

**SOCIAL WORK  
SERIES. HOUSEHOLD  
MANAGEMENT**

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Social Work Series. Household Management by Florence Nesbitt

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**FLORENCE NESBITT**

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S O C I A L W O R K S E R I E S

# HOUSEHOLD MANAGEMENT

*By*

FLORENCE NESBITT

DIRECTOR OF THE FOOD CONSERVATION SECTION OF THE CLEVELAND  
WOMEN'S COMMITTEE OF THE COUNCIL OF  
NATIONAL DEFENSE



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## PREFACE

A HOUSEHOLD economist who read the manuscript of this book said, upon returning it, "This will be a revelation to the dietitians, for nothing at all like it has ever been printed. It will give some of them their first conception of what the homemakers who live in mean streets and crowded cities have to contend with."

As editor of the Social Work Series, what has impressed me most in Miss Nesbitt's pages has been the evidence of keen observation and of a rarely democratic spirit. The individual householders\* whose troubles are described here—often by no more than a word or two—live for the reader and grip his attention, helping him to see everyday life more sanely and interpret it more sympathetically. Other social workers who have seen the proof-sheets have been enthusiastic for the practical reason that here are set down the definite steps by which the city dweller with small income and large family can get the most for his money. Those who are far removed from dependence are glad enough, in these days, to have such knowledge. I have been interested to note, for example, that the clerks who copied these chapters were eager for each installment, finding many of the suggestions applicable to their own households.

Miss Nesbitt is not only a dietitian—she is a social case worker of varied experience. As a member of the staff of the United Charities of Chicago, and later of the mothers' pension department of the Chicago Juvenile

\* It should be explained that all names given to these real people in the book are pseudonyms.

## PREFACE

Court, she had an opportunity to see where the ideas of household economists, as now formulated, are not universally applicable, and where, on the other hand, they are eminently practical. Still later, her work as director of one of the food conservation sections organized by the Council of National Defense has impressed upon her anew the fact that the women who need cooking classes and food demonstrations the most—namely, those who have the least money—are the very ones who remain outside such present-day activities, unless approached understandingly and one by one. When thus sought out, they are eager to learn and eager to apply their new knowledge.

Social workers who are in and out of the poorer homes of the city in response to many varying calls know that the wives and mothers there are now more interested than ever before in discussing ways and means. Often, however, the worker who must pay many other calls cannot take time to enter into domestic details with any thoroughness. Even so, it should be possible to make an opening for the more leisurely volunteer, acting under competent guidance. To her could be entrusted the task of carrying out the practical and friendly suggestions of this book.

As its pages go to press, the civilized countries of a world at war are looking to America to show her highest generalship in the production, distribution, and economical use of food stuffs. The task is one in which the humblest householder not only may bear a part, but, in doing so, may add permanently to the health and morale of our own people.

MARY E. RICHMOND

*Editor of the Social Work Series*

New York, March, 1918.



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# HOUSEHOLD MANAGEMENT

## I

### INTRODUCTION

**A** SUCCESSFUL American tells how his widowed mother brought up her four sons on "next to nothing a year." But the basis of their diet was oatmeal, cracked wheat, milk, and vegetables, available in their rural community for the "few cents" per day she could spend for food. No more wholesome diet for growing boys could have been secured, and, in addition, there was a good physical inheritance back of them. The social worker whose daily tasks take her into city and town homes with small incomes realizes that results would be different if the four sons were growing up now in a crowded district where the home table had to be furnished at present-day prices.