod is sometimes boiled in slices. Let them be soaked half an hour in salt water. then set on with cold spring water and salt, just enough to cover them. Let it boil up; then carefully skim and set aside for ten minutes. Serve with the same sauce as above. Slices of cod are much better fried as soles. Slices of crimped cod, for boiling, are put in boiling water, and when done served on a napkin.³⁷



A Baked Rice Pudding

The above may be used, enriched by slices of bread and butter laid at the time, with a little sugar and nutmeg strewed over.-- Or, scald the rice in a small quantity of water; when all the water is absorbed by the rice, add a quart of new milk, and let it boil up, with a stick of cinnamon for flavour; beat three or four eggs with fine moist sugar, stir to them gradually the boiling milk and rice; add one ounce of beef suet or butter; when it is in the pan, or dish, which should be buttered before putting in, grate nutmeg over the top; put it in the oven as soon as made, and make an hour.³⁸

These were exceptionally rich items, however, of a sort that most cookbook authors self-consciously avoided.

The kitchen, like a business enterprise required numerous daily decisions. To make correct decisions, reducing uncertainty and waste, women needed verifiable and clear information from cookbooks. Evidently, they informed cookbook authors what was and what was not appreciated. Mrs. T. J. Crowen had "the pleasure of receiving letters from persons (entire strangers) in different parts of the United States, expressing their extreme satisfaction" with her recipes, which they found to be of great "practical value".³⁹

The image of women making use of technical expertise in kitchen management was extended by the comments of cookbook authors to include health care. At a time when standardization of work schedules had begun to make personal fitness all the more economically important,

cookbooks, stressed the need for medically sound food preparation. Fresh ingredients and a balanced diet, as well as an ability to care for the sick without the aid of a physician, were central concerns.

If cookery was worth studying "as a sensual gratification," said a Boston Housekeeper, it was "surely much more so as a means of securing one of the greatest of human blessings--good health."⁴⁰ Mrs. Horace Mann realized the pleasures of the appetite were legitimate; as with any other pleasure, however, appetite could be abused. If its "proper conditions" were ignored "the loss of power, premature decay, and untimely death" were inevitable.⁴¹ To aid her readers in the pursuit of good health, Mann explained how "even luscious food" could be prepared without the use of unhealthy ingredients. She warned women to avoid most brands of wheat-flour, sugar, and salt because they were "adulterated with plaster of paris, alum, and sulphate of copper."⁴² Fresh and nutritious ingredients were emphasized by Mrs. Collins, who wrote especially for "Western Housekeepers" where the "generous and prolific clime" afforded a "bountiful supply of nutritious fruits and vegetables" and the "forests and hillsides" abounded in "excellent game." She was confident, however, that the ingredients called for in her cookbook could be obtained in any section of the country.⁴³

Scientifically balanced meals were emphasized as well. Theories varied, for every cookbook that warned against eating "animal food", another advised that "the most nourishing and strength-giving of all foods" were "fresh red meats." Other recommendations were more esoteric. For instance, one cookbook urged "the use of a moderate quantity of such diet as shall neither increase the salts and oils so as to produce disease, nor diminish them, so as to suffer the solids to become relaxed."⁴⁴

To assist the reader in the selection of healthy foods, many cookbooks cited the scientific discoveries of authorities like "Dr. Combe", "Dr. Boerhaave", and the ubiquitous "Dr. Beaumont." The most noteworthy example was Sarah Hale's Ladies New Book of Cookery. Hale believed that once "the true principles of preparing food were understood" a woman could insure "the healthy action" of her family. By aiding women "in their researches", Hale hoped to show "the true way of living well and being well while we live." She therefore devoted a lengthy chapter in her cookbook to "The Philosophy of Cooking" which followed "chiefly The System of Dr. Andrew Combe on 'Diet and Health'." This in turn was corroborated by "The Authority of Baron Leibert".⁴⁵ Application of such 'learned' works enhanced the image of women's technical expertise. Men still were the ultimate source of

scientific truth, but it was up to women to transmit that wisdom to the households of the nation.

Yet even the most scientific diets and freshest foods could not prevent all disease. Hence, The National Cookbook, among others, paid great attention "to that department of cookery exclusively adapted to the sick or convalescent."⁴⁶ Although the medicinal department was not intended as a substitute for the physician, presumably male, there were still times when his attendance or advice could not be had" at the moment when most needed."⁴⁷ In case a physician was "not at hand", Elizabeth Lea believed women should be trained to prepare remedies.⁴⁸ Prudence Smith provided cures for gout, heartburn, and rheumatism,⁴⁹ while a cure for "chilblains" was available in The Roger Cookery.⁵⁰ Remedies 'For a Cut' ("wash off the blood in cold water, and bind it up with a clean cotton bandage--if it inclines to bleed, put on scraped lint, after bringing the edges of the wound together as closely as possible, and bind it rather tight"),⁵¹ and for more serious afflictions such as consumption and dysentery were offered by The Good Housekeeper. Besides caring for the sick, Mrs. Sylvia Campbell urged her readers especially to watch their own health during pregnancy. "Many A Mother", commented Campbell, "has in that state laid the foundation of drunkenness in her child. How many tobacco-chewers have been made such by the habits

of the Mother...when she was continually looking for something to chew?"⁵² Here, the woman was charged even with responsibility for the welfare of an unborn child--who was apparently expected to be male.

Especially within the abundant literature on sick cookery and medicinal cures was an effect of poor or unhealthy meals, dyspepsia, "an undefinable word implying almost every sort of distress and anguish."⁵³ According to a Boston Housekeeper, this was "after insanity, the most grievous affliction of providence, or rather of improvidence and imprudence."⁵⁴ A "really good book will be patronized...in these days of dyspepsia," as Mrs. Sanderson claimed, because for too long America had "suffered from the vile concoctions inflicted upon it by untutored cooks."⁵⁵ No family members, least of all the husband, could perform at peak efficiency for very long if continually at the mercy of an upset stomach. To be regularly at work and fulfill their potential, husbands depended on their wives. If the husband ate at a table "constantly and invariably ill-spread," than "a feeling of dissatisfaction" might be "extended to other things." More specifically and "however improbably" it might seem, Mrs. Cornelius believed "the health of many a professional man" was "undermined and his usefulness curtailed, if not sacrificed, because he habitually" ate "bad bread!"⁵⁶ Mrs. Cornelius' argument thus affirmed the importance of

women to the male work world. Their ability to provide health care, along with sound nutrition, was not interpreted as an application of romantic or sentimental salve to protect and relieve men from the trials of work. Instead, proficient in techniques that represented the best contemporary opinion available, women actively involved themselves in the larger economy by trying to sustain a full-time and productive labor force.

A major part of this effort to insure a productive labor force was temperance. "Drams or distilled spiritous liquors," declared a Boston Housekeeper, possessed "the most poisonous qualities," which eventually led to "the destruction of thousands."⁵⁷ Mrs. Allen thought nothing could "add more to the sum of human happiness than temperance."⁵⁸ Some cookbook authors were not as unyielding, but they still expressed concern about alcohol's "direful effects". Mrs. Campbell, for instance, was willing to tolerate the use of beer and wine, if their ingredients were pure and their fermentation natural.⁵⁹ Even "natural" beer and wine was too much for Mrs. Horace Mann, however, who believed the purpose of her cookbook would "not be wholly answered if it should fail to enforce all arguments for temperance." Mann was so fanatic in her abhorrence towards alcohol that she banned the use of city-raised pork in her cookbook because the

"near-sighted" beast, raised "amid the abominations of distilleries," would not be "particular about its food."⁶⁰

Devotion to temperance in ante-bellum America was more than a health movement. It represented also an important facet of "the new industrial morality" that emphasized "sensual self-denial" as a means to achieving entrepreneurial success. Businessmen were eager to promote temperance; their wives, too, understood the importance of a serious-minded, sober society, and practiced at home what their husbands preached in the public forum.⁶¹

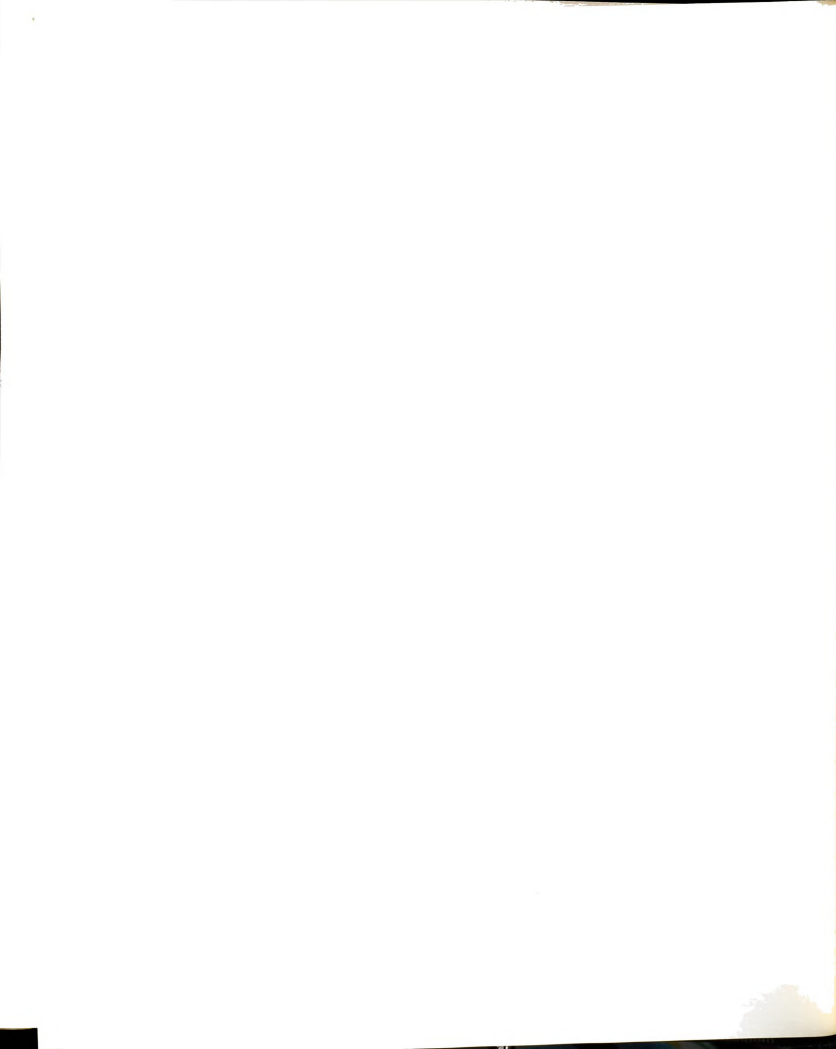
IV

One of America's greatest entrepreneurs would later define middle-class competence as "moderate sums [of money] saved by many years of effort, the returns from which are required for the comfortable maintenance and education of families."⁶² If cookbooks are indicators of behavior in the ante-bellum American home, there can be little doubt that many women were competent financiers. "Many families have owed their prosperity full as much to the conduct and propriety of female management, as to the knowledge and activity of the father," asserted Mrs. Rundell.⁶³ Whether women used inexpensive cooking recipes, suggested bookkeeping devices for household budgetary calculations, or taught their



children the meaning of thrift, it was assumed that they were conscious of the need to save and manage money.

Just as cookbook authors wished to have their publications inexpensive enough for a wide variety of readers, so they desired "to avoid expensive receipts," and show the public how "to cook well and cheaply."⁶⁴ Cookbooks were "not designed to spread a taste for pernicious luxuries,"⁶⁵ nor for housekeepers who kept their tables with great extravagance. Rather, cookbook authors provided "receipts which will enable one to furnish a table handsomely, at the smallest expense."⁶⁶ Mrs. Howland's cookbook was "compiled with a careful regard to the most economical mode of preparing the various dishes for which directions have been given; and is particularly recommended to the attention of those who would cook well at a moderate expense."⁶⁷ With her mind on economy, "A Practical American Housekeeper" offered her "present collection of receipts...selected and arranged with much care, and a well-directed attention to economy...."⁶⁸ Cookbook authors believed that "without any increase of expenditure, one person, by means of good receipts, skillfully used, and by a tasteful arrangement of the table," [could] "make a feast". This could be accompanied with "sufficient variety...to relieve all who practice by it, from an every day sameness, without severely taxing the purse, while gratifying the palate."⁶⁹



By studying the "business of cooking," women might reduce significantly "the cost of a year's housekeeping," and thus perhaps achieve moderate savings for the future.⁷⁰

"If any persons think some of the [recipes] too rigidly economical," warned Lydia Child, "let them inquire how the largest fortunes among us have been made. They will find thousands and millions have been accumulated, by a scrupulous attention to sums 'infinitely more minute than sixty cents.'" ⁷¹

Women were expected to keep a strict vigil over family income and expenses. To insure a family lived within its financial means, cookbook authors encouraged their readers to bring system and order to the often delicate management of family finances. "What we spend rationally, we enjoy"⁷² was the shaping philosophy of The Roger Cookery, and other cookbook authors repeatedly stressed the importance of "an economy careful and judicious" that enabled women to satisfy their families' "wants and wishes."⁷³ One consequence of ignoring its financial limits might be a home where "the vanity of having a showy drawing room to receive company" would relegate the family to "a more close back room."⁷⁴

But women had to be expert in more than the traditional role of handling household expense; they were expected to understand the vicissitudes of their husbands' income. The importance of women understanding and



effectively implementing a rational plan for total family finances was paramount during the ante-bellum period. America appeared a nation where to "rich and poor together", the world was open "with all its pleasures, hopes, and its prizes."⁷⁵ Tocqueville found it "not uncommon for the same man in the course of his life to rise and sink again through all the grades...from opulence to poverty."⁷⁶ This exaggerated reality, but the average middle-class family could anticipate the possibility of both good times and bad, depending on unpredictable economic conditions. Thus, understanding "the circumstances of her husband" was important because it allowed the wife to share with her spouse "the losses and events" that might occur to reduce family income. With her experience in financial matters the wife could more easily adjust expenses and "encourage...her partner and enable him to struggle through the difficulties which were thought insurmountable."⁷⁷ Before she could "spend rationally," a woman had to become acquainted with the extent of her husband's resources and resolve with firmness to regulate her household with such prudence and economy as not to exceed them."⁷⁸ Mrs. Mary Randolph was especially explicit concerning women and financial matters: The contents of the Treasury must be known and great care taken to keep the expenditures equal to the receipts."⁷⁹

The concerns of income and expenses ultimately led to the question of how much real control women had over the budget. Women were urged to exhibit prudence in household expenses, but was that still the main area of financial decision-making? Cookbooks appeared to urge women to take a more prominent role in finances. As it was "the business of man to provide the means of living comfortably," argued Mrs. Ellet, so it was "the province of women to dispose judiciously of those means and maintain order and harmony in all things."⁸⁰ Sarah Hale believed it was a mark of respect or honor to the wife when the husband placed his wealth at her disposal. "The husband earns, the wife dispenses; are not her duties as important as his?"⁸¹

The financial role of women in the ante-bellum entrepreneurial family was kind of a first line defense against disasters to which the American legal system would otherwise have to respond. Nineteenth century Americans valued private property for its entrepreneurial potential and were prepared to use legal means to create an environment that sustained such activity. By the middle of the century, bankruptcy laws were on the books to save debtors from "irretrievable ruin," so that they might re-enter the entrepreneurial world. Before relying on statutes that "stayed a creditor's remedies to afford

the debtor a breathing spell in which he might regather his strength," perhaps financially knowledgeable women could salvage entrepreneurial husbands "who might yet again contribute productively to the market."⁸²

V

Women's knowledge of the work world and their application of routinizing methods in the home were expected to guarantee the future success and growth of entrepreneurship in America. If young men and women were brought up "to consider frugality contemptible and industry degrading," warned Lydia Child, it was vain to think they would at once become "prudent and useful" when "the cares of life" confronted them.⁸³ Women had to inculcate in their children, by deeds and words, the desire and expertise to "get things done."

According to recent examinations of ante-bellum American childrearing manuals and popular magazines, mothers by the 1830s had come to be defined as the primary rearers of children.⁸⁴ Fathers were presumed to be paying less attention to their children as their work took them out of the home for the major part of the day. "The pressure upon a multitude of business and professional men is really frightful," commented one observer; "combined with the necessity in many cases of going long distances to their places of duty, it produces little short



of an absolute separation from their families."⁸⁵ By the evidence of cookbooks, however, it does not appear that maternal education necessarily resulted in "sentimentalization of the home," or that mothers were encouraged to instill in their sons "a love for the quiet of domesticity," thus undermining the very pattern of values that the emerging economic order demanded.⁸⁶

Ante bellum cookbooks did comment on the educational role of mothers for the republic's future. Beginning her chapter on "The Care of Children," Mrs. Ellet wrote: "Among the many duties of a woman is called upon to fulfill, surely none can be deemed to such paramount importance as those she owes her children."⁸⁷ Women were reminded that the American home was "the theatre of the highest hopes and the proudest pretensions." Legislators, judges, presidents, and intellects were "cradled and educated there...seldom in the abundance of superfluous wealth."⁸⁸ Little wonder, then, that one cookbook author proudly proclaimed: "in no country as in this one does its future destinies so entirely depend on woman."⁸⁹

Mothers, however, did more than raise America's future political leaders. Within homes devoted to economy, practicality, order, system, efficiency, and self-denial, mothers provided a rigorous training environment for future entrepreneurial effort. From a mother's example,

it was said, "young minds...will receive and retain every impression you make,...will imitate your feelings, tastes, habits, opinions, and...will transmit what they receive from you to their children, to pass again to the next generation,...until a whole nation will have received its character and destiny."⁹⁰

One of the most enthusiastic proponents of teaching children the entrepreneurial benefits of hard work and economy was Lydia Child. "In early childhood, you lay the foundation of poverty or riches, in the habits you give your children," wrote Child in her cookbook, The Frugal Housewife. The earlier children were taught to "turn their faculties to some account," she believed, "the better for them and their parents." Child bemoaned the custom of some parents who allowed their children "to romp away their existence, till...thirteen or fourteen." Instead, "a child of six years old can be made useful; and should be taught to consider every day lost in which some little thing has not been done." As young workers, Child felt children could "knit garters, suspenders, and stockings,...make mats for the table," and they could be taken to a farm to pick "blueberries at six cents a quart." Children might not resist this early education in hard work, if parents would recommend--it was an employment."⁹¹



Cookbook authors believed there was no subject "so much connected with individual happiness and national prosperity as the education of daughters." It was critical that young women possess the skills needed to one day manage their own entrepreneurial households. Thus, cookbook authors were highly critical of fashionable women. The most ominous threat to America's future was the frivolous education that some mothers were allowed their daughters to receive in or outside of the home. "Education has given a wrong end and aim to their whole existence," cried one author; "they have been taught to look for happiness" where it could never be found, in the "absence of all occupation, or the unsatisfactory and ruinous excitement of fashionable competition."⁹² Previously, a woman knew the meaning of hard work, but now all her time was "devoted to the acquisition of showy accomplishments."⁹³ The "frivolous" and those "superficially taught," asserted Sarah Hale, "despise and neglect the ordinary duties of life."⁹⁴

To counteract this corrupting trend, women were urged to cease their roles as "Circassian parents-giving their daughters Mahomedan education-training them for the ballroom and gala nights..."⁹⁵ Young daughters should be less interested in potential husbands and marriages. As Lydia Child insisted, "the greatest and most universal error: was teaching daughters "to exaggerate the



importance of getting married; and of course to place an undue importance upon the polite attentions of gentlemen. Leave the affections to nature and truth; and all will end well."⁹⁶ Ties of affection alone were not sufficient for Mrs. Ellet, who wrote it was "not well to rush into matrimony without due attention to such sublunary matters as dollars and cents; for the notion that when once a couple is married, all will go right is a foolish one."⁹⁷

Since most young women did eventually marry, mothers were expected to educate their daughters on the benefits of domestic science. Mary Randolph, for instance, hoped "exemplary mothers" would serve as models to their daughters, so they could "use the same means for securing the happiness" of their own families that they had seen "successfully practiced."⁹⁸ But cookbook authors realized that "even a judicious mother" might not have the time to teach her daughter all the skills necessary to manage a successful and prosperous household. To fill this crucial role, cookbooks themselves were "offered as an assistant" to the education of young women.⁹⁹ Authors, like Mrs. Putnam, knew that a reliable cookbook was "one of the greatest conveniences to a young housekeeper."¹⁰⁰

Throughout the nineteenth century, then, as America experienced rapid economic growth, industrious men and women brought to their businesses and households skills and habits acquired while growing up in



entrepreneurial homes. The nineteenth century American home did not stand as a fortress to repel the attitudes and practices of an industrial, market-conscious society. Instead, the home was meant to be a microcosm of that society and serve as a training school for effective entrepreneurial adulthood. Women, as educators, were supposed to contribute significantly to the male world of competitive work.

VI

Despite the primary importance of woman's role in the entrepreneurial family, cookbook authors did not endorse that "mental ignus fatuus, 'women's rights.'"¹⁰¹ Rather cookbooks consciously steered their readers away from the women's rights movement. Mrs. Bradley noted "much talk, nowadays, about the 'rights'...of woman," but hoped women would "enter actively and energetically into domestic employments and affairs." This repudiation of women's rights did not mean cookbook authors encouraged women to engage in "ultra-housewifery." Women, who did so, according to Mrs. Ellet, exercised "a pernicious influence" on everyone around them and were as much "to be avoided as downright sluts."¹⁰²

If cookbook authors did not ask women to become either feminists or ultra-housewives, how can the ideology of this literature best be defined in the context of

ante-bellum society? There is much to suggest that cook-books aimed to help women become "modern". Women who followed the advice of cookbook authors would have been more likely to be open to new ways of doing things; to be assertive in their daily endeavors; to desert passivity and fatalism when confronted with life's obstacles; to believe in the efficacy of science and medicine; to hold high occupational and educational goals for their children; and to appreciate people who were prompt and showed an interest in planning their affairs in advance.¹⁰³

One cookbook author referred to the managerial duties of women as "not a matter of choice, but of necessity, if we would maintain the dignity of our character as rational beings."¹⁰⁴

At the center of nineteenth century American "modernizing forces," it has been argued, lay a "release of energy principle." Through subsidies as well as general incorporation laws, American government and law, both national and state, stimulated and directed private ambitions to foster the rapid growth of entrepreneurial enterprise.¹⁰⁵ But the energy of potential and actual entrepreneurs might have weakened had not they received support from wives and families. The "Lilliputian Resemblance" of the ante-bellum family to civil government was not meant as simply a duplication of the Puritans' "little commonwealth". In line with the new economic

policies of the age, nineteenth century women were expected to create a domestic environment that encouraged a high level of "achievement motivation."¹⁰⁶ Order, technique, frugality, and education were the essential ingredients of the formula for success that inspired middle-class Americans in the decades before the Civil War.

Yet it need not be assumed that there was any "automatic, or over-direct, correspondence," as one historian has cautioned in a different context, "between the dynamic of economic growth and the dynamic of social or cultural life."¹⁰⁷ The very rapidity of economic change, it has been suggested, may have meant that many men and women "lacked the time, historically, culturally, and psychologically, to be separated or alienated from settled ways of work and life and from relatively fixed beliefs."¹⁰⁸ To explain human behavior, society and culture must be examined together:

Human behavior, whether individual or collective, is invariably the resultant of two factors: the cognitive system as well as the goals and patterns of behavior as defined by culture systems, on the one hand, and the system of real contingencies as defined by the social structure on the other. A complete interpretation and apprehension of social processes can be achieved only when both systems, as well as their interaction, are taken into consideration.¹⁰⁹

Such a framework for the analysis of human behavior suggests that many nineteenth century American women

may have simultaneously performed effectively in the emerging entrepreneurial family and rejected "modernity." It may explain how a Prudence Smith could entitle her cookbook Modern American Cookery, while in her cookbook a Mrs. P. H. Mendall offered "a number of old fashioned receipts;"¹¹⁰ or, how a Mrs. Ellet could compliment women on their great power, which could be made "to move the secret springs of action and the machinery of business ..., "¹¹¹ while a Mrs. Allen exhorted her readers to emulate the "women of bygone times."¹¹²

The women whose images fill American cookbooks published between 1820 and 1860 appeared to look backwards as often as forwards. They were active participants in a new industrial society that forced them to learn new ideas and habits, by holding out the promise of success to offset the risks of failure. Their new role was possibly more acceptable to all concerned because it could be offered as an adaption of traditional family life to a new environment. In this respect, the ideology of "separate spheres" seemed inappropriate. Not only did it ignore the reality of most everyday family experience, if not the general society; but it also presented a challenge to the traditional culture of middle class Americans that emphasized a more unified pattern of economic organization. In an era of rapid change, cookbooks served as useful guides and comforting companions.

FOOTNOTES

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²See Kathryn Kish Sklar, Catharine Beecher, A Study in American Domesticity (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1973); Nancy F. Cott, The Bonds of Womanhood: "Woman's Sphere" in New England, 1780-1835 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977); Jill Conway, "Women Reformers and American Culture," Journal of Social History 5 (Winter 1971/72),: 164-177.

³Elizabeth Pleck, "Two Worlds in One: Work and Family," Journal of Social History 10 (Winter 1976): 180.

⁴Joseph Schumpeter did not believe the entrepreneurial function consisted in either "inventing anything or otherwise creating the conditions which the enterprise exploits." Instead, he argued, "it consists in getting things done." For a full discussion of Schumpeter's views on Entrepreneurship see Capitalism, Socialism, and Democracy (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1942).

⁵The cookbooks examined represent the total holdings of American cookbooks, published between 1820 and 1860, in the Michigan State University Libraries. The years 1820-1860 were chosen because it is believed many American women underwent a profound change in their status within the family and society during this period.

⁶Sarah Virginia Gray, A History of the Publications of Cookbooks in the United States, 1796-1896 (Rochester, New York: University of Rochester Press for the Association of College and Research Libraries, 1965), p. 38.

⁷*Ibid.*, p. 38.

⁸ Mrs. E. A. Howland, The New England Economical Housekeeper and Family Receipt Book (Worcester, Massachusetts: S. A. Howland, 1847), p. 9.

⁹ Mrs. J. S. Bradley, Mrs. Bradley's Housekeeper's Guide: or A New Plain and Economical Cook-book, Containing the Greatest Variety of New Valuable and Approved Receipts Ever Published in One Work. Arranged on A Modern and Scientific Basis (Cincinnati: H. M. Rulison, 1859), p. i.

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¹¹ [Catherine Esther Beecher], Miss Beecher's Domestic Receipt Book: Designed As A Supplement To Her Treatise on Domestic Economy (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1846), p. 280.

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¹³ Hannah Mary (Bouvier) Peterson, The National Cook Book (Philadelphia: Robert E. Peterson and Co., 1850), p. iv.

¹⁴ Bradley, Mrs. Bradley's Housekeeper's Guide, p. i.

¹⁵ Mrs. Mary Randolph, The Virginia Housewife, or Methodical Cook (Baltimore: Plaskitt and Cugle, 1838), p. ix.

¹⁶ Mrs. [Elizabeth Fries (Lummis)] Ellet, The Practical Housekeeper: A Cyclopedia of Domestic Economy Embracing Domestic Education. The House and Its Furniture. Duties of the Mistress. Duties of the Servant. The Store-room and Marketing. Domestic Manipulation. Care of Children, and Their Food. The Table and Attendance. The Art of Cookery. Receipts Under Forty Five Heads. Family Bills of Fare. Perfumery and the Toilet.



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²⁰Randolph, The Virginia Housewife, p. x.

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³¹The Cook's Own Book, p. ix.

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- ⁵³Hale, The Good Housekeeper, p. 119.
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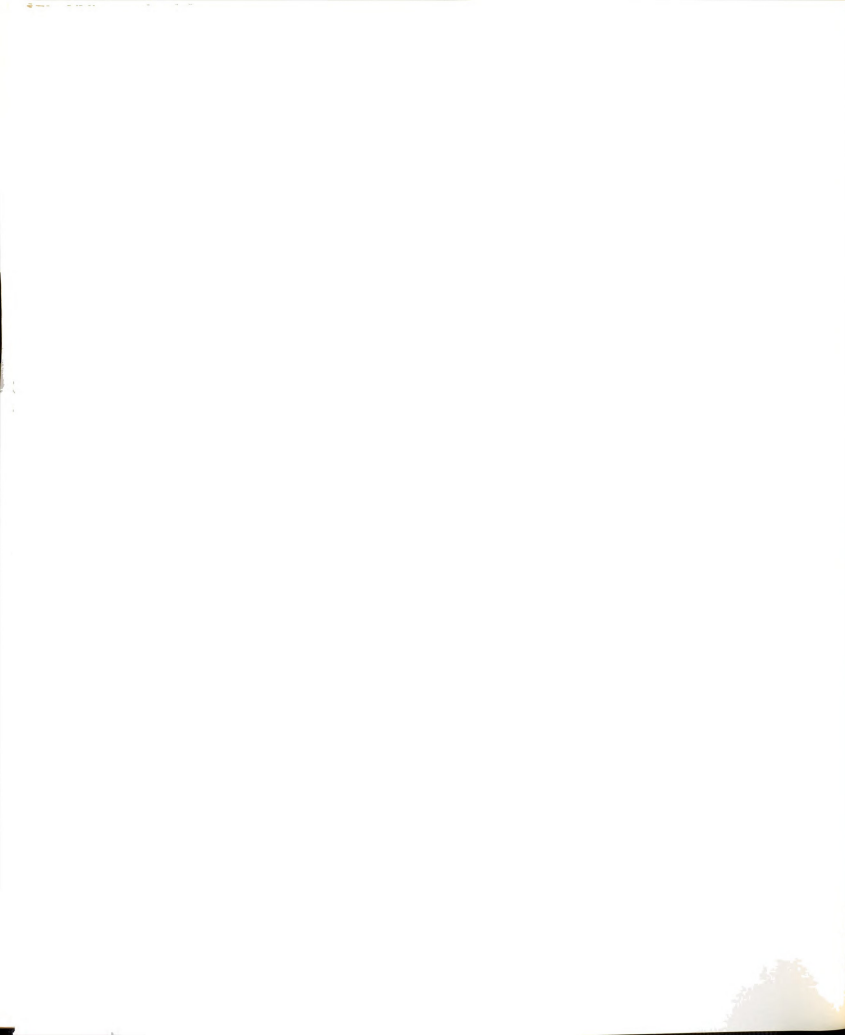
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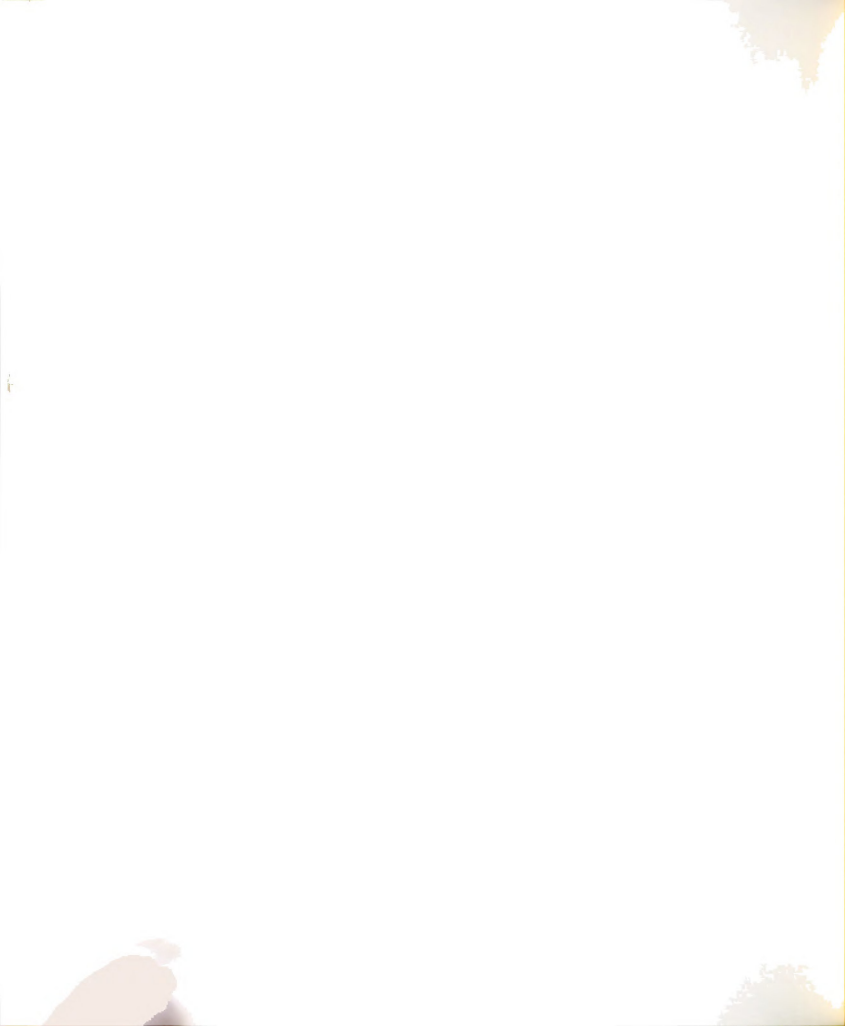
Possibly to emphasize experience to a prospective buyer *The Housekeeper's Assistant* was the product of "An Old Housekeeper".

The American Housewife: Containing the Most Valuable and Original Receipts in All the Various Branches of Cookery; and Written in A Minute and Methodical Manner. Together with A Collection of Miscellaneous Receipts, and Directions Relevant to Housewifery. New York: Dayton and Saxon, 1841.

Again, to emphasize experience in cookery, *The American Housewife* was written "By an experienced lady." The cookbook had eight editions by 1853.

The American Matron; or, Practical and Scientific Cookery. Boston and Cambridge: James Munroe and Company, 1851.

The author of *The American Matron* was "A housekeeper". Like a few others it stressed temperance and prominently displayed on its title page, "hand inexperta loquor."



[Beecher, Catherine Esther] Miss Beecher's Domestic Receipt Book: Designed As A Supplement To Her Treatise on Domestic Economy. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1846.

Published in 1846, Miss Beecher's Domestic Receipt Book went through three editions and numerous printings by 1860. It, along with Domestic Economy, was designed "for a complete course of instructions on every department of Domestic Economy" which Beecher believed should be on an "equality with the other sciences in female schools."

Bradley, Mrs. J. S. Mrs. Bradley's Housekeeper's Guide: or a New, Plain, and Economical Cook-Book, Containing the Greatest Variety of New Valuable and Approved Receipts Ever Published in One Work. Arranged on a Modern and Scientific Basis. Cincinnati: H. M. Rulison, 1852.

This cookbook was first published by H. M. Rulison in Cincinnati. However, by 1860, it also had publishers in Philadelphia and St. Louis.

Campbell, Mrs. Sylvia. The Practical Cook-Book: Containing Recipes, Directions, etc. for Plain and Fancy Cooking Being the Result of Twenty Years Experience In That Art. Albany: Munsell and Rowland, 1860.

The Practical Cook Book was also published in Cincinnati. Like Bradley's cookbook it too traveled eastward for another publisher.

[Child, Lydia Maria] The Frugal Housewife. Dedicated To Those Who Are Not Ashamed of Economy. 2nd Ed. Boston: Carter and Hendee, 1830.

The Frugal Housewife went through thirty-two editions by 1850. Child designed her book for families of moderate income. And covered many other subjects of the household besides cooking. She was also well known for her novels, verse, biographies, and her support of the abolitionist movement.

Cookery As It Should Be; A New Manual of the Dining Room and Kitchen, for Persons in Moderate Circumstances. Containing Original Receipts of Every Branch of Cookery; Domestic Beverages; Food for Invalids; Pickling, etc. etc. Together with Bills of Fare for Every Day in the Year; Rules for Carving, etc. 2nd Ed. Philadelphia: Willis P. Hazard, 1855.

Introduced in 1853, Cookery As It Should Be went through seven editions by 1860. The author was "A Practical Housekeeper, and Pupil of Mrs. Goodfellow," reputedly Philadelphia's best cook.

The Cook's Own Book; Being a Complete Culinary Encyclopedia: Comprehending All Valuable Receipts for Cooking Meat, Fish, and Fowl, and Composing Every Kind of Soup, Gravy, Pastry, Preserves, Essences, &c. That Have Been Published or Invented During the Last Twenty Years. Particularly the Very Best of Those in the Cook's Oracle. Cook's Dictionary, and Other Systems of Domestic Economy. With Numerous Original Receipts, and a Complete System of Confectionery. Boston: Munroe and Francis; New York: Charles S. Francis and David Felt; Philadelphia: Carey and Lea, and Grigg and Elliot, 1832.

"A Boston Housekeeper" wrote The Cook's Own Book. The contents were alphabetically arranged in a dictionary format.

Cornelius, Mrs. [Mary Hooker] The Young Housekeeper's Friend; or A Guide To Domestic Economy and Comfort. Boston: Tappan, Whittemore, and Mason, 1848.

One of the most popular cookbooks was The Young Housekeeper's Friend. It sold for 40 cents and was reprinted many times.

Crowen, Mrs. T. J. Every Lady's Cook Book. Toledo, Ohio: Sawyer, Brother and Company, 1854.

This popular publication sold for 25 cents and was published first in New York, and then Toledo.

Ellet, Mrs. [Elizabeth Fries (Lummis)] The Practical Housekeeper: A Cyclopedia of Domestic Economy Embracing Domestic Education. The House and Its Furniture. Duties of the Mistress. Duties of the Servant. The Store-room and Marketing. Domestic Manipulation. Care of Children, and Their Food. The Table and Attendance. The Art of Cookery. Receipts Under Forty Five Heads. Family Bills of Fare. Perfumery and the Toilet. Infusions and Cosmetics. Pommades, Vinegars, Soaps, etc. The Family Medical Guide. Miscellaneous Receipts, etc. Comprising Five Thousand Practical Receipts and Maxims. Illustrated with Five Hundred Wood Engravings. New York: Stringer and Townsend, 1857.

The Practical Housekeeper contained over five thousand "practical receipts and maxims" and was illustrated with five hundred wood engravings. Elizabeth Ellet also wrote The Women of the American Revolution.

The Good Cook; Containing Eight Hundred First Rate Receipts. Selected with Great Care and Proper Attention To Economy and Embodying All the Late Improvements In the Culinary Art. New York: Philip J. Cozens, 1853.

Another anonymous author wrote The Good Cook. The title page is signed simply: "a practical housewife."

Hale, Mrs. S. J. [Sara Josepha] The Good Housekeeper; Or the Way To Live Well and To Be Well While We Live. Containing Directions for Choosing and Preparing Food, In Regard To Health, Economy, and Taste. Boston: Weeks, Jordan and Company, 1839.

Already editor of Godey's Lady's Book, Sarah Hale published her first book, The Good Housekeeper in 1839. It represented an original compilation of "essay receipes", "sensible if not strictly scientific." It cost 50 cents and proved very popular.

Hale, Sara Josepha. The Ladies' New Book of Cookery: A Practical System for Private Families In Town and Country; with Directions for Carving and Arranging the Table for Parties, etc. Also, Preparations of Food for Invalids and for Children. 5th Ed. New York: H. Long and Brother, 1852.

Published in 1852, The Ladies' New Book of Cookery was Hale's second cookbook. The emphasis in this cookbook on economics and the key place of women in the family stemmed from Hale's own experience as a successful businesswoman.

Hale, Elizabeth M. Practical American Cookery and Domestic Economy. New York and Auburn: Miller, Orton, and Mulligan, 1856.

This comprehensive and lengthy cookbook was "compiled" by Elizabeth Hall. Its 436 pages make it the longest of all the cookbooks under study.

Howland, Mrs. E. A. [Esther Allen] The New England Economical Housekeeper, and Family Receipt Book. Worcester: S. A. Howland, 1847.

An inexpensive and very popular cookbook that was published by a number of publishers in New England and one in Ohio.

Lea, Elizabeth E. Domestic Cookery, Useful Receipts, and Hints To Young Housekeepers. 13th Ed. Baltimore: H. Colburn, 1851.

Domestic Cookery was popular before and after the Civil War. Published in 1845, a thirteenth edition appeared in 1869. On the title page was written: "The source of liberal deeds is wise economy."

Mann, Mrs. Horace [Mary Tyler (Peabody)] Christianity In The Kitchen. A Physiological Cook Book. Boston: Ticknor and Fields, 1857.

With the rise of the Temperance Movement in the 1830s and 1840s some cookbook authors wrote to promote the crusade. One of the best known crusaders was Mary Tyler Mann, the wife of educator Horace Mann.

Mendall, Mrs. P. H. The New Bedford Practical Receipt Book. New Bedford: Charles Taber and Company, 1859.

The New Bedford was a fine example of a local cookbook. The author, publisher, and title were all linked to New Bedford.

[A. M. Collins] Mrs. Collins' Table Receipts; Adapted To Western Housewifery. New Albany, Indiana: Jno. R. Nunemacher, 1851.

As the title suggested this cookbook was for those in the west. Besides introducing food recipes, Mrs. Collins had this passage from As You Like It on the title page: "If I bring thee not something to eat, I'll give thee to die."

The National Cookbook, 4th Ed. Philadelphia: Robert E. Peterson, 1853.

A "lady of Philadelphia: a practical housewife" was the anonymous author of The National Cookbook. Graham's Magazine pronounced her "a lady in whose judgement we have the most unbounded confidence" and believed the book singularly "worthy of a housekeeper's perusal". Obviously, others did too and this cookbook went through eight editions by 1857.

Putnam, Mrs. [Elizabeth H.] Mrs. Putnam's Receipt Book; and Young Housekeeper's Assistant. Boston: Ticknor, Reed, and Fields, 1849.

This popular cookbook appeared in a "new and enlarged edition" in 1860.

Randolph, Mrs. Mary. The Virginia Housewife, Or Methodical Cook. Baltimore: Plaskitt and Cugle, 1838.

The Virginia Housewife superceded New American Cookery (1796) as America's most popular cookbook. The wife of a Virginia planter Mary Randolph emphasized the importance of executive abilities in managing a large household. Although only four editions were published at least thirteen reprints of the final edition appeared by 1858.

[P. O. Roger] The Roger Cookery. Being A Collection of Receipts, Designed For the Use of Private Families. Boston: Joseph Dowe, 1838.

Although not a large selling cookbook, The Roger Cookery typified the thrust of many cookbooks when it implored on its title page: "What we spend rationally, we enjoy."

Rundell, Mrs. [Maria Eliza) Ketelby)] A New System of Domestic Cookery: Founded Upon Principles of Economy and Adapted To the Use of Private Families. Philadelphia: Carey and Hart, 1844.

The final edition of this cookbook in 1844 was augmented and improved by the addition of more than nine hundred new receipts."

Sanderson, J. M. The Complete Cook. Plain and Practical Directions for Cooking and Housekeeping; With Upwards of Seven Hundred Receipts: Consisting of Directions for the Choice of Meat and Poultry; Preparations for Cooking, Making of Broths and Soups; Boiling, Roasting, Baking, and Frying, of Meats, Fish, &c. Seasonings, Colourings, Cooking Vegetables; Preparing Salads, Clarifying; Making of Pastry, Puddings, Gruels, Gravies, Garnishes, &c. and, With General Directions for Making Wines. Philadelphia: Lea and Blanchard, 1843.

The Complete Cook cost "twenty-five cents" and was "sold by all booksellers and news agents."

Smith, Miss Prudence. Modern American Cookery: Containing Directions For Making Soups, Roasting, Boiling, Baking, Dressing Vegetables, Poultry, Fish, Made Dishes, Pies, Gravies, Pickles, Puddings, Pastry, Sick Cookery, etc. With A List of Medical

Recipes and A Valuable Miscellany. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1835.

Although published by J. and J. Harper in New York, Modern American Cookery was also "sold by all the principal booksellers throughout the United States."

Widdifield, Hannah. Widdifield's New Cook Book: Or, Practical Receipts For the Housewife. Comprising All the Popular and Approved Methods For Cooking and Preparing All Kinds of Poultry, Omelets, Jellies, Meats, Soups, Pies, Vegetables, Terrapins, Pastries, Pickles, Syrups, Rolls, Preserves, Puddings, Desserts, Sauces, Cakes, Fish, etc. Philadelphia: T. B. Peterson, 1856.

Hailed as "the most valuable cookbook ever published," Widdifield's New Cookbook sold for one dollar in 1856. Its author was "celebrated for many years for the superiority of every article she made, in South Ninth Street, above Spruce, Philadelphia."

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