

**THE NEMESIS OF
DOCILITY, A STUDY OF
GERMAN CHARACTER**

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The nemesis of docility, a study of German character by Edmond Holmes

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EDMOND HOLMES

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DOCILITY, A STUDY OF
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THE NEMESIS OF DOCILITY

A STUDY OF GERMAN CHARACTER

BY
EDMOND HOLMES

"Your enemy becomes a mystery that must be solved,
even though it takes ages; for man must be understood."

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"What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole
world, and lose his own soul?"—*St. Mark* viii. 36.

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FOREWORD

THE word *docility* is not quite strong enough for the purpose of this book. But *servility*, which seems to be the only alternative to it, if not too strong, has too narrow a range of meaning. Let me, then, explain that by docility I mean readiness to obey for the sake of obeying, avidity for commands and instructions, reluctance to accept responsibility or exercise initiative, inability to react against the pressure of autocratic authority. Docility, in this sense of the word, when it is a national characteristic, may become a destructive force of extreme violence. For a docile majority implies a dogmatic and domineering minority; and the docile majority may carry docility so far as to become dogmatic and domineering, in imitation of their masters, whom they naturally make their model. Thus it is possible for a people to be as clay in the hands of ambitious and unscrupulous rulers, and yet to be arrogant, aggressive, and self-centred in their bearing towards the rest of the world. When this happens, the materials have been laid for a great conflagration, and only a spark is needed to set them ablaze.



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