To (not) Promote Breeding: Censoring Eliza Smith's
Compleat Housewife (1727)

Patrick Spedding

The Compleat Housewife (1727), by Eliza Smith, was very popular, appearing in twenty editions in London in the course of fifty years. It was also reprinted in Williamsburg, Virginia in 1742 and has been reprinted in facsimile in 1968, 1983 and 1994. The title-page of the first edition is—as was usually the case in the early eighteenth century—a comprehensive overview of the contents, but may be reduced to the following:

The Compleat Housewife; Or, Accomplished Gentlewoman's Companion: Being a Collection of Upwards of Five Hundred of the most Approved Receipts in Cookery ... To which is Added, a Collection of near Two Hundred Family Receipts of Medicines ... By E—S—(London, J. Pemberton, 1727).

"E—S—" became "E. Smith" with the fifth edition in 1732. The "Five Hundred of the most Approved Receipts" became "Six Hundred ..." with the eighth edition in 1737, and "Seven Hundred ..." with the seventeenth edition ca. 1765. Likewise, the "near Two Hundred Family Receipts" of the first edition became "above Two Hundred ..." with the third edition in 1729, and "above Three Hundred ..." with the eighth edition in 1737.

In the eighteenth edition in 1773 the "Medicines and Salves [were] reduced to alphabetical order, as nearly as the Nature of the Subject would admit." In the

1 ESTC lists the following London editions: first edition (1727) [ESTC: n068071]; second edition (1728) [ESTC: t122321]; third edition (1729) [ESTC: t031010]; fourth edition (1730) [ESTC: t167156]; fifth edition (1732) [ESTC: n016070]; sixth edition (1734) [ESTC: t092197]; seventh edition (1736) [ESTC: t139021]; eighth edition (1737) [ESTC: n028214]; ninth edition (1739) [ESTC: n016071]; tenth edition (1741) [ESTC: t092196]; eleventh edition (1742) [ESTC: t139023]; twelfth edition (1744) [ESTC: t151059]; thirteenth edition (1746) [ESTC: n055050]; another thirteenth edition, a reissue (1747) [ESTC: t139259]; fourteenth edition (1750) [ESTC: t139022]; fifteenth edition (1753) [ESTC: t031011]; sixteenth edition (1758) [ESTC: t169541]; seventeenth edition ([1765]) [ESTC: n044637]; another seventeenth edition (1766) [ESTC: t129366]; eighteenth edition (1773) [ESTC: t141373].

2 The Williamsburg edition was "Collected from the fifth edition" [ESTC: w011903]; the 1968 facsimile, published by Literary Services and Production, and reissued in paperback in 1973, is of "the fifteenth and eighteenth editions" (1753 and 1773; the publisher does not provide more exact details); the 1983 facsimile published by Arlon House, and the 1994 facsimile by Studio Editions, are of the sixteenth edition (1758). The Studio Editions facsimile is a reprint of the Arlon House facsimile, with only very slight changes to the preliminaries (see below).


course of being so "reduced," the following recipe disappeared:

To promote Breeding.

Let the Party take of the Syrup of stinking Orrice, a Spoonful night and morning, for a week or more; then as follows. Take 3 pints of good Ale, boil in it the Piths of 3 Ox Backs, half a handful of Clary, a handful of Nep (or Cat Bos) a quarter of a pound of Dates stoned, sliced, and the Pith taken out; a handful of Raisins of the Sun stoned, 3 whole Nutmegs prick'd full of holes. Boil all these till half be wasted; strain it out, and drink a small Wine-glass full at your going to Bed. As long as it lasts, accompanying not your Husband. During the taking, or some time before, be very cheerful, and let nothing disquiet you.

Take Shepherd's-Purse, a good handful, and boil it in a pint of Milk, till half be consumed; and drink it off.

By a curious coincidence—although probably for different reasons—the same recipe was omitted from the facsimile of the sixteenth edition which was published by Arlon House in 1983 and reprinted by Studio Editions in 1994.

What is remarkable about the Arlon House facsimile is the way in which the publisher has omitted the recipe "To promote Breeding." In the sixteenth edition of The Compleat Housewife (1758), which they reproduce, the recipe falls on leaf T5r.

\[\text{In fact, in the eighteenth edition, I could locate only five of the eight recipes discussed below, suggesting that quite a few recipes were removed. See Smith, The Compleat Housewife, 18th ed., 319–20 ("A Receipt for a Consumptive Cough"), 320 ("An Electuary for a Cough" and "Excellent Lozenges for a Cough"), 323 ("A Medicine for the Cholick") and 330 ("To Make the Eye Salve").}\]

\[\text{This is the text as it appears in the second edition, the earliest available to me. Smith, The Compleat Housewife, 2nd ed. (London: J. Pemberton, 1728), 246–47.}\]

\[\text{"Stinking Iris" (\textit{Iris foetidissima}). "Orrice" appears as "Orace" in the fourth to seventh editions (1730–36) and "Orach" in the fifteenth to seventeenth (1753–66). The return to the original spelling in the eighth edition suggests that this edition was set from one of the first three editions.}\]

\[\text{"Common Catnip" (\textit{Nepeta cataria}) or "Catmint" (\textit{Nepeta mussinii}). From the fourteenth edition (1750) "Cat Bos" appears as "cat-mint."}\]

\[\text{In the ninth edition (1739), the sentence "As long as it lasts, accompanying not your Husband" is joined to the following sentence with a semi-colon. In the fourteenth edition (1750), the semi-colon is dropped so that it reads: "as long as it lasts, accompanying not your husband during the taking, or some time before, be very cheerful and let nothing disquiet you."}\]

\[\text{"Shepherd's purse" (\textit{Capsella bursa-pastoris}).}\]

The Complan Hayneft.

A specific Cure for Stomach-Blind.

TAKE one ounce of clarified rock-oil, fine
ly ground, and mix it in a bottle, adding to it
half an ounce of diggers' briar in powder, and
give them well together; then take it off the
fire, boil it, add a little water, stir it up, and
serve it up in a glass; then, after taking
three or four glasses, take a dose of the
bile and water, to the extent of a little
powder; and if it is not cured, repeat the
same a week, till you find relief.

For a Pain in the Stomach.

TAKE a quarter of a pound of live-current
powder, and perco to a little water, and take
drinking it with a glass of wine; and if the
pains do not ease, take a large dose of an
hour; and if it is not cured, mix the powder
with a glass of wine, and mix it up with a
little water; and if after taking six glasses
the pain is not cured, repeat the same.

For a Stitch in the Side.

TAKE wine, punch and stuff it, and with
some pine is nice an edible, and lie up
what is the day or night.

To cure an internizing Ague and
Fever, without returning.

TAKE eight parts of the powder of cinch,
the herb and root, and make it up into
a laudable dose, and mix it up with a
little honey to a little water, and take it up
afternoon, or you may take it as a dose of one.
The Compleat Housewife

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A. D. Y. T. N. Y. D. M.
A Medicine for the Child.

Take of the best honey, and fill full of this mixture, of such an ounce and half, of the double severes boiled in water dried as before in the water-dish or basin, and set it in the sun; and afterwards, every third day, a small spoonful of the said mixture, for about three times a week, till you find relief.

A Receipt for a Confirmation Cough.

Take of the leaves of sage and red poppy, of each three ounces, of honey, olibanum, and stevia, with six ounces of each, and six ounces of each, to the ounce of each, to the powder, and some drops of treacle, and add them to a quart of water, and boil it, according to your taste. To make the Eye Suppos.

Take of each three ounces, of honey, olibanum, and stevia, and some drops of treacle, and add them to a quart of water, and boil it, according to your taste.

An excellent Medicine for a Pain in the Stomach.

Take of sugar, as much as you can, and eat it up in the morning, without having first been up and dressed. And at night, take a cup of warm water, and eat it up in the evening. And thus do every day, for three days, and then you will be cured.

For a Sore in the Tongue.

Take white sugar, and fill full of this mixture, of such an ounce and half, and add it to the water-dish or basin, and set it in the sun; and afterwards, every third day, a small spoonful of the said mixture, for about three times a week, till you find relief.

To cure an intermitting Ague and Fever, without returning.

Take of each three ounces, of honey, olibanum, and stevia, and add some drops of treacle, and add them to a quart of water, and boil it, according to your taste.
(page 281). In order to remove this recipe, the publishers excised leaf T5 (281–82) from their facsimile altogether; they then removed the beginning of the incomplete recipe that starts on T4v (280; "An Electuary for a Cough") and the one that ends on T6r (283; "To Make the Eye Salve"). By spreading out the remaining recipes on these pages (280 and 283) the publishers hoped, no doubt, that nobody would notice the omission of eight recipes while leafing through the book. (See Figures 1–3.)

Not content with the cutting-and-pasting of photographs (or bromides) necessary to remove one leaf and add a little blank space between the recipes on T4v and T6r, the publisher renumbered every single page after 280, using the same method. They clipped "281" from their photograph of that page, and pasted it over "283," "282" over "284," and continued on in this fashion until they pasted "394" over "396." The publishers then attacked the index, removing every reference to the (now) missing recipes and changed all the page numbers between 281 and 396. Where the offending recipe had a line to itself in the index, the line is removed and appears as a blank in the facsimile; where the recipe appears among others, gathered together under a title, the page reference is simply cut out, leaving a gap in the series of numbers. (See Figures 4–5.)

The labour involved in doing this boggles the mind and prompts the question: "Why?" The answer is suggested by both the "Publisher's Note" and the unsigned "Foreword." The first of these shouts: "REMEDIES AND CURES INCLUDED SHOULD NOT BE USED AS THEY COULD BE DANGEROUS AND A THREAT TO HEALTH," while the second states, more calmly, "Many of the cures and remedies which follow the recipe section of this book are, to put it mildly, rather unsavoury and are best not tried." A similar, but longer, and more comprehensive, warning appeared in the 1968 facsimile:

The Publishers, Compilers and Editor of this book wish to emphasize that they give no warranty or undertaking expressly or by implication that any of the recipes, foodstuffs, ingredients, methods of preparation, medical or herbal remedies or any matter herein detailed are safe to use or suitable for modern use ... Any person who

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11 The publishers also removed the catchword from the foot of page 280 ("Excellent"), but did not replace it. Consequently, it lacks the "Are" that should appear here. For comparison, see ibid., "289"-"290" (=291-92).

12 The Arlon House facsimile is printed on a semi-transparent paper, making it difficult to reproduce without considerable show-through. Since the Studio Editions facsimile is identical to that by Arlon House (indeed, it must have been printed from the same plates or bromides), but printed on an opaque paper, Figures 3 and 5 have reproduced from the Studio Editions facsimile.

13 The publishers did not, however, change the signatures.

14 Smith, The Compleat Housewife, 16th ed. (1758; facs. repr. 1983), [4]. This wording is reproduced exactly in the Studio Editions facsimile, though the warning has been moved (from the verso of the "Acknowledgement" page in 1983 to the foot of the "Contents" page in 1994). See Smith, The Compleat Housewife, 16th ed. (1758; facs. repr. 1994), [3].

should make any use of any of the recipes or other matters detailed in his book must do so entirely at his own risk. In particular the medical and herbal remedies given in his book are of a purely historical interest, may include poisonous ingredients, and could be dangerous to health and life. The Publishers, Compilers and Editor accept no responsibility for any complaint of whatever nature arising out of any such usage.

It is clear from these disclaimers that the publishers were concerned that bookbuyers would either make "Another Sort of Orange Pudding" (containing sixteen eggs, a pound of butter, and other things likely to stop one's heart in an instant)\textsuperscript{16} or try "A new Method for curing the Venereal Disease" (with results too terrible to contemplate).\textsuperscript{17} Nevertheless, the publishers of the Arlon House facsimile were prepared to let these recipes stand, with only a three-line warning ringing in the ears of the reader. The recipes too dangerous to print, so hazardous, in fact, as to warrant the renumbering of roughly one quarter of the book, a similar proportion of entries in the Index, etc, are the following eight: "An Electuary for a Cough," "Excellent Lozenges for a Cough," "To promote Breeding," "For a Burn or Scald," "Children's Necklaces for the Teeth," "A Medicine for the Cholick," "A Receipt for a Consumption Cough," and "To Make the Eye Salve."

It has to be admitted that I do not know which of these eight is the offending recipe, though I suspect it is "To promote Breeding," because it is the longest and, perhaps, the one most likely to be tried by a modern reader (or, most likely to seem—to the publisher—to be attractive to a modern reader). Although slivers of henbane dipped in red wine for teething babies ("Children's Necklaces for the Teeth") and syrup of poppies and liquid laudanum for a cough ("A Receipt for a Consumption Cough") don't seem terribly safe, there are even more alarming recipes elsewhere in the Arlon House facsimile. It should also be clear by looking at the pages concerned (see Figures 1 and 2) that both recipes would be easy to remove, using the cut-and-paste methods the publisher was clearly ready to adopt.

Whatever the reasons were for Arlon House to censor their facsimile, the fact that they did so, and that they did so without notice, shows that—useful as they are—facsimiles cannot be trusted as a substitute for original editions. In the course of editing facsimile texts for Pickering & Chatto I became aware of the myriad ways in which facsimiles are prone to depart from the originals they seemingly reproduce.\textsuperscript{18} Alexander Pettit and I had to fight to have the original page numbering and running titles retained in *Eighteenth-Century British Erotica II* (2004). We were less successful


\textsuperscript{17} Ibid., "323"—"324" [=325–326].

\textsuperscript{18} For a recent discussion on the many ways in which microfilms are prone to depart from their originals, see Diana Kichuk, "Metamorphosis, Remediation in Early English Books Online (EEBO)," *Literary and Linguistic Computing* 22:3 (2007), 293–94, 297, 299.
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Bread and Butter Pudding.
in arguing for the retention of contemporary annotations. Plates were resized and re-oriented, and printed on any available blank page, usually the verso of the title-leaf.

It was no surprise to me, therefore, to find that in the Arlon House facsimile the frontispiece is printed on the verso of the title-leaf and in the Studio Editions reprint of this facsimile, the four folding “Copper Plates, curiously engraved, for the regular disposition or Placing of the various Dishes and Courses”—mentioned on the original title-page—are reduced, rotated, and printed one-per-page on the final two leaves. (In the Arlon House and Literary Services facsimiles, by contrast, the folding plates are faithfully reproduced as folding plates, and tipped in the volume). What is unparalleled, I believe, is the extensive falsification carried out by Arlon House, but such deviousness—by its very nature—tends to thwart identification.

Monash University, Melbourne

19 Neither Petitt nor I were aware that Pickering & Chatto regularly removed annotations until it was too late either for us to argue for their retention or for Pickering & Chatto to reinstate them. One consequence of this is that the headnote by me discussing the dating of The Machine: Or, Love's Preservative ([1744]) appears in Eighteenth-Century British Erotica I (2002), even though the inscription that it discusses has been removed. The Geography and Natural History of Mid-Eighteenth Century Erotica, Eighteenth-Century British Erotica I, vol. 3 (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2002), 301: “It will be seen, however, that the dated inscription on the title page has been trimmed and is difficult to read” (difficult indeed!).

20 The fifteenth edition, which the 1968 facsimile reproduces, had two more folding plates than the sixteenth edition, the one reproduced in the Arlon House and Studio Editions facsimiles.