

Reprinted from:

The
TREASURY
of
HIDDEN SECRETS

*A 17th-century housewives' handbook
of cookery, herbals, and medicine*

attributed to

John Partridge

*an unabridged reprint of the 1653 edition
with a new introduction
by S.R. Holman*

Rhwymbooks
Cambridge, Massachusetts
2002

This is a .pdf printout of copyrighted material

The Treasury of Hidden Secrets

A New Introduction

S.R. Holman

The Treasury of Hidden Secrets was a popular 16th and early 17th century English handbook of cookery, herbals, and medicine. First published around 1573, it was reprinted often for over 75 years; the present volume is that of the 1653 edition printed by Jane Bell.

Treasury was merely one of many household cookery-medicine books of its time. Some of these books were truly “cookbooks” in the modern sense: books about meal preparation for a wide variety of foods or specialty “cookbooks” for certain types of food. Robert May’s 1681 *Accomlish’d Cook*, for example, is concerned almost exclusively with cooking meats.¹ May’s book is consciously a book for the upper class gourmet, addressed to his noble patrons, and the author emphasizes his experience with bringing the best of the French to his own proudly English cooking. Other cookery books were almost wholly concerned with fruit, conserves and confections. Some household books were largely medicinal. Others, such as *The Treasury of Hidden Secrets*, *Widowes Treasure*, and the *Book of Cookery*, contain a near-equal mix of cookery and medicine; *Widowes Treasure* and the *Book of Cookery* also include tips on veterinary medicine.² All three assume a well-equipped pantry and garden.

In Elizabethan household medicine, as in all premodern medical practice, food and herbals worked together as therapy. The selected ingredients or prescriptions may also act as key agents for expressing both class status and religious practice. In the turbulent period between the Elizabethan era and the Restoration, cookery books were sometimes part of the political agenda. Another cookery book from the mid-17th century, that belonging to Oliver Cromwell’s wife, was published against her in 1664 as an attempt to discredit her as nothing more than a plain and miserly cook who cared nothing for the art.³ The book is by no means as dull as all that; it is a good record of “ordinary” 17th century meals as well as polemic commentary by the satirist who published it.

The Treasury of Hidden Secrets is not a political book. It was written both for and to women. The introduction is addressed to “all women that love and professe the practice of good huswifery.” It salutes them as “Courteous Gentlewomen, honest Matrons, and Virtuouſ Virgins.” The introduction tells us the book was “First printed at the request of a lady of great calling.” The 1653 edition was also *printed* by a woman, Jane Bell.⁴ The book describes elaborate preparations for things such as fruit conserves, pomanders, instructions for dying and scenting gloves, smoothing out the female complexion, powders to prevent plague, get rid of vermin, elaborate instructions for distilling multi-colored, multi-layered medicinal waters, as well as gynecologic clysters, douches, and not a few things distasteful to imagine. Virtually all of the recipes for edibles are for sweets: fruit conserves, tarts, beverages, and wafers for religious feasts. The recipes often call for such ingredients as gold leaf and many rare spices.

The second half of the book (chapters 61 to 140) consists of prescriptions for household medicine. These include elaborate lists of diseases, astronomical guides, medicinal herbs and the seasons for planting and harvesting, how to diagnose by urine, as well as specific medicinal formulas. Over half of these address gynecologic concerns; These are recipes for women desperate for menses, fertility, health, or the delivery of a dead fetus to save a mother’s life. Other prescriptions include those for the strengthening the bedridden sick, for those with depression, and curatives for plague, all reflecting the typical premodern understanding of

illness as caused by air and dissonant humors. Treatments include foods, herbs, alcoholic beverages, and exotic, scented gums and powders. The extended treatment for “french pocks” and other “filthy diseases from evil humors” (Chapter 117) suggests a wealthy audience able to take extended rests and make significant changes in environment and food as part of therapy. This particular prescription is the only recipe in the book that acknowledges the importance of cheerful entertainment and a quiet mind in the healing process; elsewhere melancholy is treated as wholly a physical state balanced by diet and heat. A number of the prescriptions appeal to outside authorities contemporary or historical, such as “the famous Dr. Stevens,” “my lady Grey Clement,” the Archbishop of Canterbury, and the King.

Printing History: The Editions

The earliest extant copy of the book is dated 1573⁵. Its title edition was *The tresurie of commodious conceits & hidden secrets, and may be called, The huswives closet, of healthful provision: mete and necessarie for the profitable use of all estates both men and women and also pleasaunt for recreation: with a necessary table of all things herein contayned: gathered out of sundrye experiments lately practised by men of great knowledge*. This edition was printed in London by Richard Jones, and gives John Partridge as the author.⁶

The book must have sold well. By the time it was reprinted in 1584 (again by Richard Jones), the title page advertized it as “now the fourth time corrected, and enlarged, with divers necessary and new additions.”⁷ This text included John Partridge’s original dedication and the long version of the author’s poetic address to the book was common at the time. See the Appendix for these texts and the contents of this edition the “fourth time corrected and enlarged”.

The Elizabethan printer might be exclusively a printer or both bookseller and printer; but booksellers were not necessarily printers. Both printers and booksellers in London were tightly controlled, licensed, censored, and fined for violations. Some copies note that Jones’s 1584 printing was “[at Eliot’s Court Press] for Henry Car,”⁸ suggesting Car as a bookseller who helped to finance this printing. When the book was reprinted in 1591, Richard Jones is now located specifically “at the Rose and Crowne neere Holborne bridge.” The 1591 text was yet another enlargement: “now newly corrected, and enlarged, with divers necessary phisicke helpes, not impertinent to every good huswife to use in her house amongst her own famelie.”⁹ This is the earliest edition to include the phrase “phisicke helpes” in the title and may be the earliest edition to include the 31 chapters on gynecology and medicine found in our text but not in the 1584 edition. The Bodleian’s bibliographic record suggests J. Charlewood as the 1591 printer. Jones is again given as printer for the 1596 edition.¹⁰

Richard Jones may have died soon after this. There is some evidence that the book passed into the jurisdiction of another printer/bookseller team at this time. The next “now newly enlarged” edition, in 1600, was “printed by I.R. [James Roberts] for Edward White.”¹¹ Edward White is known to have sold other household books of cookery and medicine in the late 16th century. The book was again reprinted in 1608.¹² This seems to be the latest date that the name John Partridge occurs in the text; subsequent editions are published anonymously.

There seems to have been a lull in the books’ printings after this. The next reprint was in 1627, from a new bookseller and printer; the book was “Printed [by Eliot’s Court Press] for E.B[rewster] and R.B[yrd], and are to be sold at the signe of the Bible in Cheapside.”¹³ Byrd (or Bird) sold books but did not print them. He used the services of a handful of printers whose names, like White’s, become familiar in the title pages of this and other cookery books of the period. By 1627 the phrase, “commodious conceits” had dropped out of the title and the title page identifies it as *The tresurie of hidden secrets commonly called the good huswives closet of provision, for the health of her household. Gathered out of sundry experiments, lately practised by men of great knowledge: and now newly enlarged, with divers necessary phisicke helpes, and knowledge of the names and naturall*

dispositions of diseases that most commonly happen to men and women. In 1633 it was first printed by a woman: “Elizabeth All-de, dwelling neere Christs-church.”¹⁴ Elizabeth was the widow of Edward All-de, a typical London printer whose father, John, was also a printer and whose work and style is well know.¹⁵ In 1637 *Treasury* was “printed by Richard Oulton, dwelling neere Christs-church. As McKerrow suggests that Allde died in 1628, Richard Oulton may have taken over the press from his widow by 1637.¹⁶ Finally, *Treasury* was last reprinted in 1653 “by Jane Bell and to be sold at the East end of Christ-church.”¹⁷

It is not known exactly who penned the four “enlargements” between 1573 and 1584, nor who wrote the additional “newly enlarged” sections related to “physicke” that first appear around 1591. Page numbers depend on the size of the page; for example, the 1584 book is only 14x8 cm; the 1591 edition is also small and has 96 pages. By 1600 the book settles into a much larger book with consistently 72 pages in all subsequent reprintings, suggesting that the book was not “newly enlarged” at each printing but fairly static after the “new enlargements” of about 1591.¹⁸

Authorship and the Partridge families

While the printing history seems fairly straightforward, its author’s and compilers’ identities are anything but. Apart from what he tells us in his dedications and poem, all we know about the John Partridge who is universally identified as the original 16th century author is that he flourished between 1566 and 1573 and wrote romantic “histories” in verse.¹⁹ The only other work attributed to this John Partridge is the cookery-medicine book called *The Widowes Treasure*, discussed further below.

As we find in the 1584 edition, Partridge originally dedicated the book to “the Worshipfull Master Richarde Wistow, one of the Assistants of the Companie of the Barbers and Surgions.” By this dedication, it appears he was hoping to encourage physicians to buy the book. There is no suggestion here that Partridge himself was a medical man. He explains that he wrote the book “at the insistence of a certaine Gentlewoman, being my deare and speciall freend.” Her “importunacie” aided him in bringing into print many bits of cookery and medicine “that have not hitherto bene publiquely knowen.” He produced the book at his own expense and promises Wistow a more worthy treatise hereafter:

I have accomplished this litle booke: which I have put foorth under your worships name and protection: protesting, that if I shall see this worke, which with some cost and charge I have brought to perfection, be well accepted at your handes, I shall shortly exhibite unto your worship a thing of greater value and estimation.

Would an Elizabethan male author of historical poem-romances concern himself with something as practical, prescriptive, and earthy as *The Treasury of Hidden Secrets* and *The Widowes Treasure*? Partridge does not tell us how he came by these recipes except to say he had “taken some paine, in collecting certaine hidden secrets together & reduced them into one Lybel or Pamphlet (for my owne behoote & my familiar freends”. If the dedication is true and not just rhetoric, it appears that he had originally gathered this collection of “hidden secrets” for personal reading enjoyment rather than for either publication or his own practical use. Only the insistence of the lady who is his “deare and speciall freend”, from this private group, prompted him to finance its publication. But where did they come from originally?

Might it be most probable (assuming the record is correct) that he collected them from those who held them for household use, that is to say, from women in his family, his kitchen, and the families and kitchens of those with whom he had some intimacy? It seems most likely that he took these from handwritten manuscripts (since there is no record of their prior printing), and added his name, his influence, and his funding. The instigation of a woman inspiring the project would ensure the book’s immediate popularity among women. Certainly an idle, historical-romantically-inclined son of a well-to-do Elizabethan

household might produce such a book in this manner. It is impossible to be more specific than this, and the mystery remains.

John Partridge was clearly not a famous personality in his day. So by the 17th century, when the book is “newly enlarged” the dedicatory 14-line poem (reproduced in the Appendix) is reduced to 6-lines, a loose copy of lines 1-4 and 13-14 of the original poem. Partridge originally describes the lady as “his freend, whose importunate sute procured him to publish ... To profite her freends, for healths preservation, and also to pleasure them for recreation.” The later poem is introduced, as we see in the 1653 edition, refers only to an “occasion that a Lady of Honourable regard, having seene this Booke in writing, earnestly requested, or rather commanded to have a copy of the same.”

Interestingly, three other Partridges, from the mid and late 17th century, are also connected with this text: two men, by the bibliographical record and one woman, who practiced medicine in terms very similar to the order of prescriptions outlined in the text. The two men are also named John, discussed further, briefly, below. The woman is an upper-class Puritan patroness-physician, Catherine Partridge (1599-1647). Although the book would originally date to her grandmother’s era, what is known about Catherine suggests an intimate knowledge of precisely the sort of household cookery-medicine we find in *The Treasury of Hidden Secrets*. Although she cannot be directly linked to John’s book, her life and work provide a relevant example of the way such popular medicine would have been practiced among the gentry, including women who, we find, occasionally served as physicians.

Catherine Partridge (1599-1647)

Catherine Partridge was from a landowning, educated family with Puritan sentiments; the men in her family supported the Puritan presence at Cambridge. She had one brother, Edward Partridge, who owned land in Bridge, Kent. At age 19 she married Herbert Springett (1590-1622), a young barrister from a Sussex family, the son of Herbert Springett (c. 1555-1620) and Anne Stempe. Catherine and Herbert had two sons, Sir William Springett (1622-1643/4) and Herbert, and a daughter also named Catherine. Catherine’s husband, Herbert, was educated at Cambridge, and died of consumption after the couple was married only three years. Their son, Sir William Springett, married Mary Proude. Mary was the daughter of Sir John Proude (or Preva), a wealthy landowner in Kent, and his wife, Anne Fagge. Sir John died in the service of the Prince of Orange in Holland in 1627. Mary’s mother died the same year, and Mary eventually went to live with the Springetts. Catherine became her foster mother as well as her future mother-in-law. Catherine’s son, Sir William (Mary’s husband), also died, of fever, while fighting for the Puritan cause at the Battle of Edgehill after only two years of marriage. Mary and Sir William’s daughter (Catherine’s granddaughter), Gulielma Maria Springett (1643/4-1693/4) is famous as William Penn’s first wife, and is a heroine of both English and American Quakers.²⁰ It is this alliance with the Quakers that has helped preserve Mary Proude Springett’s memoirs, written for Gulielma, which include a vivid description of Catherine’s life as a noble patroness and active physician.

After her husband died, Catherine Partridge endured a long suit over her estate from her husband’s brothers. For the sake of her children’s education she refused to marry again, and moved to Kent and London to live with her brother, Edward. After Edward’s wife (Mary Proude’s aunt) died, Catherine took over the management of his household, and took in and raised at least two children besides her own. One was Mary; the other a boy named Ellis, who through Catherine’s influence became a fellow at the Puritan college, Katharine’s Hall, at Cambridge and was eventually her son’s tutor there.²¹

Mary wrote her memoirs late in life for Gulielma and Gulielma’s son, Springett Penn. As the text is difficult to obtain, it is given here at length:

She was a most excellent woman, having great regard to the well-being of her children, both here and hereafter; and because she might the better discharge her duty respecting them, lived a retired life, and refused many good offers for a second marriage ... She lived a very virtuous life; constant in morning and evening prayer in private, and often with her children; and caused them to repeat what they remembered of sermons and scriptures.

I lived in the house with her from nine years of age till after I was married to her son. And after he died, she came and lived with me, and died at my house ... She spent her time very ingeniously, and in acts of bounty; bestowing great part of her fortune on the poor, in physic and surgery. She had about two hundred and forty pounds a year. She kept a brace of geldings, a man and a maid, and boarded at her only brother's Sir Edward Partridge. She kept several poor women employed in summer, simpling for her; and in winter procuring for her such things as she wanted in surgery, physic and sore eyes. She had excellent judgment in all these, and admirable success; which made her famous, and sought unto out of several counties, by persons of the first rank, as well as those of other classes. She daily employed her servants in making oils, salves, balsams, drawing of spirits, distilling of waters, making syrups and conserves, lozenges and pills.²²

While these things are standard medical activities in the late 1500s, it is notable that the phrases here echo exactly the types of recipes and instructions one finds in both *The Treasury of Hidden Secrets* and *The Widowes Treasure*: oils, salves, balsams, drawing of spirits, distilling of waters, making syrups, conserves, lozenges and pills. While Mary does not give use the source of Catherine's formulary, it seems highly likely that these books were at the very least a part of her library, and more possibly a heritage passed down to her, with these skills, from the women in the Partridge family. Her granddaughter, Gulielma, was later known for the same medical skills.

Catherine's greatest claim to fame, however, lay in her skill as an eye doctor and a surgeon, areas of medicine the Partridge books mention indirectly. She saw at least twenty patients daily, her fame as a healer extending far and wide. She treated the poor for free, and charged only for the ingredients of medicines for those who she thought could pay:

She was so famous for taking off spots and cataracts from the eyes, that Stephens, the great oculist, sent many to her, when the case was difficult, and likely to take up more time to perfect the cure, than he could well spare. She cured, to my knowledge, many desperate burns, and cuts, and dangerous sores that came by them, and broken limbs; also many of the king's evil [i.e., war wounds], after having taken out several bones. One very remarkable cure of a burn I shall mention. A child's head was so burnt, that its skull was like a coal: she brought it to have skin and hair, and invented a thin pan of beaten silver, covered with bladder, to preserve the head in case of a knock or fall. Some people have come some hundred of miles to her, and have lodged at a neighboring village, sometimes a quarter of a year, from their families. Perhaps she would have twenty patients of a morning, to administer to. I have heard her say, she spent half her income after this sort, and never received a penny for any thing of that kind, but often returned valuable presents. To her patients that were in good circumstances, she would give a note of what things they should buy, and bring to her, and then she made up the medicines. Her man spent great part of his time in writing directions, &c.²³

Catherine's medical practice cannot be separated from her deep religious convictions and her daily religious practices:

As to her profession of religion, since the wars in the latter part of her time, she was called a Puritan; but lately an Independent, and kept an Independent preacher in the house, and gave liberty for people to come twice a week to hear him preach. Every seventh day, all her family must leave all their occasions, and assemble to hear this man preach to, and pray for them.²⁴

The later, American, edition of Mary's memoirs includes a few other details about Catherine's medical practice. These details may have been added in Mary's later revision of the text, or they may reflect oral memories recorded later. According to these additions, the medicines Catherine composed included "conserves of many kinds, with purges;" her cures also included "dangerous sores that have come by thorns;" "she frequently helped in consumptions (beyond the skill of doctors to help), through her diligence and care in the villages about her, lodged several patients." Her case load of twenty patients each morning included "(men, women and children), to dress their wounds, apply physick to and care of sore eyes;" and her manservant spent his time not only writing recipes but also "fitting of salves and medicines."²⁵

Thus, in this window into the life and practice of Catherine Partridge Springett, we find a fascinating cameo of a gentlewoman, engaged in medical care with a heavy daily case load of visiting sick, providing therapy at her own expense, in an upper class English household, in the setting of a politically and religiously charged society. Her example suggests the way *The Treasury of Hidden Secrets* might have been used in everyday life, and possibly the family out of which it came.

Religion in The Treasury of Hidden Secrets

The Treasury of Hidden Secrets contains no hint of Puritan thought, although it was written in the early dates of the movement. The religious practices in *Treasury* reflect the more traditional dependence on the church year and religious festivals of daily household cookery that characterized the Elizabethan church both before and after reforms. Nor is religion never—in either the book or in Catherine's example—a tool for healing the sick. Catherine is certainly a woman of prayer, but her medical practice consists of mixing herbs, fitting silver headpieces, and eye surgery. Religious practice occurs in the background, as an element of daily life. In *Treasury*, for example, the liturgical year serves simply to mark the calendar and call for certain recipes. For example, the season for quinces is not given as early spring, but as Lent (chapter 12). Quince jelly needs slightly less sugar between Michaelmas and All Hallow's Day (chapter 26). Worship is combined with cooking as a handy way to measure time: we find, "Let them boil three or four Pater Nosters," in chapter 27, and in chapter 67 the author writes, "Let it stand over the fire the space of the Creed's saying." Easter is the season to plant marjoram (chapter 43) and Lammas is the season for bloodletting (chapter 62). The book appeals not only to liturgical practices but also to liturgical authorities. One particularly authoritative prescription—Doctor Stephens' secret recipe for sovereign water (chapter 105)—comes from the eminent Matthew Parker, Archbishop of Canterbury from 1559 to 1576. This "Doctor Stephens" may have been an ancestor of that "great" Dr. Stephens who referred his more time-consuming patients to Catherine Partridge's care. The original text of *Treasury*, therefore, suggests an author and audience active in and routinely familiar with the liturgical calendar of both Catholic and evolving Anglican practice in the late 1500s. There is no trace of Puritan sentiments in the text's few religious references, and the gynecologic prescriptions contain no hint of any religious strictures.

The other John Partridges

Much less is known about the two other John Partridges who are, opportunely or accidentally, linked to the later editions. Both *The Treasury of Hidden Secrets* and *The Widowes Treasure* are sometimes

wrongly attributed in bibliographical records to a “John Partridge, bookseller,” who died in 1649. More often the text is attributed to a later John Partridge (ca. 1643-1715) who was popular for his annual astrological calendar. This later John Partridge may also be the same man who in 1682 produced an English translation of a Latin medical text titled, *Thesaurus armamentarium medico-chymicum Or, A treasury of physick: with the most secret way of preparing remedies against all diseases: obtained by labour, confirmed by practice, and published out of good will to mankind; being a work of great use for the publick Written origianlly in Latine by ... Hadrianus a Mynsicht ...: and faithfully rendred into English by John Partridge*. This work was printed in London by J.M. for Awynsham Churchill. Adrian von Mynsicht postdates the original *Treasury of Hidden Secrets*, and lived from 1603 to 1638. This repeated use of the terms “treasury,” “jewel,” and “secret” in the titles of 16th and 17th century books of cookery and medicine seems to have been a common marketing ploy, attracting readers by suggesting esoteric and exclusive details. A book from the early 16th century published in English in 1576, for example, was titled *The newe iewell of health*,²⁶ by Konrad Gesner (1516-1565) and translated by the surgeon, George Baker (1540-1600). John Partridge’s English translation of von Mynsicht’s medical text, noted above, also contains the words “treasury” and “secret”.

John Aubrey, that great late 17th century gossip and biographer, knew personally John Partridge, the astrologer. In 1680 he describes Partridge, who was still living, as a self-taught fellow of humble origins, the son of an

honest waterman from Surrey who received a limited education and was then apprenticed to a shoemaker. While busy cobbling, he was also, indepenedently, studying grammar, Latin and the classics, and eventually made himself “a competent master of the Latin tongue, well enough to read any astrological booke, and quickly became a master of that science. He then studyed the Greek tongue, and also the Hebrew, to neither of which he is a stranger. he then studyed good authors in physique [i.e. physick, or medicine -ed] and intends to make that his profession and practyse, but is yet a shoemaker in Convent Garden.”²⁷

Aubrey does not connect this John Partridge with our medical books in any way. The cobbler hardly seems to come from wealthy or eminent stock. His link to Surrey, near Suffolk, his interest in medicine, and the social lability of the 16th and 17th centuries may all hint at his identity as a humble descendant of the original John Partridge household.

Aubrey also mentions two women of his day famous for their medical skills. One is Gulielma, whom Aubrey also knew personally. He says she was “generally beloved for [her father’s] good qualities and one more—the great cures she does, having great skill in physic and surgery, which she freely bestows.”²⁸ Hodgkin links this medical gift back to her grandmother, Catherine Partridge.²⁹ The other noble woman physician Aubrey mentions is Sir Christopher Wren’s sister: “amongst many other guifts she haz a strange sagacity as to curing of wounds, which she does not doe so much by presedents and receipt books, as by her owne excogitancy, considering the causes, effects, and circumstances.”³⁰ A healing she effected for King Charles II had caused bitter jealousy of the king’s physicians against her. Thus noble women were occasionally recognized as skilled physicians, but their practice was characterized by class patronage: they healed at no charge to the patient and often (since Sir Christopher’s sister is an exception) used “receipt books” as medical formularies.

Literary records refer to several other 17th century English authors named Partridge. Although few are overtly related, some wrote in similar genres and share the same printers. There is a Seth Partridge who wrote a series of annual almanacs in the late 1600s; Jane Bell also printed the 1654 edition. A James Partridge (fl. 1628) wrote a medical treatise on facial disfigurements.³¹ A William Partridge (fl. 1695) wrote a consolatory poem to the Prince, William, of Orange, reflecting the same Protestant loyalties we find in the Partridge-Springett families a century before. Finally, at the very end of the 17th century we find James Partridge, printer to the House of Lords, who died in 1694 or 1695. His entire stock of books went up for

auction after his death, and the catalog survives. It lists many medical books in a variety of languages, along with theological books, novels, and some books for women, but the list does not contain any edition of either *The Treasury of Hidden Secrets* or *The Widowes Treasure*. This is not surprising, since by this time these two books had been out of print for over forty years; most, but not all, of James's books are dated after 1660.

The Widowes Treasure, The Book of Cookery, and their Printers

The Book of Cookery and *The Widowes Treasure* are linked to one another and to *The Treasury of Hidden Secrets* by either their attributed author, as discussed already, or by their shared printers. *The Widowes Treasure* was first published in 1585, making it slightly later than *Treasury of Hidden Secrets*. The full 1585 title was, *The widowes treasure, plentifully furnished with sundry precious and approved secretes in physicke and chirurgery for the health and pleasure of mankinde: hereunto are adjoynd sundry pretie practises and conclusions of cookerie: with many profitable and holesome medicines for sundrie diseases in cattell*. It was printed in London “by Robert Walde-Grave for Edward White.”³² Unlike *Treasury*, this title did not change in any of its many printings. It was reprinted in 1588 “by Edward Alde for Edward White,” in 1595 “by I. Roberts for Edward White,” in 1599 “by I. Roberts for Edward White,” in 1631 “printed by Eliz. Alde and to be sold by Robert Bird,” and in 1639 “printed by R B[adger] for Robert Bird, and to be sold at his Shop in S. Laurencelane at the signe of the Bible.”³³ Here Robert Bird (or Byrd), who printed *The Treasury of Hidden Secrets* in 1627, reappears, along with Edward White, for whom James Roberts printed *Treasury* in 1600, and Elizabeth All-de (sometimes Alde or Alde). Ronald Brunlees McKerrow notes that Edward Alde's father was associated with 86 different booksellers. He worked most frequently, however, with the Whites, both Edward senior (1577-1612) and junior (1605-1624).³⁴ At the latter's death, Mistress White assigned her property in a number of books to E. Alde. Elizabeth Alde's name appears as a printer only after Edward's name disappears.

The Alldes were also printers for another popular household handbook called *The Book of Cookery*. Much about this book bears echoes of both *The Treasury of Hidden Secrets* and *The Widowes Treasure*, but the three are different books. *The Book of Cookery* was issued in an “enlarged” edition in 1584 by John Alde and printed by his son, Edward, in at least 1587, 1591,³⁵ 1594, and 1597³⁶ where Alde is located at “dwelling in Aldersgate street over against the Pump” The author, according to MacKerrow, was a certain “W.A.”

The authorship of *The Book of Cookery* is even more of a mystery than the two books attributed to John Partridge. An early *Book of Cookery*, from the 1570s, had as “the first owners of the book, Matthew Parker, Archbishop of Canterbury, and Margaret Parker, his wife.”³⁷ This is no less than the same Archbishop Parker who managed to obtain “Doctor Stephens” secret recipe for sovereign waters that is printed in *The Treasury of Hidden Secrets*. Possibly this *Book of Cookery* was the prototype for the later “enlarged” editions.

Yet the attribution to a Thomas Dawson (dates unknown) goes back to the 1587 text, printed at London “by John Wolfe for Edward White.” There the full title is a provocative echo of the Partridge texts: *The good huswifes iewell [jewel]: wherein is to be found most excellent and rare devises for conseites in cookerie / found out by the practyse of Thomas Dawson; whereunto is ajoynd sundry approved resiets for many souveraine oyles, and the way to distill many precious waters, with divers approved medicines for many diseases; also certain approved points of husbandry, very necessary for all husbandmen to know*. Its printing did not end with the Alldes. A 1650 edition was printed “for Jeane Bell” in London, undoubtedly the same Jane Bell who printed both *Treasury* and *Widowes Treasure*.

The 1591 edition has the note, “gathered by A.W.” The inversion of “A.W.” with the “W.A.” whose *Book of Cookery* John Alde printed in 1584 is intriguing, not only as a possible typographical error so typical in Elizabethan printing, but also given the book's printing history in the team of White and Alde. Might they not only have been printer and bookseller but also possibly editor/compiler for this popular *Book of*

Cookery? And if so, what were their sources?

The 1597 “second part” of this *Good hus-wives iewell* includes “divers conceits in cookerie with the Booke of Carving.” This “Book of Carving” has its own special title page, where it is clearly stated to be “By Thomas Dawson.” Might it be possible that Dawson lifted recipes from some contemporary *Book of Cookery* he “found out” and then appended his own “original” Book of Carving, and that the compilation was subsequently known under his name? Dawson’s book differs from the Partridge books in that it includes recipes for meats, and includes more advice on animal husbandry. Its fruit and medicinal recipes are on the same topics as the Partridge books.

The Present Edition

The text reprinted here is the 1653 edition printed by Jane Bell. The original 1653 text differs slightly in occasional spellings from the 1637 text as reprinted by Peachey, but Elizabethan authors and printers were notorious and consistently inconsistent about spelling.

Most of the 1653 book was printed in what is called the “black letter font,” sometimes called Gothic or Old English (Fig. 1). The earliest European printers used it, as did many German printers into the mid-twentieth century. This font is very hard on the eyes, and English readers never received it with great delight. The young Quaker, Thomas Ellwood, for example, reading the early church fathers in his father’s library in 1662, complained that “these books being printed in the old black letter with abbreviations of the words difficult to read, I spent too much time therein, and thereby much impaired my sight.”³⁸

To make matters worse, the print in the 1653 *Treasury of Hidden Secrets* is in many places very worn and faded, with occasional letters incompletely printed in the original. Like most Elizabethan printers, Jane Bell used different font types in the same book. She printed all chapter titles, the introduction, and the table of contents in ordinary Roman font, with Latin words and subtitles in italics, both very readable fonts. The black letter font is reserved for the body of the text, the most important “secrets” and “treasures.” It is as if this were an intentional choice of the printer, to discourage the casual or less educated reader. This font type has occasionally presented us with illegible problems.

In preparing the present text in modern type, we were further faced with the challenging question of how literally to transcribe it. Many (if not most) ordinary words are spelled differently from the modern conventions (e.g. “orange” and “suger”); many of the unusually spelled words are derivations of Old English that are not really modern words at all. To correct and standardize spelling would create a hybrid text, frustrating for scholars who want historical accuracy without subjecting themselves to the eyestrain of the original font, and yet not so much easier for the ordinary reader as to justify the changes. We originally considered a text that would have both modern and original spellings, to try and please everyone. But the Old English words would still represent a foreign language of sorts, and the two texts would not be different enough to warrant the effort and expense of a “bilingual” book. In the end, we have decided to present the original text alone, printed in a reader-friendly font, heavily annotated. We hope that this format, which certainly will not please everyone, will at least solve as many of the more obvious textual mysteries as possible with minimal reader’s effort. A very small number of obvious misprints have been corrected without noting them, and the style of the chapter headings has been standardized throughout. The woodcuts printed throughout the text are replicas of those frequently used by Edward Allde and his contemporaries.

S. R. Holman

Notes

Notes

1. e.g., Robert May, *The Accomplisht Cook, or the Art and Mystery of Cookery, Wherein the whole art is revealed in a more easie and perfect Method, than hath been publisht in any language. Expert and ready Ways for the Dressing of all Sorts of Flesh, Fowl, and Fish, with variety of Sauces proper for each of them; and how to raise all manner of Pastes; the best Directions for all sorts of Kicksaws, also the Terms of Carving and Sewing. An exact account of all Dishes for all Seasons of the Year, with other A-la-mode Curiosities. The Fifth Edition, with large Additions throughout the whole work: besides two hundred Figures of several Forms for all manner of bak'd Meats, (either Flesh or Fish) as, Pyes Tarts, Custards; Cheesecakes, and Florentines, placed in Tables, and directed to the Pages they appertain to. Approved by the fifty five Years Experience and Industry of Robert May, in his Attendance on several Persons of great Honour.* London, 1681. May's introduction is addressed to "the Right Honourable my Lord Montague, My Lord Lumley, and my Lord Dormer; and to the Right worshipful Sir Kenelme Digby." The author wrote the book in Soleby in Leicestershire and identifies himself as an Englishman who has profited much in his cooking by living in France and also consulting Spanish cookery as well.
2. The *Book of Cookery* attributed to Thomas Dawson is also first about cooking meat, but also including recipes for sauces, fruit dishes, medicinal waters and other medicines, and advice about animal husbandry. Its full title is, *A Book of Cookery And the order of Meates to be served to the Table, both for Flesh and Fish dayes. with many Excellent wayes for the Dressing of all usual forms of Meats, both Bak'd, Boyl'd or Rosted, of Flesh, Fish, Fowle, or others, with their proper Sawes. As also many rare Inventions in Cookery for made Dishes: with most notable preserves of sundry sorts of Fruits. Likewise for making many precious Waters, with divers approved Medicines for grievous Diseases. With certaine points of Husbandry how to order Oxen, Horses, Sheep, Hogges, &c. with many other necessary points for Husbandman to know.* London: Printed by Jeane Bell, dwelling at the East end of Christ-Church, 1650. Ronald Brunlees McKerrow also mentions a *Book of Cookery* by "W.A.," that John Allde printed "now newly enlarged" in 1584, and his son, Edward Allde, reprinted in 1587, 1591, and 1594. Ronald Brunlees McKerrow, "Edward Allde as a Typical Trade Printer," *The Library* 4th Series, 10(2)(Sept. 1929), pp. 121-162, reprinted in John Phillip Immroth, compiler. *Ronald Brunlees McKerrow: A Selection of His Essays.* Metuchen, NJ: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 1974, pp. 94-131; the reference to the *Book of Cookery* is on page 106.
3. *The Court and Kitchen of Elizabeth Commonly called Joan Cromwell, The Wife of the late Usurper, Truly Described and Represented, and now Made Public for general satisfaction.* London: Printed by Thomas Milbourn, for Randal Taylor in St. Martins Le Grand, 1664; reprint Peterborough: Cambridgeshire Libraries, 1983, with a new preface by Douglas Clinton and glossary and notes by Mary Liquorice.
4. The same who printed Dawson's 1650 *Book of Cookery*.
5. For dates of the various printings of all of these books, I have depended wholly on the catalog records of the British Library, the Bodleian Library, the library of the University of Birmingham (UK), and Harvard University, especially Houghton Library. It is possible that there were other printings that did not survive to be part of these library records, and exist only in private collections.
6. Originals of the 1573 printing are held by the Folger Shakespeare Library and the Henry E. Huntington Library; reproductions are in the library at the University of Birmingham (STC 19425.5 and STC

Treasury of Hidden Secrets – New Introduction

- 19426; University Microfilms reel 222 is from STC 19426.
7. Harvard University, Houghton Library Accession #24255.286.5*.
 8. University of Birmingham Library, STC 1; the bibliographic listing of the 1584 ms in the British Library does not refer to Henry Car, but the 1586 edition does (BL accession numbers C.122.9.40 and C.31.a.15).
 9. Bodleian Library, Bookstack 80 F 8(6).
 10. University of Glasgow Library, Sp. Coll. Ferguson Ao-f.7.
 11. British Library (BL) 103.7.e.2 and BL 1037.k.47.(2).
 12. University of Glasgow Library, Sp. Coll. Ferguson Ap-y.113.
 13. Bodleian Library, Bookstack Mal. 651 (8) and Houghton Library STC 19431.
 14. Bodleian, Bookstack Douce Fragm. e42 (24). On the All-des, see more below.
 15. Ronald Brunlees McKerrow (p. 106) mentions a *Book of Cookery* by “W.A.,” that John Allde printed “now newly enlarged” in 1584, and his son, Edward Allde, reprinted in 1587, 1591, and 1594. Ronald Brunlees McKerrow, “Edward Allde as a Typical Trade Printer,” *The Library* 4th Series, 10(2)(Sept. 1929), pp. 121-162, reprinted in John Phillip Immroth, comp. *Ronald Brunlees McKerrow: A Selection of His Essays*. Metuchen, NJ: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 1974, pp. 94-131.
 16. For the 1637 edition see BL 1651/553 and Cambridge University Library. For a modern transcript of the cookery selections only, see Stuart Peachey, ed., *Miscellaneous Recipes, Volume 1*. Early Seventeenth Century Food Series; Bristol, UK: Stuart Press/Historical Management Associates Ltd., 1992, pp. 5-16.
 17. For original copies of the 1653 printing, see BL 1038.i.35.(8) and Glasgow Sp. Coll. Ferguson Ag-f.35.
 18. In 1573 the book had 94 pages; in 1584, 88; in 1591, 96; the reduction to 72 by 1608 coincides with the new series of printers after Richard Jones. Since this text is called “newly enlarged,” fewer pages can only mean a new typesetting format after this time, and not less content!
 19. These include *The worthie hystorie of the most noble and valiaunt knight Plasidas, in verse* [Bodleian, Bookstack Mal 466 (2), later reprinted in a collection gathered by Samuel Pepys, printed in the 19th century for the Roxburghe Club (Roxburghe Publications 96; London: J.B. Nichols and Sons, 1873)], *The notable hystorie of two famous princes of the worlde, Astianax and Polixena, in verse* [Bodleian Bookstack Mal. 466 (1)], and *The hystorie of the Lady Pandavola* (also part of the Pepys collection), all dated to 1566.
 20. Names and dates here are taken from L.V. Hodgkin, *Gulielma: Wife of William Penn*. London: Longmans, 1947, genealogical table following p. 221.
 21. The following excerpts are, unless otherwise noted, from *Some Account of Circumstances in the Life of Mary Pennington from her Manuscript left for her Family*. London, 1821; reprinted as *On Quakers, Medicine, and Property: The Autobiography of Mary Pennington (1624-1682)*. Cambridge, Mass.: Rhwymbooks, 2000. Page numbers are from the 1821 text. Although the 1821 edition consistently gives the name as Pennington, other historical sources, including the American version of this text published by the Quakers in 1848, spell the name as Penington.
 22. *Some Account of Circumstances in the Life of Mary Pennington*, pp. 62-64.
 23. *Some Account of Circumstances in the Life of Mary Pennington*, pp. 64-66.

24. *Some Account of Circumstances in the Life of Mary Pennington*, p. 66.
25. Mary Penington. *Brief Account of my Exercises from my Childhood: Left with my dear daughter, Gulielma Maria Penn.* Philadelphia, 1848, p. 25.
26. STC (2nd ed.) 11798.
27. John Aubrey, '*Brief Lives*' chiefly of contemporaries, set down by John Aubrey, between the years 1669 and 1696, ed. from the authors' mss by Andrew Clark, with facsimiles. 2 vols. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1898, vol. 2, pp. 119-20.
28. Aubrey, '*Brief Lives*', vol. 2, p. 134.
29. Hodgkin, *Gulielma: Wife of William Penn*, p. 81.
30. Aubrey, '*Brief Lives*', vol. 1, p. 405.
31. *Changing Faces: The Challenge of Facial Disfigurements*, repr. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1990.
32. Leeds, Brotherton Library Special Collections; Cookery A PAR.
33. A modern reprint of the 1639 text is available from the Stuart Press/Historical Management Associates Ltd, 117 Farleigh Rd., Backwell, Bristol, as part of their Living History Reference Books/Early 17th Century Food Series, 1999; ISBN 1-85804-139-2; it may also be purchased from Acanthus Books, 830 W. Main St., #150, Lake Zurich, IL, 60047; info@acanthus-books.com.
34. Ronald Brunlees McKerrow, "Edward Allde as a Typical Trade Printer," pp. 98-99.
35. For a photoreprint, see *A Booke of cookrye, with the servings in of the table*, Amsterdam: Norword, NJ: Theatrum Orbis Terrarum; W.J. Johnson, 1976; 36 leaves. In the series, English experience, its record in early books published in facsimile, no 834.
36. MacKerrow, citing Hazlitt III.47, in Immroth, p. 100.
37. For a facsimile of this text, edited with notes, introduction and glossary by Catherine Frances Frere (Cambridge, UK: W. Heffer & Sons, Ltd., 1913), see Schlesinger Library, vault 641.62.P96.
38. Thomas Ellwood, *The History of the Life of Thomas Ellwood*, ed. C.G. Crump, London: Methuen & Co., 1900, p. 87.