

= A New System of Domestic Cookery =

A New System of Domestic Cookery , first published in 1806 by Maria Eliza Rundell (1745 ? 16 December 1828) , was the most popular English cookbook of the first half of the nineteenth century ; it is often referred to simply as " Mrs Rundell " , but its full title is A New System of Domestic Cookery : Formed Upon Principles of Economy ; and Adapted to the Use of Private Families .

Mrs Rundell has been called " the original domestic goddess " and her book " a publishing sensation " and " the most famous cookery book of its time " . It ran to over 67 editions ; the 1865 edition had grown to 644 pages , and earned two thousand guineas .

= = Book = =

The first edition of 1806 was a short collection of Mrs Rundell 's recipes published by John Murray . It went through dozens of editions , both legitimate and pirated , in both Britain and the United States , where the first edition was published in 1807 . The frontispiece typically credited the authorship to " A Lady " . Later editions continued for some forty years after Mrs Rundell 's death . The author Emma Roberts (c . 1794 ? 1840) edited the 64th edition , adding some recipes of her own .

Sales of A New System of Domestic Cookery helped to found the John Murray publishing empire . Sales in Britain were over 245 @, @ 000 ; worldwide , over 500 @, @ 000 ; the book stayed in print until the 1880s . When Rundell and Murray fell out , she approached a rival publisher , Longman 's , leading to a legal battle .

= = = Contents = = =

The 1865 edition is divided into 35 chapters over 644 pages . It begins with a 2 @-@ page preface . The table of contents lists each recipe under its chapter heading . There is a set of tables of weights , measures , wages and taxes before the main text . There is a full index at the end .

= = = Approach = = =

In contrast to the relative disorder of English eighteenth century cookery books such as Eliza Smith 's The Compleat Housewife (1727) or Elizabeth Raffald 's The Experienced English Housekeeper (1769) , Mrs Rundell 's text is strictly ordered and neatly subdivided . Where those books consist almost wholly of recipes , Mrs Rundell begins by explaining techniques of economy (" A minute account of the annual income and the times of payment should be kept in writing ") , how to carve , how to stew , how to season , to " Look clean , be careful and nice in work , so that those who have to eat might look on " , how to choose and use steam @-@ kettles and the bain @-@ marie , the meanings of foreign terms like pot @-@ au @-@ feu (" truly the foundation of all good cookery ") , all the joints of meat , the " basis of all well @-@ made soups " , so it is page 65 before actual recipes begin .

The recipes are written as direct instructions . Quantities , if given , are incorporated in the text . For example , " Gravy to make Mutton eat like Venison " runs :

Pick a very stale woodcock , or snipe , cut it to pieces (but first take out the bag from the entrails) , and simmer with as much unseasoned meat gravy as you will want . Strain it , and serve in the dish .

Basic skills like making pastry are explained separately , and then not mentioned in recipes . Under " Pastry " , Mrs Rundell gives directions for " Rich Puff Paste " , " A less rich Paste " , and " Crust for Venison Pasty " , with variations such as " Raised Crusts for Custards or Fruit " . A recipe for " Shrimp Pie , excellent " then proceeds with the bare minimum indication of quantities and a passing mention of " the paste " :

Pick a quart of shrimps ; if they are very salt , season them with only mace and a clove or two . Mince two or three anchovies ; mix these with the spice , and then season the shrimps . Put some

butter at the bottom of the dish , and over the shrimps , with a glass of sharp white wine . The paste must be light and thin . They do not take long baking .

Advice is given on choosing the best supplies in the market . For instance :

Fowls . ? If a cock is young , his spurs will be short ; but take care to see they have not been cut or pared , which is a trick often practised . If fresh , the vent will be close and dark .

= = Reception = =

= = = Contemporary = = =

The Monthly Review wrote in 1827 that A New System of Domestic Cookery is almost too well known to require notice [i.e. a review] . Its chief object is , to teach economy in the management of the table ; and this , we think , it accomplishes . We cannot speak in praise of its receipts for the higher kinds of cookery , but we dare say that they will be very much admired by precisely that class of gastronomes whose judgement is worth nothing . "

The review concluded that " though we have no respect for Mrs. Rundell 's salmis , we cordially admire her practical good sense , and applaud her for the production of a useful book " which had been " the pattern of all that have since been published . "

By 1841 the Quarterly Literary Advertiser was able to give as the " Opinions of the Press " , on the 64th edition , paragraphs of favourable reviews from the Worcestershire Guardian (" the standard work of reference in every private family in English society ") , the Hull Advertiser (" most valuable advice upon all household matters ") , the Derby Reporter (" a complete guide ... suited to the present advanced state of the art ") , Keane 's Bath Journal (" it leaves no room to any rival ") , the Durham Advertiser (" No housekeeper ought to be without this book ") , the Brighton Gazette (" if further proof be wanting , it may be found in the fact that Mrs. Rundell received from her publisher , Mr. Murray , no less a sum than Two Thousand Guineas for her labour ! ! ") , the Aylesbury News (" the peculiarity of the present work is its scientific preface , and an attention to economy as well as taste in giving its directions ") , the Bristol Mirror (" far surpasses all its predecessors , and continues to be the best treatise extant concerning the art ") , the Midland Counties Herald (" ought to be in the hands of every lady who does not consider it vulgar to look after the affairs of her own household ") , the Inverness Herald (" enriched with the latest improvements in gastronomic science ") and The Scotsman , which ventured

The sixty @-@ fourth edition ! So much for Mrs. Rundell 's portion of the work . Of that portion , after this , we need say nothing Of the additions made by her successor [Emma Roberts] , ... she appears to have brought a large amount of experience in the art of cookery to the task , and her name alone is a sufficient guarantee for the utility and excellence of her new receipts .

In 1844 , the Foreign Quarterly Review commented on the 67th edition that it is exclusively a middle class book , and intended for the rich bourgeoisie . The compiler , Mrs. Rundell , had spent the early part of her life in India , and the last edition of the work is enriched with many receipts of Indian cookery . It is on the whole a succinct and judicious compilation ... For many years , if report speaks truly , it has produced 1000 £ . a year to the publisher " .

= = = Modern = = =

Severin Carrell , writing in The Guardian , calls Mrs Rundell " the original domestic goddess " and her book " a publishing sensation " of the early nineteenth century , as it sold " half a million copies and conquered America " , as well as helping to found the John Murray publishing empire . For all that , Carrell notes , both " the most famous cookery book of its time " and Rundell herself vanished into obscurity .

Elizabeth Grice , writing in The Telegraph , similarly calls Mrs Rundell " a Victorian domestic goddess " , though without " Nigella 's sexual frisson , or Delia 's uncomplicated kitchen manners " . Grice points out that " at 61 , she was too old to act the pouting goddess " to sell her book , but " sell

it did , in vast numbers , as a lifeline to cash @-@ strapped middle @-@ class English households that were desperate to keep up appearances but were having trouble with the staff . " She says that compared to Eliza Acton " who could write better " (as in her 1845 book , Modern Cookery for Private Families) , and the " ubiquitous " Mrs Beeton , Mrs Rundell " has unfairly slipped from view "

Alan Davidson , in the Oxford Companion to Food writes that " It did not include many novel features , although it did have one of the first English recipes for tomato sauce . "

= = Editions = =

There have been over 67 editions , success leading to constant revision and extension : the first edition had 344 pages , while the 1865 edition runs to 644 pages including the index . Some landmarks in the book 's publication history are :

" By a Lady . " 1st edition . London : John Murray , 1806 .

(no title page) Boston : W. Andrews , 1807 .

" By a Lady . " Philadelphia : Benjamin C. Buzby , 1807 .

" By a Lady . " " Second edition " . Boston : Andrews & Cummings , and L. Blake , 1807 .

" By a Lady . " New edition , 1808 . " Price Seven Shillings and Sixpence . "

" By a Lady . " New @-@ York : R. McDermut & D. B. Arden , 1814 .

" By a Lady . " 1816 edition , reprinted by Persephone Books , 2008 .

" By a Lady . " New edition , 1824 .

" By a Lady . " London : Thomas Allman , 1840 .

" By a Lady . " 66th edition , John Murray , 1842 .

" By Mrs. Rundell . " From the Sixty @-@ Seventh London Edition . Philadelphia : Carey and Hart , 1844 .

" By a Lady . " New edition , " 245th thousand " , John Murray , 1865 .