

PREFACE

THE narrative of the Second Battle of Ypres was written on the spot and immediately after the action. It was not until long afterwards that it was possible to collect and collate the whole of the battalion diaries. The story, therefore, could only be compiled from the personal reports of the officers commanding units, and in some cases these were not available, and certain regiments did not therefore receive the prominence which was their due. These regiments will, I am sure, readily understand that the omission was not intentional, but due to the impossibility of making sure of all the details of a great and confused action until months after the event. Although the material has become available, I have decided not to attempt to rewrite the story. It is, in its main features, absolutely accurate, and has the advantage which must belong to any narrative written within sound of the guns, and while the impressions of the battlefield are still vivid to the mind. I am, in fact, afraid that any attempt on my part to reconstruct the narrative would spoil whatever merit it may possess.

In the first place, it is necessary, however, to make good some mistakes in the first volume which have been pointed out by persons who were engaged in various actions.