

PREFACE

WHEN in recognition of his priceless services in Syria Field Marshal Allenby, early in October 1919, was honoured with the Freedom of the City of London, his operations were spoken of as a classic example of the military art. The description was just. It is, however, a description applicable with equal justice to the operations of General Maude, and his successor General Marshall, in Mesopotamia, to the operations in the Balkans under the supreme command of General Franchet d'Esperey, and to the strategy and tactics, alike in defence and attack, directed by General Diaz in Italy. In Mesopotamia and in Syria the main burden was borne by British troops; in the Balkans and in Italy they played a part subordinate indeed, but useful to the Allies and honourable to their own renown in arms.

It was fortunate for the Allies opposed to the Pan-Germanic Confederacy that in all these theatres of hostilities they discovered and entrusted their affairs in the field to leaders of genius. The dictum that it is generals who win or lose battles is one the Great War has but served increasingly to confirm. And the reason is not far to seek. The methods of a man of genius are always sane and simple. More surely than men of less calibre he follows the line of least resistance, and, certain in his judgment and clear as to his aims, applies his mind to those details of preparation and administration which spell endurance, efficiency, and sustained moral. East as well as West the Allies had to deal with a skilful, resourceful, and above all determined foe.