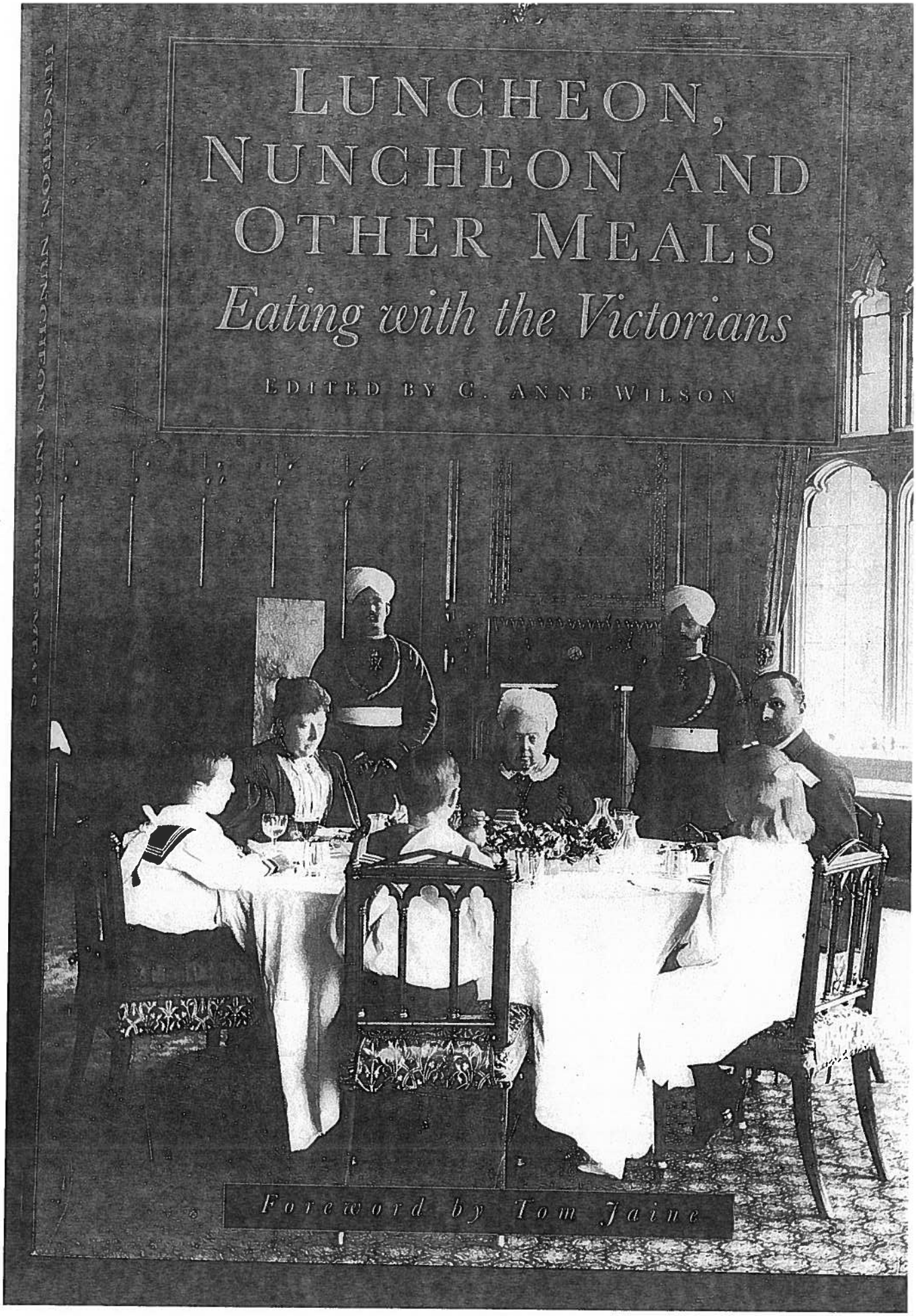
LUNCHEON, NUNCHEON AND OTHER MEALS
Eating with the Victorians
EDITED BY C. ANNE WILSON
Foreword by Tom Jaine
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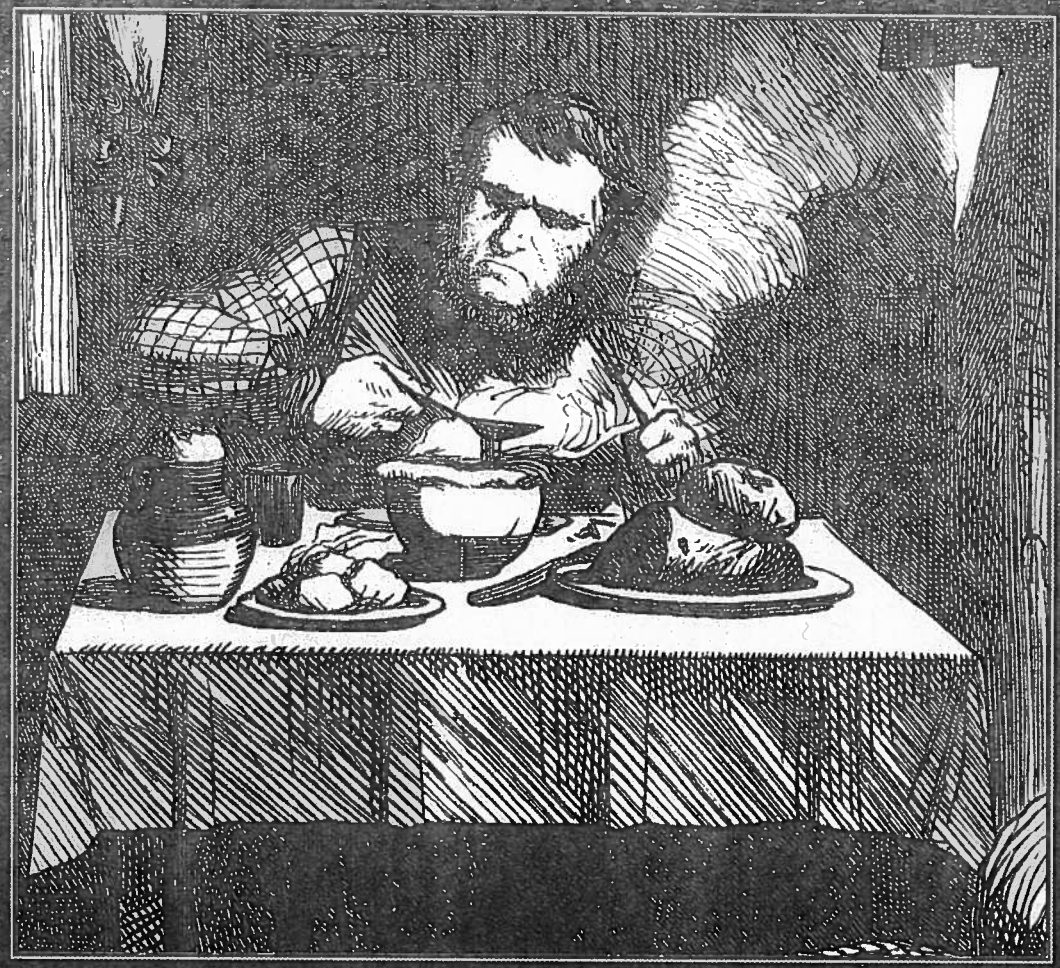

'Don't think *what*, think *when*. Here are Victorian meals set in their proper social context: a revelation.'

Tom Jaine, Editor of *The Good Food Guide*

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A family at tea in the 1860s (Hulton Deutsch Collection)

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Edited by C. Anne Wilson

with a foreword by

Tom Jaine

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entire snack (and for working people lunch continued to have the role of a between-meal snack). Once this happened, their employers borrowed the word to denote their own gradually expanding meal which bridged their greater gap between breakfast and dinner.

'The English labourer has his "lunch" between breakfast and dinner and again between the latter meal and supper', according to a medical authority quoted in *Cassell's Dictionary of Cookery* in the 1880s.[35] Beer or cider with bread and cheese or pieces of fairly plain cake were the usual components.

Servants also had a mid-morning lunch, though in mid- or late afternoon the indoor servants, at least, partook of the 'servants' tea', with bread and cakes, and tea as the accompanying beverage. They were not encouraged to linger over their lunch. Katharine Mellish wrote, at the very end of the Victorian era:

> It is usual for servants to have lunch, either bread and cheese or a piece of cake, about eleven o'clock; but they should not be allowed to sit down to it, as the morning hours are too precious. The cook should see that this meal is expeditiously despatched. Beer (if allowed at all) should not be taken at this lunch-time.[36]

All through the twentieth century lunch has strengthened its hold as the meal for the middle of the day (luncheon is now reserved for the most formal occasions), extending to an ever-widening range of social groups. But it is not yet accepted universally. Many older people still eat their main meal of the day at that time, and still call it 'dinner', thus following a tradition that goes back through the Victorian era to the centuries before the Industrial Revolution.

CHAPTER THREE

PROLIFERATING PUBLICATIONS: THE PROGRESS OF VICTORIAN COOKERY LITERATURE

Lynette Hunter

The primary question I want to address is a simple one. Why is there such a proliferation from the 1860s to the end of the century and beyond, of small books specifically on individual meals? Studying these and other related food and household books in the nineteenth century leads to the suggestion that the proliferation was made possible by printing technology and new systems of distribution, and that it mediated a radical change in the lives of middle-class women by which meals became the focus for a series of social gestures needed to alleviate the isolation of the private family.

Early nineteenth-century books related to food and cookery are most often single-authored comprehensive guides to household management, or edited selections from magazines or other works.[1] Because of the expense of these books which retailed for 10*s* 0*d* to £1 or more,[2] it is likely that they were aimed at the substantial middle-class housewife. The household guides are frequently addressed to the lady of the house whose main work revolved around the preserving, distributing and cooking of foodstuffs, whether she was in an urban or rural setting. In contrast to these books, many of which were written by women such as Maria Rundell, Mrs Dalgairns, or Eliza Acton, the edited selections were normally put together by men; for example, William Pybus's *A Manual of Useful Knowledge* (1810), J. Stewart's *The Young Woman's Companion* (1814), the anonymous *The New Female Instructor* (1820?), James Jennings's *The Family Encyclopedia* (1821), or Watkin Poole's *The Female's Best Friend* (1826). These selections seem to

Dinner is served (Second frontispiece to Beeton's Housewife's Treasury of Domestic Information, *1880)*

be more concerned with providing an educational base for the middle-class woman, and often include sections on 'conversation', on 'geography', on 'arithmetic', as well as on general household management, food and cookery.

However, if we jump fifty years, while there are still large compendious guides published by newspapers and magazines, such as *Cassell's Household Guide* (in editions from 1869 to 1912) or *'The Queen's' Cookery Books* (from 1896) by Mrs S. Beatty-Pownall, and by publishers, such as *Ward and Lock's Home Book* (1880) which was also issued under the title *Beeton's Household Treasury of Domestic Information*, or *Nelson's Home Comforts* (1882), the marked difference is in the dozens of single-authored food books directed towards specialized aspects of household management: courses, foodstuffs, dishes, technology, commercial products, and meals themselves. Mary Hooper's *Little Dinners* (1874) and Marian Harland's (Mrs Terhume's) *Breakfast, Luncheon and Tea* (1875) are among the early examples, shortly to be followed by books covering the use of baking powder or gelatine, cooking with gas or with pressure cookers, cooking with spices and unusual vegetables, and other books on meals, courses and dishes such as Isabella Thwaites's *Fish Cookery* (1883), Mary Allen's *Breakfast Dishes* (1884), Harriet Dwight's *Bread-making* (1884) and Rose Owen Cole's *Breakfast and Savoury Dishes* (1885). The list can be very full, but generally many writers such as Harriet de Salis, Charles Herman Senn, Arthur Kenney Herbert, Myrtle Reed (Olive Green), Mrs Alfred Praga, Dorothy Peel, Rose Brown and Mrs S. Beatty-Pownall, built careers around the publication of specialized books. Charles Senn alone

produced more than thirty titles, often with ten editions of each, with probably at least 5,000 copies in each edition. A very conservative estimate of his output would be in the order of 1.5 million books; it is more likely to have been twice or three or more times this number.[3]

PUBLISHING BACKGROUND

So what happens in the central years 1840 to 1870? The large edited collections are the location for an important development in the history of book publication in Britain. While many of these books had been produced in the early decades of the century for a moneyed audience, a number of events occurred during the period 1840 to 1870 which meant that the potential audience for the material expanded enormously.[4] During the 1840s many of the political controls over printing presses were lifted,[5] and following the disintegration of the Chartist movement, taxes on newspapers, on advertisements, on paper, on rag supplies for paper, were successively lifted from 1852 to 1861. Robert Philp, a great Chartist publisher, is a clear example of a new kind of editor who made much of the situation. His periodical publications, *Home Companion*, *Family Tutor* and *Family Treasury*, contained the material that went into his best-selling *Enquire Within*[6] which ran to ninety-seven editions before the turn of the century, each edition being approximately 10,000 books. Philp not only exploited looser government controls and much cheaper untaxed production, but must also have made effective use of the sophisticated distribution system for newspapers established by the Chartists during the 1840s, which elaborated on the back of the railway system and the associated growth in bookstalls and bookshops that resulted.

One other important example of this development, which took it one stage further, is found in the work of Samuel Beeton. Beeton had started the *English Women's Domestic Magazine* in 1852, capitalizing in a manner similar to Philp on the changes in the printing and publishing

Front cover of The Quickest Guide to Breakfast, Dinner & Supper *('Aunt Gertrude', c. 1880)*

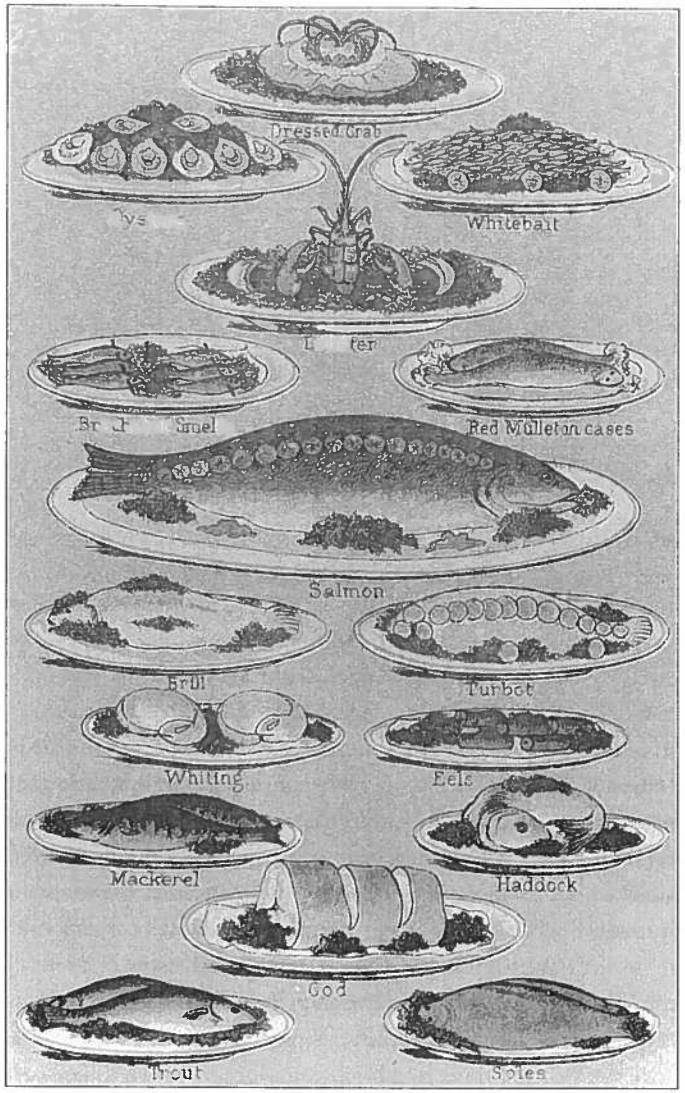
world, and selling the magazine for only 2*d*.[7] But Beeton was particularly close to the new printing technology. His magazine for the middle-class and aspiring housewife, *The Queen*, coming out from the 1860s onwards, used the new techniques for graphic illustration and reproduction, and made much of the new rotary steam-press technology.[8] More interesting was Beeton's relationship with the publishers Ward, Lock & Tyler, later Ward, Lock & Company, centring around the publication and republication of Isabella Beeton's *The Book of Household Management*. Initially brought out in monthly parts during 1858–60, *Household Management* probably achieved wide sales because it was therefore more affordable than Thomas Webster's *Encyclopaedia of*

Domestic Economy (1844) from which the cookery at any rate was largely derived. In 1861, Beeton published the parts in one volume. However, subsequently, from about 1870, *Household Management* was not only republished and re-edited as a single volume but was split up and published in small parts, including *Beeton's Book of the Laundry*, *Beeton's Domestic Recipe Book*, *Beeton's Housekeeper's Guide*, etc. The success of these focused and often shorter books is coincident with the sudden proliferation of single-authored specialized books from the 1870s onwards.

Why did Beeton, with Ward, Lock & Tyler, choose to split up the larger collection? There are a number of issues which partially address the answer to this question. The growth in bookstalls and bookshops could mean that the casual purchaser was becoming more likely, but casual purchase means smaller and cheaper books: books that don't require a large and serious investment. However, in Britain there was no consistent production of paperback books, so small hardcover books in publishers' bindings emerged. At the same time, the magazine industry was expanding quickly and creating different attitudes in both writers and readers towards fashion and status.

Periodicals of all kinds, but especially those directed towards the middle-class woman, were driven by the commercial interests of advertisers. The goods on display were part of current marketing, often being sold as 'novelties'; the advertisers' main concern was that the magazine or periodical should create strategies for bringing the reader back to the next issue, the next novelty. And magazines responded with the interview with a famous person, with elaborate correspondence columns, with the regular serialized fiction, with dates of events and descriptions of society life: constructing ideas of desirable fashion and status to whet the appetite and sate the pleasure of their readers.[9]

Furthermore, to have retained the voluminous household book alone would have been impossible in face of the speed with which several aspects of life directly addressed by books on food and cookery, were



Various fish garnished ready for serving (Plate from I. Beeton, Everyday Cookery and Household Book, *1891)*

changing. Where the technology of cookery had for most people remained largely the same for several hundred years, the second half of the nineteenth century saw the introduction of gas fires, gas refrigerators and cookers, electric cookers (in the last years) and associated devices; and where marketing, preservation and conservation had been central to the housewife's work for centuries, suddenly there were commercially bottled and canned foods,[10] and shops with unusual foreign foodstuffs, and pre-packaged foods. In order to address the different knowledge needed by this variety of change, printed material had to become more flexible: shorter and more specific books were essential.

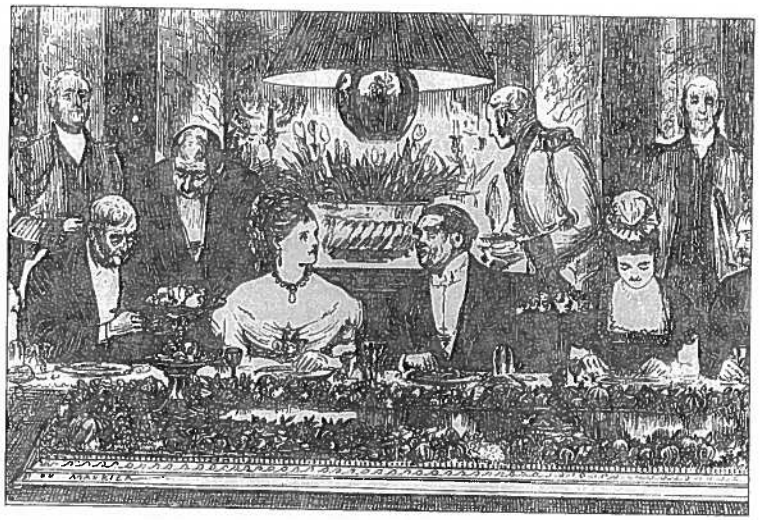
There is also the direct involvement of the writer and reader in this complex and sophisticated set of social and commercial issues. Tied into these other developments and inextricably linked with changes in education that occurred during the 1840–70 period, culminating in the Education Acts of 1870 and 1876, was the increasing professionalization of authorship and the ever-expanding number of readers. Most printed household books had until the 1830s been directed towards the middle classes. But a literature of food and cookery did exist for popular dissemination, in pamphlets, circulated diaries, recipes in newspapers and the like. When in the 1850s sales broadened across all classes of earners/workers,[11] because books were cheaper and the standard of living was improving, a large audience that had been reading printed material was brought into the *book*-buying public. This readership was also more varied, and its needs asked for different kinds of book. At the same time, as writing became more respectable, and more pressure was put on effectively employing the Copyright Act, more people began to earn their living as writers. Often the work was divided between writing for the periodicals and writing single books; but whereas periodical writing was normally anonymous, the book was published conveying the name of the author. Many of the specialized books cited above were written by journalists;

and indeed much of the content was derived from the columns the writers produced for magazines and newspapers. Instead of the magazine editor or publisher putting out large selections of material from the magazine, these books go from the writer for the magazine to the individually authored book.

As noted above, single-authored books from the early part of the century by Rundell, say, or Acton were normally addressed to the middle-class housewife. As her role shifted, and also as a result of many of the pressures of the edited collections discussed above, single-authored books diversified into works on the associated but *paid* work of cook or servant,[12] on the 'science' of domestic life (J. Buckmaster, *Buckmaster's Cookery,* 1874), on the attributes of fashion and status (C. Francatelli, *The Modern Cook,* 1846), and on the social role the wife should take up (A. Soyer, *Book of Fashionable Life*). The single most urgent problem to be addressed by this substantial middle-class housewife was what to do with her time. If technology and commerce had radically changed her domestic responsibilities, the Industrial Revolution and urbanization created a vast group of people looking for work in domestic service to relieve this middle-class woman of any further need to work. In addition, where the husband's work may in earlier decades have been within reasonable distance of the domestic community, suddenly large numbers of urban working and middle-class men started travelling to work,[13] leaving the family at home with an increasingly private and isolated structure.

HOUSEHOLD LIFESTYLE

If the history of printed material answers some of the questions around the proliferation of small books in the latter part of the nineteenth century, it is the radical change in the lifestyle of the middle-class housewife and increasingly in the lifestyle of working-class and artisan housewives that holds the answers to several more. What I would now



Dinner à la Russe *(Drawing by G. Dumaurier,* Punch, *1876)*

like to turn to are three interrelated issues: household management, the private family and the separation of the genders within the home. Against this background I shall focus on one particular specialized book, that addressed to an individual meal: not only did the books proliferate, but so also, as the other articles in this collection attest, did the meals.

Maria Rundell's *A New System of Domestic Economy* (1806 and many later editions) is addressed to the middle-class housewife. While the text is organized largely by foodstuffs, very roughly in the order in which one might eat them at a dinner, the writer is not concerned with individual meals. She includes some notes of advice on having a 'well-regulated' dinner table in case the husband should bring home a visitor, and a few words on noonings and suppers 'for accidental visitors'; but the comments are in terms of the organization of eating around the traditional large dinner. Similarly Mrs Dalgairns's *The Practice of Cookery* (1829) is concerned with food within the general

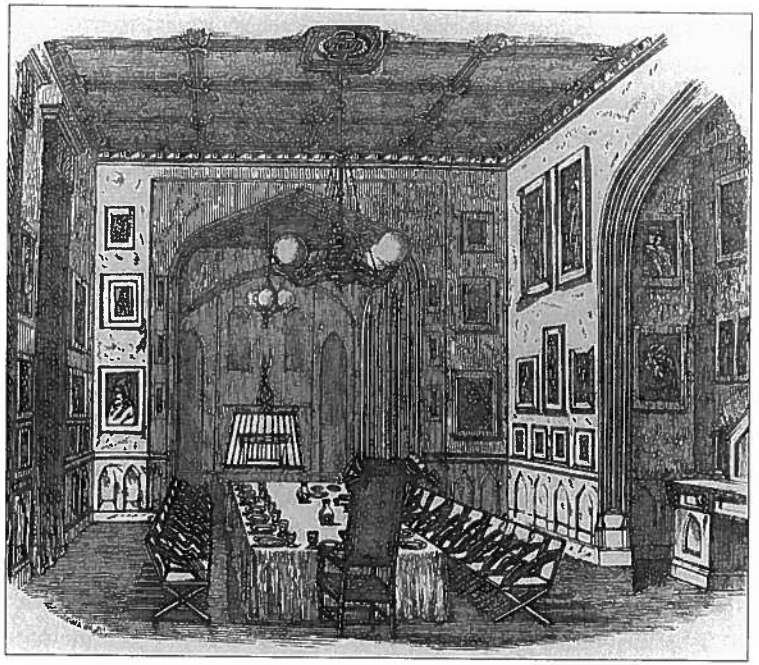
requirements of housekeeping, not with meals as such; and Esther Copley's *Cottage Comforts* (1825 and many later editions) intertwines household management with modes of cooking and preserving, as well as extensions into producing food for charitable purposes, as for the sick.

By 1845, the date of Eliza Acton's *Modern Cookery*, considerable attention is being given to ingredients. The introduction of foreign foodstuffs, the growing number of shops, and the increase in cases of food adulteration, may all have contributed to her focus on the detail of foodstuffs. Yet there is still little on meals themselves, even though the book is aimed at those with no experience of household management, the leisured children of the emergent bourgeoisie. In the 1855 revised edition Acton places more stress on well-prepared dinners, but is still mainly concerned with the purity of the foodstuffs and the organization of household economy around them. Webster's *Encyclopaedia of Domestic Economy* (1844) also speaks quite unselfconsciously to the middle-class housewife and describes a broad range of household economies; but within this, although there is very little on the more mundane lunch, nooning, breakfast, or supper, there is advice on the social entertainments of desserts, routs and balls.

While Beeton's *Household Management* (1861) is derived from Webster, it is far more self-consciously middle class. It provides the specific metaphor of progress and civilization to the meal of dinner; and offers a special section on luncheon as a tide-you-over because urban working patterns make breakfast earlier and dinner later; suppers are described as less necessary in this domestic pattern. The whole of Beeton is arranged rather like a four-course dinner, with an emphasis on etiquette and upward mobility for the aspiring middle-class housewife. It is worth noting that from the middle of the nineteenth century certainly to at least the early twentieth, daughters of middle-class households were seen to be undereducated in household management, partly as a result of needing to appear leisured in order to

maintain their family's social status. Both M. Careful's 'Julia' in *Household Hints* (1880) and O. Green's 'DS' or devoted spouse in *What to Have for Breakfast* (1905) suffer from this ignorance, as do many other examples.

Charles Francatelli explicitly addresses different classes of readers with different books. *The Modern Cook* (1846) is for the substantial middle-class housewife and is all about the organization of English, French and *à la Russe* dinners, between which fashionable competition is sweeping the country at the time. Yet his *Cook's Guide* (1862) which is addressed to the ordinary housewife, retains the more conventional



Dining-room of the Sublime Society of Beef Steaks (W. Arnold, The Life and Death of the Sublime Society of Beef Steaks, *1871)*

two-course dinner alone, and provides brief additional information on breakfast and supper as domestic meals. Also dividing his books by class, Alexis Soyer first writes *The Modern Housewife* (1849) and then *A Shilling Cookery for the People* (1855). As with Francatelli, the later emergence of a book specifically concerned with daily domestic cookery, is probably tied to the change in publishing and printing that encouraged a broader readership in the 1850s and '60s.[14] What is significant is that the middle-class books treat the instructions about food preparation as if they are bound to a particular social gesture. Soyer's *Modern Housewife* starts with a dialogue about the importance of 'visiting', especially in the country. Following immediately from this is a discussion around the preparation of breakfasts and lunches as part of this social world; the book then goes on to focus on the preparation of dinner as the centrepiece to social entertainment.

Beeton of course roughly follows this pattern while transferring it to an urban setting. Many later substantial books such as *Cassell's Dictionary of Cookery* (1881), duplicate the focus on luncheon and breakfast dishes, with the 'dinner party' and its 'principles' as the heart of social entertainment within the home. Whereas Rundell assumes that dinners may be given to occasional guests and accidental visitors, Acton clearly notes the large numbers of rules for 'dinner'-giving and Beeton stresses that the 'dinner' is the middle-class housewife's contribution to upward social mobility. In 1889, A. Filippini's *The Table* says:

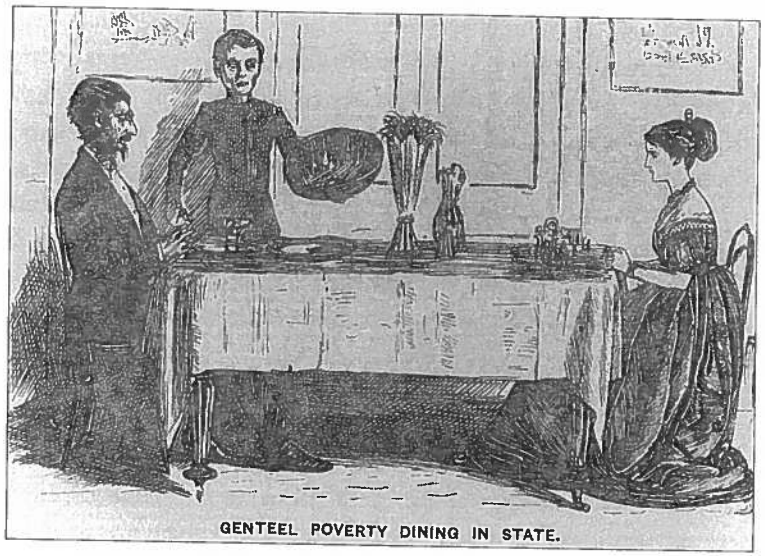
> Nearly every family of means is in the habit of giving a few dinners to its friends during the year. As a matter of course, the members of the family are, in return, invited to 'dine' out. (p. 20)

And by the end of the century there are references to the madness of holding dinners more than four times a year; C.H. Senn's comments on the frequency of 'squalid' dinners indicate the chore that this social

gesture had become. Simultaneously, breakfast, luncheon, picnics, teas and a variety of suppers – theatre, ball and rout – became meals invested with social gesture.

Significantly, most of the earlier specialized books are those on dining. In the 1840s it is clear that there were major changes in social dinner-serving to which many food writers for middle-class periodicals responded in a variety of partisan ways. *The Quarterly Review* of 1834–6 ran contributions from 'Walker's Original', who generated a range of post-Brillat-Savarin gastronomic literature often associated with men's clubs. George Vasey's *Illustrations of Eating* (1847), the anonymous *London at Table* (1851), J. Timb's *Hints for the Table* (1859) and W. Jerrold's *Epicure's Year Book* (1865 and later annual editions) are examples among many. Clubs, and to some extent pubs and taverns, provided the opportunity of eating away from home. This was often necessary during a long working day, but most of the gastronomic writers are treating dinner-going for men as a social activity. In several ways club culture can be seen as a mimicking of the illusion of aristocratic hospitality whose servants are plentiful and invisible. Timbs even refers to the need for circular tables 'to revive the chivalric glory of the round table' (p. 24). The clubs provided men with a home away from home where they were released from domestic responsibility essentially by paying a servant to provide the meal.

The elaboration of the domestic dinner into a social gesture may be seen at least partly as a response to this male-centred world. Certainly the books which focus on the housewife's preparation of such formal meals begin to be published in the 1860s–'70s, yet they also have their own social demands. An example is Mary Hooper's *Little Dinners* (1874), which *The Queen* notes as providing 'exactly what the young English wife wishes to know, and what the ordinary cookery-book does not teach her'. Hooper underlines the importance of mimicking higher-class gesture even in stringent economic circumstances. She says:



Punch *provided this comment on those who 'mimic higher class gesture even in stringent economic circumstances'* (Punch, *1867*)

> All young housekeepers, and, indeed, not a few of the more experienced, know the difficulty of getting up little dinners for five or six persons without incurring too great an expense, or too severely taxing the powers of the cook. Such dishes as the time-honoured cod and oyster sauce, the haunch or saddle of mutton, always costly, are now quite beyond the reach of persons with small incomes, and it has become necessary for them to find less expensive substitutes, or to cease to dispense hospitality at all. (p. v)

At the same time Hooper has a nostalgia for the 'fashion of our grandmothers' time [when] . . . ladies would vie with each other in the art of preparing delicacies for the table' (p. xiii). She and a number of other writers in the 1870–90 period emphasize the importance of training young women in domestic economy so that they can maintain

the appearance, if not the basis, of a substantial middle-class family (A. Bowman, *The New Cookery Book*, 1869, p. 589; J. Buckmaster, *Buckmaster's Cookery*, 1874, pp. 143 ff.; *Cassell's Dictionary of Cookery* 1881, p. xciv). Harriet de Salis and Nancy Lake, both of whom write on dinners, in *The Art of Cookery* (1898) and *Menus Made Easy* (1884) respectively, as well as on other meals in the 1880s and '90s, are concerned with the cost and with keeping within moderate means, while maintaining social appearances. De Salis even publishes her books in different bindings: 1*s* 0*d* for those of moderate means and 1*s* 6*d* for those of substantial income. The education of the middle-class woman in domestic economy is focused on thrift, not frugality, thrift that enables the maintenance of fashionable status.

Mary Hooper is a writer who relates this social gesture intimately to the domestic life of the middle-class housewife. Her *Handbook for the Breakfast Table* (1873) describes the importance of a good breakfast to the 'busy city man' who swallows the poor breakfast in haste and then rushes off, often sustained only by a sandwich until dinner, frequently resulting in headaches and other ailments. The housewife in such a family is supported by servants, who are also part of the appearance of social status. Among her domestic responsibilities is to produce via the servants a good breakfast and a good dinner for her husband, and the occasional social dinner.[15] It is highly likely that this woman has few cooking skills herself, but she needs to know how to tell the servants to prepare meals, and so needs books that help her with this. Furthermore, socially oriented meals will often be 'à la mode' or 'recherché', fashionable, new and needing explanation: another reason for having a book about them. More interestingly, those people with servants have a lot less to do and are faced with the problem of 'filling in time'. Steel and Gardiner's *The Complete Indian Housekeeper and Cook* (1890) discusses the problem of eating too much and having too many meals, when there is too little to do. Even *Cassell's Shilling Cookery* (1888) notes that decoration of food takes time 'but there are a great

many persons who would gladly employ their spare time, of which, they have plenty' (p. 324). Just so, there is the late-nineteenth-century emphasis on the need for the middle-class housewife to be able to produce *one* dish for herself, partly because it demonstrates competence and skill to her husband and servants, and partly because it gives her physical exercise (!) and something to do.

Although it is focused in a particular way, the picture drawn by these writers is of a group of women who no longer have active household work, whose duty is to the maintenance of domestic and social appearances, and whose lives are increasingly separated from men and isolated from one another. A. Hayward's *The Art of Dining* (1852 and new edition of 1883) notes that women never dine in public. Indeed, even if she has an expendable income, there are few places a woman can go in public with her husband, fewer with another woman, and even fewer on her own. In response, women elaborated on the social gesture of 'visiting' which came from the country house, and constructed a sophisticated set of domestic and social occasions in the home which were located around food.

Usually middle-class women ate at home, only joining their husbands for breakfast, and eating lunch, tea and occasionally supper rather than dinner. Major L. . . in *Breakfasts, Luncheons, and Ball Suppers* (1887) refers to lunch as 'the ladies' meal' (p. 26) and Mary Ronald's *Luncheons* (1902) notes that men are invited to lunch only on special occasions. Breakfasts move away from the 'light' meal of the 1850s (Philp, *Housewife's Reason Why*, 1857; Timbs, *Hints for the Table*, 1859), and become highly elaborate. Book after book, from A. Kenney Herbert's *Fifty Breakfasts* (1894), M.L. Allen's *Breakfast Dishes for Every Morning of Three Months* (14th edn, 1892), H. Southgate's *Things a Lady Would Like to Know* (1881), Florence Jack's *Breakfast and Savoury Dishes* (1903), even the educational L.O.C.'s *Breakfast and Savoury Dishes* (1885), to C.H. Senn's *Ideal Breakfast Dishes, Savouries and Curries* (1910) and *Breakfast and Supper Dishes* (1898), talk about the boredom

Boating-party picnic, with plentiful liquid nourishment (Rural History Centre, University of Reading)

of the average breakfast table, the monotony of breakfast (M.L. Allen), of 'bacon and eggs' only occasionally relieved by 'eggs and bacon' (Kenney Herbert), and the need to make the meal interesting. The early commercial development of convenience food for breakfast underlines the importance of producing varied and interesting food for this meal, despite the constraints on time. Before these, O. Green tells us in *What to Have for Breakfast* (1905) women can produce 'a dainty, hygienic, satisfying breakfast' (p. 5) with forethought and 'persistent, if determined, cheerfulness'. These books also ally breakfast with savoury snacks that can be eaten by both husband and wife at supper.

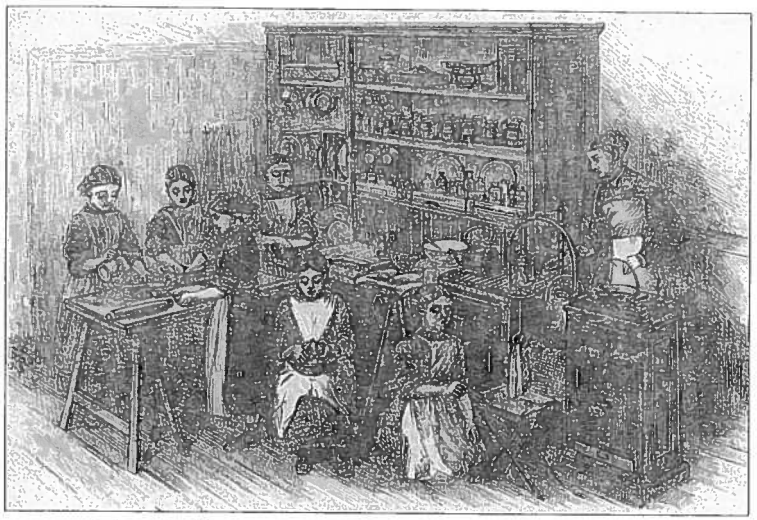
It becomes apparent that the wife may only have expected to join the husband at dinner when it was a special occasion. A. Bowman's description of the dinner table implies that it is primarily for the man of the house, who expects to consume a fresh joint every day (p. 3). The

social dinner, or dinner party, also becomes one of the few places where men and women who are not in the same family come together. Women are temporarily allowed to participate in a man's meal, and of course have to leave the table to the men at the end of it. M. Careful in *Household Hints* (1880) gives explicit instruction for a woman's participation in dinner when a (male) guest comes to eat:

> After dinner you sit awhile at the dessert and the wine passes, while conversation mingles with the pleasant smile. But when you find a little weariness pervading the scene, you rise and retire to the withdrawing room – this being of course always required when a friend is with you. (pp. 29–30)

Other mixed-gender social occasions such as the picnic, the ball-supper, the tennis party, also revolved around the preparation of meals specific to the occasion, often adopted because they satisfied the need to entertain but were in fact cheaper than formal dinners, yet still requiring books to instruct the housewife in the fashionable, and economic, presentation of them.

While the books on meals can give only a partial understanding of the way that women organized their lives, what is interesting is that the pattern of small and frequent meals in the home for women, and the focus on food as a social gesture, is found in books addressed to all classes of women by the 1890s. Even the textbooks used in ordinary schools such as Mary McNaughtan's *Lessons in Practical Cookery* (1895), not just those for middle-class women being trained in domestic economy such as those by Rose Owen Cole of the National Training School for Cookery (including her *Breakfast and Savoury Dishes*, 1885), were organized around these assumptions. As more families aspired to a bourgeois, middle-class lifestyle, the wives within those families were expected to adopt the private domestic world:



Cookery school lesson (C.M. Buckton, Food and Home Cookery, *1879)*

> Over the period from 1841 to 1914 the greatest change in women's occupations was the rising incidence of housewifery as the sole occupation for married women. In 1851, one in four married women (with husbands alive) was employed. By 1911, the figure was one in ten.[16]

The result is that an entire range of books addressed to audiences with quite different purposes – education, fashion and status, or domestic management – all begin to offer similar approaches to the structure of meals. The private housewife responded to social and domestic isolation with a series of gestures related to food. Her life revolved around a proliferation of small meals, a snack culture that places enormous emphasis on the significance of food preparation and presentation. Magazines and periodicals that carried the recipes, and the related published books, were essential to this development and went hand in

hand with it, alongside the commercial, technical and technological changes of the late nineteenth century. Some of the questions arising from the initial starting point of the enormous explosion of specialized food books in the latter part of the nineteenth century may have been addressed. But we are now left with a further set: does this description of a social history relate to the food disorders of the twentieth-century western world?

CHAPTER FOUR

EVERYTHING STOPS FOR TEA

Laura Mason

I like a nice cup of tea in the morning
For to start the day you see,
And at half past eleven
Well my idea of heaven
Is a nice cup of tea.
I like a nice cup of tea with my dinner,
And a nice cup of tea with my tea,
And when it's time for bed
There's a lot to be said
For a nice cup of tea.

Thus wrote A.P. Herbert in *Home and Beauty* of 1937, neatly summing up in verse one of the conundrums of British life: that tea is not only a drink, but also a meal. This has been so for about two hundred years. Matters are further complicated by the fact that tea meals have two entirely different forms, distinguished by the prefixes 'afternoon' and 'high'; and that both are usually called 'tea' with no further ado by the people who eat them. They know what they mean; but the two meals represent a wealth of social and regional differences, for those who eat dinner and then tea, as opposed to tea and then dinner, are likely to lead very different lives. This reflects a change in fashion with regard to the timing of dinner during the early nineteenth century, and much of the confusion can be traced back to that time. The difference between afternoon tea and high tea is intimately bound up with this confusion over the names, times and forms of meals, for high tea eaten after a midday dinner is likely to be a main meal and probably one taken in the provinces; and afternoon tea,