

HUMAN MOTIVES

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Human motives by James Jackson Putnam

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JAMES JACKSON PUTNAM

**HUMAN
MOTIVES**

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Edited by H. Addington Bruce, A.M.

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EDITORIAL INTRODUCTION

THIS is one of a series of handbooks designed to extend knowledge of the important discoveries affecting individual and social welfare that have been made during recent years through psychological research. Most of the books in the series will deal with special problems as illumined by the results of investigations aiming directly at their solution. But the present volume is of a more general character, having as its main purpose the focusing of attention on the aid afforded by modern psychology to the upbuilding of a really sound and practical philosophy of life.

Undoubtedly the outstanding feature of the psychological researches of the past

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quarter of a century has been the exploration of that vast, and previously almost unknown, region of the human mind termed "the subconscious." The discovery that complicated mental processes may, and constantly do, go on beneath the threshold of consciousness, and that these processes include a dynamic action perpetually and profoundly affecting "the conscious self" for good or for ill, has led to further discoveries that have already been turned to good account.

Particularly helpful has been the demonstration of the permanence of the experience and memories of the first years of life, and the rôle played by them as determinants of adult character, behavior, and health. There has even come into being a new department of medicine, based on this proved relationship of subconscious memories and certain maladies — the psychoneuroses, or functional nervous and mental disorders.

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But it is not only to the physician that the exploration of the subconscious has been of great helpfulness. Its results are equally important to the parent, the educator, the social reformer. Indeed, as Doctor Putnam makes clear, they are of prime significance to all of us.

For one thing, knowledge of them gives us a far better understanding of ourselves and our fellows, thereby leading to greater insight into means of self-improvement, and leading also to a more tolerant and just view of those about us. And, fully as important, the results of modern investigation of the subconscious point the way, when properly considered, to a surer grasp of the meaning of the universe and our own place in it. They have, that is to say, a philosophical and spiritual as well as a psychological value.

This it is Doctor Putnam's effort to establish, and the result is a volume that should bring encouragement to all oppressed

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by the seeming impossibility of reconciling the intuitions of religious faith with the dictates of modern science. That the findings of the field of science — medical psychology — in which Doctor Putnam himself has so long and ably labored, tend to reinforce, not weaken, religious conviction, is his firm belief; and he has presented his reasons for this belief with admirable candor and force.

Apart from this larger aspect, his book is of direct value to his readers because of the light it throws on the subject with which it is primarily concerned — human motives. The hidden impulses that so often hurry us to rash actions; the weeds in our minds that need to be uprooted lest they obtain a fatal dominance over our constructive energies; the secret sources of harmful habits — on all of these Doctor Putnam turns the revealing gleam of psychological analysis.

Throughout he rightly emphasizes the