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.1 It was also reprinted in Williamsburg, Virginia in 1742 and has been reprinted in facsimile in 1968, 1983 and 1994.2 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."3 In the

1 ESTC lists the following London editions: first edition (1727) [ESTC: t068071]; second edition (1728) [ESTC: t12321]; third edition (1729) [ESTC: t031010]; fourth edition (1730) [ESTC: t167156]; fifth edition (1732) [ESTC: n16070]; sixth edition (1734) [ESTC: t092197]; seventh edition (1736) [ESTC: t139021]; eighth edition (1737) [ESTC: n028214]; ninth edition (1739) [ESTC: t016071]; tenth edition (1741) [ESTC: t092196]; eleventh edition (1742) [ESTC: t139023]; twelfth edition (1744) [ESTC: t151059]; thirteenth edition (1746) [ESTC: t055050]; another thirteenth edition, a reissue (1747) [ESTC: t139259]; fourteenth edition (1750) [ESTC: t139022]; fifteenth edition (1753) [ESTC: t031011]; sixteenth edition (1758) [ESTC: t469541]; seventeenth edition ([1765]) [ESTC: t0414637]; 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: 4

**To promote Breeding.** 5

Let the Party take of the Syrup of stinking Orrice, 6 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) 7 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. 8 During the taking, or some time before, be very cheerful, and let nothing disquiet you.

Take Shepherd’s-Purse, 9 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. 10

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

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4 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 350 (“To Make the Eye Salve”).

5 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.

6 “Stinking Iris” (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.

7 “Common Catnip” (Nepeta cataria) or “Catmimi” (Nepeta mussinii). From the fourteenth edition (1750) “Cat Bos” appears as “cat-mint.”

8 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.”

9 “Shepherd’s purse” (Capsella bursa-pastoris).

A specific Cure for stopping Blood.

TAKE two ounces of dried rhubarb, finely powdered, and melt it in a tumbler, adding to it half an ounce of damson or blood in powder, and mix them well together; then take it off the fire, keeping it simmering till it comes to the consistence of a thick paste. For making up into pills; make your pills of the biggest of a large pea, and the paste cool, warm it again so that a degree or the whole quantity may be made into pills; this medicine is proper in all cases of violent bleedings, without exception; the ordinary or usual dose is half a grain, to be taken once in four hours till the bleeding stops, taking a glass of water or punch after it, and after every dose, and another of the same square a quarter of an hour after; in violent cases give half a dram for a shot.

To make Stoughton’s Elixir.

PAKE off the rind of six lemons very thin, and put them in a quart bottle, with an ounce of guinea-gold, dried and flour, and six pennyworth of anchovies; put in a pint of the best brandy; shake it together two or three times the first day, and then let it stand two or three days, and bottle it off into bottles for use; take a large tea spoonful in a glass of wine in the morning, and at noon in the afternoon, or you may take it in a glass of tea.

The Compleat Housewife.

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An excellent Medicine for a Pain in the Stomach.

TAKE of rhubarb four ounces of the root, and mix it with a sufficient quantity of water, and boil it gently for an hour, strain it through a double cloth, add a little sugar, and mix it with a little brandy. Take a glassful of this every two or three hours, and you will find great relief.

For a Pain in the Stomach.

TAKE a quarter of a pound of cardamoms, and put them in a mortar, with an ounce of aniseed bruised; before you put them to the mortar, make them into a hole with a little sugar of cloves, and you will find great relief. Take two glasses of this every hour, and you will find great relief.

For a Stitch in the Side.

TAKE ginger, powdered, and half a pint of water, and mix it with a little of the best brandy. Take a glassful of this every two or three hours, and you will find great relief.

To cure an intermitting Ague and Fever, without returning.

TAKE jujubes bark in fine powder, one ounce; cloth of steel and Jamaica pepper, of each a quarter of an ounce; teat custard or mastix, four ounces; mix them together, and take the quantity of a nutmeg three times a day when the fit is off, and a draught of warm ale, or white wine after it.
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Excellent Lotions for a Cough.

TAKE a pound of brown sugar-candy, and as much loat-sugar, beat and force them thro' a fine sieve; take two ounces of the juice of lemon, and dilute it in three or four (spoonfuls of) hydrom-water over a gentle fire; then mix your sugar and sugar-candy with one drachm of oxalate-powder; one drachm of the powder of cernissins, of gum-dragant powdered half a drachm; add one drachm of the oil of aniseeds, and one grain of salt; mix all these together, and work it into a paste, and roll it into lozenges the size of a barley-corn, or something larger.

To promote Breeding.

LET the party take of the syrup of flaming orach, a spoonful, night and morning, for a week or more; then as follows: take three pints of good ale, boil it in the pits of three or backs, half a handful of clary, a handful of neps (or cat-mint), a quarter of a pound of dates floured, dressed, and the pits taken out, a handful of raisins of the finer floured, three whole nutmegs prick'd full of holes, boil all these till half be watered; strain it out, and drink a small wine glass full at your going to bed, as long as it lasts, accompanied with your husband during the taking, or some time before, be very cheerful and let nothing disquiet you. Take fleur-de-lis in a good handful, and boil it in a pint of milk till half be consumed, and drink it off.

For a Burn or Scald.

TAKE laurel-leaves, chop them in hogs-grade; strain it, and keep it for use.

Children Neckties for the Teeth.

TAKE roots of henbane, of orpine and vervain; scrape them clean with a sharp knife, cut them in long beads, and tying them green, full henbane, then orpine, then vervain, and so on till it is the beg-
A Medicine for the Colick.

TAKE of the best manna, and oil of sweet almonds, of each an ounce and half, of camomile-flowers boiled in punch-drink an handful; let the poultice-drink be strained from the flowers, and mingled very well with the oil of almonds and manna; let the patient take it three days successively, and afterwards every third day for a fortnight. This not only gives relief in the most violent fits, but also, being often used, prevents their returning.

A Receipt for a Consumptive Cough.

TAKE of the syrup of white and red poppies, of each three ounces, of barley, cinnamon-water, and red poppy-water, of each two ounces, of tincture of saffron one ounce, liquid laudanum forty drops, and as much spirit of sulphur, as will make it acid; take three or four spoonsfuls of it every night going to bed, increaseth or diminisheth the dote, according as you find it agrees with you.

To make the Eye Soothe.

TAKE of fresh butter out of the churn, unsalted, and unwashed, two pounds; let it in a glass jar in the sun to clarify three months, then pour very clear off about a quart of a pound, and put to it in an ounce of vitamin water, when it is melted, put it into white rose-water to cool, and beat it in the water half an hour; then take it out from the water, and mix it with half an ounce of nutty finely powdered, and two spoons of stafleite beaten and bruised as well as possible; mix all well together, and put it in pots for use; take a very little in your fingers, when in bed, that your eyes, and rub it over the lid and corner of your eye.

An excellent Medicine for a Pain in the Stomach.

TAKE of pellagra faint (or instillation of hyssop) one ounce in the morning, falling an hour, then drink a little warm ale, do this two or three times a week, till you find relief.

For a Pain in the Stomach.

TAKE a square of a pound of blue currants, wash them clean, and pound them in a mortar, with an ounce of annelid bruised before you put them to the currants, make this into a bols of with a little syrup of clove-stilling flower, take every morning the quantity of a walnut, and drink rosemary-tea, instead of other tea, for your breakfast; if the pain returns, repeat it.

For a Stitch in the Side.

TAKE rosin, pound and mix it, and with treacle mix it into an elixir, and lick it up often in the day or night.

To cure an Intermittent Ache and Fever, without returning.

TAKE juttae bark, in fine powder one ounce, salt of iron and jamaica pepper, of each a quarter of an ounce; treacle or molasses, four ounces; mix these together, and take the quantity of a medicine, three times a day when the fit is off, and a draught of warm ale, or white wine after it.

Dr.
(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").11 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.)12

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.13 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,"14 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."15 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

11 The publishers also removed the catchword from the foot of page 280 ("Excellent"), but did not replace it. Consequently, it lacks the "An" 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)\(^{16}\) or try “A new Method for curing the Venereal Disease” (with results too terrible to contemplate).\(^ {17}\) 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 numbering of roughly one quarter of the book, a similar proportion of entries in the Index, etc., are the following eight: “An Ectuary 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 Consumptive 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 Consumptive 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.\(^{18}\) 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


\(^{17}\) Ibid., “323”–“324” [=325–326].

\(^{18}\) 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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Caudle
in arguing for the retention of contemporary annotations.\textsuperscript{19} 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\textsuperscript{20} 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.

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\textsuperscript{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 \textit{The Machine: Or, Love's Preservative} ([1744]) appears in \textit{Eighteenth-Century British Erotica I} (2002), even though the inscription that it discusses has been removed. \textit{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!).

\textsuperscript{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.