

PREFACE

THE following sketches were written some months ago. They concern the period when "a contemptible little army" fell back from Mons on Paris, advanced north to the Aisne, and finally arrived in Belgium to fight the first battle of Ypres.

Much water has flowed under the bridge since then: there are not many left of that original handful who crossed the water; and yet a second winter finds us in positions practically unchanged. True, the trenches have improved; the bombs are better; the guns more numerous. But the boredom and the mud, the cold and the fright, are just the same.

The stories are not chronological, and, needless to say, portray no specific individual. All are founded on fact, sketched in with a framework of imagination.