

MARY EVELYN'S 'OECONOMIS TO A MARRIED FRIEND', 1677

Frances Harris, in her new book *Transformations of Love* which we review in this issue, describes how Mary Evelyn, wife of the author of *Acetaria*, wrote a memorandum on household management for her husband's young friend Margaret, newly married to the politician and courtier Sidney Godolphin. The couple had lately taken (and refurbished) lodgings in Whitehall and Margaret, whose ardent (but never carnal) relationship with John Evelyn dated back to 1669, was an innocent in housewifery. As Evelyn later wrote, she 'never was House-keeper before, had lost her Mother long since, & being from a Child, bred in Courts, may be thought (without reproch) not much to have buisied her head about Oeconomique matters.' Evelyn, on the other hand, had always delighted in instruction (though here delegating the task to his wife) – whether in gardening, aesthetics, matters of faith or, most fondly perhaps, running a house and kitchen.

The manuscript here transcribed is in the Pforzheimer Library in the Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center at the University of Texas. The original, of which I assume this to be a contemporary clerk's copy, was an enclosure to a letter from John Evelyn to Samuel Pepys dated 3 October 1685. Pepys was on the look-out for a new housekeeper (Mary Evelyn would suggest a candidate in the following month), so presumably it was to help him clear his mind about her necessary qualifications. The final part of this manuscript is the distinct, and unexplained, specification of Lady Rolle's ideal housekeeper. It is not clear whether this was sent by Evelyn too or whether Pepys merely filed it together with his friend's letter and memorandum. The documents once formed part of the library of the Victorian collector Alfred Morrison, dispersed at the end of the nineteenth century.

Margaret Godolphin had died young, in childbirth, in 1678. To console himself and comfort the widower, Evelyn proposed to write a short biography. For *aides-mémoire* he requested, and received, many letters and papers that he had earlier sent her, including this memorandum. *The Life of Mrs Godolphin* remained in manuscript (there were certainly two versions) until 1847. It was subsequently printed in 1848, 1888, 1904 and 1939. This last is the best edition, by Harriet Sampson (Oxford University Press). The 1847 text is available at <http://www.bedoyere.freeserve.co.uk>.

Harriet Sampson printed extensive extracts of the memorandum (though not Lady Rolle's specification) as an appendix to her edition. Extracts were also printed in the catalogue of the dealer S.J. Davey in 1889 and by H.B. Wheatley in the supplementary volume, entitled *Pepysiana*, to his edition of Pepys's Diary (1918). The catalogue of the Pforzheimer Library, available here at the British Library, also contains a transcript. Most are not complete and entire, though domestic historians will find all of it quite captivating, hence its appearance here. I am most grateful to Guy de la Bedoyère for supplying copies of the document. His *Particular Friends* (Boydell Press, 1997) is an edition of correspondence between Pepys and Evelyn and was very helpful in sorting out the history of the manuscript.

I have made certain small changes to the text. I have modernized the spelling of 'the' (invariably written as 'y^e') and I have extended many of the above-the-line contractions such as 'y^r', 'wth', and 'w^{ch}'. I have not changed the capitalization. The original was laid out in double columns: these I have not attempted to replicate. Nor have I corrected the arithmetic.

There remains the question of the date. That given in the text of Mary Evelyn's letter to Margaret Godolphin, below, is agreed to be a copyist's mistake. Frances Harris suggests it should be 1677, as Mrs Godolphin's preliminary request for advice was in a letter dated May 1676. Harriet Sampson suggests 1676.

Tom Jaine

For a Family of Eight Persons (as many as were in the Ark) this, I think, to be a decent Provision, conjecturally computed, as to the Prices, little more or less, & within the compass you give me.

Weekly Expence for the Table.

	£	s	d
One Joynt of Butch ^{rs} . Meat	001	05	00
A 2 ^d . Dish of Foule & Fish	000	15	00
A 3 ^d . Dessert	000	10	00

Note

The 1st. Course may bee Beef, Mutton, Veal, Lamb, Pork &c^a., as the Season requires.

The 2^d. Course, Rabbits, Chick Pidgeons &c^a., not Pheasant, Patridge, or costly Fouls often.

The 3^d. Tarts, Creams, Artich.: Pease, Beanes, Cheese, Apples, Quelq Chose &c^a.

Bread, the quantity of $\frac{1}{2}$ Bushel and Baking	000	03	06
Beer, one Barril per month	000	03	00
Ale	000	03	00
Wine, one bottle per day	000	07	00
Butter 1 lib. per day	000	05	00
Salt, Eggs, Oatmeal, Salletting, Herbs &c ^a .	000	02	06
Grosser's fruit, Sugar, Spices, Sampier, Capers &c ^a .	000	02	06
Raw Fruit (according to the Season), Must ^d . Vinegar, Oyle &c ^a .	000	02	06
Fuel, for the Kitchen $\frac{1}{2}$ Bush ^l . Seacoals per diem, and for washing, if you wash at home, 6 Chald ⁿ . a year	000	02	06
Wood-fuel for 2 Chambers, your owne & Closet	000	05	00
Candles 6 lib. per week, reckoning the Winter longer Evenings	000	02	06

	£	s	d
Soape, Starch, Washing &c ^a . changing your owne Sheets once a fortnight, the Servants monthly; in all 5 Beds; also Napkins, Table-cloths &c ^a .	000	02	00
Brooms, Mops &c ^a .	000	01	00
Sum per Week —	004	12	00

Living in London.

House-keeping	244	04	00
Your own Clothing (you being already so plentifully stock'd)	066	00	00
Your Husbands Cloaths	040	00	00
Your Women's Wages	010	00	00
Your 2 Maids	008	00	00
Valet de Chambre	010	00	00
Footman & Groome	020	00	00
Coach & Chair hire	026	00	00
Your Husbd's. 2 Geldings	030	00	00
Charity & Pocket-money for Gratuities &c ^a .	040	00	00

Annual Expences 480 04 00

Bill of Fare for Sunday

1			
Pottage of a knuckle of Veal, piece of a neck of Mutton, a little bone of Beef, a little Pork or Bacon, or without, & some Herbs	000	03	00
2			
Roast-beef (if you please) 3 1/2 Stone or Fillet of Veale	000	05	00
3.			
Rabits, or what you please	000	01	06
Artichokes, Pease, Asparagus, as the Season is	000	01	00
Total —	000	10	06

£ s d

Monday.

1.			
Mutton, Leg or Shouldr ^r .	000	02	00
2.			
Chick. Pidg. Rab. or young Ducklings, according to the Season	000	02	06
3.			
Dissert, one Dish, Tart or as you like	000	01	06
Sum –	000	06	00

Tuesday.

1			
Beef to boyle (weight 12 lb) with Pudding, Dumpling, Cabbage, Car[rots,] Turnips, or Sprigs &c ^a .	000	03	00
2.			
A neck of Mutton roasted	000	01	04
3.			
Tart, Fruit or something like, dessert	000	01	06
Sum –	000	05	10

Wednesday.

1			
Fricassey of Chick, Lamb or Veal, Rab. as you please	000	02	06
2.			
Quarter of Lamb roasted or Joynt of Mutton, as is most seasonable	000	02	06
3.			
Baked Pudd. Tart, Dessart	000	01	06
Sum	000	06	06

	£	s	d
Thursday.			
1			
Pottage, or stewd meats, Scotch Collops &c ^a .	000	02	00
2.			
Leg of Mutton or fillet of Veal with the Knuckle	000	03	00
3.			
Pidgeon-pye of which you may save a part cold &c ^a .	000	04	00
Dissert	000	00	06
Sum –	000	09	06

Friday.			
1			
Pottage Maigre	000	01	00
2.			
Fish of what sort ordinary (fresh or salt) you please, for it will else goe but a little way with the Servants; Fasting-days being of all other (I find) most troublesome in a Family	000	04	00
3			
Milk, Rice, Oatmeal frumeti[e] Eggs, Tansy, Herb-tarts, Quaking-pudd. White-pots, any of these that is in season	000	01	00
Tart, Cheese, Fruit &c ^a .	000	01	06
Sum –	000	07	06

Saturday.			
1.			
Calves head boil'd (broil'd or stew'd better) Tripes, Beans, Pease, Bacon (according to Season) Pork & Pease in Wint[er]. Stew'd Beef or any of these	000	02	00
2.			
A Breast of Veal, Loyne of Mutton, as the Season	000	02	00

	£	s	d
3.			
Capon, Goose	000	02	06
Dissert, fruit &c ^a .	000	01	00
Sum –	000	07	06
 Total of the Weeke	 002	 13	 04

This comes neare the Calculation of the first

Column on the other side in which are
reckon'd Bread, Beer, Wine, Spice,
Butter, Eggs, Fuel, Candles, Washing;
being in all by the Weeke

004 12 09

What is left at dinner & that may handsomely be spar'd from the Servants (whom I am sure you will not abridge, but this will be the discretion of your woman, who you say shall be your Housekeeper) may [be] reserv'd for their Supper; though in London they have in most places only Bread & Beer: But here in the Country where they work continually and much abroad, they will require Supper of Flesh, of which something is kept for your Breakfast.

Dear Child,

Of the 500^{lb} per Ann. (which you tell me is what you would contract your Expences to) and that you are to provide your Husbands Cloaths, Stables, & all other House-Expences (except his Pocket-money) I leave you 20^{lb} over, and for your owne Pocket &c^a. 40^{lb} (In all 60^{lb}) and that little enough considering Sickness, Physicians, and innumerable Accidents that are not to be provided agst. with any certainty. But (as the Proverb you know is) I am to cut your Cloake, according to your Cloth; and I have done it as near as possibly I could, with some variety, but without Dainties or Entertainments; you living so just & regular a Life, &

having so good & reasonable a Husband; and I pray God to bless you both & pardon the defects of my Obedience to your so earnest desires, who shall ever remaine,

Dear Child,
Yours. M.E.

April 13.
1675

Houshold-Stuffe &c^a.

	£	s	d
In 1. Linnen will cost you	049	12	00
2. Bedding	030	00	00
3. Plate	197	00	00
4. Pewter	015	18	00
5. Tin	000	08	06
6. Copper & Brasse	007	00	06
7. Iron	006	15	00
8. Wood	003	16	00
9. Glasse & Earth ⁿ . Ware	002	11	00
Sum –	313	01	00

Of all which you are to see what you can be well without, that it may amount to less: but the Total is not considerable if the Particulars be good & substantial for you will save nothing by slight things.

Now as to the Particulars, whence this Sum^r rises, & as far as I am able to direct, I conceive the following may be enough; you already having so nobly & handsomly furnish'd your Lodgings & Rooms of Reception &c^a. with Beds, Hangings, Chairs, &c^a.

Linnen.

To every Bed 2 p^{re}. of Sheets, to your own 4.

In all 12 p^{re}., that is 4 p^{re}. for the ordinary Men & Maid-servants at 15^s. a p^{re}. 003 00 00

The Valet de Chamb & your Woman's 4 p ^{re} . at 25 ^s .	005	00	00
Your owne Bed 4 p ^{re} .	013	00	00
Pillow Biers	002	05	00
<i>[carried forward]</i>	023	05	00

Nappery & Table Linnen

Six larger & 6 lesser Tablecloths to serve an oval table & Side-board of Fren[ch] ordinary Diaper	006	00	00
A suit of fine Diaper & another of Damask for Extra. occasion	010	00	00
Napkins — 6 Doz.	006	00	00
Towells — 1 Doz.	000	15	00
For the Servants.			
Six Table-cloths of Flaxen Cloth 2 a week	001	00	00
Napkins 3 Doz.	001	10	00
Towells for them 12	000	10	00
Six Dresser Cloths for the Kitchin	000	09	00
Dish-clouts, 6 yards at first, afterwards old Linnen will be found soon enough to supply	000	03	00
Su ^m [of linen and nappery] —	049	12	00
Feather-beds for yourself I set not downe			
Your Servants 4 will cost as above	030	00	00

Plate, at the least some of it

Bason & Ewer	050	00	00
A Cover'd Cup & Salver	015	00	00
Sugar caster, Pepper & Mustard-Box &c ^a .	009	00	00
Two Tumblers	004	00	00
Ladle for Pottage	002	00	00
Salt-seller large	004	00	00
Yet this may be omitted, because they now use only			
6 Trencher-salts	003	00	00

12 Spoons	007	00	00
12 Forks	006	00	00
12 Knives — Silver handles	006	00	00
A Posset-bason	012	00	00
A larger & 2 smaller Chafing dishes	017	00	00
Large Candlesticks one p ^{re} .	014	00	00
Snuffers & dish	005	00	00
A Cover'd Porringer	007	00	00
Trencher plates at least 6	036	00	00
Sum —	197	00	00

This you'll be always augmenting & I should choose rather plain than wrought; there being so much lost in change of the other when the fashion alters. But you tell mee you have 1/2 doz. large and other dishes already, which with 2 doz. more of Trencher plates will be enough to serve your owne Table all in plate, than which nothing is more cleanly & honorable.

Pewter.

Dishes 8 of 4 Sizes	003	00	00
Mazarins — 6	001	10	00
Py-plates 2	000	10	00
Entermesses 2	000	10	00
Plates 3 doz.	005	08	00
Cisterne & Ladle to wash Glasses	001	05	00
A Flagon	000	06	00
Candlesticks 1 p ^{re} . for ordinary use	000	08	00
A Cheese-plate	000	08	00
A Bason	000	04	00
Cullender	000	05	00
Porringers 3	000	04	00
A Desert hoops or else of silver	001	05	00
Chamber-pots 4	000	10	00

White Earth is cleaner but too subject to be broken & some should be had there should be one of silver.

Close Stool-pan	000	05	00
White Earth is also best.			
A Bed-pan for one thats sick	000	05	00
Sum –	015	18	00

Tin.

Dish-covers 3	000	04	00
A Dredger	000	00	06
Basting-Ladle	000	00	06
Grater	000	01	06
A smaller for Spices.			
Apple-roaster, if not silver	000	01	00
A Bottom to take up Fish	000	01	00
Sum —	000	08	06

Copper and Brass.

A large Copper pot to boyl Beef &c ^a . in	001	10	00
Two Pot. for smaller Joynts, Artichokes &c ^a .	000	15	00
A Kettle of brass, to boyle Fish in and wash foule Dishes	000	10	00
Skillets 3	000	10	00
A Copper-pudding-pan tin'd	000	08	00
A Stew-pan of Copper tin'd with Cover	000	08	00
Frying-pan tinn'd	000	07	00
Dripping-pan tinn'd	000	15	00
Sawce-pan of Copper tin'd	000	02	06
Brass Scummer	000	02	00
Brass-Ladle for dripping	000	01	00
A Brass-Slice to take up Cullops, Eggs, Fritters &c ^a .	000	01	06
A Copper-pot to warme Beer in — tin'd	000	02	06
Brass-Candlesticks 6	000	08	00
Warming-pan of Copper or one of Silver	001	00	00
Sum	007	00	06

Iron.

Spits 2 one large another small for lesser Joynts	000	10	00
A Beef-fork	000	01	00
Dripping-pan	000	08	00
Jack	002	00	00
Rack, fire-iron, Shovell, Tongs fork			
Coal grate &c ^a .	003	00	00
Chafing dish	000	02	00
Gridiron	000	02	00
Mortar of Bell-mettle & Pestle-Iron	000	06	00
Chop ^g knife, Cleaver &c ^a . and knife for your Cookmaid	000	06	00
Sum —	006	15	00

Wood.

Large Washing-tubs	000	14	00
Pails — 2	000	05	00
A flower-tub	000	02	00
A smaller for Oatmeal	000	01	06
Two Trays to take meat in & make puddings in	000	02	06
A powdring tub	000	08	00
A dough-trough, if you make your owne Bread	000	05	00
A Salt-box	000	01	00
Bellows 2 p ^{re} . ordinary	000	03	00
Rolling-pin & peelee	000	03	00
A Napkin-press	001	00	00
Brushes 4 long 2 short for rooms	000	04	00
Slickstone of Lignum Vitae	000	07	00
Sum	003	16	00

Wicker.

A Large flasket for the Laundry	000	04	00
Two Baskets for the Buttery, one for Glasses, the other for Table Linnen	000	07	00
According to their finess they cost more.			
Sum —	000	11	00

Glasses		
12 Drinking-glasses	}	
2 Cruets for Oyle & Vingr.		001 00 00
A water-glass &c ^a .		
Sum		001 00 00
Earth		
2 Sallat dishes	}	
6 Fruit-dishes (or of silver)		001 00 00
12 Plates		
Sum		001 00 00
Total of all		313 01 06

I have perhaps omitted somethings; though I think not many of necessary use; and it is almost impossible to tell what may at one time or other bee wanting till you have occasion; and so things will multiply and in a little time you will have all complete for your family and designs. Curiositys are infinite; and I have heard wise people affirme that what is more than useful is Burden & Lumber not Houshold-stuff. But my Dear you impose another task on me, which I am sure you will need no advice in, how you should governe your Accounts & reckon with your servants. Well, if I must also obey you in this; all I can say is,

That if you have a faithful Woman or Housemaid, it will cost you little trouble. It were necessary that such a one were a good Market-woman, & whose Eye must bee from the Garret to the Cellar; nor is it enough they see all things made cleane in the House, but set in ord^r also; That if any Goods be broken or worne out they shew or bring it to her that she may see in what condicoⁿ it is, that nothing bee hid or imbezel'd. Use as seldom Charewomen and Out-helpers as you can they but make Gossips. She should bee the first of Servants stirring and last in bed, & have some authority over the rest, & you must hear her & give

her credit, yet not without your owne Examination & inspection, that Complaints come not to you without cause. It is necessary alsoe she should know to write and cast up small sums & bring you her Book every Saturday-night, which you may cause to be enter'd into another for your selfe, that you may from time to time judge of Prices & things which are continually altering. This Servant is to keep your Spicery, Sweetmeats Cordial waters &c^a. & the rest of the Servants are to account to her; & such a Servant (I tell you) is a Jewel not easily to be found; but such there be & such I wish you with all other Happiness.

D. D. Farewell.

Mr Ev. writes this from me. If there be faults (as too many I believe there are) blame him with me, & I shall bear it the better.

My Lady Rolles's Description of the Housekeeper She looks out for.

Shee is

- 1 — To raise Paste well for Pastys & great Pyes, as well as small ones & Tarts.
- 2 — To dress fish well.
- 3 — To make Potages & all sorts of French Dishes now in use.
- 4 — To make French Bread & all sorts of Puddings.
- 5 — To pickle all sort of Sallat.
- 6 — To understand all that belongs to a Man-cooke, & set her hand to dress Dinner & Supper.
- 7 — To know how to collar Beef, Pig, Cow-heels &c^a.
- 8 — To know how to pot Venison & fowle.

- 9 — To look after the Dairy-maid, Cook-maid & Housemayd.
- 10 — To keep the Storehouse & all the Houshold-linnen & mend & make it, & help to fold it when she is at leisure, that she may see it well done.
- 11 — To see the House kept cleane, and help to brush the furniture.
- 12 — To still Waters.
- 13 — To make Breakfast for Strangers, or Caudles Jelly broths & such like.
- 14 — To make Cakes & Creames
- 15 — To set her hand to anything in the Kitchin, when the Maid has other Work to doe.
- 16 — But the Chief thing I desire is to be an excellent Cooke, a good Housewife, & a willing Servant to doe what I thinke belongs to her place.
- 17 — I will give her 8^{lb} & bear her Charges downe; but I will not be ty'd to bear her Charges to Londⁿ. againe, if she undertakes more than I find she is able to perform or willing.
- 18 — I keep a Cookmaid & a Scullion, man or boy.