

AUTHOR'S FOREWORD

It is possible that this book may be taken for an actual account of the Somme battle, but I warn readers that although it is in the bulk based on the fighting there and is no doubt colored by the fact that the greater part of it was written in the Somme area or between visits to it, I make no claim for it as history or as an historical account. My ambition was the much lesser one of describing as well as I could what a Big Push is like from the point of view of an ordinary average infantry private, of showing how much he sees and knows and suffers in a great battle, of giving a glimpse perhaps of the spirit that animates the New Armies, the endurance that has made them more than a match for the Germans, the acceptance of appalling and impossible horrors as the work-a-day business and routine of battle, the discipline and training that has fused such a mixture of material into tempered fighting metal.

For the tale itself, I have tried to put into words