With the same forthrightness, Catherine E. Beecher faced the servant problem. She saw here a social issue almost beyond solution in America. She was sensitive to the basic paradox of 'domestic service' within a democratic state.

'There is no point where the women of this country need more wisdom than in relation to those whom they employ in their services,' she wrote in 1841 in her chapter 'On the Care of Domestics.' 'The subject is attended with many difficulties. The peculiar trials which American women suffer from this source are the necessary evils connected with our most valuable civil blessings.' [4]

With her sister, Harriet Beecher Stowe, author of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, she completely rewrote her textbook on domestic economy. The new version, dedicated to the 'American woman' and entitled *The American Woman's Home*, appeared in 1869. Here the earlier fragmentary hints were elaborated: 'Every human being stands (according to the Declaration of Independence) on the same level. . . . There are no hereditary titles, no monopolies, no privileged classes. . . . All are to be free to rise and to fall as the waves of the sea. . . . The condition of domestic service, however, still retains about it something of the influence from feudal times.' [5]

The pseudo-feudalistic conditions then prevalent in Europe are brought out by comparison of America with England: 'In England the class who go to service *are* a class and service is a profession. . . . In America domestic service is a spring-stone to something higher.' [6]

The authors did not avoid the issue: 'Now, what is the matter with domestic service? . . . We cannot in this country maintain to any great extent large retinues of servants. . . . Every mistress of a family knows that her cares increase, with every additional servant.' Their verdict is unequivocal: 'A moderate style of housekeeping, small, compact and simple domestic establishments must necessarily be the general order of life in America.' [7] And finally they point to the solution: 'This being the case, it should be an object in America to exclude from the labors of the family all that can be . . . excluded out of it by combined labor.' [8]

Even today, one could hardly state the problem more trenchantly. By force of circumstance, reality is gradually moving toward this state. Sampling at random the views expressed around 1910, we learn that the servant problem is to be solved' 'on the same plane as in other employments,' and as a direct result, 'we are gradually coming to the abolishment of a permanent serving class in our homes.' [9] Meanwhile the problem increasingly shifted into the psychological sphere. 'There is a very strong case against the presence of the permanent worker in the home. . . .' She forces 'psychological adjustment . . . on the homemaker and on the entire family. . . . In many cases the standard of the home is consciously or unconsciously made less simple or adapted to the expectation and demands of the worker.' [10] All this points back to Miss Beecher's proposal of 1869, that housework should be divided up so far as possible among the members of the family. In 1915 more pressing reasons are given: 'The servantless household (by servantless is meant without resident workers) offers the only opportunity for a family to follow *the exact standards* . . . and enables a family cooperation and a chance for training the children.' [11] The prerequisites for such a solution were supplied only when mechanization made it possible to reduce manual drudgery to a minimum.

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[4] *A Treatise on Domestic Economy*, p.204.

[5] Catherine E. Beecher and Harriet Beecher Stowe, *The American Woman's Home*, New York, 1869, p.318.

[6] Ibid. p.321.

The work does not start with cooking recipes. It opens with a chapter on 'The Peculiar Responsibilities of the American Woman.'

She raises her questions in the very preface: 'In what respects are women subordinate? Wherein are they superior and equal in influence?' This woman, who at the age of twenty-one already taught domestic economy in an institution of her own founding, blamed her sex's many disappointments on the fact that 'women are not trained for their profession.'

Her *Domestic Economy* carefully weighs the problems facing the women of 1840. Before coming to her subject, she could not help discussing human physiology. Without such an understanding, it seemed to her, practical rules were bound to be mere patchwork.

She treated in detail practical household tasks — how to cook, wash, clean, how to furnish the home, or choose vegetables and trees for the garden. As for kitchen recipes, there were none. They were published later, separately. Her every word shows that efficient housekeeping was not an end in itself. It was but an instrument to be properly mastered; and above all it was the medium through which she hoped to guide American women to their responsibilities.

In a speech to American women in the 1840's, Catherine Beecher pointed to the 'evils suffered by American women and American children.'[3] She dealt with the female lot among all classes of society. She told of '10,000 women in New York living by needle work, who by working twelve to fourteen hours can earn only twelve-and-half cents.' She has seen a 'New York office opened to aid domestics in finding places' where in 'a large room so crowded that she could think of nothing but a slave market,' servants were selected like chickens on a counter. She investigated living conditions among the workers at the Lowell textile mills (regarded as a model factory settlement in her time) and differed in her conclusions from Charles Dickens, who had visited them some years earlier. The fourteen-hour day, she found, was toil beyond the girls' endurance: 'At five the bells called for labor. . . . Work prosecuted without remission till twelve . . . then half an hour allowed for dinner and work till seven o'clock.' And finally she came to 'another class of evils endured by a large class of well-educated, unmarried women of the more wealthy classes. . . . It is the suffering which results from inactivity.'

Catherine Beecher's aim was not the achievement of outward power. She was thoroughly opposed to feminism in the political field. Her goal was to give women self-assurance and confidence in their profession. That is why all her life she demanded that 'domestic economy' be taught in the schools as a science no less than physics and mathematics. Only properly trained women could rise to the status for which they were destined.

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[3] *The Education of the Rising Generation*, Address to the Women of Cincinnati, 1846.